THE MULTISECTORAL COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION APPROACH

Lessons from 2022 Electoral-Violence Prevention and Preparedness

POLICY BRIEF NO. 01 OF 2024

About this Brief

This Policy Brief discusses key findings and lessons on adopting a multisectoral coordination and collaboration approach to violence prevention and election preparedness enhancement. It draws from an impact assessment and evaluation report on *Creating Peaceful, Fair, and Non-violent Elections*"[1]. The brief demonstrates critical insights on the effectiveness of creating avenues for embracing an intersectoral approach, characterised by collective action for collective impact where different stakeholders, state and non-state actors, can work together to create safer communities. It also incorporates recommendations for scaling to currently implemented areas, Nakuru and Baringo, and replicating the lessons learned across the 47 counties and the African region.

Introduction

Election-related violence, including political conflict, social revolt, ethnic rivalries and opportunistic violence, [2] is a reiterative issue in Kenya's election periods. This violence stems from deeply-rooted multi-dimensional ethnic tensions and divisions where leaders mobilise political support based on ethnic identity coupled with the presence of intense political competitiveness and rivalries among ethnic political factions, often associated with inciteful language and rhetoric that may encourage followers to engage in violence. In return, election violence results in severe loss of life, destruction of property, competition for resources, displacement, poisoned ethnic relations within the multi-ethnic regions, advanced impacts on the country's socio-economic milieu, and creation of the sense of insecurity, fear, and inhabitancy among the citizens within their homeland. For instance, the 2007 election presented Kenyan history's most severe and violent period. In Nakuru, ethnic-rooted violence erupted based on accusations related to election rigging, while in Baringo County, the 2013 post-election violence resulted in the displacement of about 1,000 families[3]. Issues of political instability, ethnic tensions, and collective national insecurity, therefore, were of concern going into the 2022 elections. Peace and stability required adequate electoral preparedness among various stakeholders to create a conducive environment of integral, safe, fair, and credible election processes.

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[1] Mutuma Ruteere and Patrick Mutahi, "Creating Peaceful, Fair, and Non-Violent Elections. Lessons Learned from Local Leadership Development in Nakuru and Baringo Counties, Kenya 2021-2022," Impact Assessments and Evaluations (Danish Institute Against Torture [DIGNITY] & MIDRIFT HURINET, 2023),.https://dignity.dk/wp-content/uploads/43-Creating-Peaceful-Fair-and-Non-Violent-Elections_digital.pdf.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

In the run-up to the general election scheduled for 9th August 2022, the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government spearheaded the formation of a National Multi-Sectoral Consultative Forum (NMSCF) and a Multi-Sectoral Election Security Forum established in October 2021 and January 2022 respectively. Further to this and to ensure enhanced coordination and collaboration of stakeholders and initiatives at the grassroots level, it was recommended that inclusive Multi-Sectoral Coordination and collaboration Forums be established at the County and Sub-County levels, bringing together both state and no-state actors with effect from February 2022. The multisectoral approach to violence prevention and enhanced election preparedness in Nakuru and Baringo counties was critical.

The Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Approach

The multisectoral coordination and collaboration forums brought together different stakeholders from various sectors to discuss collaborative efforts to address election-related tensions and violence before the 2022 elections, unpack security threats, and affirm commitments to peace and cohesion, creating robust local leaders as change agents of violence prevention[4].

The stakeholders included County Government officials, Security and Intelligence Committee members, Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) officials, political party officials, Peace committees, Community policing members, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the Business community, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), inter-faith organisations, civil servants, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), public transport sector (*matatus, tuk-tuk, and bodaboda* operators), youth, media outlets, and Women leaders[5]. The forums were chaired by the County commissioner and Co-chaired by a non-state actor. Nakuru and Baringo County Commissioners appointed MIDRIFT HURINET co-chairs of the Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums in the respective Counties.

In Baringo County, MIDRIFT HURINET delegated the co-chair responsibility to its network member Baringo Peace Action Consortium. The Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums aimed at enhancing coordination and collaboration of stakeholders and initiatives at the grassroots level for early warning and early response for creating a conducive environment for the conduct of the 2022 general elections by the IEBC. This was achieved by creating support systems for improved collaboration, engagement, and communication among involved stakeholders, thus creating multisectoral cooperation.

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

Key Findings

1. **Enhanced Collaboration through Collective Information Sharing and Working Together**

Multisectoral forums enhanced stakeholder interactions, where Non-State Actors voiced their ability to share and discuss ideas with security actors on required steps to address threats related to peace and security. State Actors, including IEBC, could also interact and coordinate related security efforts effectively and efficiently with other actors. Moreover, they enhanced collaborative information sharing among stakeholders related to each stakeholder's roles and activities, avoiding instances of siloed working.

2. **Creation of a Unified Purpose and Resource Sharing**

Collaboration among state and non-state actors allowed actors to speak in one voice to prevent election-related violence, enhance election preparedness, and create safer communities by ensuring safety before, during, and after elections through local peace-building initiatives. Stakeholders could complement each other's strengths and fill gaps or shortfalls experienced. The report found that in one instance, a Baringo County Administrator lacked sufficient funds to finance a planned peace caravan throughout Kabarnet town. Nonetheless, this was made possible through assistance from the county's *boda boda* association, which led the roadshow and spread peace messages. In Nakuru County, Non-State Actors facilitated Forums and activities, including funding of Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums and activities, signing of peace charters and agreements in Nakuru, Njoro and Naivasha and organizing peace concerts and peace caravans.

3. **Quick and Improved Access to Security Officials**

Multisectoral forums increased advocacy and lobbying of the national government's coordination and engagement in election violence prevention and enhanced preparedness. By lobbying for formal and structured engagement systems within the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, the County Commissioner escalated integral information and requests, resulting in a quick response. In addition, a direct line of access to security officials, including police officers, when required was created through the multisectoral forum.

4. Trust and Credibility Building among Stakeholders

The report found improved relations and trust among stakeholders, including between non-state actors and security agencies, between the police and IEBC officials, and between police and community members[6]. The multisectoral forum provided a platform for the IEBC to answer questions about election preparedness and an avenue for other State Actors to cooperate and create syenergy. Moreover, there were creative channels adopted through the multisectoral forum for the effective attainment of the unified purpose, including educative and awareness-building activities, community-led dialogues, citizenry sensitisation forums, cultural shows and exhibitions to create awareness of different cultures, public *barazas* with local administration and sporting activities. This largely improved trust and created a strong relationship between state and non-state actors.

5. Creation of Open Dialogue Platforms

Through the forums, open dialogue platforms emerged where people could hold those 'uncomfortable debates' related to causal factors of violence emanating in Nakuru and Baringo counties, perpetrators and facilitators, and preventative measures[7]. At the County Level Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums, the County Commissioner could chair the meeting and call upon the Deputy County Commissioners to share their security situation reports for their respective sub-counties. From the reports, the stakeholders would recommend measures and interventions to mitigate challenges and suggest local stakeholders critical in addressing the challenges.

Lessons Learned

1. The socio-political environment and conditions are ever-changing, necessitating collaboration to track these changes, learn and comprehend their impact on precipitating violence, and adapt to preventative measures when creating multisectoral forums for preventing election-related violence and increased preparedness.
2. Multisectoral forums are effective in theory and practice, providing avenues for accessing the power to leverage the different stakeholders' comparative advantage, contributions, and social capital when addressing election-related violence.

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[6] A respondent demonstrated the ability of motorcycle riders to speak and discuss with a police commander on security matters.

[7] According to the report, the 'uncomfortable debates' were possible because all players in the forum shared the agenda of enhancing collaboration and coordination for early warning and response

3. Identifying targeted and right actors in peace promotion and preventing violence is a recipe for successfully attaining related goals and objectives. This involves targeting at-risk groups (youth) and perpetrators or facilitators of violence (political leaders) early enough for increased impact. While scaling the forums and replicating the lessons learned, it is crucial to involve the youths to understand their perspectives of these multisectoral forums, their voice and their role in preventing all forms of violence and being peace champions, considering they are at-risk groups.

4. Investment in Social Capital Garnered from the Multisectoral Collaborative Networks bring together diverse stakeholders with diverse comparative advantages that can be leveraged to maximise the collaboration action and impact from the state (Ministry of Interior and National Administration Departments) to non-state actors, including international and non-governmental, inter-faith organisations, individual leaders, youths, women, media outlets, and the larger community.

Recommendations for Replicability

1. **Repurposing of the Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Election Preparedness to Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Peace and Security**

In October 2022 and November 2023, the Nakuru and Baringo County Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Election Preparedness were repurposed into County Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums for Peace and Security[8] respectively,creating a permanent and sustainable mechanism for intersectoral Security and Peace Building in the Counties and Sub-Counties.
With proven implementability, buy-in and effectiveness of both the Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Election Preparedness, these forums when repurposed will provide a lasting social innovation solutions linked to peace and security needs, social interaction and stakeholders' capacity to act, creating new social relationships and collaborations. **It is highly recommended that the Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Election Preparedness be repurposed to Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Peace and Security in Kenya and Circular be issued on the same.**

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[8] Ibid.

2. **Scalability of Lessons Learned Nationally and Regionally**

The Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Peace and Security present positive impacts that strengthen efforts in synergy building, coordination and collaboration of peace and secuirity in a given locality. Therefore, there is a need for adequate support within the multisectoral networks to replicate the lessons learned and extend the best practice through a circular across the 47 counties. These best practices could become an inspiration fror replication in other African contexts with learnings from Kenya.

3. **Institutional Capacity Building**

In view of the changing contexts and dynamics in peace and security, it is recommended that stakeholders and development partners should design programmes to capacity strengthen key state actors stakeholders to respond to emerging contexts and systemic challenges. These could be done by institutions like Kenya School of Governement, National Steering Committee on Peace Building and Conflict Management (NSC) and National Police Leadership Academy.

4. **Youth Engagement**

It is recommended that more youth should be involved and included in peace and security platforms including in Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Peace and Security. Their inclusion and involvement will enhance mainstreaming of youth issues into peace building and security priorities, creating youth led activites spearheaded by youth peace champions.

5. **Extensive Research and Analysis**

It is recommended that after repurposing, successful scaling and replication of the Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Peace and Security in 47 Counties in Kenya, it will require further research and evidence to address the dynamic and ever-changing socio-political environment and conditions, monitor these changes, understand how they contribute to violence, and adjust preventive measures when developing multisectoral forums to avert all forms of violence and enhance coordination and collaboration.

References

1. Circular: -Establishment of Regional ,County and Sub County Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Election Preparedness.
2. Letter Inviting MIDRIFT HURINET to the establishment of Nakuru County Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forum on Election Preparedness.
3. Repurposing the Nakuru County Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forum on Elections Preparedness to Forums on Peace and Security.
4. Repurposing the Baringo County Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forum on Elections Preparedness to Forums on Peace and Security.
5. Circular-Establishment of Regional ,County and Sub County Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Peace and Security