Trends of Violent Extremist Attacks and Arrests in Kenya, January – December 2022

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About this report

This report draws from the Terror Attacks and Arrests Observatory of the Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS Terrorism Observatory). It presents the latest data collected, disaggregated, and analysed from 1 January – 31 December 2022. CHRIPS uses verified traditional and new media reports and information from our CVE research hub partners to generate a comprehensive database on terror-related occurrences in Kenya. Learn about the CVE research hub here.

Key highlights

- Attacks increased to 77 from 51 reported in 2021

- January recorded the highest number of attacks at 16, with 46 fatalities and 16 injured people

- Four counties were affected: 37 attacks in Mandera; 21 in Lamu; 10 in Garissa; and nine in Wajir

- 116 people were killed in the 2022 terror attacks compared to 100 in 2021

- 64 people were injured: 42 civilians; 38 Al Shabaab militants; 35 security officials, and one government official

- 14 people were kidnapped: 12 in Mandera; and 2 in Wajir

- 29 people were arrested for terror-related offences: 21 men; and 8 people whose gender was not specified

- 9: the highest number of suspects arrested, which was recorded in Garissa

- Nationalities of those arrested: 5 Ethiopians, 3 Kenyans, 1 Canadian, 1 Somali citizen, 1 Tanzanian 18 undisclosed
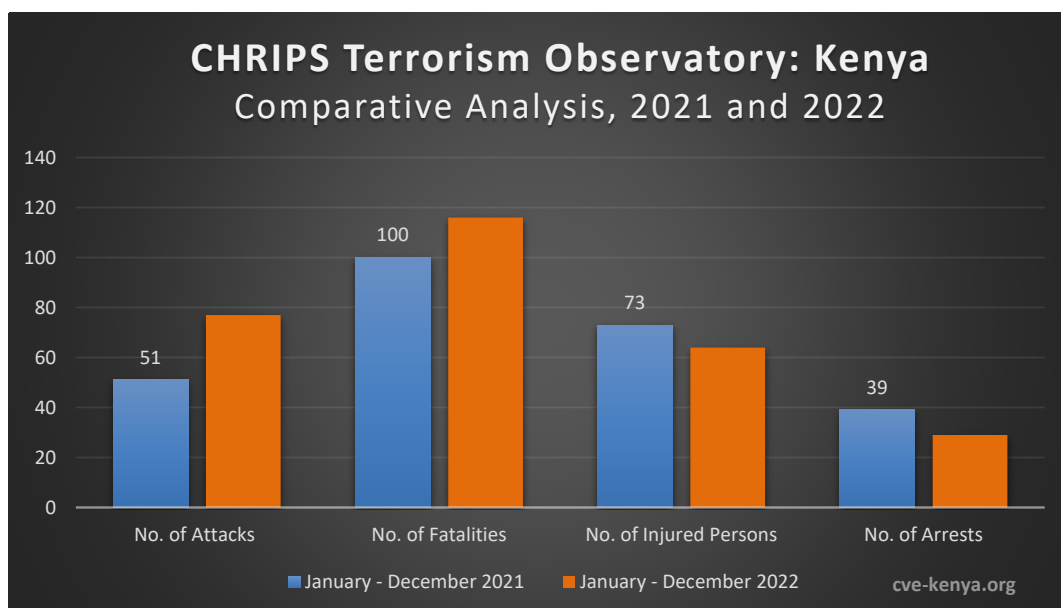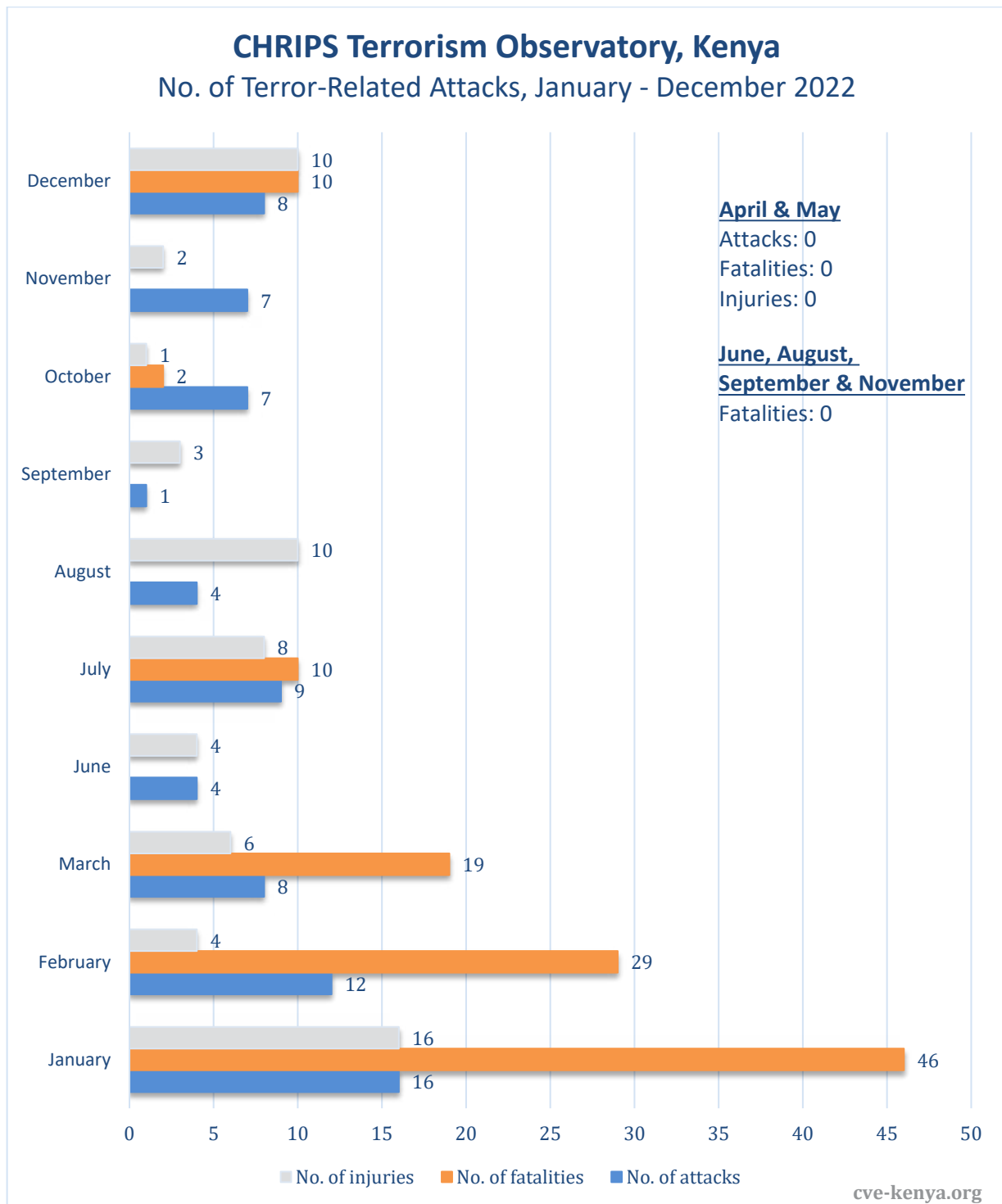

Figure 1: Comparative analysis, 2021 and 2022

Terror Attacks

CHRIPS Terrorism Observatory, Kenya
No. of Terror-Related Attacks, January - December 2022

April & May
Attacks: 0
Fatalities: 0
Injuries: 0

June, August, September & November
Fatalities: 0

Month	No. of injuries	No. of fatalities	No. of attacks
December	10	10	8
November	2		7
October	1	2	7
September	3		1
August	10		4
July	8	10	9
June	4		4
March	6	19	8
February	4	29	12
January	16	46	16

Legend: No. of injuries | No. of fatalities | No. of attacks

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Figure 2: Number of terror-related attacks, January - December 2022

Seventy-seven terror-related attacks were reported in 2022. This is a 36% increase compared to 51 attacks recorded in 2021. As illustrated in figure two above, attacks intensified at the beginning of the year, increasing sporadically between June and December. There were no attacks recorded in April and May. January recorded the highest number of terror attacks and also the highest number of fatalities at 46 people. During this month, the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) killed 15 Al Shabaab militants in Lamu County. During the period under review, Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for 3 attacks. The militants claimed responsibility for the 9 January attack, where they ambushed and killed four
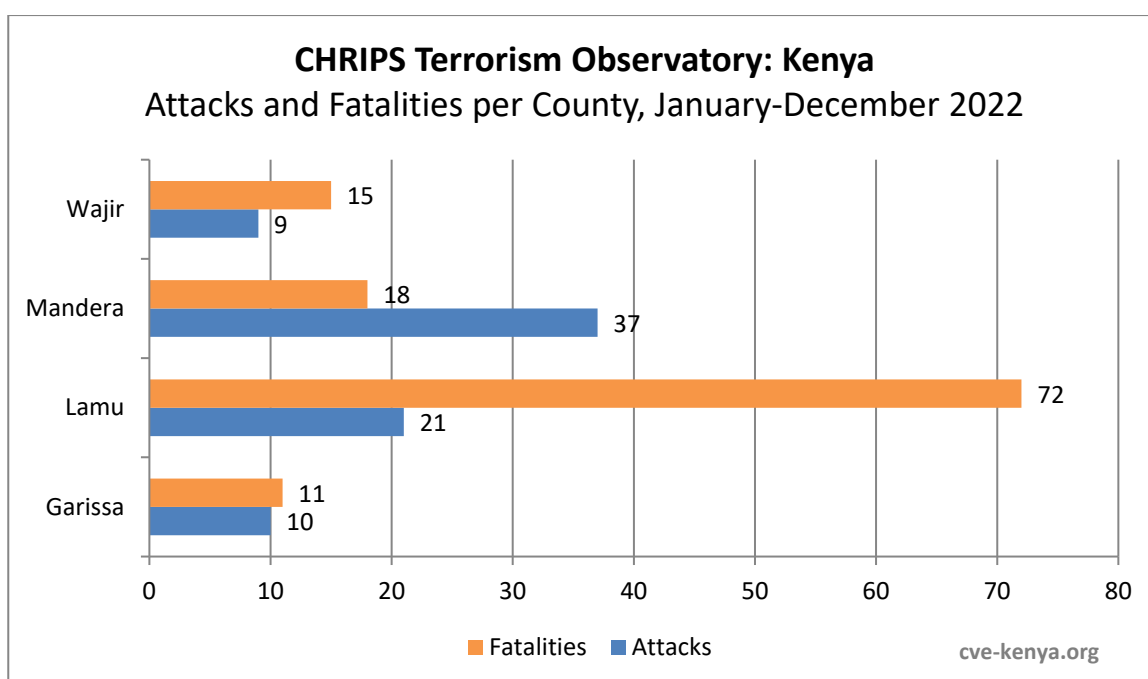
police officers between Liboi and Kulan areas in Garissa.[1] Al Shabaab also claimed responsibility for another attack on 9 January in Lamu, where militants attacked Marafa village in Mpeketoni, torched several houses and looted food. Two civilians were killed in the attack.[2] Lastly, the militants admitted they were behind the 17 January attack where 15 Al Shabaab militants were killed by Kenyan security officials in Boni forest in Lamu County.[3]

On 11 March, Al Shabaab militants ambushed a construction site in Lamu; four civilians involved in the construction of a bridge on Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) died and three others were injured, among them was a Chinese national.[4] No fatalities were reported in April, May, June, August, September and November.

January recorded the highest number of injured people at 16. In an attack in Mandera in January, 13 civilians were wounded when a mini-bus ferrying members of the public to Mandera was shot at and hit with an improvised explosive device (IED) planted by suspected Al Shabaab militants along the Arabia-Mandera road.[5] There were no injuries reported in April and May.

Location of Attacks

CHRIPS Terrorism Observatory: Kenya
Attacks and Fatalities per County, January-December 2022

County	Fatalities	Attacks
Wajir	15	9
Mandera	18	37
Lamu	72	21
Garissa	11	10

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Figure 3: Attacks and Fatalities per County, January – December 2022

In the period under review, attacks were reported in the North Eastern region of Kenya and Lamu County in the coastal region. Most of the attacks were in Mandera, where 37 terror-related attacks were reported, and 18 fatalities were recorded in different incidents. The second highest number of attacks, 21, was reported in Lamu, which also recorded the highest number of deaths at 72. On 23 February, as they attempted to enter Boni forest, 4 suspected Al Shabaab militants were killed by Kenya Defence forces (KDF). KDF also recovered a rifle, 100 bullets and other paraphernalia.[6]

[1]ACLED. (2022). Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2022, www.acleddata.com

[2]ACLED. (2022). Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2022, www.acleddata.com

[3]Ombati, C. & Marita, B. (2022) "Four al Shabaab militants killed by KDF in Lamu", 26 February, The Star, https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2022-02-26-four-al-shabaab-militants-killed-by-kdf-in-lamu/

[4]Crisis24 (2022) "Kenya: Al-Shabaab claim responsibility for attack on a construction site in Lamu County March 11", 12 March, Crisis 24, https://crisis24.garda.com/alerts/2022/03/kenya-al-shabaab-claims-responsibility-for-attack-on-a-construction-site-in-lamu-county-march-11
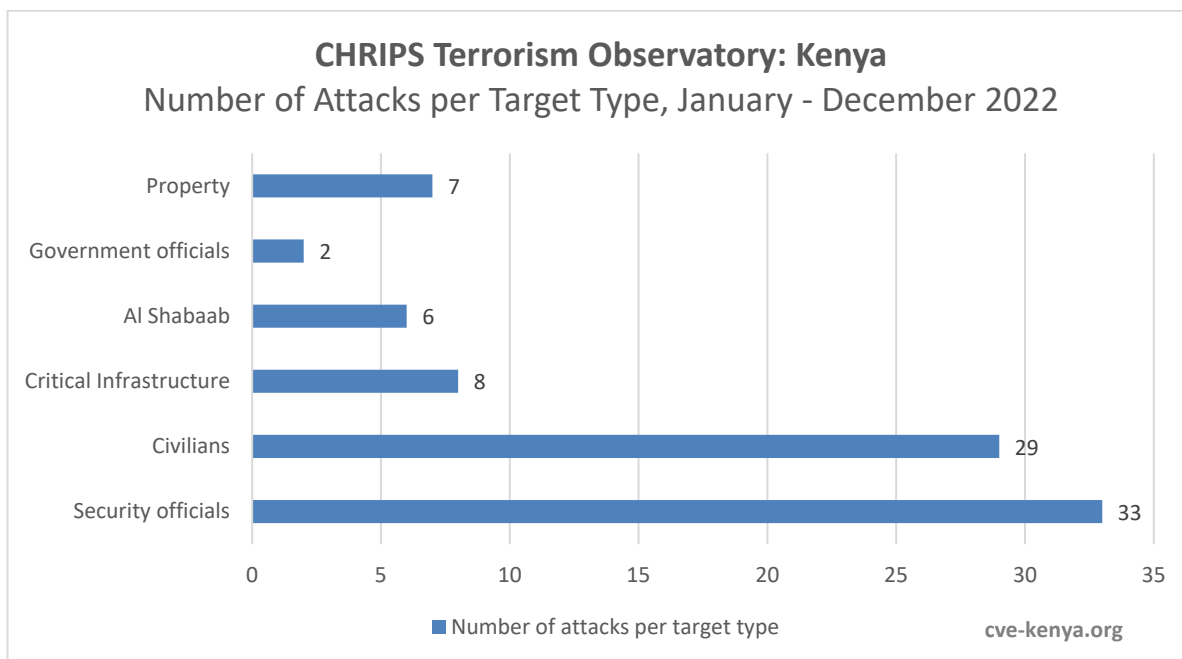
[6]Otsialo, M. (2022) "Inside the ill-fated Mandera matatu journey" 1 February, Nation Africa, https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/mandera/inside-ill-fated-mandera-matatu-journey-3701072

[7]Mbati, C. & Marita (2022) "Four al Shabaab militants Killed by KDF in Lamu" 26 February, The Star, https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2022-02-26-four-al-shabaab-militants-killed-by-kdf-in-lamu/

Garissa County recorded the least number of attacks and fatalities during the period under review. Two security officials and one civilian were killed in Garissa on 21 December by firing explosives on a vehicle belonging to Galmagalla police station, Bura East, which was attached to the construction of the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia-Transport road project (LAPSSET).

Targets

CHRIPS Terrorism Observatory: Kenya
Number of Attacks per Target Type, January - December 2022

Target Type	Number of attacks
Property	7
Government officials	2
Al Shabaab	6
Critical Infrastructure	8
Civilians	29
Security officials	33

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Figure 4: Number of attacks per target type, January-December 2022

Out of a total of 77 reported attacks during the period under review, close to 50% were targeted at security officials. During the period under review, security officials were hit while in transit or during patrol. For example, on 5 December, suspected Al Shabaab attackers ambushed and opened fire on a truck with about 10 Border Patrol Unit officers on patrol and injured two officers. A host of weapons, including rocket-propelled grenades and AK47 firearms, were recovered by the Border Patrol Unit, who repulsed the attack.[7] Suspected Al Shabaab militants also hit police posts and stations targetting security officials. For instance, on 12 October, Al Shabaab reportedly attacked the Alunga police station, hitting a communication mast with explosives, and rocket-propelled grenades. This attack damaged two vehicles parked at the station with multiple bullet holes.[8]

Civilians were frequent targets of terror-related attacks by suspected violent extremist groups. In Mandera on 25 October, a standard seven pupil was injured when suspected Al Shabaab attackers hurled explosives into a primary school in Fino, targeting teachers and students and a member of the county assembly.[9] Suspected Al Shabaab militants raided two mosques in Mandera armed with AK47 rifles and lectured faithfuls who had attended morning prayers. Reports state that the militants claimed to be at war with non-Muslims and were lecturing faithfuls to join the fight.[10]

[7]Ombati, C. (2022) "Two police officers injured in ambush by al Shabaab in Garissa", The Star, 6 December, https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2022-12-06-two-police-officers-injured-in-ambush-by-al-shabaab-in-garissa/

[8]Otsialo, M. (2022) "Three teachers "missing" following Mandera terror attack" Nation Africa, 12 October, https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/mandera/three-teachers-missing-following-mandera-terror-attack-3982438

[9]Otsialo, M. (2022) "Pupil injured in a suspected terror attack in Mandera" Nation Africa, 26 October, https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/mandera/pupil-injured-in-a-suspected-terror-attack-in-mandera-3998084

[10]Ombati, C. (2022) "Al Shabaab raids mosques, lectures faithfuls in Mandera" The Star, 23 October, https://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/north-eastern/2022-10-23-al-shabaab-raid-mosques-lecture-faithfuls-in-mandera/

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As recorded in 2020 and 2021, critical infrastructure remains a target in terror-related attacks. Al Shabaab militants destroyed eight communication masts in separate incidents, particularly in Mandera and Wajir counties. Three telecommunication installations were destroyed within police stations: Korof Harrar police station on 8 August, Alunga police station on 12 October, and Kutolo police station on 18 December.

Three government officials were attacked in two incidents recorded during the period under review: two in Lamu and one in Mandera.

CHRIPS Terrorism Observatory: Kenya
Attacks targeting security officials 2018,2019,2020,2021 and 2022

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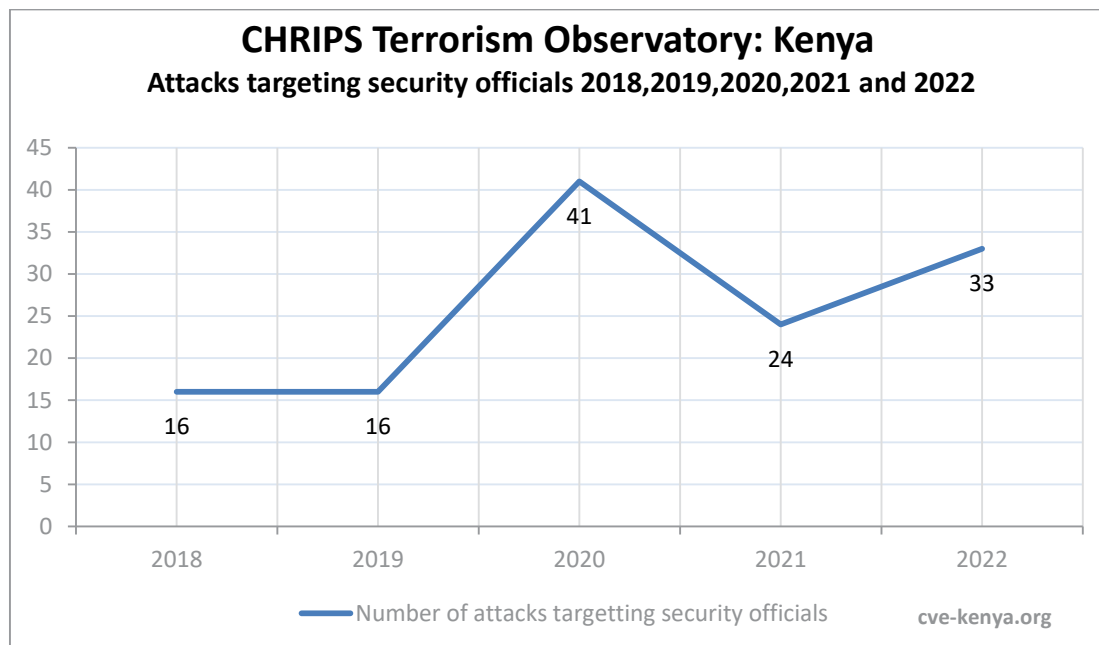
Figure 5: Number of attacks targeting security officials from 2018 - 2022

As seen in figure 5, the number of attacks targeting security officials increased in the period under review. Security officials were targeted 33 times out of 77 attacks reported in 2022. Most attacks targeting security officials were by suspected Al Shabaab militants, mainly using explosive devices. These were recorded in Mandera, which reported 15 occurrences, followed by Garissa with 8 episodes. Lamu and Wajir counties each had 5 attacks.
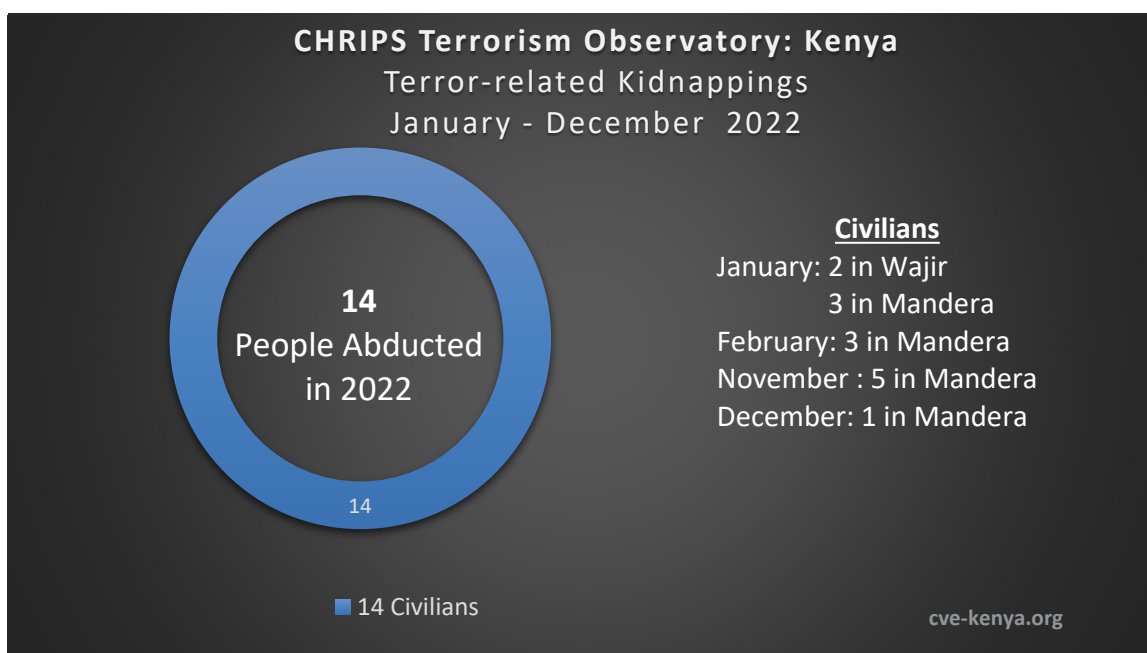

Figure 6: Terror-related kidnappings, January-December 2022

Fourteen civilians were abducted by suspected Al Shabaab militants, 2 in Wajir and 12 in Mandera counties. Among those kidnapped by alleged Al Shabaab militants were 2 former councillors on 9 January in Wajir in Khorof Harar. However, they later managed to escape. In another incident in Fino, Mandera County suspected Al Shabaab militants kidnapped three health workers, released two and crossed over to Somalia with one of the workers.[11] The number of kidnappings decreased by 18% per cent compared to 17 people who were reported to have been kidnapped in 2021.

Fatalities and Injured persons
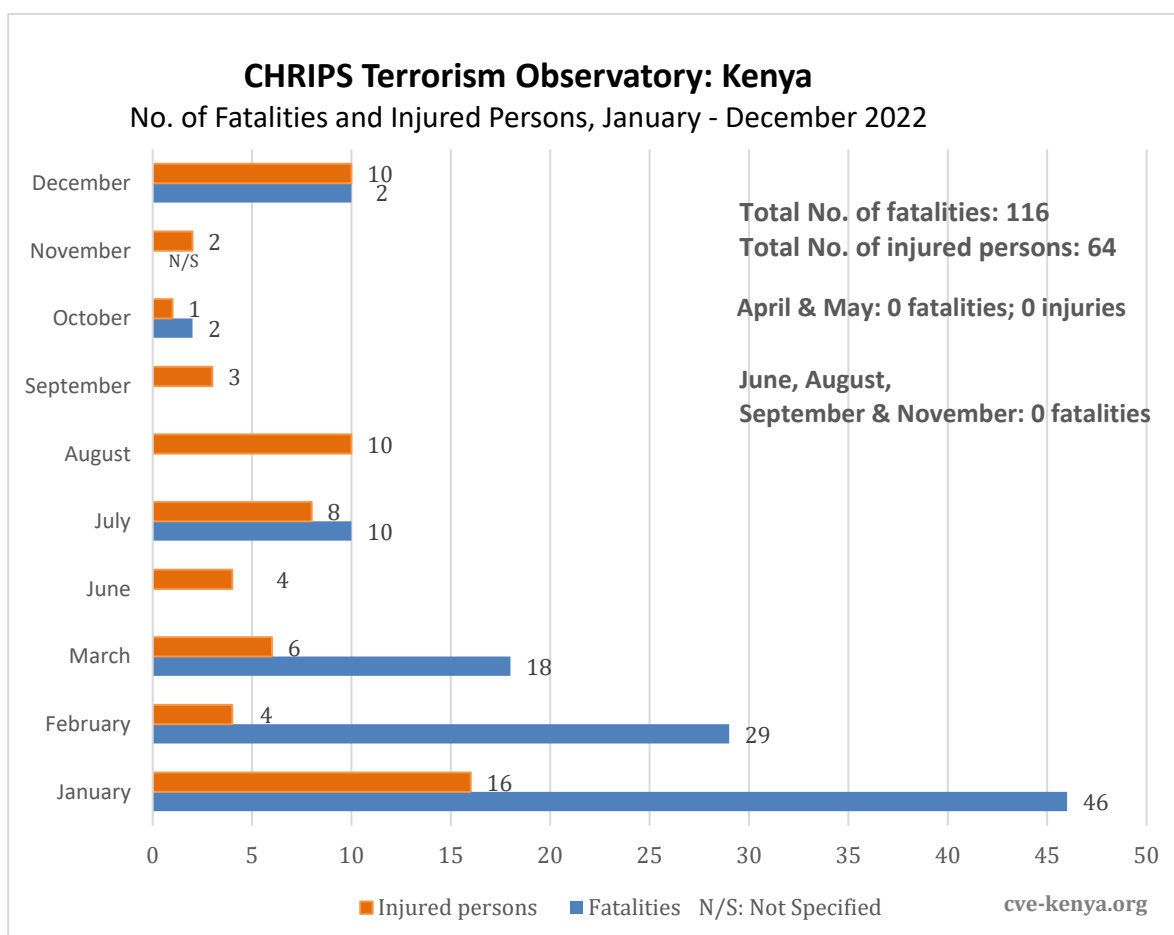
Figure 7: Fatalities and Injured persons, January-December 2022

One hundred and sixteen people were killed and 64 injured due to terror-related incidents in 2022. The highest fatalities due to terror-related attacks were recorded in January, February and March, where 46, 29 and 18 people were reportedly killed, respectively. No fatalities nor injuries were reported from April to June. No fatalities were reported in August, September and November. The highest number of injuries was recorded in January, resulting from 16 attacks. In November, the number of fatalities was unspecified.

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[11]ACLED. (2022). Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2022, www.acleddata.com

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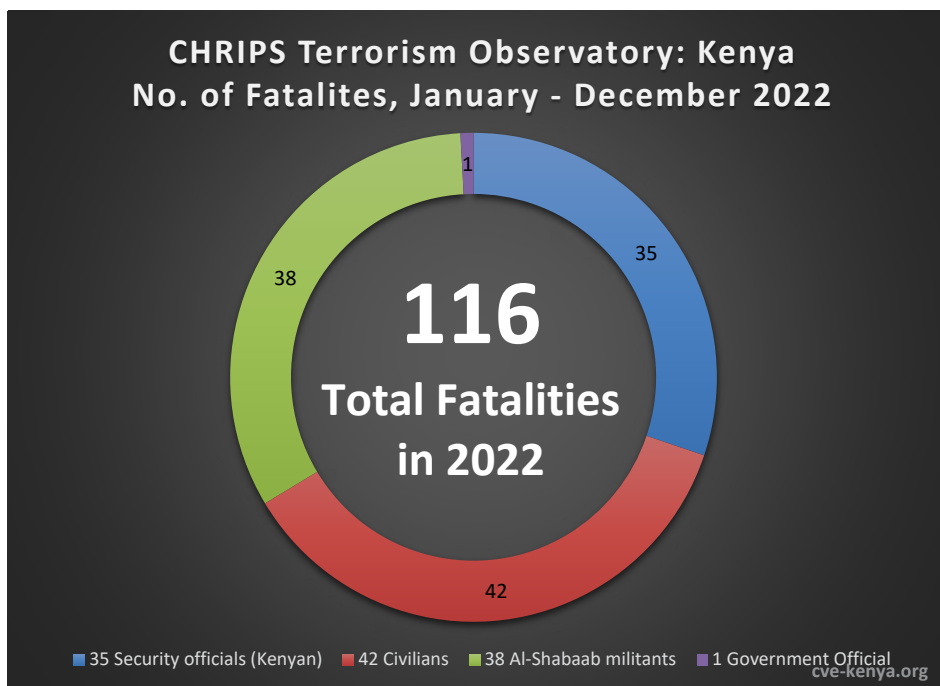
Figure 8: Number of Fatalities, January - December 2022

The highest number of fatalities recorded in 2022 was of civilians, where 42 people were killed out of a total of 77 attacks reported in the period under review. 38 suspected Al Shabaab militants were also killed in operations by Kenyan security officials in instances where the officers were repulsing attacks by the militants. One government official, an Assistant Chief, was killed in Mandera on 28 February.[12]
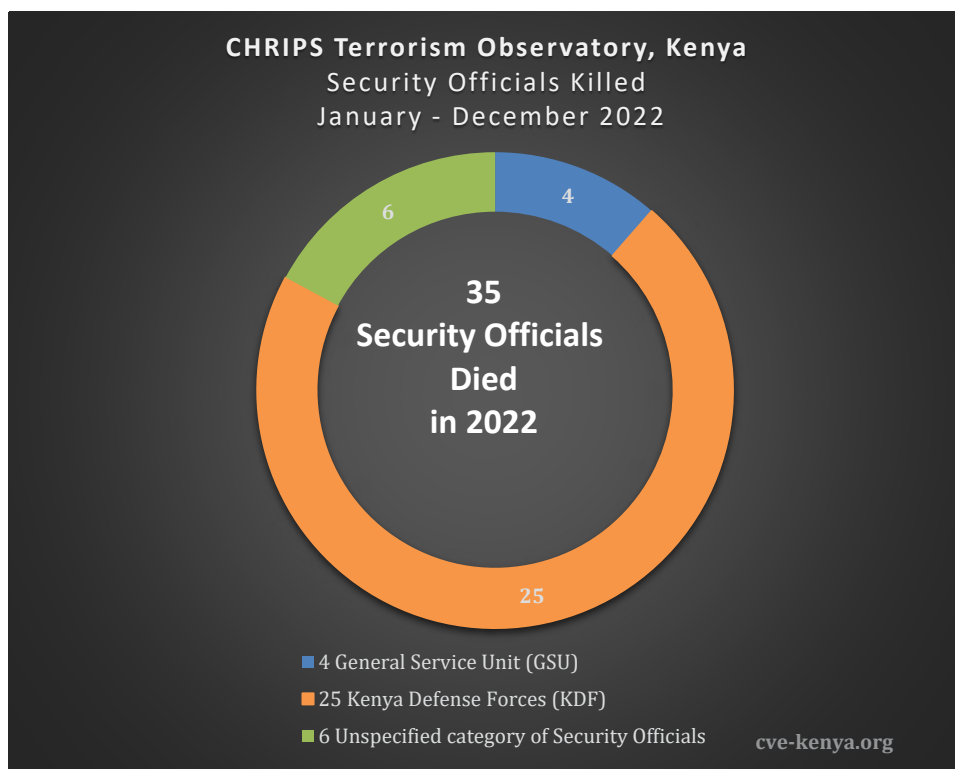
Figure 9: Security Officials Killed, January - December 2022

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[12]Wairimu, M. (2022) "Police arrested suspects, recover AK47 guns in Garissa, The Star, 3 March, https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2022-03-03-police-arrest-suspects-recover-ak47-guns-in-garissa/

Twenty-five military officers from the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) were killed in a total of 6 terror-related attacks. During the period under review, most security officials have been targeted while in transit, during patrol, and in police stations. For instance, four General Service Unit (GSU) officers were killed in a Shabaab attack in Milihoi, Lamu County, when a rocket-propelled grenade hit a security patrol car at the border.[13] Unspecified categories of security officials were also killed in 6 separate terror-related incidents.
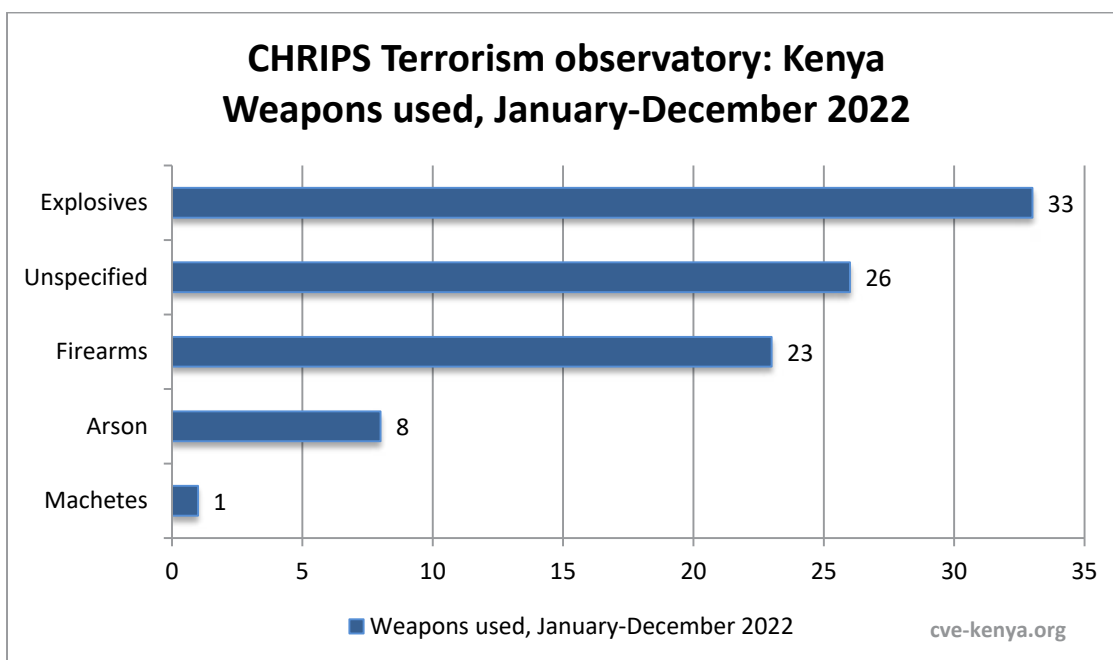
Weapons used

Figure 10: Weapons used, January-December 2022

Explosive devices were employed in 33 terror-related incidents. These devices included rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), bombs, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), primarily used in attacks directed at security officials and critical infrastructure. Firearms were employed in 23 attacks, majorly involving security officials and civilians. There were 6 incidents involving arson reported in 2022. In two separate attacks targeting civilians in January in Lamu County, suspected Al Shabaab militants attacked villages in Hindi and Mpeketoni, torching several houses in both villages and killing a total of 3 civilians.[14] Still, in Lamu, a machete was used in one incident alongside other weapons when suspected Al Shabaab militants attacked civilians in a village in Witu area. At least one person was reportedly shot, another hacked to death with a machete, while others were burnt alive, and several houses were torched.[15] The type of weapons used in 26 incidents was not specified.

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[13]Agence France Presse (2022) "4 GSU officers killed in Lamuu attack", Capital News, 7 January, https://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2022/01/4-gsu-officers-killed-in-lamu-al-shabaab-attack/

[14]ACLED. (2022). Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2022, www.acleddata.com

[15]Agence France Presse (2022) "4 GSU officers killed in Lamuu attack", Capital News, 7 January, https://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2022/01/4-gsu-officers-killed-in-lamu-al-shabaab-attack/
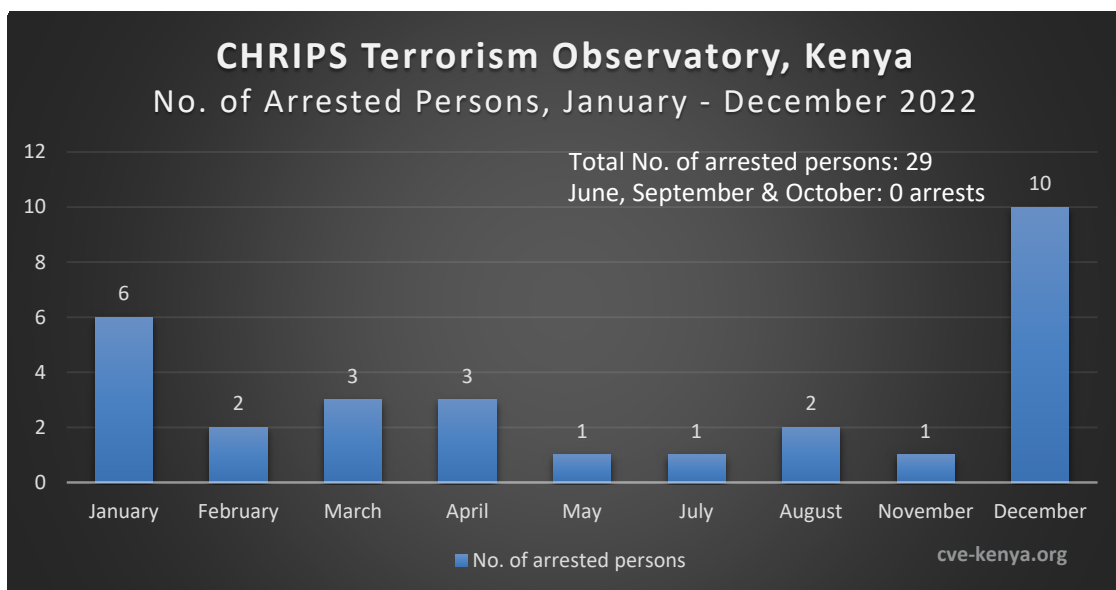
Terror-related arrests
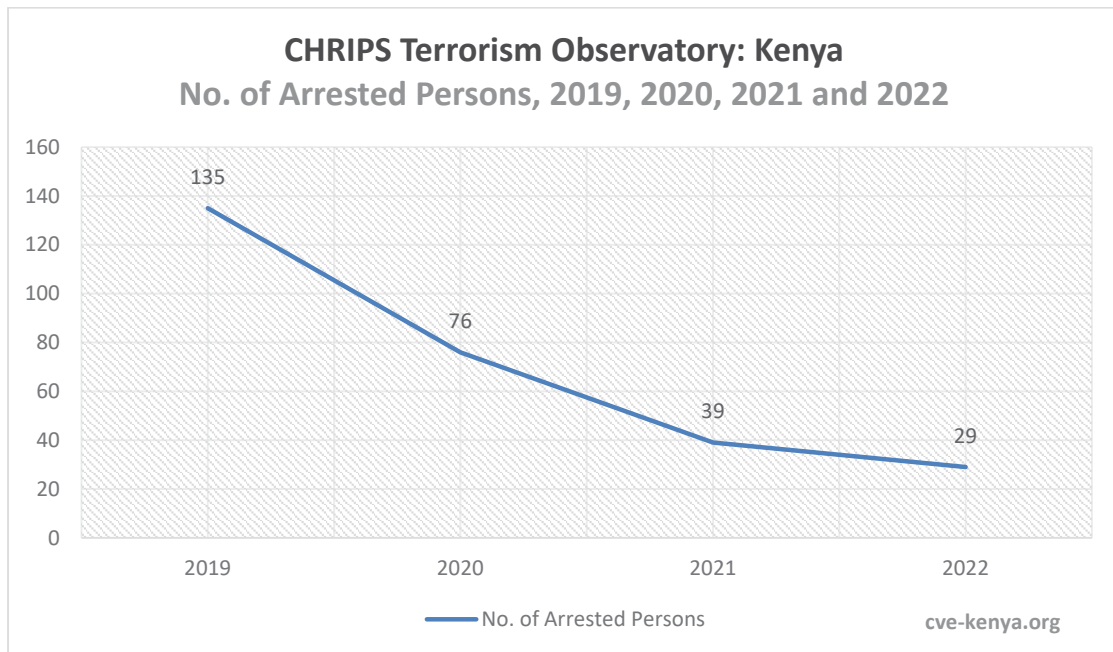
Figure 11: Number of arrested persons 2019 - 2022

By the end of 2022, the media reported that 29 people had been arrested on different counts of terrorism or being involved in a terror-related activity. This is a decrease from 39 people arrested in 2021 and a drop from 135 people arrested in 2019. In 2022, persons were arrested on suspicion of supplying security information to a terror group; membership to a terror organisation; planning attacks within Kenya; possessing illegal firearms; and having links to terror activities.

Figure 12: Terror-related Arrests, January-December 2022

The highest record of most arrests in the period under review was in December when ten people were arrested in 3 separate incidents, 6 in Garissa, 1 in Kwale and 3 in an unspecified county. January shows the second-highest recording of the year, totalling six arrests including four unidentified persons who were arrested on suspicion of having ties to the Al Shabaab in Lamu county.[16]

March and April both recorded 3 arrests in each month.

In addition to 3 people who were apprehended in 2 separate incidents in March in Garissa and Kilifi counties, an unspecified number of persons were also arrested on 3 March in Garissa for possessing illegal firearms in an intelligence-led operation by a multi-agency security team with assistance from residents.[17] May, July and November recorded the least number of arrests, with one person being apprehended in each month.

Arrests by Counties

CHRIPS Terrorism Observatory: Kenya
Arrests per County, January - December 2022

Total No. of arrested persons: 29

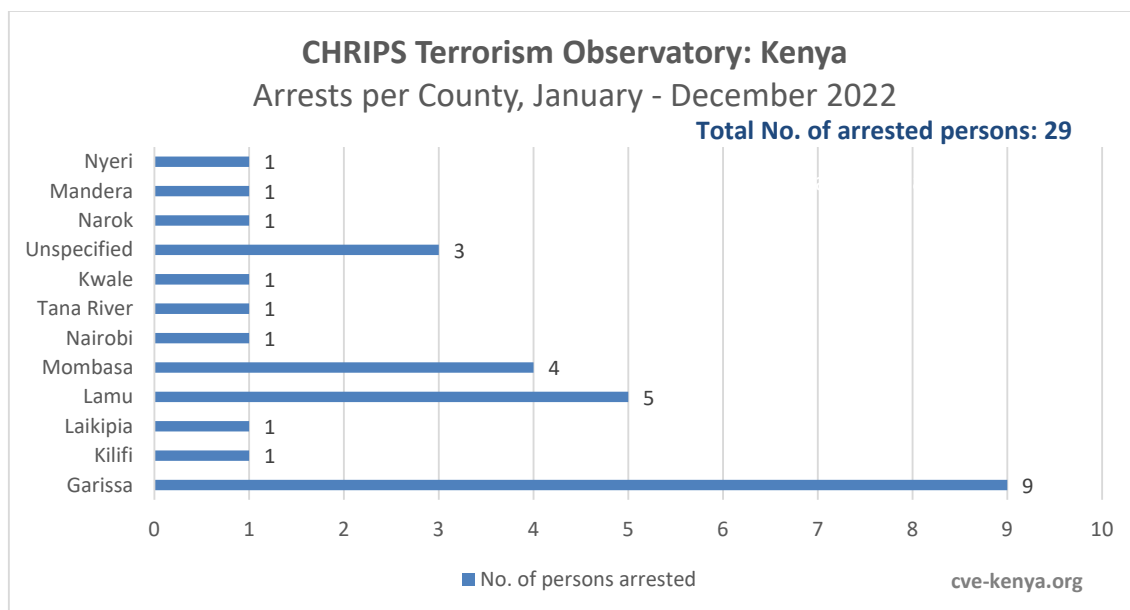| County	No. of persons arrested
Nyeri	1
Mandera	1
Narok	1
Unspecified	3
Kwale	1
Tana River	1
Nairobi	1
Mombasa	4
Lamu	5
Laikipia	1
Kilifi	1
Garissa	9

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Figure 13: Arrests per county, January-December 2022

Garissa County recorded the highest number of arrests during the period under review. Lamu and Mombasa counties recorded the second-highest number of arrests during the period under review while Laikipia, Kilifi, Nairobi, Kwale, Narok, Mandera, Nyeri and Tana River reported one terror-related arrest each. In Lamu, police arrested 4 unidentified persons on suspicion of being behind a spate of attacks that occurred between the end of 2021 and January 2022.[18] Unlike the previous year, in 2022 terror-related arrests were recorded in Nyeri, Narok, Kwale, Tana River, Lamu and Laikipia counties.

In Laikipia County, an identified male student at Meru National Polytechnic, who confessed to joining Al Shabaab military group, was arrested while taking photos of a British military camp in Nanyuki on 2 August.[19] In Tana River, an identified male was apprehended in the Bura East sub-county on suspicion of supplying information to the Al Shabaab terror group. The police believe the information was used in a series of attacks that happened throughout the year along the Lamu Port -South Sudan- Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) corridor.[20]

[16]ACLED. (2022). Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2022, www.acleddata.com

[17]Wairumu, M. (2022) "Police arrest suspects, recover AK47 guns in Garissa" The Star, 3 March, https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2022-03-03-police-arrest-suspects-recover-ak47-guns-in-garissa/

[18]ACLED. (2022). Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2022, www.acleddata.com

[19]Kiage, N. (2022) "Student'make confession' after being arrested taking photos of British camp", Nairobi News, 2 August, https://nairobinews.nation.africa/student-makes-confession-after-being-arrested-taking-photos-of-british-camp/

[20]Ombati, C. (2022) "Police detain al-Shabaab informant over Lamu, Garissa attacks" The Star, 21 November, https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2022-11-21-police-detain-al-shabaab-informant-over-lamu-garissa-attacks/
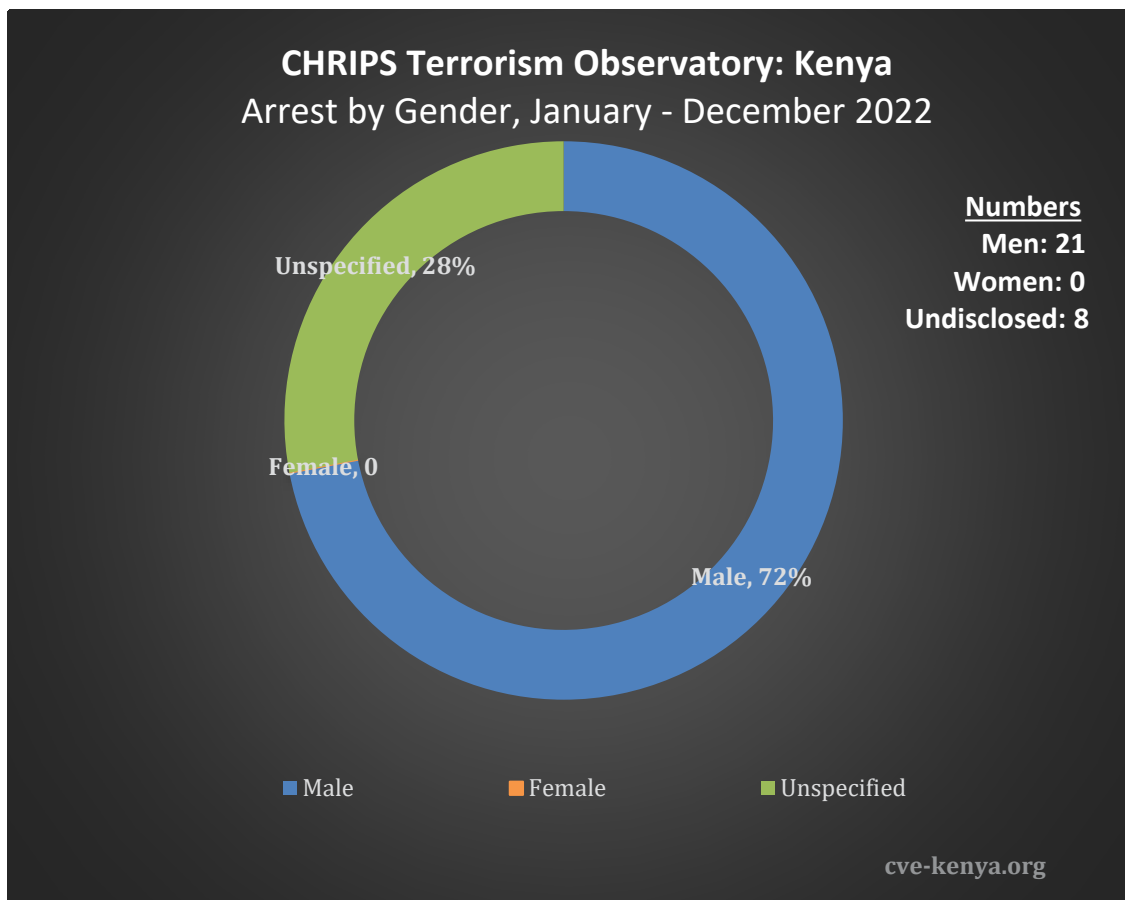
Arrests by Gender

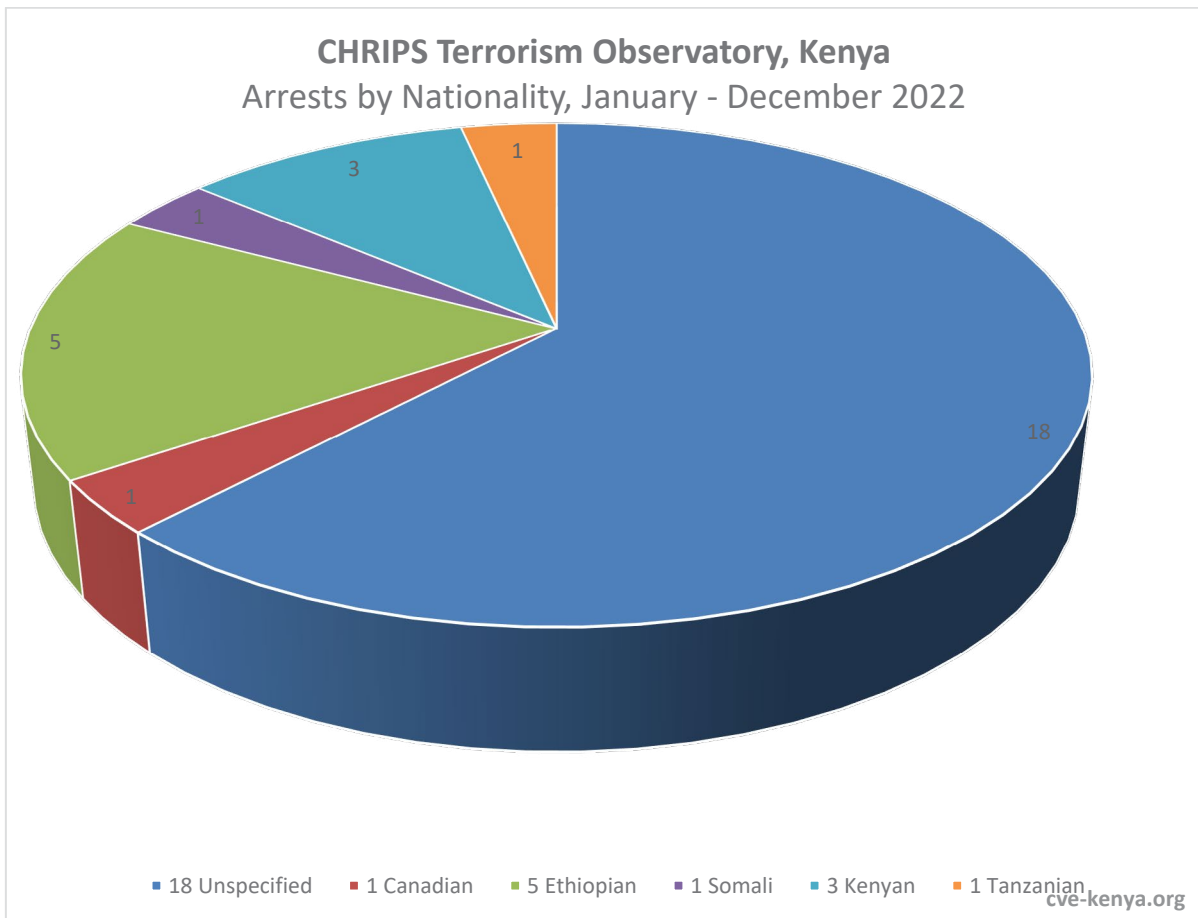**Figure 14: Arrests by Gender, January-December 2022**

Eleven persons out of the 29 arrested in 2022 were men. In Mombasa county, 3 identified men were reportedly arrested in the Barsheba area on 13 April because of ties to the Al Shabaab terror group.[21] In Shanzu, Kilifi County, an unidentified person was apprehended and detained by six suspected police officers. It is reported that the individual was a former Al Shabaab ex-convict at Shanzu and was arrested moments after being released from the *Shimo la Tewa prison*. He later resurfaced on 3 September 2022.[22] Reports did not disclose nor specify the gender of 8 others arrested during the period under review.

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[21] Mghenyi, C. (2022) 'Three arrested as anti-terror police foil Easter attack in Coast' Th Star, 19 April, Three arrested as anti-terror police foil Easter attack in Coast (the-star.co.ke)

[22] ACLED (2022). Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 2022, www.acleddata.com

Arrests by Nationality

CHRIPS Terrorism Observatory, Kenya
Arrests by Nationality, January - December 2022

■ 18 Unspecified ■ 1 Canadian ■ 5 Ethiopian ■ 1 Somali ■ 3 Kenyan ■ 1 Tanzanian

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Figure 15: Arrests by Nationality, January-December 2022

Five Ethiopians, three Kenyans, one Canadian, one Somali citizen and one Tanzanian were arrested in 2022 in relation to terror activities. Additionally, 18 people were reportedly arrested, and their nationalities remain unspecified.

Acknowledgement