COMMUNITY-BASED POLICING
AND
POST-CONFLICT POLICE REFORM

A HORIZON 2020 PROJECT

LECTURE AND BRIEF 1

Lecture for senior and mid-ranking African advisors and officers attending training courses + Policy Brief

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The present document contains, first, a lecture given by Ingvild. M. Gjelsvik at the United Nations Police Officers Course (UNPOC) in Nairobi on 17 March 2017. Second, the document contains a policy brief on community-policing and anti-radicalisation in Kenya.
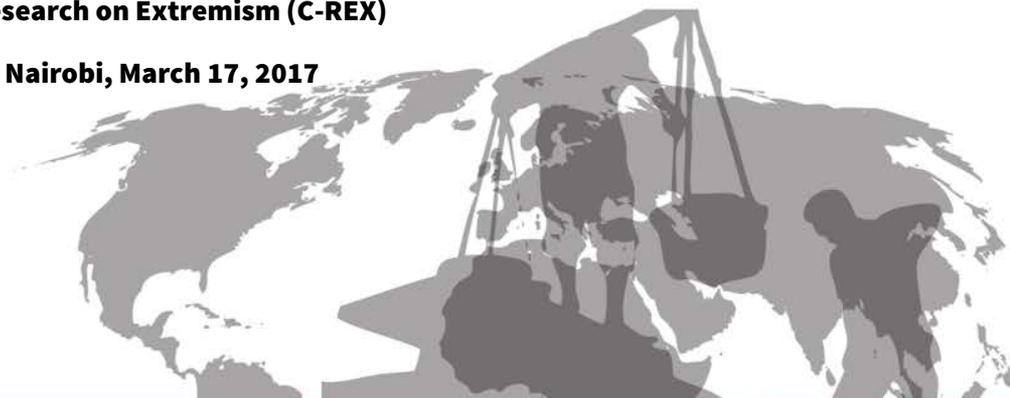
Community Policing
and
Violent Extremism

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Overview of the sessions

- *Definition and aim of community policing*
- *Implementation*
- *Opportunities and advantages*
- *Risks and challenges*

- *Break* ☺

- *Scenario based group work*

Radicalization and violent extremism

- *On top of the global agenda today*
- *Affect the way peace keeping is done*
- *Often met with hard power responses*
  - *Intelligence, surveillance, punitive measures and military interventions*
  - *Top-down*
- *Increased focus on soft approaches*
  - *Inclusion of civil society*
  - *Bottom-up*

The role of the police in preventing violent extremism

- *The police are in the front line*

- *Day-to-day protection remains largely at the hands of local police*

- *Police are the public face of the state in communities*

Two police paradigms

1. *Protect and serve the state*
   - *Citizens excluded from partnerships*
   - *Repressive state control*

2. *Protect and serve the public*
   - *Policing carried out in collaboration with the citizens*
   - *Inclusive approach to deal with security challenges*

Q: What is community policing?

Improve community - police relations

- *Aims to:*

  - *Re-establish broken links between communities and police*

  - *Establish them where they may never have existed*

  - *Renegotiate them where they were poor in the past*

  - *Change public perception of the police*

  - *Increase trust in the police*

- *Philosophy not a programme*

- *Holistic approach*

- *Winning «hearts and minds»*

- *Lies in the exectution of policing by every police officer*

- *In essence: A collaboration between the police and the community in order to improve or maintain safety and solve problems*

Community policing is not:

- *Infiltration*

- *Undercover*

- *Spying*

- *Exploiting citizens for information*

- *All other methods undermining trust building*

Q: Why commmunity policing?

- *The communities have the knowledge of the security challenges in their area*

- *Provide a more holistic and correct picture*

- *Problem solving approach*

- *Easier to do prevention work*

- *Better security for police officers themselves*

Q: How to build trust between police and communities?

- *Positive interaction and dialouge*
- *Put a face on the police*
- *Not only talking to but also with the communities*
- *Give and recieve*

Q: What does community policing look like?

Any policing activity that builds trust

- *Community meetings*
- *Community security committees*
- *Sports*
- *Assisting in community events*
- *School visits*

Possible partners

- *Religious milieus*
- *Clan/tribe leaders or community elders*
- *Local organizations*
- *Public service institutions*
- *Taxi drivers*
- *Shop keepers*
- *Women and youth*
- *Media*

Challenges

- *May create or reinforce inequalities between communities*
- *May reinforce negative power balances*
- *Clan/tribe based security vs. state provided security*
- *Internal structures in the police*
- *Other parts of the police use more repressive methods*
- *Corruption*
- *Percieved as racial or religious profiling*
- *Individuals may jepordize their own security when collaborating with the police*

Localized approach

Assess:

- *What is the security situation in the area?*
- *Who has the power?*
- *Who provides security in what way?*
- *In what condition is the local police?*
- *What is the general perception of the police?*
- *Other traditional systems?*

Police officers in host country

- *Fragile state apparatus*

- *Harsh working conditions*
    - *Understaffed, underpaid*
    - *Little resources/equipment*
    - *Large security risks*

- *Lack of psycho-social services*

Be humble and have an open mind

Scenario

- *Long lasting conflict over political power*
- *Government is fragile- little support from the population*
- *Power vaccum- expolited by extremists groups*
- *IDP camp with large security challenges*
- *High level of unemployemt, edcucation is scare*
- *70% of the population are youths*
- *Drought- disputes over land and water*
- *Police force mainly consists of officers of age with little training*
- *Police is understaffed and lack equipment*
- *Strong and active civil society*
- *International community is heavily present*
- *In your contingent you have both FPUs and IPOs*

Thank you for your attention!

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The below part contains the policy brief

"Work With the Community, Not Your Weapons"

Ingvild Magnæs Gjelsvik, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

The importance of involving local communities in national strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism is often under-estimated. Effective involvement of the local population requires a certain level of trust in the state and the police.

Based on interviews with community organizations in Nairobi and Mombasa in January and February 2016, this brief highlights some of the negative impact Kenya's anti-terrorism policing strategies have had on already weak community-police relations.

Yet, as the brief also shows, success stories can be found in the most unlikely of places, and the initiative for community-involvement in the security field may well come from the communities themselves.

While the country continues to struggle with high murder rates and other violent crimes, a central part of Kenya's security threat is now violent extremism.

To a large degree states have reacted to terrorism and violent extremism with top-down, "hard power" responses. Kenya is no exception. But violent extremism is as much a local as it is a state security matter, and this needs to be appreciated in counter-terrorism strategies.

After 2010, the Somali militant group al-Shabaab started to launch high-profile operations outside the Somali borders. The attack on Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi in 2013 killing 67 people and the Garissa massacre in Northern Kenya in 2015 taking the life of 148 university students are examples of this.

What may be considered highly militarized anti-terror strategies, Kenya's approach has received much criticism as the police are accused of extrajudicial killings, disappearances, harassment, ill treatment and unlawful detentions[i]. Muslim dominated areas and Somali-Kenyans in particular are victims of this, despite the fact that many of the people who have joined al-Shabaab in Kenya are not of Somali descent and there are several known examples of Christian Kenyans converting to Islam before joining al-Shabaab[ii].

One example of the government's responses is "Operation Usalama Watch" that took place in April 2014 in Eastleigh, a district in Nairobi consisting mainly of people of Somali origin. According to Human Rights Watch, during the operation, security forces incarcerated thousands of people in overcrowded cells, harassed families and looted their houses. The police also rounded up whole communities in a football stadium for days in poor conditions without access to legal aid[iii]. In addition, individual police officers frequently use the anti-terror law in attempts to justify their continued harassment of inhabitants in Eastleigh and other Muslim-dominated areas. A representative of a women's organisation said it thus:

"Eastleigh is seen as an ATM bank by the police. Non-Eastleigh based police go into Eastleigh during the night as that is when people are in their houses. So, Eastleigh became an ATM for bribes for the police. People would just pay the police in order for them [the police] not to enter the house and rob".

It goes without saying that such heavy handed policing methods and abuse of the power that comes with being a police officer are not inviting people to trust their police. On the contrary, it brings about fear, anger and grievances.

In fact, racial and religious profiling and further marginalization of specific groups that are already neglected by the government may contribute to, not preventing, radicalization.

Targeted communities and individuals develop grievances towards the government, which al-Shabaab takes momentum of to recruit and attract support for their cause. A large number of Kenyans have over the past years joined the ranks of al-Shabaab. A woman working in a community organization in Mombasa expressed her concern that Kenya's anti-terrorism strategies provide fertile ground for radicalization.

"A father was shot by the police in front of his child. That child may grow up to go against the government. We are creating al-Shabaab within ourselves. [...] They have to come up with other mechanisms to deal with these issues, this is not working. The way the police is handling terrorism is so bad. The police need to be careful to not bring about more terrorist among us".

Success Story

It is no secret that community-police relations in Kenya have been weak for a long time. Fear of and lack of trust in the police are widespread among the population. In fact, a study carried out in 10 urban and rural communities in Kenya in 2011[iv] found that the police are identified as a major source of insecurity for many.

Despite the many negative encounters between communities and police in Kenya there are examples of members of communities and police coming to terms with each other. In Majengo, a Muslim majority slum area in Nairobi bordering Eastleigh, a group of youths decided to work on improving their relationship with the police. Majengo is known for being a stronghold for al-Shabaab in Nairobi and recruits from other Kenyan regions travel to Majengo to be sent off to Somalia to fight. For a long time, there has been tension and clashes between youth in Majengo and the police. A male youth expressed his concerns:

"The police would suddenly show up and arrest people. Sometimes people were shot on the spot, right there and then. They would pick some random guys out of us and shoot them in front of our eyes".

After the increase of al-Shabaab activity in the area, Majengo became a target area for the police in the fight against terrorism. In addition to the threat posed by al-Shabaab, the fear of extra-judicial killings and disappearances carried out by security forces were an everyday concern for many.

A group of young men therefore decided to form a youth organization with the aim of creating job opportunities for themselves and fellow youth to prevent unemployment, crime and recruitment to criminal and extreme milieus. Starting from scratch they slowly grew and the first income-generating activity they started was a car wash.

Despite of becoming a positive force in the area the youth felt that the police continued to target them. The whole group therefore decided to approach the police commander at the nearby police station to properly introduce them-

-selves and their organization. They explained the purpose and vision of their business and the issues they were experiencing with police officers. The meeting was successful and resulted in a "peace agreement" between the youth group and the local police. After retelling this story the leader of the youth organization stated proudly:

"Now even the police officers come to our carwash to get their cars cleaned".

This is an example of youth agency: They took charge of their own situation, made efforts to improve their own situation and thus created space for themselves. However, it is important to note that this initiative came as a result of continuous harassment from the police rather than from good policing methods.

The agreement made it easier for the youth group to operate, but did not necessarily change the way the police officers treat other groups and segments in Majengo. However, it did indeed build trust and strengthened the relationship between the police and the youth and this also developed positively over time, creating an opening for positive interaction and increased cooperation.

Community-Led Approach

Violent extremism is not only a state security matter; it is also a local security matter. Recruitment to extreme groups occurs in local communities and no one knows better what is happening in the communities than the people living there. The police therefore have a lot to gain by engaging and working closer with communities on all issues related to local and national security. Many of the organizations interviewed were advocating strongly for a more community-led approach to security. A representative of a human rights organisation in Mombasa said:

"Security must be owned and driven by the community. Without the community, it will never succeed. [...] The police need to work with the communities to be effective in security."

Or, as a lady from a women's organization Mombasa so eloquently put it:

"The police need to work with the community, not work with their weapons."

Community-oriented policing (COP) is a concept that has gained popularity amongst donors, governments, police and policy makers all over the world in order to improve police-community relations.

COP is not a foreign concept to Kenyans, several national and international NGO's are implementing COP programmes across the country. The most known programme is "Nyumba kumi" (ten households) led by the Directorate of Community Policing, Gender and Child Protection. The idea is that 10 houses constitute one unity whereby one representative is selected to function as a liaison between the households and the local police.

Many Kenyan communities are critical to this set-up and feel it is imposed on them by a police force they do not trust. As a representative of a Mombasa human rights organisation said:

"Nyumba kumi came about two years ago. They created a new structure which was very foreign to people. For many it felt like spying on your neighbors. [...] It rather needs to be a community-driven initiative and owned by the communities. It also needs to be based on the need of the community, on community demand."

He continued voicing the need for an approach with greater inclusion of communities where various segments of the police and community members came together to discuss the challenges the communities are facing and together pave out a way to deal with them.

Such a problem-solving approach could be one way of bringing the police and the community closer together or at least a way for the local police to get more accurate information about what is going on in the area where they operate and become more accountable to the inhabitants. It was also emphasized that the police should undergo training in more suitable methods of collecting intelligence and learn how to connect with and build trust with the communities.

Conclusive remarks

Interviews with community organizations in Nairobi and Mombasa in Kenya clearly showed how counter-productive militarized counter violent extremism approaches carried out by the police can be. Undemocratic policing style has proven highly harmful to police-community relations.

Instead of preventing violent extremism, the hard-handed policing methods bring about fear, anger and grievances towards the state and the police among communities that already have little trust in their police.

Many of the local organizations interviewed clearly stated that there is a need for more community-friendly and community-driven initiatives and that community involvement is key in order to improve the security challenges that Kenya is facing today.

Notes

i) Amnesty International (2014). Somalis are scapegoats in Kenya's counter-terror crackdown. Policy brief. Retrieved from: https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR52/003/2014/en/

ii) Botha, Anneli (2014). Radicalisation in Kenya: Recruitment to al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council. ISS paper 265, September 2014. Retrieved from: https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/Paper265.pdf

iii) Human Rights Watch (2015). World Report 2015: Kenya. Events of 2014. Retrieved from: https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/kenya.

iv) Andvig, J. C., & Barasa, T. (2011) Cops and Crime in Kenya. NUPI Working Paper 794. Oslo: NUPI. Retrieved from: https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/277254/WP-794-Andvig%2band%2bBarasa.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

THE PROJECT

The ICT4COP research project seeks to understand human security in post-conflict settings by researching community-based policing and post-conflict police reform.

The Norwegian University of Life Sciences is the project coordinator.

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THE AUTHOR

Ingvild Magnæs Gjelsvik is a Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI). She is currently a PhD. Candidate at NUPI, The Norwegian Police University College and the University of Oslo writing about the role of community oriented policing in in relation to preventing and countering violent extremism.

Gjelsvik says: "*I am truly grateful to the organizations in Nairobi and Mombasa who took the time and effort to speak to me about a very sensitive topic. I would also like to thank my colleague in the project Clifford Omondi for all his support and assistance during my fieldwork in Kenya*".