



Assessment of Electoral Peace and Conflict Dynamics

In

Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Uasin Gishu and Kericho Counties

Security Research and Information Center (SRIC)

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Acronyms And Abbreviations	v
Executive Summary	vi
Section One	1
Introduction and Methodology	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Justification	2
1.3 Objectives	2
1.4 Methodology	2
1.4.1 Key Informant Interviews	3
1.4.2 Focus Group Discussions	3
1.4.3 Sampling	3
1.4.4 Data Analysis	3
1.4.5 Assessment Area	3
1.5 Research Ethics Considerations	5
1.6 Limitations and Mitigation Measures	5
Section Two	6
Assessment Findings and Discussions	6
2.1 Updating Peace and Conflict Scenarios	6
2.1.1 Perception of Peace and Security	6
2.1.2 Levels of Fear/ Possibility of Election Related Conflicts	7
2.1.3 High Risk Areas	8
2.1.4 State of Peace and Conflicts	12
2.2 Electoral Conflict Triggers	15
2.2.1 Incitement, Threats, Fear-Mongering and Misinformation	16
2.2.2 History of Electoral violence	17
2.2.3 Disputed Electoral Results	17
2.2.4 Fall out between the President and his Deputy	17
2.2.5 Perception of Vulnerability and State Bias	18
2.3 Actors likely to Contribute to Electoral Conflicts	18

2.3.1 Criminal Gangs and Idle youth	18
2.3.2 Political Leaders	21
2.3.3 Boda Boda Operators	21
2.3.4 Election Management Bodies (EMB)	22
2.3.5. Social Media Influencers and Vernacular Media	22
2.4 Actors With highest Influence in Promoting Peace	22
2.4.1 Political Leaders	23
2.4.2 Religious Institutions/ Leaders	23
2.4.3 Business Entities	24
2.5 Assessing Risk Levels	24
2.5.1 History of Electoral Related Violence/ Conflicts	30
2.5.2 Interventions	30
2.6 Impact of Electoral Violence/Political Processes on Different Groups	33
2.6.1 Impact of Electoral Violence/ Political Processes	33
2.6.2 Chances of Exposure to Electoral Violence	33
Section Three	35
Conclusion and Recommendations	35
3.1 Conclusion	35
3.2 Recommendations to Mitigate Electoral Conflicts	36
3.2.1 State actors	36
3.2.2 non-State actors	38
References	40

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Acronyms And Abbreviations

CAG	Conflict Analysis Group
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CIPEV	Commission of Inquiry on Post-Election Violence
CJPD	Catholic Justice and Peace Department
CPCs	Community Policing Committees
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EMBs	Election Management Bodies
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
KECOSCE	Kenya Community Support Centre
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KNCHR	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
LEAs	Law Enforcement Agencies
NCIC	National Cohesion and Integration Commission
NCRC	National Crime Research Centre
NGAOs	National Government Administrative Officers
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPS	National Police Service
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PEV	Post Election Violence
PWDs	Persons Living with Disability
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SCOK	Supreme Court of Kenya
SGBV	Sexual and Gender based Violence
SRIC	Security Research and Information Centre
UDA	United Democratic Alliance

Executive Summary

Kenya has had different experiences in regard to election related violence. Indeed, the months leading up to, and after elections have been the most unpredictable periods in Kenya's post-independence history in terms of peace and conflict dynamics. The country has experienced different forms of conflicts in the run up, during and post-elections in 1992, 1997, 2007, 2013 and 2017 General Elections (GEs). In the run up to the August 2022 elections, Kenya is witnessing some far too familiar scenarios. Ethnic political coalitions have sprung up. Defections and counter defections, from these coalitions, based on ethnic and personal interests as opposed to ideological considerations characterize this period. Violent clashes have been reported with alarming regularity amid intense political campaigns by politicians at various levels. The country is also witnessing an emergency of criminal groups, protection groups and also gangs during the electioneering period. It is difficult not to link this ongoing violence to the jostling for power by different political groups.

In order to ensure smooth, free and peaceful elections, the Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC) in partnership with Conflict Analysis group (CAG) conducted a peace and conflict assessment in a number of counties that had been identified as hotspot counties with the highest risk of electoral-related conflicts (NCIC, 2022). These were: - Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Uasin-Gishu and Kericho Counties. The assessment sought to update the peace and conflict scenarios, map out specific areas within the hotspot counties that needed to be prioritized when developing different interventions and also identify immediate electoral violence triggers that needed to be addressed.

The assessment adopted a qualitative approach that included use of both secondary and primary means of data collection. In secondary data collection, previous reports on peace and security in the target counties were reviewed while for the primary data, key informant interviews and focus group discussions were used. Groups reached through this assessment included National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs), representatives from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), officers from National Police Service (NPS), politicians, council of elders, community leaders, farmers and businesspeople among others. The assessment also reached victims or people affected by incidences linked to Post-election Violence (PeV) in some of the counties such as Kericho, Uasin Gishu and Nakuru counties. The assessment was conducted in July and the report compiled in August, 2022.

The key findings included the following: -

- Perceptions on electoral Peace and security dynamics across the six target counties were found to vary with the level of ethnicity intensity. In highly cosmopolitan counties, the majority ethnic groups appeared optimistic that the counties will be peaceful while minority groups seemed unsure of peace and security dynamics during the electoral process. There were incidents of people moving to areas that they considered safer or areas dominated by their ethnic groups for fear of post-election conflicts. This was majorly informed by history of post-election violence that seemed to create fear among the minority groups.
- Intra-party rivalries and fierce competition especially within the leading political coalitions were found to be causing tensions across the counties as most of the leaders advocated for 6-piece voting patterns while alienating independent candidates and other parties within the same coalitions.
- Criminal activities were reported to be on the rise. Criminal gangs, organized youth groups including *bodaboda* were found to have a strong influence on peace and conflict dynamics across

the counties especially in Nakuru, Kisumu, Mombasa and Nairobi Counties. These groups were found to be behind most of the criminal activities especially linked to electoral processes. Some of the criminal activities were alleged to be jeering/ booing of political leaders during campaigns, disruption of political events, muggings, robberies among others. People mentioned that they feared that such groups could be used to cause violence during and in the aftermath of the General elections.

- Levels of fear seemed to vary across different counties and in other cases across ethnic groups. Majority ethnic groups seemed upbeat that the elections would be peaceful. Majority of people seemed worried about the announcement of presidential election results with some people mentioning that announcement of unpreferred presidential candidate as the winner of the elections could cause tensions across different counties. Levels of fear were more pronounced among the minority ethnic groups across the counties. This was mostly noted in Kericho, Nakuru, Uasin Gishu and Mombasa counties.
- People across the counties seemed more worried about the aftermath of the General Electoral period. Majority felt that peace within that particular period will depend mostly with politicians as any statement from the leading presidential candidates disputing the outcome of the presidential elections might trigger violence in some of the counties especially in the cosmopolitan ones.
- Name calling and shaming individuals working with the Election Management Bodies (EMBs) allegedly to discredit or project the institutions as incapable of conducting free and fair elections was causing fear across the counties. There seemed to be a well-coordinated attack - through social media and by politicians - on institutions and individuals meant to manage elections in the country. This was identified as a worrying trend and concern.
- Incitement by political leaders, misinformation, fake news and propaganda, disputed election results and history of electoral violence were found to be the leading likely triggers of violence across the counties.
- In terms of areas that peace and security stakeholders needed to focus mostly on, town centers, informal settlements, highly congested areas especially areas mostly occupied by different ethnic groups were found to be most likely to experience post-election conflicts.
- People living in the informal settlements and other highly congested areas especially within the cosmopolitan counties were found to be the most vulnerable - in case of electoral violence.
- Politicians were identified to hold the highest influence to peace and a major factor in influencing conflicts among communities. This showed the importance of involving politicians in peace and conflict interventions across the counties.
- Social media influencers and also presenters in the local vernacular FM stations were also identified as agents of promoting peace and also conflicts across the counties.
- Peace messaging and other community outreach programmes, involvement of security agencies in peace and conflict management initiatives and also the multisectoral approaches adopted by state and non-state actors in promoting peaceful coexistence of different communities were mentioned as the most effective interventions that guarantee peace in the run-up, during and post-election periods.
- Involvement of security agencies in sensitization meetings on the need to coexist peacefully was found to be crucial in improving community-LEAs trust and relations. This was found to be the most effective way of improving police-community relations especially in Kericho and Uasin Gishu where security leaders/ administrators took part in sensitization meetings within churches to

encourage communities to embrace one another and also share their contacts to improve sharing of early warning information.

- On risk levels, Kisumu and Uasin Gishu counties were identified to hold the highest risk of electoral related conflicts while Nairobi and Nakuru were mentioned to have a moderate risk. Mombasa and Kericho counties had mixed positions in terms of risk levels as majority of people ranked them as low-to-moderate and moderate-to-high risk levels respectively.

Some of the recommendations made included the following: -

- Improve on strength and deployment of police officers in hotspot counties and areas: In some of the areas identified as hotspots, locals were of the view that the strength of the respective police stations needed to be enhanced with a view to improve chances of containing violence and conflicts if it happens.
- Enhance and sustain civic education: Majority of people reached through this study were unanimous that civic education was not adequately conducted and that explains the disinterest on voting amongst the youth.
- Sustain community empowerment projects such as *Kazi Mtaani*: The *kazi mtaani* project was lauded as a good occupation for the youth and therefore needed to be sustained.
- Reign heavily on hate speech mongers and other individuals inciting communities against one another. The study found that the social media was awash with not only hate content but also incitement related to the general election.
- Address border disputes: Border disputes especially along Kisumu and Kericho border needed to be addressed as a matter urgency.
- Sustain and intensify inter-sectoral collaboration in sensitization of communities on peaceful coexistence: The need to involve LEAs in peace activities was emphasized.
- Involve politicians in peace activities: Politicians held the highest influence on peace and conflicts and therefore their involvement will help in promoting community relations.

Section One

Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

Kenya has had different experiences in regards to electoral related violence. Since the re-birth of pluralist democratic politics in 1991, the country has repeatedly suffered electoral conflicts. According to reports by different entities, the country has experienced different forms of conflicts in the run up, during and post-elections in 1992, 1997, 2007, 2013 and 2017 general elections (KNHCR, 2017). The conflicts vary in magnitude with 2007/2008 believed to be the worst of the conflicts which left over 1,300 dead and some 350,000 displaced, a stark illustration of the enduring tensions and challenges the country must overcome and the fragility of its democratic trajectory. This forced the country to put together an extensive reform agenda that among others led to the promulgation of the Constitution in 2010. These reforms were aimed at resolving some of the root causes of the conflicts, notably grievances over land, privilege, and inequality and to break the cycle of electoral violence in the country.

The new reform process brought to the fore different forms of conflicts as political rivalry and contestation shifted to the county levels leading to emergence of county-level issues. Majorly, the issues revolve around contestation on use of natural resources such as water, land and extractive resources among others. Furthermore, cosmopolitan counties were thrown into intense rivalry on use and sharing of resources among different ethnic groups and in other cases clans. Different ethnic groups in cosmopolitan counties such as Nairobi, Mombasa, Uasin Gishu, Nakuru and Narok have reported to have been left out of county government linked opportunities such as employment, tenders for supply of goods and services and development related projects (UN, LNOB report, 2022). This compounded with the winner-take-it-all electoral approach intensifies political contestations within the counties as different communities scramble to gain control of the resources. This state of affairs is no different from the national level politics.

The beginning of multi-party democracy intensified political contestations and rivalry. Since 1992, politics have been ethnicized with parties coalescing around tribal power-brokers and an ever-changing political landscape characterized by inter-ethnic alliances that emerge in the run-up to the general election and either survive or fall apart depending on the outcomes of the elections. The shifting alliances and stakes associated with the formations raise the ethnic-linked expectations that in most cases lead to intolerance among different communities resulting in conflicts. The months leading up to, and after elections have been the most unpredictable periods in Kenya's post-independence history in terms of peace and conflict dynamics. Consequently, as the country nears the August, 2022 General Elections, there is a need to assess peace and conflict issues and also constantly update election violence linked triggers to ensure timely interventions. Decisions on areas that most interventions need to be concentrated on - need to be solely based on constant assessments that are aimed at monitoring the quickly changing political landscape in the country and the implications on peace.

1.2 Justification

The changing political dynamics in the country call for constant peace and security assessments to ensure interventions are timely and resonate with the changing environment. Most of the assessments done on electoral related conflicts were done before a number of electoral processes such as the party primaries and selection of the running mates for the leading political formations that may mostly impact on some of the already established scenarios and conflict hotspots.

In the run up to the August 2022 elections, Kenya is witnessing some far too familiar scenarios. Ethnic political coalitions have sprung up. Defections and counter defections based on ethnic and personal interests as opposed to ideological considerations characterize the country's political space. Violent clashes have been reported with alarming regularity amid intense political campaigns by politicians at various levels. The country is also witnessing an emergency of criminal groups, protection groups and also organized youth groups during the electioneering period. It is difficult not to link this ongoing violence to the jostling for power by different political groups.

In order to ensure smooth, peaceful, free and fair elections, there is need to adopt a proactive approach that include taking preventive action. To this end, Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC) in partnership with the Conflict Analysis group (CAG) conducted a peace and conflict assessment in a number of counties that had been identified as hotspots or counties with the highest risk of electoral-related conflicts (NCIC, 2022). These were: - Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Uasin-Gishu and Kericho Counties. The assessment sought to update the peace and conflict scenarios, map out specific areas within the hotspot counties that needed to be prioritized when developing different interventions and also identify immediate electoral violence triggers that needed to be addressed.

1.3 Objectives

The assessment sought to contribute to peaceful electoral processes in the run-up to, during and post-election period through conducting peace and conflict assessment to inform quick and prioritization of interventions. The assessment sought to achieve the following specific objectives:

- 1) To update peace and conflict scenarios in the target Hotspot counties.
- 2) To identify electoral conflict triggers and prescribe interventions aimed at mitigating electoral violence in the hotspot counties.
- 3) To assess risk levels within the hotspot counties
- 4) To assess the impact of electoral violence/political processes on different groups within communities.

1.4 Methodology

The assessment process adopted a qualitative approach that included use of both secondary and primary means of data collection. In secondary data collection, previous reports on peace and security in Nairobi, Nakuru, Mombasa, Kericho, Kisumu and Uasin-Gishu Counties were reviewed, including those from print and digital media. Literature from other stakeholders like government agencies, NGOs, local security agents, research think tanks and individual researchers

was also consulted to enrich the scope of the assessment. The primary data was collected through key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

1.4.1 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews targeted different peace and conflict stakeholders within the counties of focus. There was a particular focus on individuals based within informal settlements, areas earmarked as hotspots and also areas with a history of PeV. The interviews targeted law enforcement officers, National and County Government Officials, local community leaders, religious leaders, youth representatives and representatives from community-level peace and security structures. In total, 90 key informant interviews were conducted with 15 interviews in each targeted county.

1.4.2 Focus Group Discussions

The assessment conducted 18 FGDs with at least three in each County. The FGDs targeted members of the civil society, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), peace committees, Community Policing Committees (CPCs), women and youth groups and other representatives from different community leaderships. Each FGD had a minimum of 7 participants.

1.4.3 Sampling

The assessment utilized purposive and snowballing sampling techniques to select key informants and FGD participants.

1.4.4 Data Analysis

The assessment made use of content analysis to analyze data collected. This helped draw themes and generate summaries that eased report writing. The analysis was also linked to existing literature to add more meaning to the collected data.

1.4.5 Assessment Area

The assessment was undertaken in Nairobi, Nakuru, Mombasa, Kisumu, Kericho and Uasin-Gishu Counties.

Targeted Areas

County	Assessment Areas ¹	KIIs	FGD
Nairobi	General groups in the county ²	3	0
	Kibra	4	1

¹ The assessment areas are based on a NCIC report on Conflict hotspot mapping for Kenya, 2022

² To include both state and non-state actors involved in peace and conflict management across the county

	Mathare - Mlango Kubwa	4	1
	Kawangware	4	1
Kisumu	General groups in the county	3	0
	Kondele	4	1
	Nyalenda	4	1
	Manyatta	4	1
Nakuru	General groups in the county	3	0
	Kaptembwo	4	1
	Bondeni	4	1
	Rhonda	4	1
Mombasa	General groups in the county	3	0
	Nyali	4	1
	Likoni	4	1
	Changamwe	4	1
Kericho	General groups in the county	3	0
	Swahili village	4	1
	Motobo	4	1
	Nyagacho	4	1

Uasin-Gishu	General groups in the county	3	0
	Langas	4	1
	Munyaka	4	1
	Huruma	4	1
Totals		90	18

1.5 Research Ethics Considerations

Deeply appreciative of the sensitivities of the assessment, especially so close to the elections, the research team was guided by the principle of informed consent. Participants were asked for their consent to participate, guaranteed of confidentiality and that no information provided will be directly attributed to them. Further, they were informed of their right to participate and withdraw from the process at any time.

1.6 Limitations and Mitigation Measures

The electioneering period is mostly characterized by high emotions and some levels of insensitivities. During this period, political biases, misperceptions and fears run high. This increases the likelihood of participants providing inaccurate and exaggerated information. To overcome this limitation, the research team sought views from a diverse sample, probed deeper on information provided and during analysis looked for common occurring themes to minimize errors in data collected.

Section Two

Assessment Findings and Discussions

2.1 Updating Peace and Conflict Scenarios

The assessment sought to update peace and conflict scenarios developed from the previous assessment that was done between February and April, 2022 by NCIC. This section presents findings and assertions from different people reached through the assessment.

2.1.1 Perception of Peace and Security

Generally, all the sampled counties were relatively peaceful compared to the previous elections though some tensions were rising as the election day drew closer. The relative peace experienced was attributed to the many peacebuilding efforts done by both state and non-state actors. The fear, as expressed by some people, was that the election outcome would not be peacefully received by Kenyans. This was corroborated by reports that people from communities labeled as “non-natives” were relocating or have been moving their valuables to safer spaces. Some business establishments were said to have scaled-down their stocks or ceased production altogether. Further, reports indicated that some Kenyans were buying goods in bulk to store in their homes fearing that the outcome of elections could trigger violence. A key informant summarized this by stating that: -

“...there is peace here, we are living harmoniously, but we cannot be sure about the aftermath of the elections.... tension is building up and people think that what happened in 2007 is likely to happen. Some people have started moving their valuables to other areas and mostly at night because they are also afraid of being questioned by the locals as to why they are moving.....we are also aware that some landlords are not allowing people from some communities to rent their houses fearing what may happen after the general elections.”³

In some of the counties such as Mombasa, Nairobi and Nakuru, criminal gangs associated with politicians were causing tensions and people were fearful that the groups could be used to cause violence. Cases of insecurity; muggings, robbery, phone snatching, hooliganism and political intolerance and zoning were reported. Literature has shown that criminal activities tend to increase during the electioneering period⁴. This could explain the high number of criminal incidences reported across the counties. Additionally, intense political rivalry between leading aspirants in some of the counties such as Kisumu, Mombasa, Uasin Gishu and Nairobi could pose a security risk. There were reports that these intense rivalries were causing rifts within families as indicated by a key informant in Kisumu County who observed that: -

³ A comment by a key informant on the status of peace and conflict in Kericho County. Interview conducted in July, 2022.

⁴ Otieno, J. (8/4/2022). The Africa Report. Kenya: Voters wary of increase in violent crimes in run-up to 2022 general elections. Retrieved from: <https://www.theafricareport.com/191324/kenya-voters-wary-of-increase-in-violent-crimes-in-run-up-to-2022-elections/>

“.....family disputes as a result of political positions are a big issue here already.....there are households experiencing conflicts based on their political allegiance. If the wife supports Fred Ouda yet the husband is on Joshua Oron’s side, they fail to provide for the family asking them instead to ask Ouda to provide.....”⁵

Jostling for handouts from politicians was also identified as a key catalyst in disruption of peace especially in the informal settlements across the counties. In Kisumu for instance, handouts popularly known as ‘*Yuko Jamna*’, or harvesting ‘*zambarao*’, were identified to cause tensions amongst the youth and thereby disrupting the state of peace in almost all counties.

2.1.2 Levels of Fear/ Possibility of Election Related Conflicts

Levels of fear seem to vary across the six target counties and in other cases across ethnic groups. Most people reached from the majority ethnic groups were upbeat that the counties were peaceful but also cautioned that manipulation of the presidential election results could easily cause problems since tensions were already building up. The minority ethnic groups across the counties seemed unsure of the conflict situation and some feared that there could be some form of violence. This was noted in Kericho, Nakuru, Uasin Gishu and Mombasa counties.

Additionally, zoning by political formations seemed to be causing fear among people with contrary political positions. Intolerance among supporters of different political formations was mentioned to cause fear among some segments of the population. This was the case in Uasin Gishu, Mombasa, Kisumu and Nairobi counties. An FGD participant emphasized this by stating: -

“Due to the pressure, we are facing, publicly I will support the ODM/Azimio preferred candidate, but on the actual voting day, I will vote for candidate of my choice. I am forced not to publicly mention my preferred candidate, because I fear for my life.... it’s bad here on the ground”⁶

Past post-election violence seemed to also cause fear among residents in different counties. This was highly notable in Kericho, Uasin Gishu and Nakuru counties. Some people mentioned that they had witnessed some of their friends and neighbors moving their valuables in fear of conflicts. This fear seemed to be majorly connected to the incidences of 2007/08 PeV and post-election tensions reported in 2013 and 2017. Additionally, business people within some of the town centers in Kericho, Uasin Gishu, Nairobi and Nakuru counties were reported to have invested in security enhancement facilities such as; CCTVs, erecting steel doors and perimeter walls and also moving some of their stocks to their houses. Some of the comments from key informants include: -

“kama haukuwa hapa 2007 huwezi jua, nagonja shule zifugwe nipeleke watoto nyumbani. Si lazima tupige kura, maisha yetu ni ya maana kuliko kura” (If you were not here, in

⁵ Sentiments by a discussant in a FGD session in Kisumu County

⁶ FGD discussant from Nyalenda, Kisumu County

*Eldoret in 2007, you can't understand, I'm waiting for the schools to close to take my children to the home village. It's not a must we vote; our lives are more important)*⁷ and “.....we cannot pretend to be 100% sure that there will be peace here after elections, especially based on what happened here in 2007/08, 2013 and 2017. We are trying our best to be safe, some of us moved our families back to our villages, I will vote and go to my village for a while to be sure that there is peace here before coming back.....tusidanganyane hapa – watu wanaishi kwa hofu (let us not lie to one another, people are living in fear)⁸

2.1.3 High Risk Areas

The assessment established that the areas considered hotspots within the counties were either due to high presence of criminal gangs or areas occupied by people considered outsiders or simply have a history of electoral violence. The table below summarizes the hotspot areas and justification given across the 6 counties: -

Table 1: high risk areas

County	Areas within the County that need to be closely monitored and justification	
	Area	Justification
Kisumu	Kondele <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flyover ● Kondele market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cosmopolitan- People from diverse communities converge here in search of income opportunities. ● Presence of idle youth who are easy to mobilize hence a fertile ground for political mobilization. ● Demonstrators feel they easily get fair coverage by the media from this area.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Call box area ● Sije grounds ● Obunga slum, ● Kachok area ● Carwash area ● Nyalenda - Nyaori. Kasawino 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Area has radical ODM supporters hence any other candidate not affiliated to ODM, if found campaigning there is met with violence. ● Areas largely informal settlement with high levels of poverty and minimal development ● Highly preferred by politicians since they are densely populated and home to majority of idle youth
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Koyango 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Located in Manyatta, it is a spot where a dreaded gang known as <i>Darfur boys</i> are based.

⁷ Key informant from Uasin Gishu

⁸ Key informant from Kericho

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gesoko 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Informal settlement – many idle youths reside there ● The area is synonymous with drugs and drug abuse. ● Under age youth - end up being involved in petty crimes ● Presence of SALW ● <i>Bodaboda</i> people in the Baraka area near Kisumu National Polytechnic may be involved in crime. ● Dubai Complex also a den of <i>Bodaboda</i> engaging in crime
Uasin Gishu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Silverline ● Munyaka ● King'ong'o ● Kisumu dogo ● Kona mbaya 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● High prevalence of idle youth. ● Dens of illicit and illegal drugs – drunkards easily make remarks that are inciting and threatening to certain communities seen to be going against the wishes of the dominant community. ● Matatu stages and market places where there is always a huge concentration of people. ● Unresolved land issues ● Demand for 6-piece voting patterns by Kenya Kwanza coalition
Nakuru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kwa Rhoda ● Kaptembwa ● Kapkures ● Bondeni ● Kivumbini ● Shauri yako ● Kambachia ● Flamingo ● Manyani ● Mwariki ● Karagita (Naivasha) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Border disputes. ● Ethnic diversity coupled with negative ethnicity – supremacy battles between communities. ● Politically mobilized criminal gangs ● Unresolved land disputes especially in Kaptembwa and Kapkures ● Inequitable distribution of resources especially in Nakuru west ● Demand for 6-piece voting patterns by Kenya Kwanza coalition. ● Youth unemployment, drug abuse making youth vulnerable to exploitation by politicians. ● Criminal activities ● Religious differences especially in Manyani. ● Socio-economic differences between the S. Sudanese and Kenyans in Manyani

Nairobi	Kibra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarang’ombe ward - includes Kamukunji and Gatwekera villages (Same dynamics with Lindi area) • Ngumo-Silanga 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area has radical ODM supporters hence any other candidate not affiliated to ODM, if found campaigning there is met with violence • Youth have been blocking non-ODM candidates from campaigning in the area and using all manner of intimidation tactics against them. • The area is a slum with many idle youths easily manipulated by politicians • Kibra has a history of post-election violence 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laini Saba area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toxic mix of political intolerance that emanates from a mathematical ethnic matrix involving the Luo, Kikuyu and Kamba residents. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makina 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stiff competition between three candidates and this is raising temperatures between ODM and UDA supporters. • Religious overtones here as the current legislator is a Muslim with substantial backing from the Nubians while the ODM candidate is a Christian 	
		Mathare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mlango Kubwa. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mlango Kubwa - identified as the epicenter of tensions and some level of violence. • It has the highest number of MCA candidates, • Proliferation of small arms and light weapons- (candidates said to be buying guns for youths), • High level of drug abuse and largest numbers of goons for hire.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mabatini • Mbodeni, • Kosovo, and • Hospital wards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising political intolerance where politicians are heckled and cars vandalized • Stiff competition between the candidates, conflict between Kenyans and Ugandans, • High preference of SGBV, drugs and illicit brew, voter bribery, inter-ward fighting more so in Mabatini and Hospital ward • landlord tenant conflict • Extrajudicial killings, radicalization, illegal firearms inflow, muggings and claims that some police officers 	

		have been compromised by some politicians for selfish gain.
	Kawangware <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congo Junction, Stage 2 area, • Takataka 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal activities - Youths including touts have been robbing people • There are reports that even some school going children (17-25yrs) might be involved in crime and could instigate electoral violence to further their heinous acts. • There were also claims that the criminal gangs were armed with firearms
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madiaba, • Gatina, • Mau Mau at the border of Kawangware and Kangemi, • Muslim and 46 Mwisho. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are reports that criminals reside in these areas. • Presence of idle youth waiting to be hired by politicians
Mombasa	Changamwe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mwangosi village, • Murang'a, • Bokole, • Mlolongo • Chaani • Likoni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of criminal gangs especially “Sisi Kwa Sisi”, <i>Russia, and Colombia</i> - which was said to be already terrorizing citizens • The area is considered to be occupied by “outsiders” • In Chaani, youth already fighting over <i>Kazi mtaani</i> initiative-claiming unfair distribution by the politicians • Drug abuse and idleness making youth open for political manipulation • Machetes wilding youth as young as 11 years who terrorize people even at daylight
	Nyali, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soweto grounds, • Kisumu Ndogo, • Frere Town, • Bamburi mwisho, • Chuda, • Majengo mapya, • Kasandani 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High incidences of crime, high populations of idle youth who were said to be armed with crude weapons. • School dropped out high, unemployment and also suffering from drug abuse. • In Kisumu dogo, the area was said to be dominated by Luos who speak in one voice when it comes to politics. • The area has a history of post-election violence; during the 2017 election, Kisumu dogo experienced violence due to disputed presidential results

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Matopeni 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Destruction of opponent’s posters especially in Ferere town ● Toxic media platforms such as <i>Hisia kali</i>, <i>Sauti ya vijana</i>, <i>Likoni political forum</i>, <i>Sauti yako</i>, <i>Likoni news</i>
Kericho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kapsoit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presence of radical political leaders ● Propaganda, fake news and misinformation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sondu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Boundary disputes along the borders with other Counties ● Fight over revenue collection in Sondu market by county officials. ● Stock theft issues ● Spillover of conflicts from Kisii and Kisumu
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nyagacho 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Propaganda, fake news and misinformation ● Drugs and reckless statements from the locals ● Political issues and differences – different ethnic groups.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Londiani 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Propaganda, fake news and misinformation ● Many ethnic groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tea Estates and Areas within the town -, KCC Roundabout, Ngoina road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Based on 2007/08 PeV ● That is where most people converge when there are conflicts.

2.1.4 State of Peace and Conflicts

The assessment sought to establish the state of peace and conflicts in the run-up, during and post-election period: -

Run-up to Elections

The peace and security environment was generally peaceful across the six counties except some isolated insecurity incidents. Some of these insecurity incidents were associated with political candidates’ pronouncements and actions. The incidents included destruction of opponent’s posters by the youths, sponsoring of criminal gangs to intimidate opponents through creating fear, heckling of opponents, and sometimes violent confrontations, incitement and hate speech during political rallies. Most of the participants expressed fear that the criminal gangs could be used by the candidates to unleash violence.

Moreover, in some areas members of ethnic groups taking advantage of their claim to indigeneity were threatening those considered to belong to ‘settler’ communities with forceful evictions. Exploiting the fears usually associated with elections, memories of past violence and perceived land injustices, some people were threatening members of ‘settler’ communities that they do not have a choice but to vote for the candidates preferred by the ‘indigenous’ communities. In Kapkures and Kaptembwa, Nakuru West constituency, a KII informant indicated that they were being warned thus: -

“How many Kikuyus can you see here? The way we kicked out Kikuyus in 2007 is the same way we will kick out the Kisii”⁹.

Another KII informant from Kaptembwa, Nakuru West constituency corroborating the threats, stated that they were being warned that they should vote for the candidates preferred by the ‘indigenous’ community otherwise: -

“masaa kama hii, utakuwa ukienda nyumbani bila hata nguo ya kubadilisha (A time like this, you will be traveling to your indigenous home without even changing clothes)”¹⁰

The presidential election outcome seemed to be the main determinant of whether the country will be peaceful or not. The two leading presidential candidates seemed to enjoy support and huge following in most of the counties. Moreover, the run up to the general elections was heavily characterized by: -

1. Heightened political rivalry/competition operating at multiple levels. Across the counties where the assessment was conducted, there was intense competition between the main political formations; the Azimio-one Kenya and Kenya Kwanza coalitions. Within these counties, candidates vying for various political seats were also trapped into this competition which at times encouraged the use of divisive campaign strategies, widespread voter bribery and violence.
2. Threats of eviction: This was mostly reported in Kericho, Nakuru and Uasin Gishu counties where grievances around the land question remains a key underlying driver of conflict, and perceived land grievances are often used by politicians as a strategy for winning support and intimidating opposition - ‘others’.
3. Rigging claims within political parties during the party primaries: There were claims that some parties had picked some unpopular candidates and rigged out others. This could lead to conflicts in some of the areas like it was noted in Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu and Mombasa counties.
4. Propagating of negative ethnicity as a political mobilization strategy resulting in tensions among different ethnic groups. This was reported mostly in Nairobi - Kibra and between the Luo and Nubians, Nakuru (Kalejin-Kisii), Uasin Gishu especially in ethnically diverse areas such as Eldoret.

⁹ Key informant, Nakuru County

¹⁰ Key informant, Nakuru County

5. Politicians taking advantage of desperate youths through paying them meager amount of money, buying them cheap alcohol and drugs so that they can engage in acts of intimidation, verbal insults and violence.
6. Hate speech, misinformation and disinformation: There were widespread cases of hate speech, misinformation and disinformation. This was more pronounced in vernacular radio stations and social media platforms especially in WhatsApp and Facebook groups with huge following.
7. Coordinated attacks aimed at discrediting election management bodies: There seemed to be a well-coordinated attack - through social media and by politicians - on institutions meant to manage elections in the country. This according to the majority of people was creating a worrying trend – especially in instances where some people lose elections – may be a pointer of some politicians disputing election results.

The political call to vote for all candidates from one political party - commonly referred to as six-piece voting pattern- continued to draw varied opinions as it was seen to divide people and was likely to cause conflicts during the election if left unchecked. The intolerance noted amongst candidates and even within the same political coalitions if unchecked could be a trigger for pre-poll violence, especially against candidates and supporters who are not part of the main political parties. An informant in Kisumu while commenting on the six-piece voting had this to say: -

“There are rumors that ODM leader Hon Raila Odinga will be holding his final campaigns in Kisumu on the 4th of August. Therefore, they are dictating that he should be the last aspirant candidate to campaign. There will be no other rally campaigns after Hon Raila because they believe he is coming to preach 6-piece vote, so they don’t want others’ parties to campaign since they will confuse people or corrupt minds against 6-piece.”¹¹

During Elections

The state of peace and conflict during the general elections on 8th August 2022 was reportedly going to be largely peaceful. The assessment however identified some issues that could threaten peace; delays in delivery of voting materials, mix up of voting materials, cases of voter bribery, people hovering around polling centers after casting their votes, some citizens propagating the “Linda Kura” initiatives, presence of politicians at the polling centers or nearby areas intimidating voters, presence of heavy security at polling centers, voter names missing in the election register, lack of proper management of electoral processes; late opening of polling stations, verification and admission of agents, identification of voters, assisted voters, vote tallying, controversies over disputed and stray votes and transmission of results, disruption of voting by hired gangs, drunkenness and rowdiness of voters. Besides, misinformation and propaganda about election rigging, KIEMS kit failing, and delays in announcement of election results were also identified as issues that could cause tensions and unrest in most areas.

¹¹ Key informant, Kisumu County

The assessment anticipates that the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) will conduct themselves according to the law and this will be instrumental in determining whether there would be conflict or not. Key among the EMBs is the IEBC and NPS. Any perceived partiality from these institutions is likely to trigger conflict.

Post-Election Period

According to most people that were interviewed for this assessment, the aftermath of the elections is the most sensitive period. Majority of people expressed fear of some leading politicians failing to concede defeat and disputing the electoral results. Participants from across the counties surveyed expressed low trust in the ability of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to deliver a credible election. This fear, according to the people reached by the assessment was emanating from the back-and-forth altercations between IEBC and other government bodies especially Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI). More so, there were fears that the Executive arm of the government might interfere with the process in favor of their preferred candidate.

A key informant highlighted this by mentioning that,

“There is peace here, elections will happen, but we are concerned by the manner IEBC is behaving. Some of us feel as if they may not do the right thing and that will be an excuse for many political leaders to reject election results. This could bring tensions here.....”¹²

This fear was informed by past experiences whereby the post-election period was the riskiest in relation to outbreak of electoral related violence. In previous elections, the majority of the counties scanned had experienced violence arising from disputed presidential election results.

In Rift Valley (Nakuru, Uasin Gishu, Kericho) and Nyanza (Kisumu County) regions, where the leading presidential candidates, Hon. William Ruto and Hon. Raila Odinga hails from, respectively, people seem to be sure that their preferred candidate will win and are not ready to accept any other outcome. This signifies a potential violence since ultimately, there will be a one winner. Consequently, the Supreme Court which is tasked with adjudicating presidential election result disputes, remain a critical institution to salvage the situation. Indeed, the manner in which either the IEBC or the Supreme Court will execute their mandate will determine whether these two regions shall remain peaceful or conflicts will erupt.

2.2 Electoral Conflict Triggers

The assessment identified numerous issues that the key informants and focus group discussants felt could trigger electoral conflicts with the leading one being disputed presidential election outcome. This was mostly pronounced in the Rift Valley (Nakuru, Uasin Gishu and Kericho Counties) on one hand and Nyanza (Kisumu County) on the other. As mentioned earlier, the two regions are home to the two leading presidential candidates. It is in these regions where voters were seemingly not ready to accept any unfavorable outcome.

¹² Key informant, Kericho County

2.2.1 Incitement, Threats, Fear-Mongering and Misinformation

Respondents from various counties noted that social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, TikTok and Facebook, groups and pages like ‘Kivumbini reloaded’ and ‘flamingo wall’ (in Nakuru County), *Hisia kali*, *Sauti ya vijana*, *Likoni political forum*, *Sauti yako*, *Likoni news* (in Mombasa County), *Jukwaa la Siasa* (Mathare) among others, were spreading inciting messages and hate speech. A key informant in Nakuru had this to say: -

*“In social media especially Facebook, WhatsApp groups and Twitter, there is a lot of incitement, rumors and propaganda that elections have already been decided”*¹³.

Further, hate speech/ reckless statements that bordered on threats to some communities by some random people, mostly under influence of drugs, were also raised as a cause for alarm. It emerged that some people were fond of making reckless statements while drunk that could be easily understood as targeted threats to particular communities across the counties.

There were also a lot of conversations in the town centers and bars that in many ways informed or triggered unverified political positions or dynamics that were creating fear among the communities. Some religious bodies were also flagged for their roles in shaping political positions through selective messaging. Some of the statements that were picked by this assessment included:

-

*“...Chebukati does not mean well for us...he has been bought....”*¹⁴

*“...IEBC is already bought...”*¹⁵

*“..... Chiefs have been tasked to campaign for a particular candidate....”*¹⁶

*“.....this is a battle between God and the devil.....we know who is chosen by God and therefore voting against that is wrong.....”*¹⁷

A focus group discussant while commenting on some of the statements, drunkards were using, mentioned that: -

*“.....one of the gentlemen while staggering home loudly said that - this time we shall not accept defeat, you vote whoever you want but prepare yourself just in-case our candidate loses – you see these are the statements that are causing panic to communities that are seen as non-natives here.....”*¹⁸

Although the security agencies were lauded for taking action on some of the people reported to be causing tensions among different members of the community including campaigns to assure every one of their safeties, it was reported that such statements had already instilled a great level of fear among the minority ethnic groups.

¹³ Key informant, Nakuru County

¹⁴ Key informant in Kericho County.

¹⁵ A comment by a key informant in Kericho County

¹⁶ A comment by a key informant in Uasin Gishu County.

¹⁷ A comment by a key informant in Kericho county.

¹⁸ A comment by an FGD participant drawn from Nyagacho, Kericho. Discussion held in July, 2022

2.2.2 History of Electoral violence

Memories of past Post-election Violence (PeV) were blamed for some of the fears reported during the assessment. Majority of the people reported that they lost properties, loved ones, businesses burnt down and others were evicted from their homes and were left with harrowing tales of trauma. This was mostly noted in Kericho, Uasin Gishu and Nakuru counties. A key informant mentioned thus: -

*“.....kama haukuwa hapa 2007 huwezi jua, nagonja shule zifugwe nipeleke watoto nyumbani. Si lazima tupige kura, maisha yetu ni ya maana kuliko kura”*¹⁹ (If you were not here, in Eldoret, in 2007, you can't understand, I'm waiting for the schools to close to take my children home. It's not a must we vote; our lives are more important)

2.2.3 Disputed Electoral Results

Majority of respondents expressed fear that the presidential aspirants would reject the outcome of the general elections thus inciting their followers to cause violence. This was mentioned as the leading trigger of the 2007/08 electoral violence and thus people felt IEBC had the biggest responsibility in ensuring peaceful elections across the counties. It was mentioned that perceptions were already being formed that the elections will not be free and fair going by the utterances by some political leaders and actions by the elections management bodies, especially IEBC.

2.2.4 Fall out between the President and his Deputy

The fallout between the Jubilee party principals, President Uhuru Kenyatta and his Deputy Hon. William Ruto was mentioned to have the possibility of triggering conflicts especially in Kericho, Nakuru and Uasin Gishu counties. According to KIIs and FGDs respondents, the Kalenjin community believes that the Deputy President, Hon. William Ruto played a very crucial role in the Jubilee party candidate's ascension to presidency in 2013 and 2017 general elections. They were banking on reciprocation of support from Mt. Kenya region. Consequently, the perceived fall-out between the president and his deputy has entrenched perceptions of betrayal and this could trigger conflicts. One respondent noted that,

*“sisi tulipigia kura the current president, na akatutahidi ya kwamba atamobilize watu wake kusupport Deputy President, baada ya miaka kumi, lakini sasa tunaona ni kama anatuheza. Maombi yetu ni kwamba watatupigia kura kama vile sisi tuliwapigia”*²⁰ (we voted for the current president and he promised to mobilize his people to vote for his Deputy President, but we are now feeling as if - him and his people may not vote for us. Our hope is that he will honor his promise and the people of central vote for us like we did to them)

¹⁹ FGD participant, Uasin Gishu County

²⁰ FGD discussant, Kericho County

2.2.5 Perception of Vulnerability and State Bias

The assessment was informed that state institutions, especially NPS and National Government Administration Officers (NGAOs) were largely being used by the government against the UDA politicians. This perception of biasness is reinforced by the ongoing social media misinformation purporting massive deployment of police in Kenya Kwanza strongholds tasked with voter suppression. It is also reinforced by seemingly participation of government officials in Azimio political rallies. Majority of people reached by the assessment were of the view that failure by the government institutions to provide a fair and free electoral environment will most likely trigger violence - especially in a situation where Kenya Kwanza loses elections. More so, massive deployment of security agencies in perceived Kenya Kwanza strongholds should it occur during election, would likely lead to tensions and possible violence.

These perceptions that elections might not be free and fair and that the laws put in place might not help in promoting transparency in electoral processes could be a huge trigger of violence. According to Conklin (1995), in instances where people have little trust on the ability of institutions to assure the public of fairness in an electoral process, their bond to society weakens and the probability of engaging in criminal acts increases²¹. There is need therefore for all EMBs to put necessary mechanisms in place aimed at assuring the public of fairness and transparency of the electoral processes to avert post-election conflicts.

2.3 Actors likely to Contribute to Electoral Conflicts

The assessment sought to identify groups with the highest influence and means to cause violence in the six counties.

2.3.1 Criminal Gangs and Idle youth

According to the majority of the respondents, criminal gangs hold the biggest threat to peace across the country. It was mentioned that in 2007/2008 PeV youth groups were used by politicians to threaten, intimidate people and engage in acts of violence. Since then, these criminal gangs have proliferated and have been mobilized for political expediency. For instance, the gangs have been mobilized before to disrupt political rallies and, there were fears they could as well be mobilized to disrupt voting or take advantage of the electoral environment to strategically create chaos during the elections. A discussant in Kisumu had this to say: -

“.....these are areas where most youths are idle. Those in the transport sector easily get involved in hooliganism, they are involved in drugs and substances abuse like changaa as they hang out in chang'aa dens and discuss politics, waragi and marijuana making them vulnerable to be used easily to participate in violence.”²²

²¹ Conklin, J. E. (1995). Criminology (5th Edition). London: Allyn and Bacon.

²² FGD participant, Kisumu County

The study established that Mombasa, Nairobi, Nakuru and Kisumu had the highest number of criminal groups. In Uasin Gishu and Kericho, respondents mentioned that there were no known criminal groups but idle youth that were easily mobilized by politicians to disrupt political events and activities. A key informant reinforced this by mentioning that: -

“I have not heard of any criminal group here but what I know is the youth tend to be easily mobilized and manipulated by politicians.....like, we got information that a group of some idle youth had been mobilized by a known politician to jeer, boo and disrupt a campaign rally organized by the Azimio One Kenya Alliance.....the information we got was that he had bought them some cheap liquor – chaag’aa – a night before the event with instructions to disrupt the planned meeting.....we called the politician to our offices and demanded that he calls all the youth who were involved and order them to stop their plans.....the Azimio event happened without any reported issue we warned him that he remained within our radar. We will not allow politicians to mess up the peace we have in this county because of selfish motives and interests....”²³

Generally, the criminal groups seemed more active during electioneering periods and were said to be mostly used by politicians to mobilize supporters or campaigners or disrupt their opponent’s rallies. They are also hired as official hecklers as well as blocking other candidates from accessing some parts in the counties. In all the counties, youth were said to be more vulnerable to manipulation by politicians as majority lacked meaningful employment to be able to comfortably eke a living. The findings corroborate similar ones from NCRC report done on organized criminal gangs in Kenya that established that some politicians in Kenya hired individual goons and members of organized criminal gangs to intimidate their opponents during elections. The report further indicated that the youth (especially the unemployed) were the key perpetrators of election crimes and offences due to their vulnerability to strong influences from wealthy politicians²⁴. Some of the most mentioned criminal groups are tabulated below: -

Table 2: criminal groups

Name of Criminal Group	Area Found
Nakuru County	
Confirm Gaza Mungiki WaTZ	KwaRhonda Bondeni Mawanga Kivumbini

²³ A key informant in Kericho

²⁴ NCRC (2012). NCRC Research Report No. 1: A Study of Organized Criminal Gangs in Kenya. ISBN 978-9914-9954-0-4. Retrieved on 3rd October, 2022. Available at: <https://www.crimeresearch.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Organized-Criminal-Gangs-in-Kenya-Report.pdf>

Mauki Mungiki Yahoo Boys Five Fingers Boston 42 brothers Jambo Boys Kizazi Jeuri Nyuki Power	KITI Kaptembwa Kimathi Lanet Ngomongo
Mombasa County	
Sisi kwa sisi Russia Colombia Wakali Kwanza Wajukuu Wa bibi Alshabaab Mombasa Republic Council (MRC) Shiranga Paka Nyeuzi Califonia	Kisauni Shanzu Majengo Likoni Frere town Chaani Changamwe
Kisumu County	
Darfur boys Somali Base Pita Usemwe Kijiweni Usiku Sacco	Informal settlements Kondele Nyalenda Gesoko konyango
Nairobi County	
Warembo wa Muhesh Gaza Gogo Super power 42 brothers Tsunami Habana Tambua Kapedo	Mathare Kibra, Kayole Eastleigh Tasia, Soweto Tom Mboya street, Moi Avenue Dandora, Kariobangi Kangemi Majengo

2.3.2 Political Leaders

Politicians were identified as a crucial group in shaping peace and conflict issues across the country. According to the group discussants, the reaction of politicians to the election outcome will determine peace and conflict scenarios not only in respective counties but also in the whole country. Key informants drawn from the security agencies indicated that there have been a lot of efforts aimed at controlling the conduct of politicians because they hold the highest influence on peace and conflict dynamics. It emerged that during the campaigns most politicians were working with some youths to peddle rumors, intimidate and cause tensions. A comment by a key informant from Nakuru confirms this: -

'Yes, I do worry that there is a possibility of election-related conflict Rhonda is cosmopolitan with a high number of vulnerable youths who are unemployed, has had influx of criminal gangs due to vulnerability of youths, politicians are targeting the same youths to advance their political agenda, and has a history of post-election Violence'²⁵

The political class was also said to have substantial influence over their supporters with majority of them bent on exploiting local grievances especially the emotive land question and distribution of development projects and public jobs as campaign strategies. These together with economic frustrations were identified by National Crime Research Centre (NCRC) as the leading contributors of violence during electoral processes²⁶. The utterances by politicians therefore needs to be keenly monitored as they could easily trigger conflicts in some of the areas already identified as hotspots.

2.3.3 BodaBoda Operators

The assessment established that the *bodaboda* group is well structured, easy to mobilize and highly mobile. The politicians often use them as an advance party to survey campaign routes for the candidates and mobilizing people to attend rallies, mostly through making as much noise as possible. While doing so, they also, more often than not, participate in criminal activities such as looting and attacking members of the public. In all the six counties, people seemed wary of the *bodaboda* riders. Cases of people being robbed of their valuables by men and women on motorbikes who quickly speed off were reported to have intensified especially during campaign rallies. This was mostly reported in Nakuru, Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa counties.

The unity exhibited by the *bodaboda* riders, even when engaging in criminal activities was cited as a threat to peace in all the counties. This unity is more pronounced when one of them is involved in an accident. It is this strength in unity that perhaps has attracted state and non-state

²⁵ FGD participant, Nakuru County

²⁶NCRC (2016). Election Crimes and Offences in Kenya. Retrieved on 3rd October, 2022 from: <https://crimeresearch.go.ke/publications/Elections%20Crimes%20&%20Offences%20in%20Kenya.pdf>

peacebuilding entities to engage the *bodaboda* riders as peace ambassadors. Indeed, actors engaged for this assessment stated that there were deliberate efforts to engage *bodaboda* people on peacebuilding efforts especially contributing to early warning early response mechanisms as a way of transforming the group to peace champions and ambassadors.

2.3.4 Election Management Bodies (EMBs)

The Election management bodies are very critical in the electoral process. It is these bodies who set parameters for a free and fair elections and build public trust in the electoral process. It was however disturbing to find majority of respondents expressing low trust levels on EMBs especially the IEBC and the Supreme Court of Kenya (SCOK). On one hand, the concern with the IEBC was on its ability to deliver on credible elections. On the other hand, there were fears that the NPS might be deployed to strategically cause violence so as to suppress voter's turnout. These fears were mostly noted in Nairobi, Uasin Gishu and Nakuru Counties. A key informant intimated thus:

-

“.....police officers have to be fair while doing their work, they should not agree to being used by politicians to push certain agenda.....on election day, they should focus on security and allow us to vote our preferred candidates.....”²⁷

2.3.5. Social Media Influencers and Vernacular Media

Social media influencers, bloggers and also presenters in leading vernacular stations were also identified as some of the actors with the ability to influence electoral-related conflicts across the 6 counties. According to the majority of people reached through this assessment, this group of people had a huge influence in shaping opinions and perceptions on the electoral process. It was mentioned that majority of voters relay mostly on this space to get information on political issues. This shows the power of the space in terms of mobilization of people to adopt certain political positions that could also be fertile grounds for propagating conflicts or tensions amongst communities.

The findings corroborate with a report by Mercy Corps that established that social media is capable of mobilizing and shaping users' values. The report further mentioned that the space rewards identification and connection within a group, though this can also be at the expense of intergroup cohesion. Social media influencers and political actors on online platforms were identified to have the potential of fueling tensions between ethnic and sectarian identities.²⁸

2.4 Actors With highest Influence in Promoting Peace

In order to recommend entities or groups that can help the country in the post-election period in promoting peace and cohesion in the communities, the assessment sought to establish actors with

²⁷ A key informant while commenting on fears that police officers could be used to suppress the will of the people in some areas. Interview held in Uasin Gishu.

²⁸ Brook, A. (March, 2022). Technology for Development. Scroll and share: The role of social media on conflicts. Retrieved from: <https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/role-social-media-conflicts#:~:text=Social%20media%20rewards%20identification%20and,between%20ethnic%20and%20sectarian%20identities> on 6/10/22

the ability to mobilize community members towards peaceful coexistence. Some of the most mentioned actors include the following: -

2.4.1 Political Leaders

Politicians were identified to hold the highest ability to mobilize the public towards peaceful coexistence. It was mentioned that most of the local and national level politicians held the power to influence people to either coexist peacefully or into conflicts. For instance, a discussant in Kisumu County and a key informant in Kericho observed: -

“.....politicians here have the biggest influence to peace, for instance, the aspirants are sometimes preaching peace and their supporters are calm based on their directions but as soon as they get the go ahead to cause conflict they engage.”²⁹ And,

“.... waniasa ndio kusema (politicians have the final say on peace), there will be peace as long as politicians are quiet or support outcomes of elections.....one word from them and tensions begin to build here.....”³⁰

This observation underscores the need to put mechanisms in place to deter politicians from inciting violence and hatred among communities and to also include politicians in peacebuilding efforts within the communities with a view to promote a sense of responsibility among them and also ensure their support in sensitizing people on the need to uphold peace and unity within their locales.

2.4.2 Religious Institutions/ Leaders

Religious institutions were said to be playing a key role in preaching peace across the country. According to all the people reached through this assessment, church leaders were said to be vocal in preaching cohesiveness across the country through peace caravans, church sermons and also through open-air crusades. The close partnership between church leadership and the security personnel was also lauded to be essential in promoting peace. This was noted as one of the leading approaches in promoting public trust on government institutions especially the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs).

In Kericho, the security personnel had developed a schedule (during the electioneering period) for engagement with the religious institutions. This engagement includes attending church services to sensitize community members on the need to coexist peacefully, remind them of the interdependence between different ethnic groups in the county and also share their contacts to enhance sharing of early warning information for early response. A key informant emphasized the value of this approach by intimating that: -

“my team and I have been to almost all the churches, mosques and other places of worship encouraging people to share information on any threats.....especially targeted to a particular ethnic group in the county.....we want people to know that we are here to

²⁹ FGD participant, Kisumu County

³⁰ A comment by a key informant on the role of politicians in peacebuilding. Interview held in July, 2022

help them and should trust our ability to bring and maintain peace and ensure order in the county....though this, we have received a number of complaints and acted on them and I can tell you without any fear that there will be peace in the county - regardless of the election outcome.....”³¹

2.4.3 Business Entities

The business fraternity was lauded for supporting peace initiatives. For instance, in Kericho County, Unilever was commended for supporting peace caravans and dialogue forums between different ethnic groups. In Mombasa, the Royal Media Group, through Citizen T.V was also lauded for her effort in promoting a peaceful election through roadshows. The group also run programs to improve electoral accountability and transparency as well as enhancing civic education as a way of contributing to a peaceful election.

Other actors include;

- Civil Society Organizations: Uasin Gishu County; Champions of Peace, Mercy Corps, CJPD, Rural Women Peace Link and Supkem, Mombasa County; KECOSCE, Nakuru County; Midrift Human Rights Network
- Council of Elders in Uasin Gishu County. Composed of representatives from all the ethnic groups, they are involved in mediation and reconciliation
- Local Peace Committees
- NGAOs

2.5 Assessing Risk Levels

The assessment sought to rank the risk levels in relation to electoral conflicts. The table below summarizes the views of different entities and personalities reached through focus group discussions and key informant interviews: -

Table 3: Assessing risky levels

County	Risky level (High, Moderate, Low)	Justification	
		Before Elections	During/Post-Election
Kisumu	High	1. The county is calm – low level of security threats and political violence. 2. Leading threat to peace and security in the town – around Manyatta, Kondele and Nyalenda. Political tension	1. The conduct of IEBC will most likely affect peace and security dynamics during and after the general elections. 2. The community trusts what they are told by their

³¹ Comment by a key informant, Kericho County

		<p>between two aspirants - Kisumu central parliamentary seat (Utterances between ODM candidate and the incumbent causing tensions among the people).</p> <p>3. High levels of intolerance for candidates vying for different political seats with parties not affiliated to the Azimio coalition. Some levels of violence noted during political rallies.</p> <p>4. Presence of many idle youths that can easily be mobilized by politicians to cause chaos in the county – Available for hire for as little as Ksh. 50.</p>	<p>political leaders and therefore messages communicated or portrayed by the leaders will be key to peace or conflicts.</p> <p>3. The conduct of government agencies such as police when responding to an issue will also determine the occurrence of violence.</p>
Nairobi	Moderate	<p>4. Generally peaceful - in fact more peaceful than in past elections.</p> <p>5. Isolated cases of violence, - hooliganism and political intolerance in some parts of the city including Kibra, and Mathare and some parts of Embakasi East.</p> <p>6. Tensions in some areas due to ethnic undertones and political zoning – Kawangware, Mathare and Kibra.</p> <p>7. Rise in general insecurity, especially muggings and robberies.</p> <p>8. Movement of people to some places they consider safer zones – especially</p>	<p>1. There is little chance of an electoral violence if IEBC conducts itself in a transparent manner</p> <p>2. Election results are announced in good time</p> <p>3. Election materials are not delayed</p> <p>4. The security agencies are not misused to favor preferred candidates</p> <p>5. Election disputes are referred to necessary authorities</p> <p>6. Youth do not engage in drugs and drug abuses</p> <p>7. Politicians desist from inciting people against one another</p>

		<p>linked to ethnic groups – people moving to areas dominated by their community members. This includes movement to the rural areas.</p> <p>9. Intimidation of voters to vote certain candidates - Kibra, Mathare and Kawangware.</p> <p>10. Business owners reported to be apprehensive about the outcome of the hotly contested presidential poll and some were said to be scaling down their activities while some plan to close down altogether on election day and immediately after until a clear winner is determined.</p>	
Nakuru	Moderate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Currently the county is calm but with some notable tensions. 2. Some people are planning to move from the urban centers to the rural homes in fear of violence. 3. Insecurity in the area is rampant due to petty theft and presence of criminal gangs – the leading ones include the Confirmed, Gaza, Boston, Wa Tanzania, Yahoo boys, 42 brothers, Nyuki, Wakali, 21 brothers, Number 2, Mauki and Jerusalem. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delays by IEBC to announce presidential election results. 2. Reckless utterances and hate speech from political leaders. 3. Delay in delivery of voting materials. 4. Agents overcrowding the polling stations and some citizens falling to the “Linda Kura” initiatives. 5. Use of cheap illicit brews and drugs by politicians to intoxicate the youth and incite them to cause violence. 6. Social media which is used

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Cases of political unrest have been noted in Kaptembwa. People have moved away from the area in fear of political violence. 5. Ethnic tensions rampant in the county especially in cosmopolitan areas. In Kaptembwo, accusations and counter-accusation were rife as some communities allege that others were occupying their land. 6. Low trust between communities and authorities. Police have been accused of working with gangs, especially the <i>Confirm</i> group. 	<p>for incitement by the people. Platforms like Facebook where groups like Kivumbini reloaded and flamingo wall have pages specifically for incitement and hate speech during the election period.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Negative ethnicity: - every tribe wants their own to take up leadership.
<p>Uasin Gishu</p>	<p>High</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The county is – ‘<i>tense, calm</i>’ and fragile. 2. Tension, fear, anxiety and uncertainty especially for the non-Kalenjin ethnic groups. 3. The devastating episodes of 2007/08 PeV still elicits fear among individuals that were affected. Live in fear that the same could happen. 4. Some people were said to have started moving out with others waiting for schools to break so that they may leave. 5. The fallout between the Jubilee party principals, President Uhuru Kenyatta 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rejection of the presidential election results could trigger violence in the county. 2. Remarks and utterances by some of the trusted politicians in the county could trigger violence after elections.

		<p>and his Deputy, Hon. William Ruto, was mentioned to have the possibility of triggering inter-communal conflicts in the county.</p> <p>6. Some landlords and other property owners, especially in Huruma, reported to be selling their properties at throw away prices - out of fear.</p> <p>7. Some people reported threats and intimidation to vote for certain aspirants</p>	
Kericho	Moderate to high	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The county is calm – 50:50 rating for peace. 2. A bit of tension emanating from fears that the presidential election results will not be well received by the locals if preferred candidate do not win. 3. Non-natives have been moving their properties and family members. 4. The moving of properties by the “non-locals” has not been well received by the locals. Majority think that the action is creating tensions that the county will not be peaceful. 5. The NCIC report that indicated the county to be a hotspot county is also informing the movements. 6. Businesses have been scaling down. No 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nominations were hotly contested. The ticket for the UDA was the most sought and most people equated bagging-in the ticket to a win in the general elections. 2. People believe that violence is likely to occur after the elections – people have started moving, carrying their valuables and relocating to other places. 3. Presidential election results are quite important to the locals. They think that there are some underhand deals to deny their ‘son’ from ascending to the top. 4. The mass lay-offs from the tea picking – replaced by machines rendered so many youths idle and therefore easily manipulated by politicians.

		restocking.	
Mombasa	Low to moderate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The only serious threat to peace is based on past experience, where the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) threatened to disrupt elections in 2013 and the outcome was appalling. 2. There were reports that the same MRC, which has been dormant for some time now, was regrouping and has begun issuing threats. 3. Business people were said to have stopped stocking their shops because they are in fear. 4. There is fear some of the communities were already arming themselves with crude weapons in preparation for any possibility, come the general election. 5. The use of abusive language from various aspirants and their supporters. 6. Disruption of opponents' rallies causing tensions 7. Connnoted narratives 'wa bara' versus 'wa pwani' 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a likelihood of election violence during or after the elections. 2. Threats from some people alleged to be from the MRC group. 3. There is a cut-throat competition between current and aspiring M.P seat in Nyali Constituency. 4. Competing candidates destroy each other's posters especially in Nyali. 5. Every aspirant has his/her own gang which are likely going to be used during or after elections. Some of the criminal gangs mentioned were: "sisi kwa sisi, Russia, and Colombia". 6. The two presidential candidates have a large influence in the county so any dispute may cause problems. 7. The controversial land issues have a high risk of sending the County into post-election conflicts especially in Likoni and Kisauni. 8. Use of abusive language in the social media especially those created for the purposes of the campaign such as: Hisia kali, Sauti ya vijana, Likoni political forum, Sauti yako, Likoni news and many more.

2.5.1 History of Electoral Related Violence/ Conflicts

Kenya has experienced several post elections violence but not in the magnitude of the 2007/2008 PeV. This one caused over a thousand fatalities and led to a national crisis which was eventually resolved through a coalition government and constitutional reform. Report by NCIC indicates that patronage politics, a history of violent conflict and high-stakes elections increase the risks of poll violence³². By the time of doing this assessment, all these risk indicators were already at play especially in Nakuru, Kericho, Uasin-Gishu and Kisumu counties. Memories of the 2007/2008 violence were still fresh with majority of respondents across the sampled counties mentioning that they were badly affected by that wave of violence hence living in fear as the country approached another election. The fear of election violence is further compounded by the fact that there was repeat violence in 2013 and 2017 though to a lesser severity. Respondents mentioned that all these conflicts were driven by the disputed election results but fueled by politicians through incitements. Historical injustices, especially issues of land use and control were highly mentioned as the underlying factors behind these conflicts.

2.5.2 Interventions

The assessment sought to identify initiatives implemented by different peace and security entities aimed at promoting peaceful coexistence of communities and also ensuring conflicts witnessed in different post-election periods do not re-occur. It also sought to establish the most effective initiatives that different entities can adopt to ensure peace in the run-up, during and post-election periods. The most popular initiatives across the six counties included the following: -

- **Institutional Reforms**

The PeV of 2007/2008 necessitated a number of institutional and political reforms in Kenya. Key among these institutions were flagged as the judiciary, the electoral commission of Kenya (ECK), the Kenya police force among others. Since then, both state and non-state actors have been involved in various initiatives aimed at contributing to the reform agenda. Participants informed the assessment that the promulgation of a new constitution, reforms on judiciary, establishment of an independent electoral body (IEBC), formation of NCIC and instituting reforms within the NPS has helped in restoring public confidence on the election management institutions. Through these institutions, the government has made strides in promoting transparency, reigning on political incitements and hate speech. The establishment of the Supreme Court, to deal with, among others, presidential election disputes provided an avenue for conflict resolution. The study was also informed that the nullification of the 2017 presidential election gave Kenyans more confidence with the reforms undertaken in the country. It is this public confidence that the country need to build on for a peaceful election.

³² NCIC (2022). Towards a violence-free 2022 election conflict hotspot mapping for Kenya. Retrieved from: https://cohesion.or.ke/images/docs/downloads/hotspot_mapping_ncic.pdf on 3rd October, 2022

- **Peace Sensitization Forums**

Participants informed the assessment that there have been intense peace initiatives and activities such as peace caravans and concerts, peace messaging, sports for peace, peace forums and public barazas across the different counties by both state and non-state actors. These were said to have been effective and were bearing fruits across the country. According to the different groups of people reached, different security teams have been going round in churches preaching peace and managing people's expectations in instances where the final results did not favor their desired outcomes.

- **Inter-Communal Dialogues**

Different dialogue forums held between communities helped in improving relations and cohesion among those communities. In Kericho County, Uasin Gishu and Nakuru County, residents mentioned that there have been numerous forums and meetings aimed at bringing different communities together to remind them of their interdependence and the need to coexist peacefully. In the same counties, people reached mentioned that branding of the counties as hotspots or areas with the highest risk to electoral conflicts helped in concentrating peacebuilding efforts in the counties. In Kericho and Uasin Gishu, people mentioned that inter-communal engagements supported by different agencies helped in promoting unity among different communities in the counties.

- **Strengthened Local Peace and Security Structures**

NGAOs in partnership with CSOs have been on the forefront in spreading peace messages, improved capacity of local peace structures, civic and voter education and community reconciliation and dialogue forums. The improved status of peace was attributed to the vibrant local peace and security structures and the improved relations between the community and police that have made it possible for timely information sharing and response in these areas. In Kisumu County, communities mentioned that security agencies were more friendly and readily available than ever before. This was mentioned to be crucial in ensuring peaceful electoral processes in the county.

- **Early Warning Platforms**

Early warning platforms established by different stakeholders across the counties and also nationally were also said to be effective in facilitating quick response to emerging community problems. In Nakuru County, majority of people mentioned MULIKA UHALIFU - 988 as a leading early warning platform that linked LEAs with communities. Generally, sharing of mobile phone contacts by law enforcement agencies across the six counties was highlighted as the most effective way of improving sharing of early warning information and also following up on response. Majority of people reached through this assessment mentioned that the 2022 electoral period was different as most security administrators were more friendly and willing to engage in ensuring elections were held peacefully.

- **Community Level Economic Empowerment (*Kazi Mtaani*)**

Initiatives such as *Kazi Mtaani* run by the national government were said to be contributing in keeping youth occupied and therefore reducing chances of manipulation by politicians. Communities across the counties were unanimous that the programmes needed to be sustained beyond the electoral period.

- **Enhanced Deployment of Security Personnel**

The law enforcement agencies across the counties were lauded for their effort in promoting peace in the run-up to general elections. Police officers were lauded for taking part in different meetings aimed at improving police and community relations and also for sharing their contacts with communities to ensure timely sharing of early warning information. In Mombasa County, the assessment was informed that between January and June, 2022, the government deployed a special unit of the police to rein in the criminal gangs in the county. This effort has seen over 200 members of criminal gangs in prison as at the time of the assessment. The state was also said to be monitoring the actions of the largely “dormant” MRC who are believed to have shifted to Kilifi for fear of police operations. The state has also formed a sub-county election preparedness committee consisting of; emergency response team, sensitization and awareness team and media and publicity team, where all issues touching on elections are discussed and actions taken.

- **Joint Peace and Security Outreach Meetings**

Outreach activities by different stakeholders across the counties were said to be effective in promoting public trust on peace and security structures. In Kericho County, Joint peace activities between non-state actors and government officers, especially the security intelligence committees, were identified as the most effective initiatives that were bearing fruits in the county. According to the residents, the team has been going round in churches preaching peace and managing people’s expectations in instances where the final results do not favor their desired outcomes.

Joint events between communities especially along the borders were also mentioned to have calmed down tensions. The assessment established that there had been numerous joint initiatives such as friendly football matches pitting youth from different communities and also cultural exhibitions that were meant to promote cohesion in the areas. These were reported to have been steered especially by the council of elders - the *MIOT* – from the Kalenjin side and the Luo council of elders, who also utilized the platforms to share the long history of peaceful coexistence along the border points.

Other notable initiatives mentioned included efforts by community structures such as the council of elders –, social engagement by the media houses such as the Standard Group that had held several peace and dialogue meetings in the county, church prayers and peace caravans sponsored by different state and non-state actors (including the NCIC, churches, NGOs, CBOs and business community among others) to promote peaceful coexistence of all communities in Uasin-Gishu county.

In Kisumu and Nakuru Counties, religious leaders together with some politicians replicated the national 'handshake' amongst political rivals. This contributed immensely to the relative peace in the county. In addition, civic education and reform programmes targeting youth from informal settlements who were involved in violent and criminal activities were also reportedly successful with several renouncing violence. Moreover, these youth were now said to be peace ambassadors; educating fellow youth on the importance of peace.

2.6 Impact of Electoral Violence/Political Processes on Different Groups

To help in identifying segments within the population that needed specialized support or focus by different peace and security stakeholders, the assessment sought to establish the impact of electoral violence on different groups within communities.

2.6.1 Impact of Electoral Violence

The study identified women, children and PWDs as the most vulnerable groups whenever conflicts arise. This finding corroborates the Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence (CIPEV) report which observed that women, children and PWDs suffered the most during the 2007/08 post-election violence³³. This group were victims of SGBV; individual and gang rapes, defilement, forced female genital mutilation, bottles stuffed into their private parts, being forced to watch their parents and siblings being sexually violated. Additionally, the victims could not seek timely medical attention because of the insecurity and breakdown of law and order at the time. This situation was made worse due to fear of leaving their homes and lack of transport to access medication thereby by increasing chances of contracting STIs and other deadly infections³⁴. They also suffered stigmatization, loss of family members, loss of property and displacements. The perpetrators were not only gang members but also crooked law enforcement officers.

In all the 6 counties, youth were majorly identified as the perpetrators. Through the influence and sponsorship of politicians, businessmen and other men of influence, they were used to execute violence on members of the public perceived to be of different ethnic origin. They torched homes, churches, businesses, farms and other properties, killing and chasing away innocent citizens. Many also suffered loss of lives, arrested and prosecuted and others were forcefully abducted. Some police officers were also mentioned as having contributed to the severity of the conflicts. As narrated by a respondent, they took sides and were reluctant to respond whenever citizens sought help.

2.6.2 Chances of Exposure to Electoral Violence

Based on the interviews, it seemed people were living in fear of being exposed to violence after the announcement of the presidential elections results. Majority of people interviewed in Kericho, Uasin Gishu and Nakuru reported to have either been victims, affected or witnessed various forms

³³ Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission (2008). Published by Seattle University, School of Law. Commissions of Inquiry - CIPEV (Waki Report) (Report). Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=tjrc-gov>. Accessed on 20/10/22

³⁴ Ibid

of post-election violence. Some reported that they were still traumatized by the events of PeV experienced in 2007/08 and found it hard to relate with members of the host community in the county. A key informant mentioned that: -

“.....2007/08 was really bad to us here. Everyone wanted us out, they burned our houses and other properties, chased us from houses where we were paying rent and beat up some of our people..... how would I be comfortable that a repeat will not happen after the elections?”³⁵

People living within the informal settlements and other highly congested areas within the cosmopolitan counties were identified to be the most vulnerable in case of post-election conflicts. Women, children, the elderly and PWDs were mentioned to be among the most vulnerable groups and the groups that had the biggest exposure to violence associated with electoral conflicts across all the six counties. This underscores the need for security agencies to be more vigilant in ensuring security for these groups. Women who responded to this assessment mentioned that they faced different forms of violence such as intimidation aimed at preventing them from vying for various electoral positions especially during the party primaries with some being physically and sexually assaulted while others were denied platforms to campaign and engage community members.

³⁵ A comment by a key informant. Kericho County. Interview held in July, 2022

Section Three

Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusion

The assessment concludes that peace and security dynamics vary across the six counties of focus. In cosmopolitan counties, perceptions of peace or possibility of peaceful electoral processes seemed to vary as the majority ethnic groups were optimistic that the counties will be peaceful while minority groups seemed unsure of peace and security dynamics during the electoral processes. There were incidents of people moving to areas that they considered safer or areas dominated by their ethnic groups for fear of post-election conflicts. This was majorly informed by history of post-election violence that seemed to create fear among the minority groups.

In terms of areas that peace and security stakeholders needed to focus mostly on, town centers, informal settlements, highly congested areas especially areas mostly occupied by different ethnic groups were found to be most likely to experience post-election conflicts. Intra-party rivalries and fierce competition especially within the leading coalitions were found to be causing tensions across the counties as most of the leaders advocated for the 6-piece voting while alienating independent candidates and other parties within the same coalitions.

Peace messaging and other community outreach programmes, involvement of security agencies in peace and conflict management initiatives and also the multisectoral approaches adopted by state and non-state actors in promoting peaceful coexistence of different communities were mentioned as the most effective interventions that can guarantee peace in the run-up, during and post-election periods.

Incitement by political leaders, misinformation, fake news and propaganda were found to be the leading possible triggers of violence across the counties. Politicians were identified to hold the highest influence to peace and a major factor in influencing conflicts among communities. This showed the importance of involving politicians in peace and conflict interventions across the counties.

Generally, this assessment concludes that there is a need to focus mostly in promoting peace within the cosmopolitan counties and also intensify security surveillance in identified hotspot zones within the counties. In order to ensure peace in the run-up, during and post-election period, peace and security stakeholders need to closely work with politicians to monitor their pronouncements and also activities as majority of them seemed to hold the biggest influence to peace across the counties.

3.2 Recommendations to Mitigate Electoral Conflicts

Based on the findings of this assessment, the following recommendations are made: -

3.2.1 State actors

Short term

- i. **Police Transfer and Deployment:** NPS should transfer police officers who respondents complained were working in cahoots with criminal gangs. Some police officers were mentioned to have overstayed in some stations and also working in their home (local) stations. There is need to therefore ensure officers work away from their home stations and also that they do not overstay in one station to reduce chances of too much familiarity with the locals. This will inject new energy in the fight against criminal gangs, reduce opportunities for corruption and collusion with criminal gangs. In addition, the state should ensure adequate deployment of police officers and increased mobile patrols in the run up to, during and after elections. It should also ensure the police are adequately equipped to be able to effectively response to security issues especially in identified hotspot areas.
- ii. **Civic Education:** This appeared to be a huge gap across the target counties. Majority of respondents did not seem interested to know why they were voting and kept insisting that they would only vote because their ‘son’ required their vote to capture the presidency. There was a common feeling that IEBC had not done adequate civic education like it is normally the case in other electioneering periods. In order to ensure effective civic education, there is need for IEBC to work with different stakeholders such as NGAOs, CSOs and community-based structures. This will intensify civic education on the need to participate in elections, upholding peaceful elections, tolerance and harmonious interethnic co-existence.
- iii. **Enhance community empowerment projects:** The assessment noted that politicians can easily misuse the unemployed youth by hiring them to attack their opponents and disrupt political events. It is therefore recommended that initiatives such as *kazi mtaani* need to be enhanced and conducted through the Ministry of Labor and not left to be managed by local chiefs and politicians. *The Kazi Mtaani* program was lauded across all the six counties for providing livelihood opportunities for thousands of youths and therefore needs to be retained as a stop-gap measure as the government pursues more sustainable youth economic empowerment initiatives.
- iv. **Review, harmonize or enact adequate laws to reign on Hate speech:**

Most people seemed convinced that only politicians had the power and ability to incite violence across the country. They insisted on the need to ensure politicians causing tensions were firmly dealt with. There should be more initiatives aimed at curbing hate utterances among politicians especially in the aftermath of the general elections. According to the residents, utterances by politicians on the presidential elections could easily trigger conflicts across the country and therefore security actors should remain on high alert. In

spite of this concern, the only law in Kenya creating a crime of hate speech is the NCIC Act, which again falls short of severity and has been subjected to a multiplicity of interpretations by the politicians. Based on this, there is need for the country to enact relevant laws to reign on hate speech, ethnic intolerance and incitement as provided for by Article 33 (2) of the Kenya constitution. These laws should be punitive enough and implemented without fear or favor.

Long-term interventions

- i. **Inculcation of national values, ethos and citizenship:** Almost sixty years after the independence, the nation remains divided along ethno-political lines. Nations are imagined communities intentionally built through uniting myths, values and interests. The state should invest in multipronged initiatives aimed at inculcating values needed to build a civic Kenyan identity capable of subordinating the current predominant identities based on primordialism. This requires intentional pursuit of inclusive policies, governance and national development architecture, equitable distribution of resources, and citizenship education especially at basic school level.
- ii. **Address the land question:** The land question has remained an enduring driver of inter-ethnic violence and divisions based on who truly belongs, that is, indigenous versus settler communities. The government should prioritize addressing this question through a mix of securing land tenure, resettlement, reparations, accelerated urbanization and growth of manufacturing and service sector so as to reduce obsession with land ownership.
- iii. **Address youth unemployment, alcohol and substance abuse:** Kenya remains a youthful country with a median age of 20.1 years. The huge youth demographic provides an enormous opportunity for economic transformation through investing in employment creation and productivity growth. However, this potential demographic dividend can turn into a demographic curse which will lead to more criminal gangs, high risk of armed conflict and a nation of zombies trapped in alcohol and drugs. There is a need to lay the foundation for realizing this demographic dividend for long-term stability.
- iv. **Media Monitoring and Sanctioning:** Based on the data analyzed, the mainstream and social media have been complicit in spreading hateful messages, fear mongering aimed at creating interethnic fear, misinformation and disinformation. In a democratic society, democratized media is critical for progress. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and WhatsApp have provided a voice for the voiceless, platforms for mass and instantaneous communication and creation of virtual communities where people can initiate or perform roles as producers, broadcasters, audiences, and political actors. Additionally, they have provided powerful tools for political mobilization. However, left unmonitored, they pose a huge risk to the same democracy and societal stability. Thus, the government should put in place policies and legislations aimed at creating a balance between freedom of expression and responsible use of media. Besides, media platforms enabling hateful messages and misinformation need to be sanctioned.

- v. **Government should quickly address border disputes:** The assessment established that most of the contested border points were as a result of confusion on the borderlines. Communities use different names to describe the border points thereby creating confusion. The assessment recommends involvement of communities in deciding and erecting boundaries that are clear and well agreed by the communities. Majority of people interviewed wondered why the government had taken too long to clearly mark border points in some of the contested zones to address the cyclic conflicts emanating from confusion in those areas.

3.2.2 non-State actors

Short-term

- i. **Peaceful elections campaigns:** non-state actors were lauded for their efforts in promoting dialogue and engagements within communities aimed at promoting peace and cohesion across the six counties. There is need to sustain campaigns aimed at ensuring inclusive, peaceful and credible elections. This includes strengthening of local structures for peace, media engagements, facilitating intercommunal dialogues, promoting national values and ethos, elections monitoring, early warning and early response.
- ii. **Sustain and intensify intersectoral collaboration in sensitization of Kenyans on security management:** The assessment established that the many sensitization meetings that involved security teams and the clergy contributed to peace in the run-up to the general elections. The involvement of the security teams in sensitization meetings especially in the churches helped enhance trust between them and the communities and therefore improved information sharing. This should be encouraged especially along the border areas.
- iii. **Engagement with political class:** There is need to increase engagement with the political class especially on the use of hate speech, attacks against Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), negative ethno-political mobilization, and commitment to utilizing the laid down legal and institutional architecture to solve electoral-related disputes should they arise.
- iv. **Support to grassroots leaders, chiefs, village elders and Nyumba Kumi:** Community-level structures and local government agencies were lauded for good work that they were doing, especially partnering with church and other entities to preach peace across the country. There is therefore need to for non-state agencies to partner closely with these structures with a view to enhance their abilities to sustain peace conversations at the community levels.
- v. **Support sociocultural events:** These events seem to have contributed to peace and cohesion along the borders and needs to be encouraged across the country targeting members of different ethnic groups.

Long term interventions

- i. **Develop integrated Peacebuilding Programs with long-term implementation cycles:** Among the many threats to peace identified are youth unemployment, alcohol and substance abuse, presence of criminal gangs, social media driven hateful messages and

misinformation, negative ethnicity and contested notions of belonging especially around indigene-settler dichotomy. These threats are interlinked and need to be addressed holistically. This calls for peacebuilding programs which can transcend usual interventions and focus, integrating components on livelihoods and resilience, media literacy, disengagement from criminal gangs, building of civic citizenship, psychosocial support and trauma healing, alcohol and substance abuse and resocialization from cultural narratives justifying negative ethnicity and violence. Essentially the program should be anchored on the intersection between peace, governance, individual and collective development and social change.

- ii. **There is needs to ensure a balance between deterrence and confidence building:** Due to high levels of mistrust and insecurity around election times, increased deployment of security personnel is sometimes necessary. However, this might also be seen negatively as some people consider it provocative. A more comprehensive approach is thus required where CSOs and community leaders are involved in building confidence and encouraging mutual respect and tolerance.

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