



MIDRIFT
HURINET
Peace, Governance, Justice

PRACTICE BRIEF NO 1 OF 2025

Operationalizing and Institutionalizing of the Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Peace and Security in Kenya





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1.0 Introduction: A Paradigm Shift in Kenya's Peace and Security Architecture

Kenya is undertaking a significant strategic shift in its approach to national security, moving away from a traditional, state-centric model toward a more inclusive and preventive multisectoral peacebuilding and violence prevention framework. This evolution is driven by the recognition that the nation's complex and deeply rooted conflict drivers demand collaborative, community-owned solutions rather than purely reactive, securitized responses.

The core thesis of this practice brief is that the formal institutionalization of Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums (MSFs) through the **Ministry of Interior and National Administration's circular¹ of July 25, 2024**, represents a pivotal policy evolution. This framework is designed to address the multifaceted drivers of conflict by embedding inclusive dialogue, structured coordination, and community-driven action into the very fabric of Kenya's governance system.

This practice brief looks at the historical context that necessitated this policy change, examines the implementation framework of the MSF model, presents key findings and best practices from its pilot phase, and concludes with evidence-based recommendations for its successful national scaling. This analysis therefore begins by examining the historical context of conflict that rendered previous security strategies obsolete and created the imperative for this fundamental policy shift.

2.0 The Context of Conflict: Rationale for a New Approach

Understanding Kenya's complex conflict landscape is essential for appreciating the strategic rationale behind the MSF model. For decades, the nation's peace and security have been shaped by a persistent interplay of historical inequities, political dynamics, environmental pressures, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. These challenges are not isolated incidents but interconnected issues that require an integrated response.

The multifaceted nature of Kenya's security challenges is evident across different regions and sectors:

- **Urban Insecurity:** Major urban centers are contending with a rise in criminal gang activity, which is frequently linked to political mobilization, creating instability and fear within communities.
- **Resource-Based Conflicts:** In Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands, particularly the volatile North Rift, longstanding conflicts over resources are being dangerously intensified by the effects of climate change, the proliferation of small arms, and persistent cattle rustling and banditry.

¹ [Circular establishing Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Peace and Security](#)



- **Violent Extremism** : The persistent threat from extremist groups like Al-Shabaab continues, particularly along the Somalia border, where they strategically exploit local grievances to entrench their influence and recruit followers.

- **Digital Disinformation**: While digital spaces have empowered a new generation of politically conscious youth and enabled civic engagement, they have also become a double-edged sword. Economically disenfranchised youth can be mobilized to amplify misinformation and disinformation, inflaming tensions and undermining social cohesion.

Historically, election-related violence has been a primary catalyst for policy reform. The devastating 2007–2008 post-election violence, which resulted in over 1,000 deaths, thousands injured, more than 600,000 people forcibly displaced, hundreds of reported rape cases, and the destruction of over 100,000 properties, remains a stark reminder of the catastrophic failure of previous security paradigms. The legacy of this and other violent election cycles exposed the profound limitations of reactive, state-led security responses, thereby creating the imperative for a preventive, collaborative, and locally rooted governance model.

3.0 From the Study, to Policy Brief, to the Circular (The Circular Establishing Multisectoral Collaboration and Coordination Forums on Peace and Security in Kenya)

In 2023, MIDRIFT HURINET conducted an impact study titled "*Creating Peaceful, Fair and Non-Violent Elections - Lessons Learned from Local Leadership Development in Nakuru and Baringo Counties, Kenya 2021-2022*"². The findings of the study were launched in a national conference in Nairobi on October 2, 2023. The report was positively received by key stakeholders, who strongly encouraged MIDRIFT HURINET to develop a policy brief highlighting the significance of these forums in addressing peace and security challenges.

A policy brief³ advocating for the establishment of Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Peace and Security in all forty-seven (47) counties of Kenya was developed by MIDRIFT and used as an advocacy tool to lobby senior officials in the Ministry of Interior. As a result, in July 2024, the Principal Secretary issued a circular directing regional and county commissioners to establish these forums at the regional, county, and sub-county levels.

The Multi-Sectoral Forum (MSF) Approach is a direct policy response to the complex security challenges previously outlined. Its core purpose is to embed inclusive leadership and community-driven solutions into Kenya's formal governance fabric, shifting the national approach from crisis response to proactive and collaborative peacebuilding.

MSFs are county and sub-county platforms designed to bring together a diverse range of state and non-state actors to prevent and respond to peace and security risks. A key structural innovation is the co-chair model, where each forum is led jointly by the County Commissioner (representing the

² Mutuma Ruteere and Patrick Mutahi, [Creating-Peaceful-Fair-and-Non-Violent-Elections_digital](#)

³ [Policy Brief advocating for the establishment of Multisectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums on Peace and Security in Kenya](#)



national government) and a nominated non-state actor as a co-chair. This design bridges the gap between government authority and community legitimacy, fostering trust and shared ownership.

According to the model's **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** ⁴, the primary objectives of the MSFs are to:

1. **Promote Peace and Security** : To foster structured dialogue and cooperation among all stakeholders for the effective prevention and resolution of conflict.
2. **Coordinate Across Sectors**: To facilitate systematic information sharing, mutual support, and the harmonization of peace and security efforts among government agencies, civil society, and other actors.
3. **Build Stakeholder Capacity**: To enhance the skills and effectiveness of all peace and security actors involved in the forums.
4. **Establish M&E Mechanisms**: To create robust systems for the continuous assessment of progress, allowing for adaptive programming and accountability.

To ensure broad and meaningful participation, the MSF model employs an inclusive stakeholder engagement strategy. This involves the use of participatory mapping to identify and involve a wide spectrum of actors, including Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), faith-based groups, youth and women's organizations, the private sector, and even social media influencers. This theoretical framework has been rigorously evaluated, and the practical evidence gathered during its initial implementation validates its potential.

4.0 Analysis of the Pilot Phase: Validating the Model through Practice

The pilot phase, conducted from October 2024 to August 2025, was critical for testing, validating, and refining the MSF model before its national rollout. This initial implementation in Nairobi, Nakuru, Baringo, West Pokot, and Elgeyo Marakwet counties, along with five key sub-counties (Kibra, Nakuru Town East, Nakuru Town West, Naivasha, and Njoro), provided invaluable evidence of the model's effectiveness and adaptability in diverse conflict settings.

4.1. Evaluated Best Practices

The pilot phase identified several highly effective operational practices that are essential for the model's success. These best practices provide a clear roadmap for replication and scaling by demonstrating not just what to do, but why it is effective.

1. **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**: The development of SOPs by the National Steering Committee (NSC) provided a clear and consistent operational framework, creating a predictable and scalable architecture essential for national institutionalization and accountability.
2. **Co-Chairing Model**: The appointment of developed place-based leaders to co-chair forums as demonstrated in Nairobi and Nakuru is a pivotal innovation. This model systematically bridges the historical trust deficit between state security actors and local communities, enhancing legitimacy

⁴ [Standard Operating Procedures for the Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forum on Peace and Security](#)



and ensuring interventions are not merely state-imposed but are genuinely co-owned and contextual relevant.

3. Quarterly Meetings with Action Plans: The discipline of regular quarterly meetings, combined with the development of tailored action plans, created a powerful feedback loop for sustained momentum. This structure ensures forums remain focused, adaptive, and able to address evolving, context-specific challenges effectively.

4. Multi-Level Coordination: Establishing forums at regional, county, and sub-county levels created a vital cascading structure for policy implementation and information flow. This strategic alignment ensures that national priorities are translated into localized action and that local intelligence informs higher-level strategy.

5. Inclusive Stakeholder Mapping: The deliberate mapping of all peace and security actors within a locality was a key driver of efficiency. This practice systematically reduces the duplication of efforts and creates powerful synergies by enabling stakeholders to align programs and resources for maximum collective impact.

6. Inter-County Collaboration: The joint peace and security efforts in the Kerio Valley, which brought together governors and county commissioners from Baringo, West Pokot, and Elgeyo Marakwet, set a powerful precedent. This demonstrated the model's unique capacity to address complex cross-border conflicts that transcend single administrative authorities.

7. Secretary of the Forums: Another emerging best practice is the appointment of officers working in the office of the respective County Commissioners as secretaries of the forums.

4.2. Key Lessons Learned

Beyond best practices, the pilot phase yielded critical strategic insights that must inform the national scaling strategy.

- The pilot confirmed that trust is not a byproduct of collaboration but its foundational prerequisite. Policy must therefore prioritize structured, long-term relationship-building as the primary enabler of joint initiatives, rather than assuming collaboration can be mandated.
- Leveraging existing institutional memory and networks by repurposing structures like election preparedness forums proved to be a highly resource-efficient and sustainable strategy for rapid implementation.
- Leadership development is a critical force multiplier. The demonstrated impact of programs like Place-Based Leadership Development (PBLD) confirms that investing in local leadership capacity is non-negotiable for ensuring community ownership and effective forum co-chairship.
- Fragmented, short-term interventions yield limited returns. The pre-2024 lack of coordination underscores the strategic necessity of a permanent, nationwide mechanism for sustained long-term peacebuilding.
- Evidence-based policy advocacy is a powerful catalyst for institutional change. The direct line from MIDRIFT's 2023 impact study to the government's institutionalization circular proves the value of rigorous data in driving reform.



- Inclusive platforms that intentionally integrate diverse state and non-state actors are demonstrably more effective at reducing violence, as they foster broader ownership and draw from a wider pool of solutions.
- The pilot invalidated a one-size-fits-all approach, confirming that policy success is contingent on the model's adaptability to hyper-local conflict dynamics, from urban gang violence to pastoralist disputes.
- Creative resource mobilization, including the pooling of efforts and leveraging existing community platforms, is essential for overcoming financial constraints and ensuring operational sustainability.
- Strategic engagement with youth and social media influencers is indispensable for amplifying peace messaging, countering disinformation, and securing broad community buy-in.
- The sub-county forum serves as the bedrock of the entire architecture, acting as the primary early warning mechanism for identifying local threats and escalating issues that require county or regional intervention.

The success of the pilot phase unequivocally validated the MSF model, providing a compelling evidence base for its expansion into national peace and security architecture.

5.0 The National Scaling Strategy: A Phased and Contextualized Rollout

Informed by the successes and lessons of the pilot phase, MIDRIFT and its partners have committed to a strategic national scale-up plan to institutionalize the MSF model nationwide. This plan is designed to be phased, adaptive, and context-sensitive, ensuring that the rollout is both ambitious and sustainable. The 3-year, three-phase implementation strategy prioritizes high-risk areas first while building a nationally coordinated and locally owned peace infrastructure.

| Phase | Timeline | Counties Covered | Focus and Priorities |
|-----------|-----------------|---|--|
| Phase I | June - Dec 2025 | Nairobi, Nakuru, Baringo, West Pokot, Elgeyo Marakwet | Deepen implementation in the five (5) pilot counties. |
| Phase II | 2026 | Twenty-two (22) new counties across the Country. | Expand to twenty-two new counties, targeting areas with persistent insecurity (e.g., gangs, terrorism, political conflicts, banditry) and enabling technical exchange from Phase I counties |
| Phase III | 2027 - 2028 | The remaining twenty (20) counties nationwide | Achieve full national coverage in the remaining twenty (20) counties and fully institutionalize the Multisectoral Forums on Peace and Security (MFPS) to strengthen the nation's preventive capacity |



Successful scaling of this model hinges on several core strategic pillars that will guide its implementation across all forty-seven (47) counties of Kenya.

- **Partnership Expansion** : The strategy requires actively engaging a broader range of CSOs, international donors, national and County Governments and private sector actors to provide the necessary technical and financial support for a nationwide rollout.
- **Inter-County Learning**: A key component of the plan involves facilitating exchange visits between counties. This will allow emerging forums to learn directly from the best practices of more established ones, fostering peer-to-peer learning and rapid replication.
- **National Advocacy**: A coordinated national advocacy campaign will be launched to raise awareness and secure buy-in from county governments and local communities, clearly articulating the role and value of MSFs in enhancing peace and security.
- **Tailored Contextualization**: A central principle of the scale-up is ensuring that SOPs and action plans are adapted to local conflict dynamics, whether addressing cattle rustling in pastoralist areas political conflicts or urban crime in cities, to guarantee relevance and effectiveness.
- **Phased Rollout**: Prioritize high-conflict counties for immediate rollout, using the pilot counties as learning models before a sequenced nationwide expansion.

This comprehensive national strategy is linked to a set of specific, actionable recommendations designed to ensure its success and long-term sustainability.

6.0 Strategic Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The following recommendations are evidence-based, actionable steps derived from the analysis of the pilot phase. They are designed to ensure the successful and sustainable nationwide implementation of the MSF model by providing clear guidance to key stakeholders.

6.1 Recommendations to the Government of Kenya

- **Mandate Sustainable Financing**: To ensure long-term viability beyond donor cycles, the government must mandate the integration of MSF operational budgets into National Government appropriations and County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs).
- **Formalize Permanent Structures** : Formally institutionalize Multisectoral Peace Forums as permanent structures for tracking progress, sharing innovations, and facilitating adaptive programming across all levels of government.
- **Integrate Justice System Pathways**: Actively incorporate Court-Accredited Alternative Justice Systems (AJS) into MSF-led peace processes to strengthen community-owned dispute resolution and link local efforts to the formal justice sector.



- **Accelerate Policy Alignment** : Leverage MSFs as the primary vehicle for implementing the recommendations outlined in the national peacebuilding architecture report, ensuring policy coherence from the national to the local level.

- **Promote Inter-County Collaboration:** Actively encourage and resource shared economic and peace initiatives between neighboring counties, particularly in conflict-prone border regions, to address the transnational nature of many conflicts.

6.2 Recommendations to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

- **Scale Proven Leadership Models:** Expand leadership training programs like the Place-Based Leadership Development (PBLD) to build a larger, national cohort of skilled community leaders prepared to serve as effective forum co-chairs.

- **Standardize Monitoring & Evaluation:** Develop and implement a standardized M&E framework, leveraging digital dashboards and tools to track outcomes, document case studies, and enable data-driven strategy adaptation across all MSFs.

- **Address Conflict Root Causes:** Actively link MSF activities to broader initiatives that tackle the underlying drivers of conflict, such as youth unemployment and land disputes, to create a more holistic and preventive impact.

- **Sustain National Advocacy:** Continue to lobby government and development partners for the full nationwide adoption and resourcing of multisectoral approaches to peacebuilding, using evidence from the pilot to make the case.

- **Foster Educational Partnerships:** Engage learning institutions, from universities to technical institutes, to involve students and academia in peacebuilding research, dialogue, and practice.

- **Champion Data-Driven Approaches:** Establish formal partnerships with entities like the National Crime Research Centre to ensure that MSF strategies are informed by rigorous, evidence-based data and analysis.

6.3 Recommendations to the Development Partners

- **Provide Flexible and Adaptive Funding:** Prioritize flexible funding mechanisms that support core MSF functions, including early warning systems, real-time data collection, and rapid response capabilities, allowing forums to adapt to emerging threats.

- **Invest in Systemic Capacity Strengthening:** Support targeted, long-term capacity strengthening for MSF members, focusing on enhancing systemic skills in coordination, collaborative leadership, and conflict transformation.

- **Fund Innovation and Learning:** Invest in the establishment of learning and innovation hubs within the forums to systematically document, test, and scale contextually relevant peacebuilding approaches that can be shared nationally.

These recommendations provide a clear pathway for consolidating the gains made and ensuring the long-term success of this transformative peacebuilding initiative.



7.0 Conclusion: Securing Kenya's Future Through Collaborative Peacebuilding

The institutionalization of Multi-Sectoral Coordination and Collaboration Forums marks a transformative shift in Kenya's security posture. It signals a move away from a reactive, state-centric security apparatus toward a proactive, inclusive, and preventive peacebuilding strategy that is owned by communities. The success observed in the pilot counties demonstrates the profound value of structured collaboration, empowered local leadership, and evidence-based adaptation in addressing complex and persistent drivers of conflict.

With the 2027 general elections on the horizon, the urgency for consolidating and scaling this model cannot be overstated. The MSF framework represents Kenya's most promising strategy for breaking historical cycles of violence and building a more resilient social fabric. If Kenya commits to fully implementing this model nationwide, it will not only mitigate the immediate risks of conflict but finally establish a resilient, locally owned architecture capable of dismantling the structural drivers that have undermined national peace, security, and development for decades.



ABOUT MIDRIFT HURINET

MIDRIFT HURINET is a Non-Profit organization operating in Kenya since 2008. We are dedicated to advancing Peace, Good Governance, and Human Rights in Kenya. Our work is anchored on three strategic priorities: Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation, where we engage stakeholders and empower communities to resolve conflicts and foster a culture of Peace and Security; Good Governance and Human Rights Advocacy, where we promote transparency, accountability, and civic participation; and Institutional Strengthening and Development, where we build the capacity of Government institutions, non-state actors, and our own team to collaboratively deliver on our mission for a more just and peaceful society.



Vision

A prosperous society that enjoys Human Rights, Good Governance, Peace and Security.



Mission

To empower Citizens, State and Non-State actors to foster a Culture of Human Rights, Good Governance, Peace and Security in Kenya.

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