

Report No. 2 January 2019

## Trends of Violent Extremist Attacks and Arrests in Kenya, December 2017-December 2018

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### About this report

The data and analysis in this report draws from the Terror Attacks and Arrests Observatory of the Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS). It presents the latest data collected and analysed from media reports on terror attacks between 1 December 2017 and 31 December 2018.

### Key highlights

#### Between December 2017 and December 2018:

- 26 terror attacks were reported by the media
- 58 fatalities were reported; 41 security officials and 17 civilians
- The highest number of attacks took place in Mandera and Lamu; 7 in Mandera and 8 in Lamu
- 109 people were arrested
- Mombasa had the highest number of arrested persons totalling at 16
- The highest number of arrested persons were Kenyans totalling at 21
- Based on media reports where gender was disclosed, 15 women and 20 men were arrested

#### Similar to observations made between January 2017 and November 2017,<sup>1</sup> in this year's period under review:

- Security officials were the main target of the *Al-Shabaab*
- Mandera and Lamu had the highest number of reported attacks
- Employment of explosive devices caused the highest number of fatalities
- Majority of the arrested persons, where their nationality was disclosed, were Kenyans
- Majority of the arrested persons, where their gender was disclosed, were male

#### In 2018 as compared to 2017 there was a:

- Decrease in the reported number of attacks by 47%
- Decrease in the reported number of fatalities by 46%
- Decrease in the reported number of arrested persons by 39%

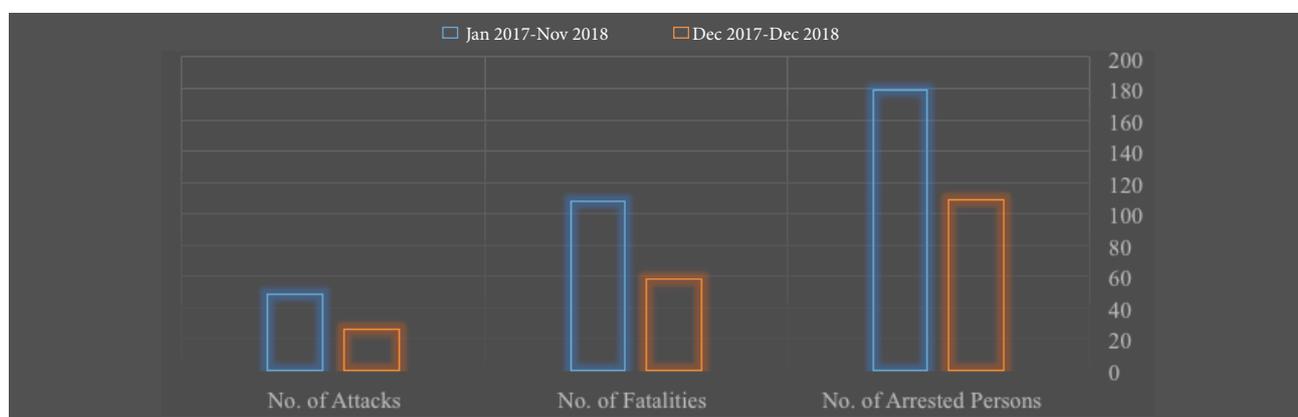


Figure 1: Comparative analysis, 2017 and 2018

<sup>1</sup> CHRIPS, Trends of violent extremist attacks and arrests in Kenya, January-November 2017, Report No. 1 December 2017

## Terror attacks

There were 26 media reported attacks between December 2017 and December 2018. In contrast, between January 2017 to November 2017, 49 terror attacks were reported.

The highest number attacks were recorded in January with 6 incidents, closely followed by July with 4 attacks. Although the majority of the attacks were attributed to *Al-Shabaab*, the group has not claimed responsibility

for some of them. Accordingly, it is unclear who perpetrated them.

Resulting from these attacks, 58 deaths were reported. This is a 46% decrease from 108 reported fatalities last year. The highest number of fatalities in a single incident was the killing of 8 KDF soldiers along the Kenya-Somalia border in Garissa County on 6 May 2018. Similarly, in Wajir County, 8 security officials (5 Administration Police and 3 police reservists) were killed on 17 June.

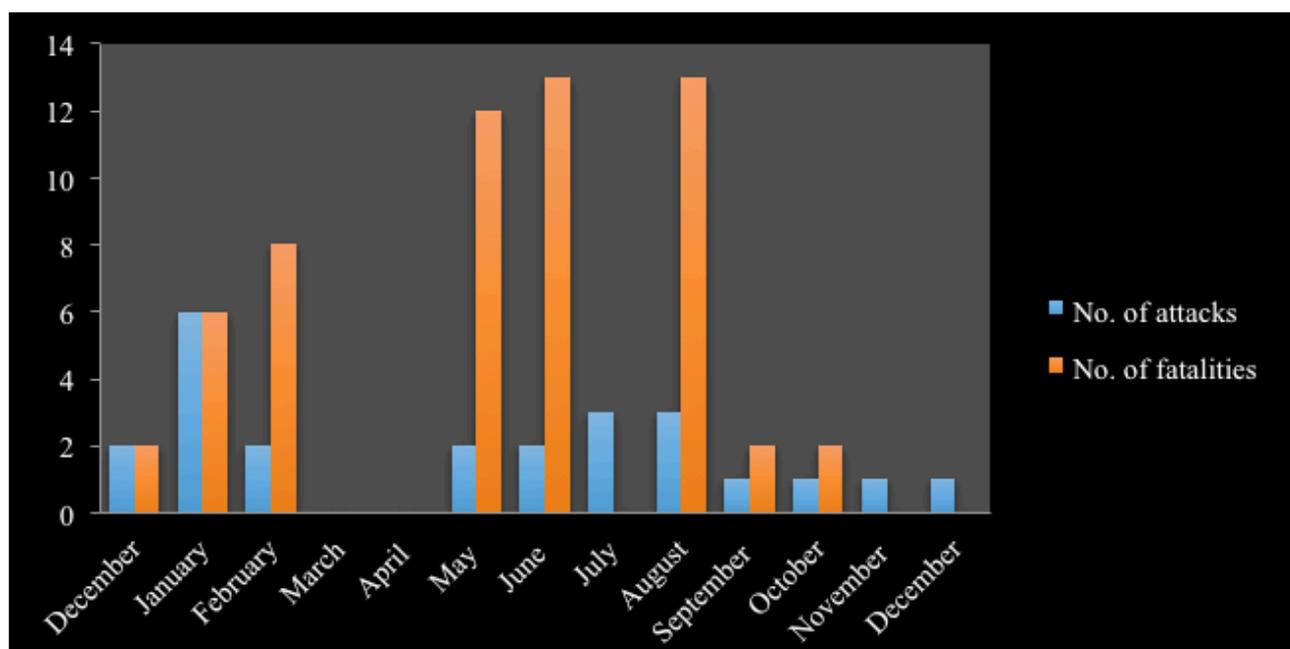


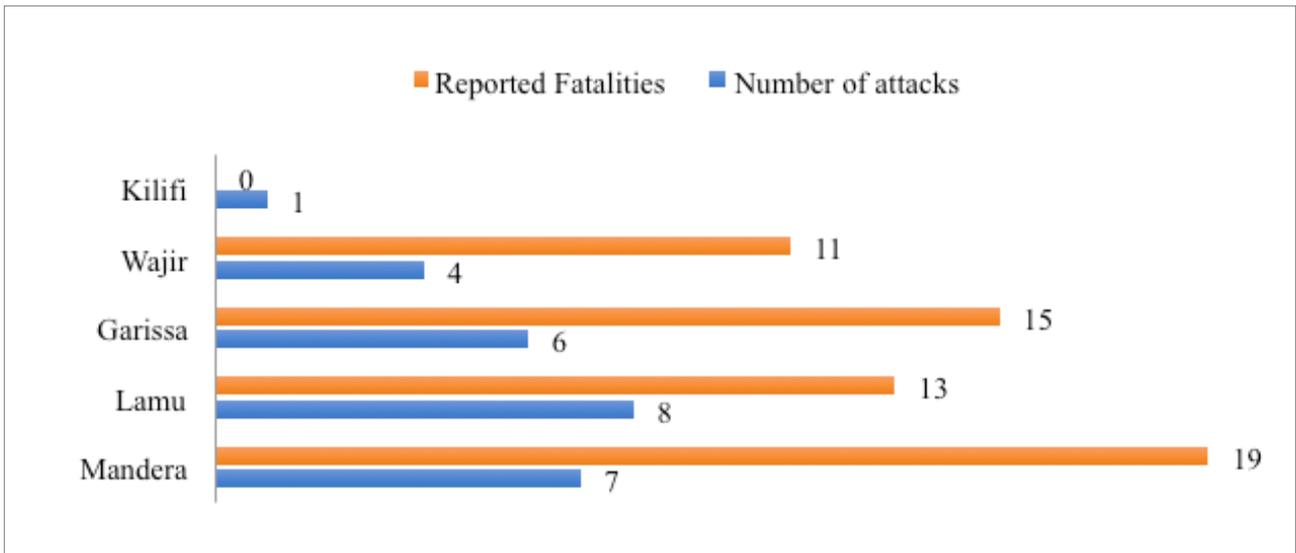
Figure 2: Number of terror attacks, Dec 2017-Dec 2018

## Location of attacks

The highest number of attacks according to media reports took place in Lamu and Mandera. 8 attacks took place in Lamu and 7 in Mandera. This is similar to last year: 17 incidences were reported in Mandera and 19 in Lamu.

During this period under review, Mandera had the highest death toll where 19 people were killed. Lamu

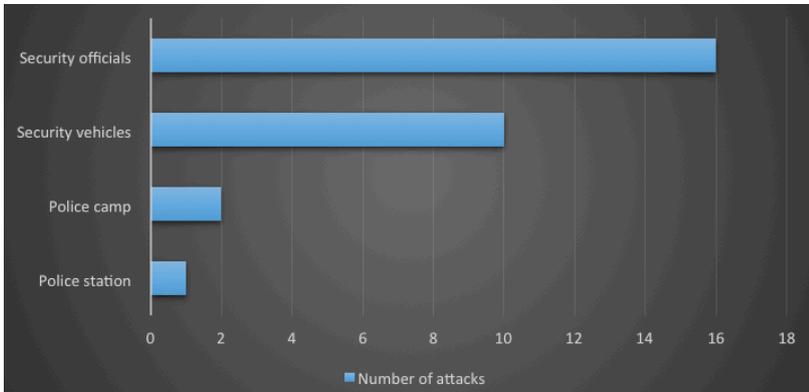
had the highest number of injured victims which totalled up to 23 people. Last year, the highest number of fatalities was recorded in Lamu where 58 people were killed. This was followed by Mandera and Garissa where each recorded a total of 22 fatalities.



**Figure 3: Reported attacks and fatalities, Dec 2017-Dec 2018**

## Targets

The *Al-Shabaab* targeted mainly security officials according to media reports. Media reports show that security vehicles have borne the brunt of most attacks. 12 security vehicles (including lorries, land cruisers and a water bowser) have been burnt to ashes either by arson or running over an improvised explosive device.



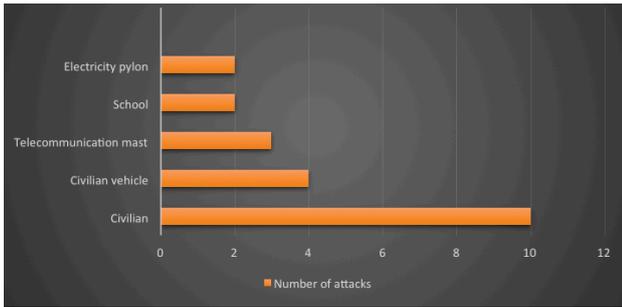
**Figure 4: Number of attacks on security officials Dec 2017-Dec 2018**

Civilians have also been targeted. There was 1 reported abduction of an Italian civilian in Kilifi on 20 November.<sup>2</sup> 2 civilians were executed in Garissa after *Al-Shabaab* militants flagged down the bus they were travelling in and profiled the passengers according to religion on 14 September.<sup>3</sup> In January, a group of about 100 heavily armed suspected *Al-Shabaab* militants raided Ishakani Village in Lamu County in the morning and preached radical teachings to the residents for about one hour. No one was killed or physically injured. The villagers were warned –or advised– not to board police or military vehicles since these were major targets of the *Al-Shabaab*.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ahmed, M. and Baya, S. (2018) '5 injured, Italian kidnapped in Kilifi night attack', Daily Nation, 21 November, <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/kilifi/Malindi-night-attack-Al-Shabaab/1183282-4861328-hamvb8/index.html> on 18 January 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Standard Reporter (2018) '*Al-Shabaab* terrorists kill two in ambush in Garissa', Standard Digital, 14 September <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/kilifi/Malindi-night-attack-Al-Shabaab/1183282-4861328-hamvb8/index.html> on 18 January 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Kazungu, K. (2018) '*Al-Shabaab* ambush Lamu village, give radical lecture' Daily Nation, 14 January <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/lamu/Al-Shabaab-ambush-Lamu-village-preach-radical-teachings/3444912-4263510-2sv6gpz/index.html> on 18 January 2019.

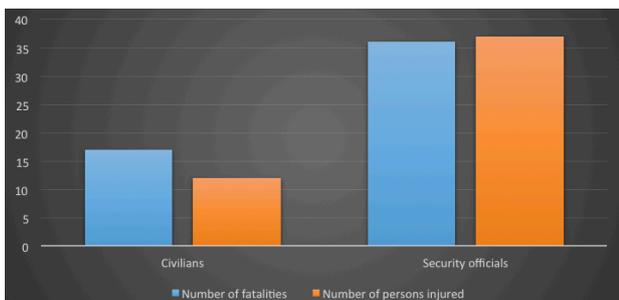


**Figure 5: Terror attacks by target type, Dec 2017-Dec 2018**

The terrorists have also targeted public infrastructure such as 2 electricity pylons and 3 communication masts. In addition, they have targeted schools. According to media reports, in October the *Al-Shabaab* burned a part of the teacher’s staff quarters and a staff room in an attack at Arabia Boys Secondary School, Mandera which claimed the lives of 2 teachers.<sup>5</sup> In February the terror group attacked Qarsa Primary School, Wajir killing 4 civilians.<sup>6</sup> Lastly, the *Al-Shabaab* have targeted 1 police station at Ijara and 2 police camps in Mandera County.<sup>7</sup>

### Fatalities and injured persons

According to media reports, 41 security officials were killed: 18 KDF soldiers, 5 GSU (General Service Unit), 9 Administration Police, 7 Kenya Police Reservists and 2 unspecified security officials.



**Figure 6: Fatalities and injured persons, Dec 2017-Dec 2018**

<sup>5</sup> Ombati, C. (2018) ‘Suspected *Al-Shabaab* attackers kill two teachers in Mandera’ Standard Digital, 10 October <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001298512/suspected-al-shabaab-attackers-kill-two-teachers-in-mandera> on 18 January 2019.

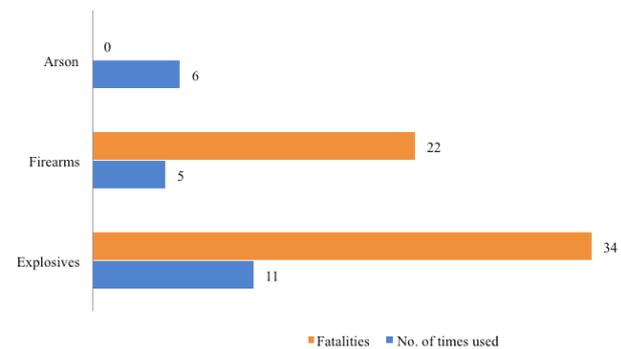
<sup>6</sup> Makong, B. and Wanzala, O. (2018) ‘Three teachers killed in Wajir Shabaab attack’ Daily Nation, 16 February <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/wajir/Teachers-killed-Al-Shabaab-attack-Wajir-Qarsa-Primary-School/3444790-4306966-kjo6htz/index.html> on 18 January 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Cherono, S. (2018) ‘Five militants killed in KDF strike near border’ Daily Nation, 2 January <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/Five-militants-killed-in-KDF-strike-near-border/1056-4248212-2nkc95z/index.html> on 18 January 2019; Otsialo, M. (2018) ‘Police repulse suspected *Al-Shabaab* attackers in Mandera’ Daily Nation, 12 July <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/mandera/Police-repulse-suspected-Al-Shabaab-attackers-in-Mandera/1183298-4659206-15s146hz/index.html> on 18 January 2019; Ombati, C. (2018) ‘Five police officers killed in *Al-Shabaab* attack on two Mandera camps’ Standard Digital <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001271682/five-police-officers-killed-in-al-shabaab-attack-on-two-mandera-camps> on 18 January 2019.

On the other hand, 17 civilians were killed. Contrastingly, in 2017, there were more civilian fatalities than security officers and government officials.

### Weapons used

Firearms were employed in 12 attacks and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in 11 incidents during the period under review. The use of IEDs caused a total of 34 deaths while firearms caused 22 killings. IEDs destroyed 2 KDF vehicles, 4 police vehicles and 2 private vehicles.



**Figure 7: Weapons and fatalities Dec 2017-Dec 2018**

While there was no use of knives and machetes between December 2017 and December 2018, 17 fatalities were caused by the employment of knives and machetes in 4 attacks in 2017.

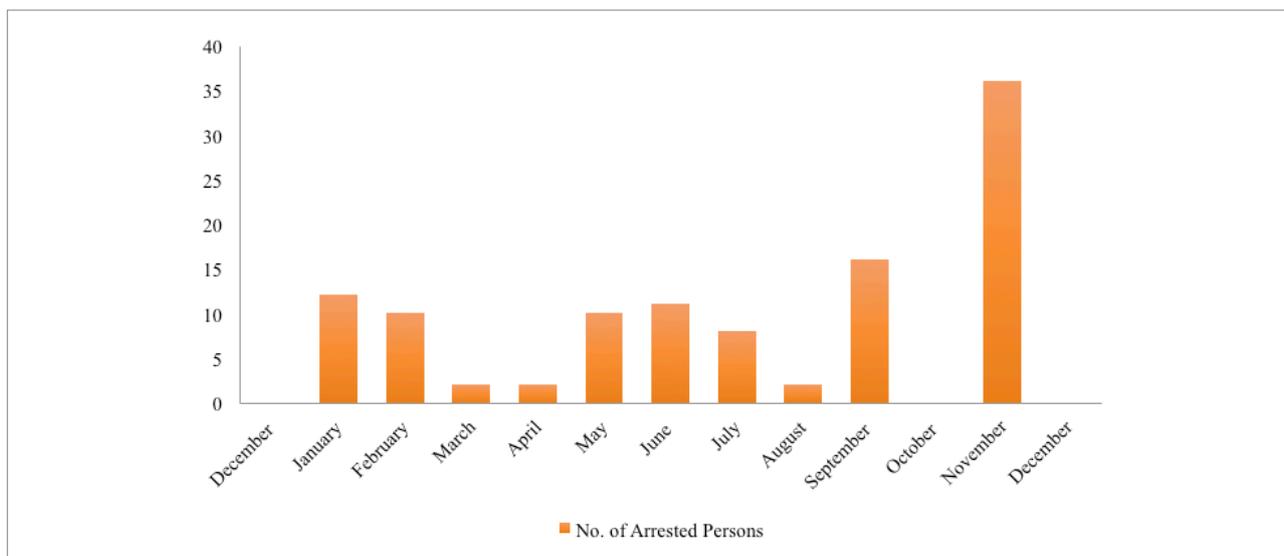
### Terror-related arrests

109 people were arrested during the period under review, with the highest number (36) recorded in November due to a security sweep. This is a drop from the 179 people arrested in 2017.

According to media reports, most of the suspects arrested during the year were accused of being linked to *Al-Shabaab*. 2 suspects were allegedly linked to the

Islamic State (IS). The two were arrested on 15 July for serving the IS by establishing a financial facilitation network spanning across Europe, East Africa, the

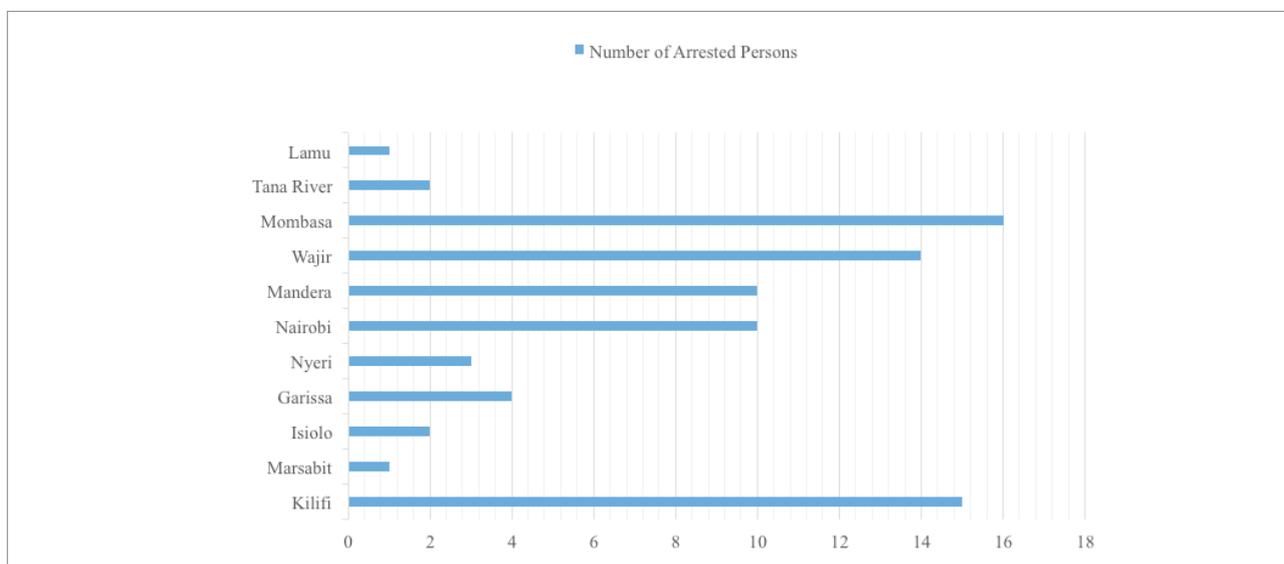
Americas and the Middle East.<sup>8</sup> The highest number of people arrested was 36 following the abduction of an Italian volunteer in Kilifi County on 20 November.



**Figure 8: Number of arrested persons, Dec 2017-Dec 2018**

According to media reports on arrested persons during the period under review, 12 people have been accused of radicalisation; 8 have been suspected of possession of bomb-making material; 14 have allegedly financed the *Al-Shabaab*; 6 for planning to conduct an attack;

2 for allegedly travelling to Somalia to join the *Al-Shabaab*; 5 have been accused of being members of the *Al-Shabaab*; 3 for allegedly forging official documents for *Al-Shabaab* members; and 2 people for recruitment of the *Al-Shabaab* militants.



**Figure 9: Arrests per county, Dec 2017-Dec 2018**

<sup>8</sup> Welimo, R. (2018) 'Police arrest two facilitators' KBC <http://www.kbc.co.ke/police-arrest-two-terror-facilitators/> on 18 January 2019.

Mombasa recorded the highest number of arrests, followed closely by Kilifi and Wajir. Comparatively, in 2017, Nairobi and Kilifi recorded the highest number of arrested persons.

### Arrests by gender

Media reports were often unspecific on the gender and nationality of the arrested suspects. Therefore, based on media reports where gender was disclosed, 15 women and 20 men were arrested. For both groups, the accusations were diverse from the commission of a terrorist attack to facilitation of terrorist acts such as financing terrorists, forging official documents, conspiracy/planning an attack, membership in a terror group, and crossing the border to Somalia for recruitment in *Al-Shabaab*.

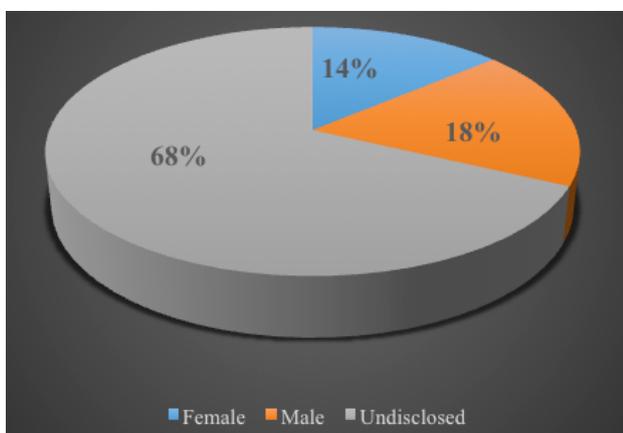


Figure 10: Arrests by gender, Dec 2017-Dec 2018

### Arrests by nationality

Media reports show that the highest number of arrested persons were Kenyans totalling at 21. Likewise, in 2017 there were more Kenyan suspects than other nationalities; 135 Kenyans as compared to 35 foreigners.

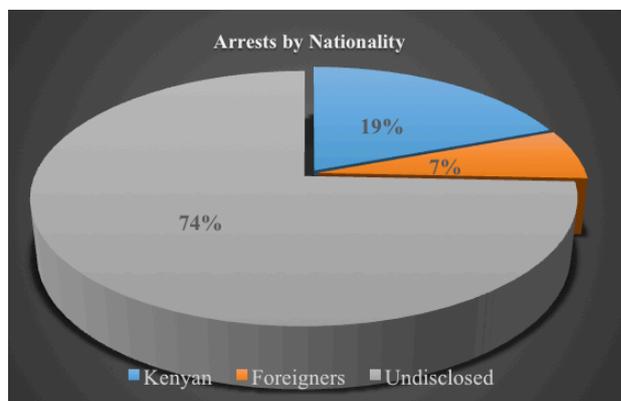


Figure 11: Arrests by nationality, Dec 2017-Dec 2018

According to media reports, 15 foreigners were arrested during the period under review: 10 Pakistani, 4 Somali and 1 European. 10 Pakistanis were arrested for allegedly facilitating and financing terrorism, 1 Somali for allegedly crossing the border from Somalia to commit an attack in Kenya and 1 European was arrested for being an accomplice to *Al-Shabaab*.

## References

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**Kazungu, K. (2018)** 'Al-Shabaab ambush Lamu village, give radical lecture' Daily Nation, 14 January <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/lamu/Al-Shabaab-ambush-Lamu-village-preach-radical-teachings/3444912-4263510-2sv6gpz/index.html> on 18 January 2019.

**Makong, B. and Wanzala, O. (2018)** 'Three teachers killed in Wajir Shabaab attack' Daily Nation, 16 February <https://www.nation.co.ke/counties/wajir/Teachers-killed-Al-Shabaab-attack-Wajir-Qarsa-Primary-School/3444790-4306966-kjo6htz/index.html> on 18 January 2019.

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**Welimo, R. (2018)** 'Police arrest two facilitators' KBC <http://www.kbc.co.ke/police-arrest-two-terror-facilitators/> on 18 January 2019.

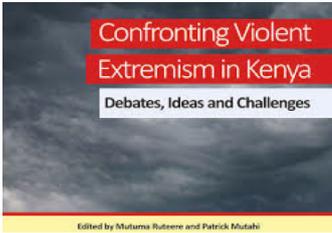
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## Acknowledgement

Melissa Mungai is a Research Intern at the Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies.

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# PUBLICATIONS



**Confronting Violent Extremism in Kenya: Debates, Ideas and Challenges (CHRIPS, 2018)**  
This pioneering collection brings together critical analyses on a range of issues touching on violent extremism by a multidisciplinary team of scholars and scholar-practitioners with an intimate and long-standing interest on the subject in Kenya, the region and globally. They cover the breadth as well as depth of the complex problem of violent extremism in a manner and language that speaks to both scholars and policy makers.



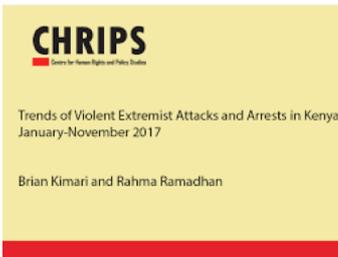
**Governing Security from Below: The case of four cities in East Africa (CHRIPS, 2017)**  
This special issue focuses on local level governance of security in poor urban neighbourhoods of East Africa. The issue seeks to address both a theoretical and policy gap in the security governance where the bulk of scholarship has focused on state security actors and often treated non-state security actors as secondary and even symptomatic of deficiency and incapacity in the state or public security.



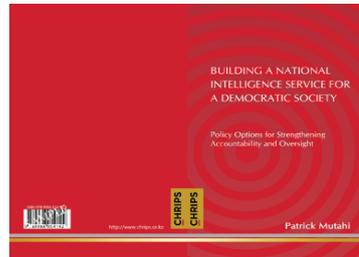
**Where is the Money? Donor Funding for Conflict and Violence Prevention in Eastern Africa (CHRIPS, 2017)**  
This study demonstrates that donors have a variety of security and commercial interests in the region, and these are not always neatly separable from conflict and security priorities



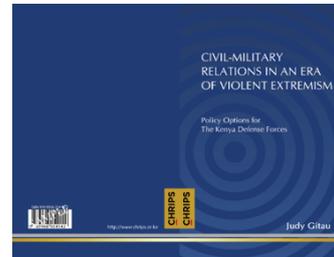
**The Impact of Social Media and Digital technology on Electoral Violence in Kenya (CHRIPS, August 2017)**  
This paper identifies the specific threats that social media and digital technology pose and opportunities they present for violence prevention. Ultimately, the paper seeks to present the opportunities that exist for partnerships between state and non-state actors to effectively prevent political and electoral violence.



**Trends of Violent Extremist Attacks and Arrests in Kenya, January-November 2017 (CHRIPS, December 2017)**  
The data and analysis in this report draws from the terror attacks and Arrests Observatory of the Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS). It presents and analyses the latest data, collected from media reports, on terror attacks and arrests between January 1, 2017 and November 30, 2017. Data on terror-related attacks will be regularly updated on the observatory and reports published periodically.



**Building a National Intelligence Service for a Democratic Society: Policy Options for Strengthening Accountability and Oversight (CHRIPS, 2016)**  
This study is a critical examination of the effectiveness of the accountability of the intelligence services in Kenya. In tandem with the central tenet of the constitution that all national security organs remain subordinate to civilian authority, the study argues that democratic accountability would ensure proper impetus for reforming the National Intelligence Services.



**Civil-Military Relations in an Era of Violent Extremism: Policy Options for The Kenya Defence Forces (CHRIPS, 2016)**  
This study examines the civilian oversight structures over the Kenya Defence forces, in the context of military engagement in countering terrorism and violent extremism in Kenya. The study argues that the threat of terrorism requires a multi-pronged approach in developing an effective national security strategy.



**Securing the Counties: Options for Security after Devolution in Kenya (CHRIPS, 2014)**  
This study argues that counties are central not only to development but also the implementation of security solutions. Considerable opportunities and capacities for improving security exist at the county level.

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