

Trends of Violent Extremist Attacks and Arrests in Kenya,

January – December 2024

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About this Report

This report draws on data from the Terror Attacks and Arrests Observatory of the Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS Terrorism Observatory). It presents data collected, disaggregated, and analysed from 1 January to 31 December 2024. CHRIPS uses verified reports from both traditional and new media, as well as information from our CVE research hub partners, to generate a database on terror-related occurrences in Kenya. Learn more about the CVE research hub here. Due to limitations in data collection, the information provided in this report is based solely on what CHRIPS was able to verify.

Key highlights

- In 2024, the CHRIPS Observatory recorded 85 terror-related incidents.
- Attacks increased from 72 incidents reported in 2023 to 85 in 2024.
- Four counties were affected: 41 attacks in Mandera, 33 in Garissa, 8 in Lamu, and 3 in Wajir.
- 107 people were reportedly killed, compared to 178 fatalities reported in 2023.
- Fatalities included 29 civilians, 28 security officials, and 36 Al-Shabaab militants. 14 others were unspecified.
- 124 people were injured, including 54 security officials, 40 civilians, 27 Al-Shabaab militants, and three unspecified individuals.
- November recorded the highest number of attacks in a single month, with 13 incidents.
- Militants kidnapped three people. All three incidents were recorded in Mandera.
- 161 people were arrested for terror-related offences: 43 men, three women, and 115 individuals whose gender was not specified in the reports.
- The nationalities of those arrested were 113 Kenyans, 37 Ugandans, 1 Tanzanian, and 10 people of undisclosed nationalities.

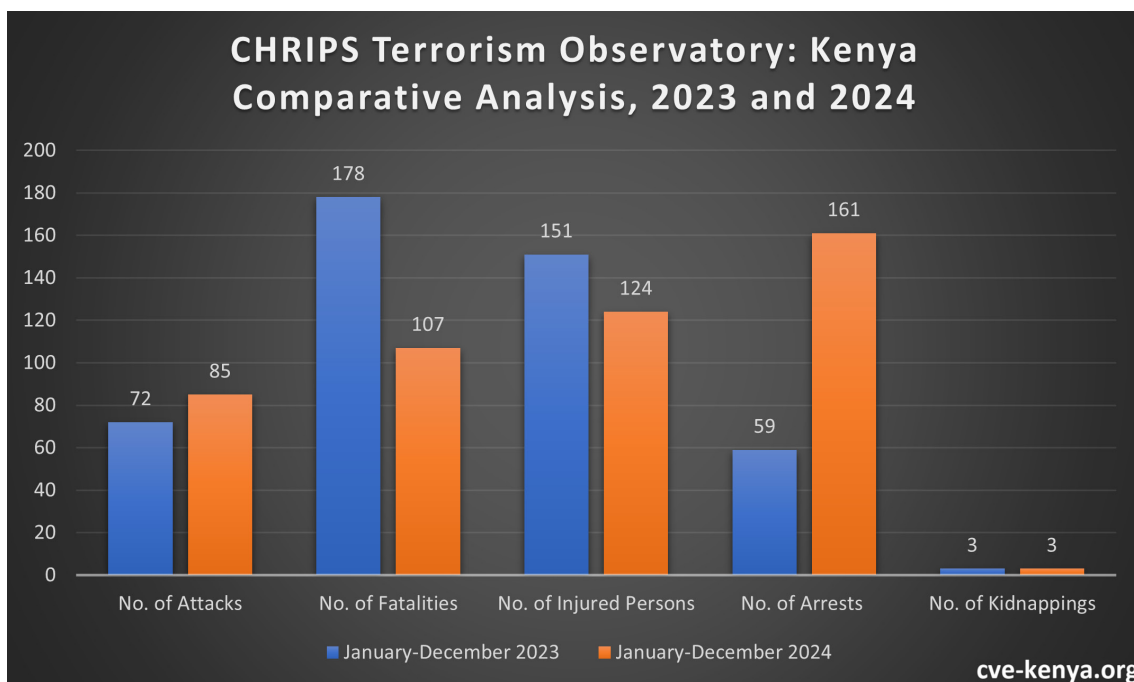


Figure 1: Summary and Comparative Analysis, 2023 and 2024

¹ On three incidences, the actual number was unspecified. During two counter-terrorism incidences, “several” militants were injured, and in one incidence, perpetrated by Al-Shabaab militants, several security officials were injured.

Terror Attacks

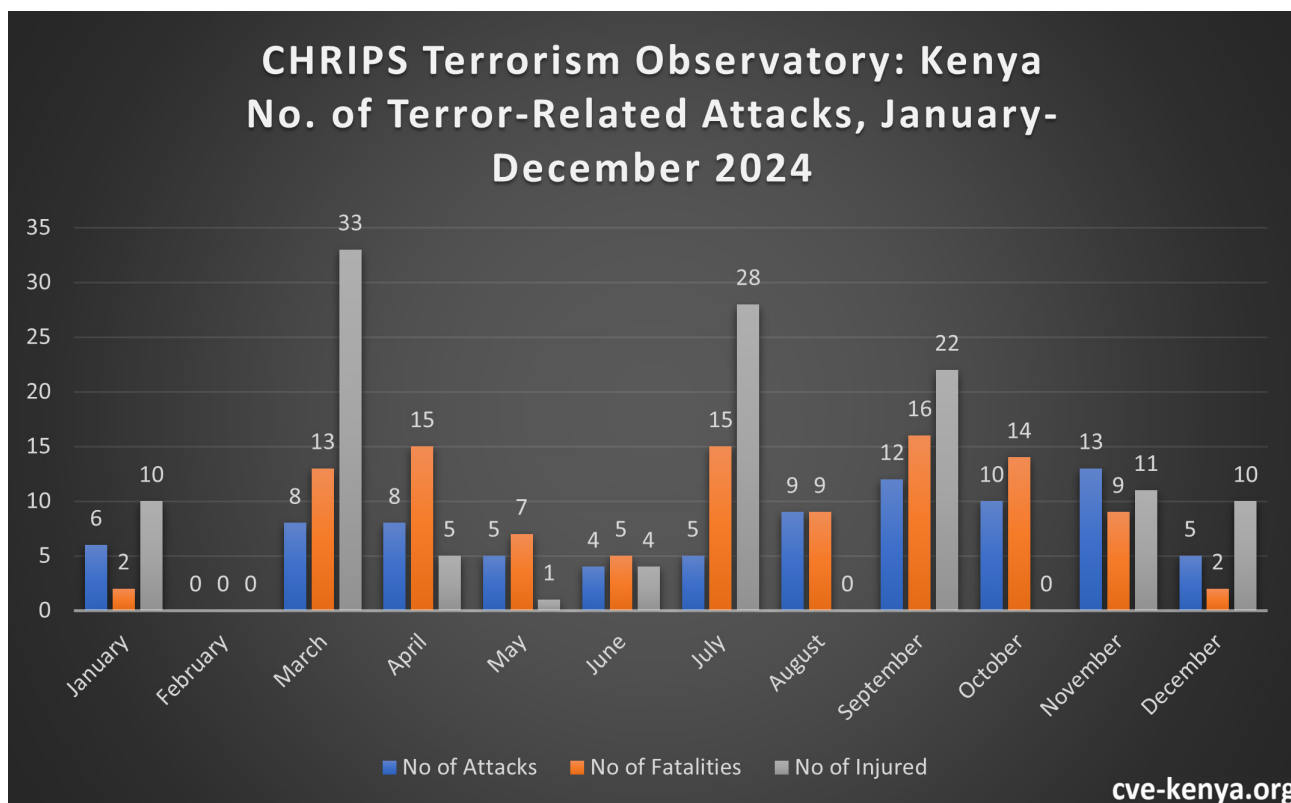


Figure 2: No. of Terror-Related Attacks in January-December 2024.

The CHRIPS Observatory recorded 85 terror-related attacks in 2024, a 19% increase compared to 72 in 2023. As illustrated in Figure 2 above, between January and March, there were 14 terror attacks where 15 people were killed and 43 persons were injured. February was the only month with no reported terror attacks. March recorded the highest number of injuries in a single month, with 33 people injured. Of these 33, 20 people were injured after an improvised explosive device (IED) went off in a food kiosk on 25 March in Mandera. Two police officers and two civilians were also killed, including the owner of the kiosk.²

Between April and June, 17 terror attacks were recorded, resulting in 27 fatalities and 10 injuries. On 29 April, 13 people were killed and five injured in an explosion in Elwak, Mandera.³ Militants had allegedly hidden IEDs in a donkey cart. Animal-borne terrorist attacks are increasing as Al Shabaab militants use donkeys to evade detection. A similar attack was noted on 18 January in Bula Hawa, Mandera. Police reported that a remote explosive detonation system had been attached to a

donkey cart undergoing routine luggage checks at the border. The donkey cart operator detonated the IED while border police officers approached to inspect the cart. One police officer was killed, and four others were injured.

During this period, civilians, security officials, and hospitals were targeted. In two incidents, militants targeted civilians in healthcare facilities in Mandera and Garissa. On 13 April, four suspected Al-Shabaab militants, armed with rifles and dressed in military attire, accosted guards at the Elwak Referral Hospital in Mandera. They assaulted them and demanded to know the whereabouts of the hospital's doctors. They left after not acquiring the required information. Moreover, on 7 June, suspected Al-Shabaab militants shot four non-local residents and workers at a health centre in Bogyar village in Garissa. Four others managed to escape unharmed. The civilians were reportedly carrying out renovations at the health centre when the suspected militants shot them at close range after subjecting them to torture.⁹

² Kinyanjui M. (2024) "Two Cops among Three Dead in Mandera Food Kiosk Blast," *The Star*, 25 March, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/2024-03-25-two-cops-among-three-dead-in-mandera-food-kiosk-blast>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

See <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-04-29-death-toll-in-mandera-ied-explosion-rises-to-13>

See <https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/mandera/blast-in-elwak-town-disrupts-normal-operations-4606802>

Between July and September 2024, 26 terror attacks were recorded, resulting in 40 fatalities, and more than 50¹⁰ were injured. This period recorded the highest number of people killed and wounded in militant attacks. Security agencies also foiled at least eight attacks in Garissa and Mandera. Moreover, it was observed that suspected Al-Shabaab militants targeted government vehicles, either killing, injuring, or kidnapping government staff and escaping with government vehicles. In Mandera on 10 August, militants armed with firearms ambushed a government vehicle belonging to the Deputy County Commissioner for Mandera East.¹¹ They killed the driver and stole the vehicle. A 6-year-old who was in the car was also kidnapped but was later found in Somalia and safely returned to Kenya.¹²

Between October and December 2024, there were 28 reported terror attacks, resulting in 25 deaths and 21 injuries. This period recorded the highest number of terror attacks. On 16 October, militants carried out five coordinated terror attacks in a single day across multiple wards in Lafey Sub-County, Mandera. They targeted a police vehicle, leading to the death of a Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) officer and the kidnapping of a passenger. In the same month, militants also attacked a police station in Lafey town, followed by attacks on three forward operating bases in Lafey (one in Damasa Ward and two in Fino Ward) and another near the border. They also ambushed a military convoy between Fino and Lafey towns.

⁵ See <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/nairobi/article/2001421697/how-donkeys-have-made-war-against-terror-more-complex>

⁶ See <https://nation.africa/kenya/news/animal-borne-explosives-the-changing-face-of-terror--4500462#story>

⁷ See <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/donkey-cart-bomb-kills-kenyan-police-officer-injures-2-others/3112916>

⁸ Wanjala E. (2024) "Security Heightened after al Shabaab Raid Elwak Hospital," The Star, 15 April, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-04-15-security-heightened-after-al-shabaab-raid-elwak-hospital>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

⁹ Oruta B. (2024) "Two Construction Workers Shot Dead on Dadaab-Garissa Road," The Star, 8 June, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-06-08-two-construction-workers-shot-dead-on-dadaab-garissa-road>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

¹⁰ During two counter-terrorism incidences in Garissa, "several" militants were injured, and in one incidence in Mandera, perpetrated by Al-Shabaab militants, "several" security officials were injured.

¹¹ <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-08-12-six-year-old-boy-abducted-by-al-shabaab-abandoned-in-somali>

¹² Astariko S. (2024) "Mandera Security Officers Pursue Vehicle Stolen by al Shabaab," The Star, 12 August, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-08-12-mandera-security-officers-pursue-vehicle-stolen-by-al-shabaab>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

Location of Attacks

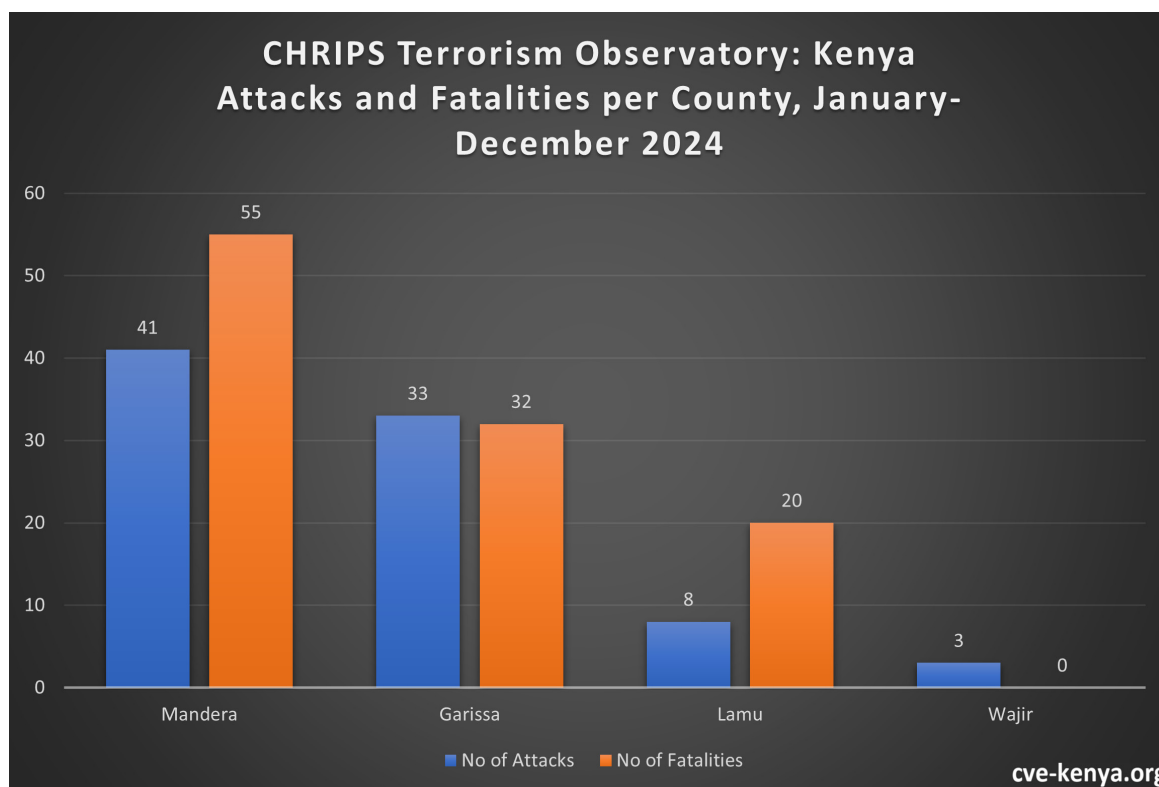


Figure 3: Attacks and Fatalities per County

During the period under review, terror incidents were reported in four counties in the North Eastern and Coastal Regions of Kenya. Most of the incidents occurred in Mandera, which recorded 41 terror-related attacks and 55 fatalities across various incidents. The main affected areas were Lafey Town, Fino, and Damasa. The most common targets were security officials, with numerous police camps, forward operating bases, military convoys, and government personnel being attacked.

Garissa County recorded the second-highest number of attacks (33) and fatalities (32). The affected locations included Fafi, Alango, Hagadera, and the Garissa-Dadaab Road.

Lamu experienced eight attacks resulting in 20 deaths, primarily perpetrated by Al-Shabaab. The main affected locations were the Ziwa la Kibokoni and Milhoi areas. Additionally, in Wajir, security officials and civilians were the primary targets in the three attacks.

Trend Analysis per County

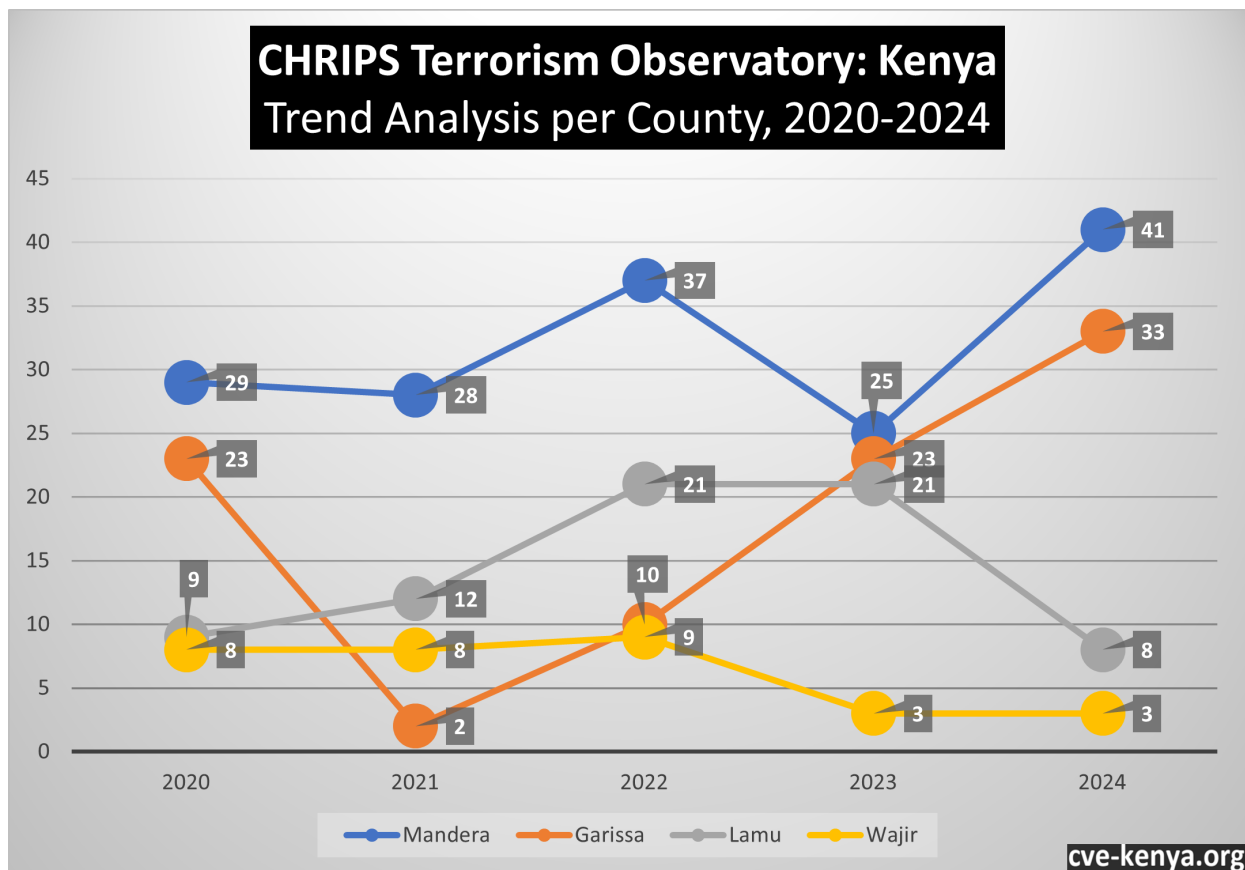


Figure 4: Trend Analysis per County 2020-2024.

Mandera has consistently recorded the highest number of attacks in Kenya over the past five years. Attacks decreased from 29 in 2020 to 28 in 2021 before rising to 37 in 2022. In 2023, the number of attacks fell to 25 but increased sharply to 41 in 2024. In Garissa, recorded attacks decreased from 23 in 2020 to just 2 in 2021 before rising sharply from 10 in 2022 to 23 in 2023 and now standing at 33 in 2024. Lamu has experienced a steady rise in attacks from 2020 to 2023, followed by a significant decline in 2024. Finally, CHRIPS noted a decrease in attacks in Wajir over the past five years.

Targets

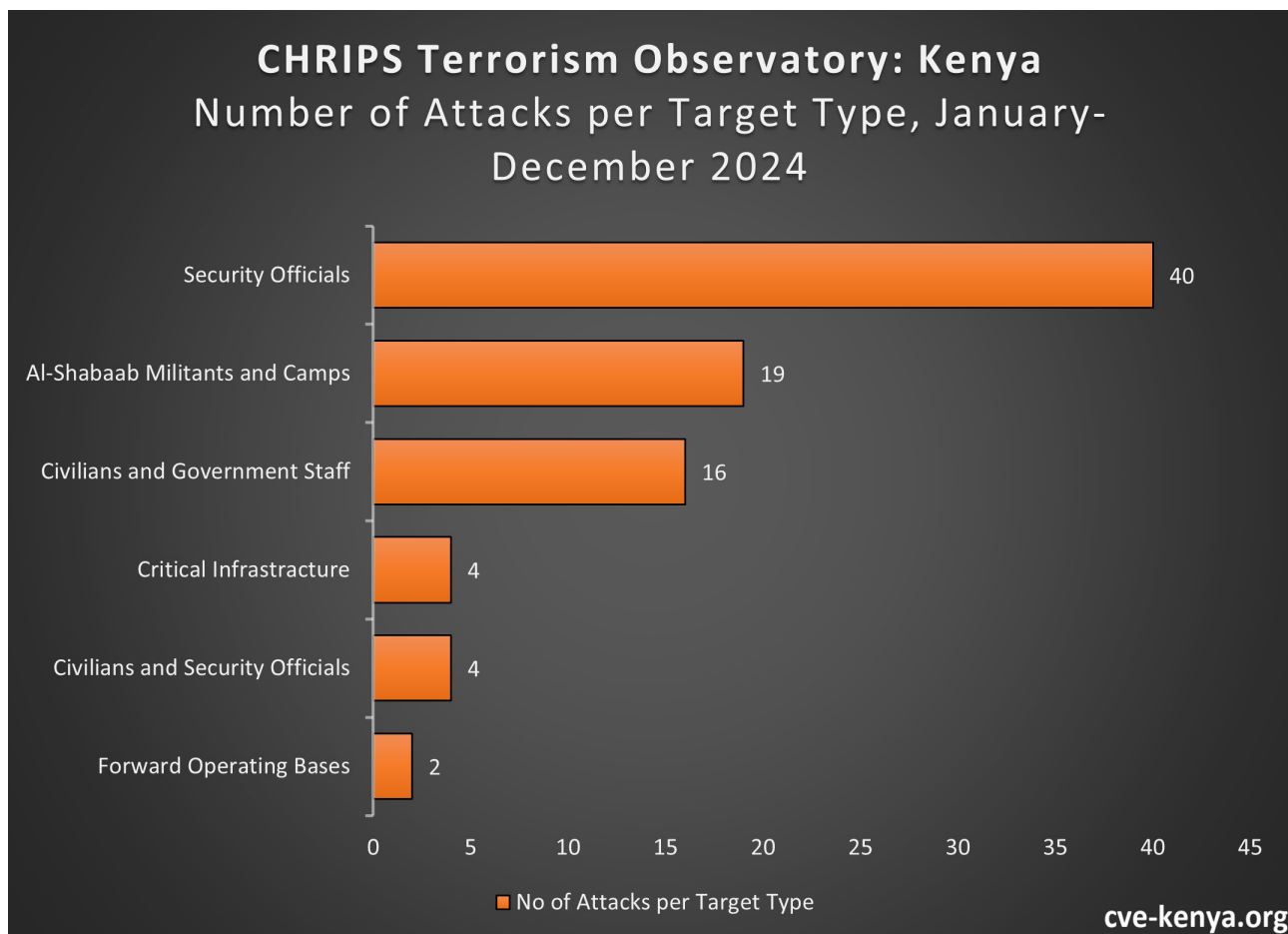


Figure 5: Number of Attacks per Target Type.

Out of the 85 attacks reported during the period under review, approximately 47% involved security officials (see Figure 9), either being targeted by Al-Shabaab militants or during counter-terrorism operations. On 11 July, suspected Al-Shabaab militants ambushed and killed four members of the Elite Special Operations Group (SOG), leaving six others injured near the Banisa-Derkale border in Mandera County. The Elite SOG officials had been tracking the suspected militants.¹³ Most attacks against security officials occurred after assaults on police camps and stations by suspected Al-Shabaab militants, triggering exchanges of gunfire.¹⁴ On 21 November, suspected Al-Shabaab militants detonated an IED in Bamba Ola, targeting a military convoy. This attack resulted in the deaths of three military officials, with several others injured. A subsequent exchange of gunfire followed. Two forward

operating bases were targeted in Mandera County on 19 October and 27 October, in Fino and Damasa wards, respectively. In Fino, at least eight people were killed, while in Damasa, at least three were killed.¹⁵

Al-Shabaab militants and their camps remained targets in 2024, attributed to increased intelligence-led counter-terrorism operations. This year, collaborative efforts from joint teams of the Elite SOG, Border Patrol Unit, National Police Reservists, and local police officers were evident in their respective locations.¹⁶ On 5 August, multi-agency teams conducted several raids targeting Al-Shabaab positions in Mandera, Wajir, and Garissa Counties. At the Mandera-Wajir border, an intelligence-led operation was executed on suspected Al-Shabaab hideouts spread across the Iresqinto,

¹³ Astariko S. (2024) "Mandera Security Officers Pursue Vehicle Stolen by al Shabaab," The Star, 12 August, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-08-12-mandera-security-officers-pursue-vehicle-stolen-by-al-shabaab>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

¹⁴ Ombati C. (2024) "Cops Repulse Suspected Terrorists Who Attacked Station," The Star, 17 October, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-10-17-police-repulse-suspected-al-shabaab-terrorists-who-attacked-lafey-police-stations>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

Kutayu, and Boji areas. Security forces recovered several buried items, including AK-47 and PKM ammunition, medical equipment, drugs, and several jerricans filled with water.¹⁷ On 14 August, a multi-agency team raided an Al-Shabaab makeshift camp in the Digdiga area in Fafi within Garissa County, resulting in the deaths of two suspected terrorists and injuries to several others. According to Police reports, the raid was conducted following complaints from locals about frequent harassment by the militants, who were planning an attack targeting security officers across the Sub-County.¹⁸

Sixteen attacks were targeted at civilians and government staff. Government vehicles and staff were targeted. Non-locals were also targeted in their workplaces. In addition, social places, like restaurants, were attacked. In 2024, at least two attacks occurred

at eateries in Mandera County, including one on 25 March, which resulted in four deaths and 20 injuries and another on 24 July, which caused five injuries.²¹

Communication and health infrastructure were also targeted. On 4 January, suspected Al-Shabaab militants attacked the Fincharo Safaricom mast in Mandera, forcing National Police Reservists to flee and equally destroying a generator, fuel tank, and solar panels. On 31 July, Al-Shabaab militants attacked a Safaricom communication mast in Banissa Constituency, Mandera County. They also destroyed several pieces of equipment and injured a Kenya Police Reservist. On 14 November, an ambulance evacuating a patient from Kutulo Hospital to Mandera County Referral was struck by an IED near Iresuki village. The driver sustained injuries, while the patient and others on board were reported to be in stable condition.

¹⁵ ACLED (2024) "Situation Update | November 2024. Kenya Battles Threats from Communal Militias and al-Shabaab," ACLED, 25 November, <https://acleddata.com/2024/11/25/kenya-battles-threats-from-communal-militias-and-al-shabaab-november-2024/>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

¹⁶ Ombati C. (2024) "Security Team Raids Two Al-Shabaab Camps in Garissa," The Star, 6 November, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-11-06-security-team-raids-two-al-shabaab-camps-in-garissa>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

¹⁷ Ombati C. (2024) "Two al Shabaab Suspects Killed in Ambush in Garissa," The Star, 15 August, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-08-15-two-al-shabaab-suspects-killed-in-ambush-in-garissa>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

¹⁸ Ibid. <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-08-15-two-al-shabaab-suspects-killed-in-ambush-in-garissa>

¹⁹ Oruta B. (2024) "Two Construction Workers Shot Dead on Dadaab-Garissa Road," The Star, 8 June, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-06-08-two-construction-workers-shot-dead-on-dadaab-garissa-road>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

²⁰ Kinyanjui M. (2024) "Two Cops among Three Dead in Mandera Food Kiosk Blast," The Star, 25 March, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/2024-03-25-two-cops-among-three-dead-in-mandera-food-kiosk-blast>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

²¹ Kiilu D. (2024) "5 People Injured in IED Blast at Restaurant in Mandera," The Star, 24 July, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-07-24-5-people-injured-in-ied-blast-at-restaurant-in-mandera>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

Targets against security officials.

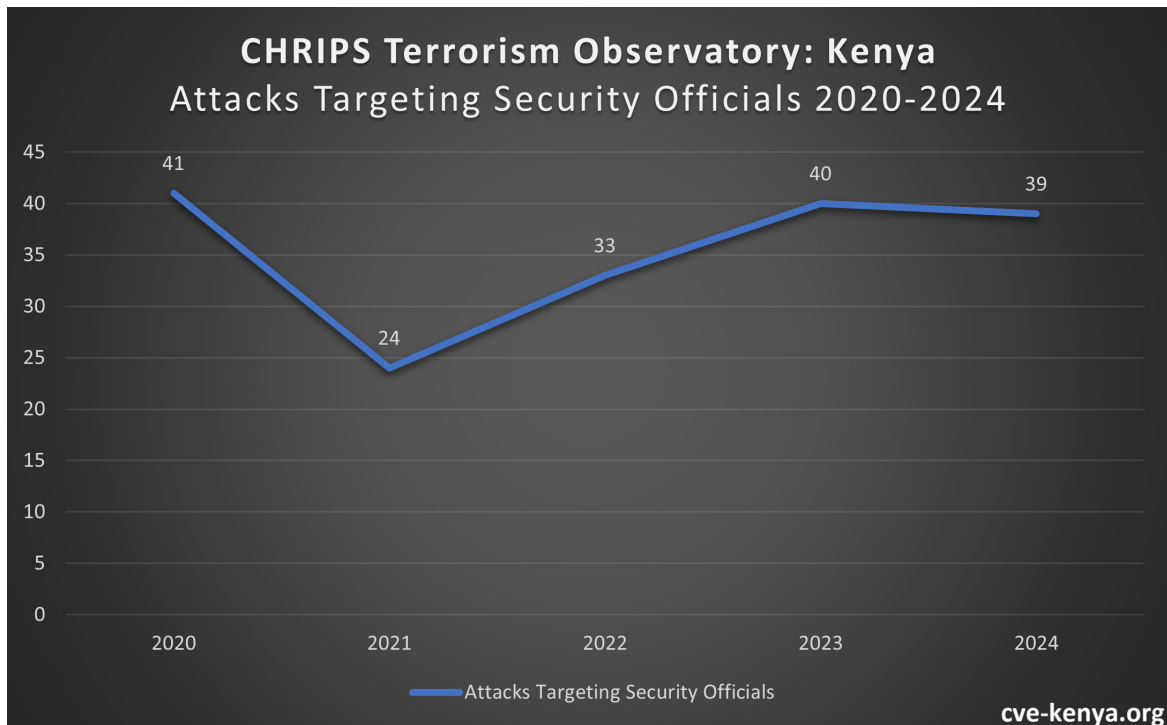


Figure 6: Number of Attacks Targeting Security Officials in the Last Five Years.

As shown in Figure 6, the number of attacks targeting security officials decreased from 40 in 2023 to 39 in 2024. Security officials were targeted a total of 39 times. Twenty-two attacks against security officials were recorded in Mandera (resulting in 16 fatalities), 12 in Garissa (resulting in 2 fatalities), three in Lamu (resulting in 10 fatalities), and two in Wajir (No fatalities were recorded) (see Figure 9). Most attacks targeting security officials were by suspected Al-Shabaab militants, mainly using firearms and explosive devices (see Figure 10).

Fatalities and Injured Persons

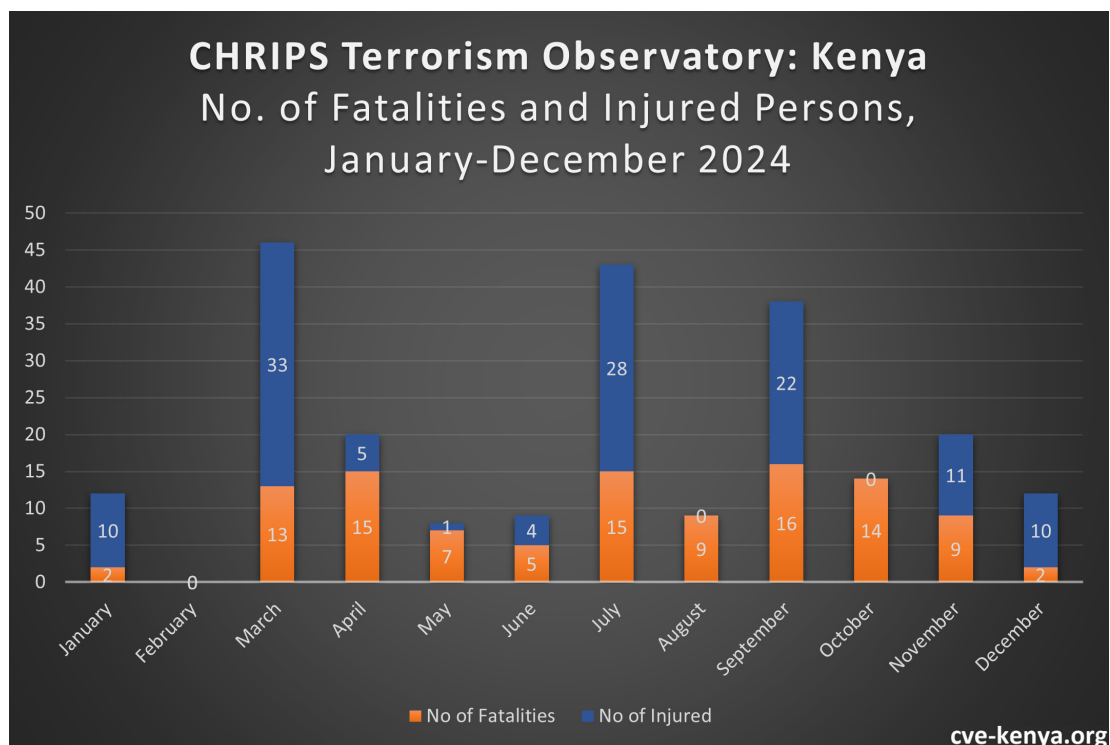


Figure 7: No. of Fatalities and Injured Persons in January-December 2024.

An estimated 107 people were killed, and 124 were injured in terror-related incidents in 2024. The highest fatalities were reported in September, July, April, and October. No deaths or injuries were recorded in February. Furthermore, no injuries were reported in August despite at least nine deaths. The highest number of injuries occurred in March, July, and September, resulting from eight, five, and 12 attacks, respectively. The largest number of injuries from a single incident occurred during an attack on a food kiosk in Mandera on 25 March, where two police officers died, and at least 20 civilians were injured.²² On 13 July, at least four Al-Shabaab militants were killed and eight others wounded during a multi-agency counter-terrorism and border operation in Mandera.²³

²² Kinyanjui M. (2024) "Two Cops among Three Dead in Mandera Food Kiosk Blast," The Star, 25 March, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/2024-03-25-two-cops-among-three-dead-in-mandera-food-kiosk-blast>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

²³ Githinji I. (2024) "Security Forces Kill Four Al Shabaab Militants, Recover Weapons," The Standard, 13 July, <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001498996/security-forces-kill-four-al-shabaab-militants-recover-weapons>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

Fatalities per Target Type

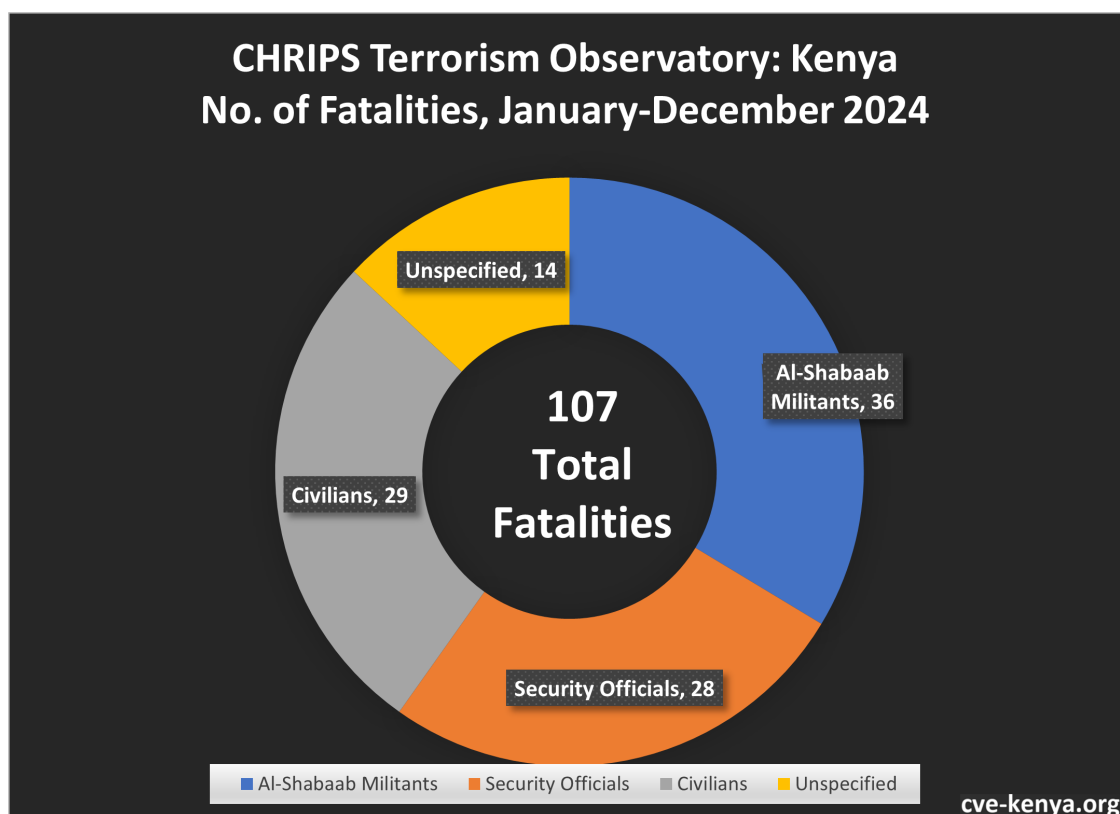


Figure 8: No of Fatalities in January-December 2024

The highest number of fatalities recorded was among Al-Shabaab militants, which can be attributed to the increased number of intelligence-led counter-terrorism operations in 2024. Multi-agency teams raided numerous makeshift Al-Shabaab camps and operating bases, disrupting logistical plans and foiling planned attacks. At least 28 Kenyan security officials from various units were killed (see Figure 9).

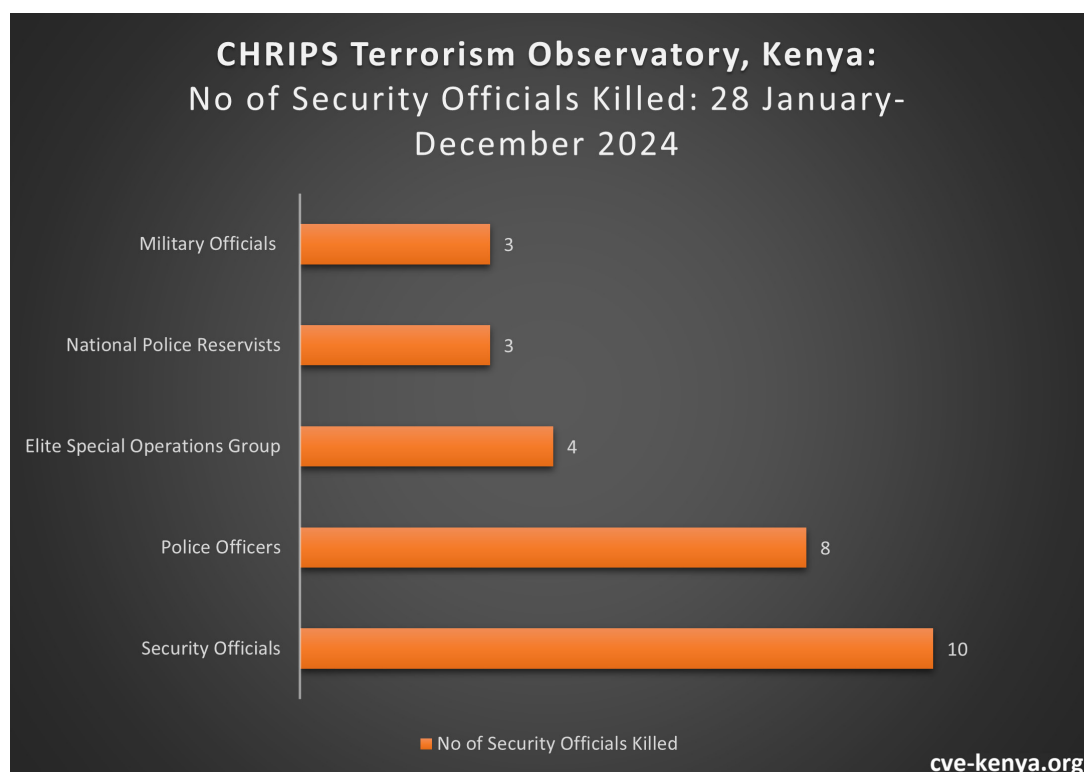


Figure 9: No of Security Officials Killed in January-December 2024.

Mandera recorded the highest number of fatalities among security officials, at 16; Lamu had 10; Garissa had 2.

Weapons Used

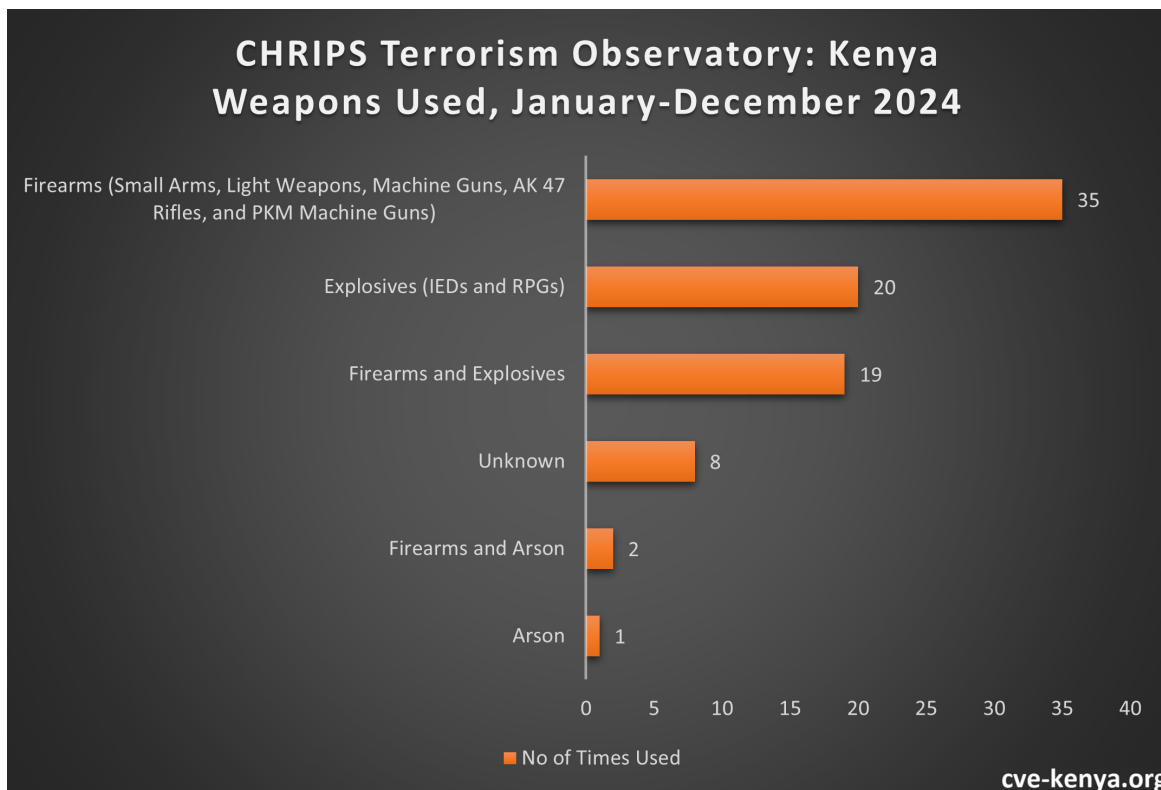


Figure 10: No of Times the Weapons were Used, January-December 2024

Firearms were employed in 35 terror-related incidents, closely followed by explosive devices, which were used in 20 terror attacks. Suspected Al-Shabaab militants increasingly hid IEDs in donkey carts and detonated them at police checkpoints. Firearms used included small arms, light weapons, machine guns, AK 47 rifles, and the PKM machine guns, while the most prevalent explosives were rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Suspected Al-Shabaab militants also combined the weapons, using firearms and explosives together in 19 terror incidents, which mainly involved attacks on police posts and military camps in Mandera and Garissa.

Militants also used firearms and arson in two attacks

targeting civilians in Lamu. On 9 April, suspected Al-Shabaab militants reportedly harassed farmers in the Milhoi area in Lamu. When an alarm was raised, they ambushed vehicles, shot and killed a driver and his turnboy, and then burnt the vehicles before fleeing. On 1 June, suspected Al-Shabaab militants shot and killed an elderly man in Kibokoni village.

After killing him, they went ahead and torched his home while his neighbours fled for safety upon hearing gunshots. Arson was also used in one incident in Wajir on 15 September when suspected Al-Shabaab militants set fire to a commercial goods truck in Mahatathe, Wajir, but no casualties were reported.

²⁴ Marita B. (2024) "At Least 2 Killed, Vehicles Burnt in Lamu al Shabaab Attack," *The Star*, 9 April, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-04-09-at-least-2-killed-vehicles-burnt-in-lamu-al-shabaab-attack>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

Terror-Related Arrests

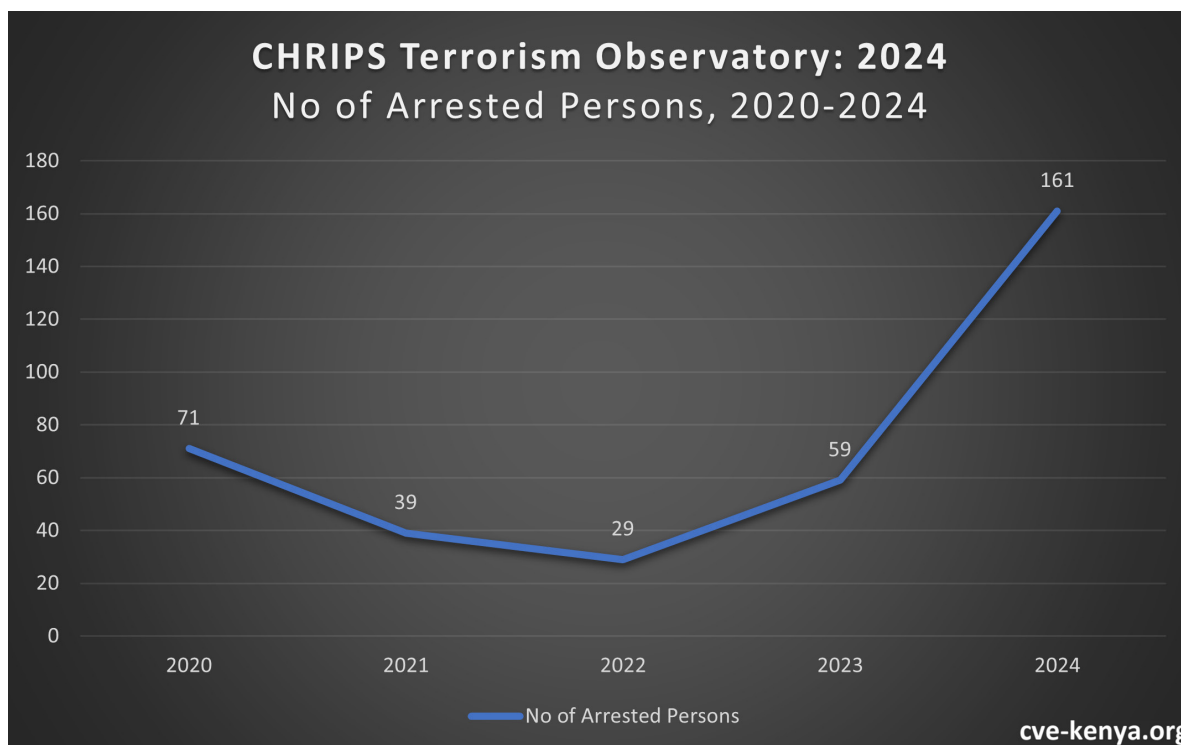


Figure 11: No of Arrested Persons in the Last Five Years

Data reveals that 161 people were charged with various terrorism-related offences in 2024. This marks an increase from 59 arrested in 2023 and 29 arrested in 2022. Those arrested were charged and accused of travelling to Somalia to join the Al-Shabaab group; facilitating and financing necessities of the Al-Shabaab group; conspiracy to commit a terrorist act in Kenya; and conducting a terrorist act.²⁵

On 13 January, a 22-year-old Tanzanian man was arrested at the Kenya-Somalia border while en route to Dhobley in Somalia, an area believed to be under the strict control of the Al-Shabaab terror group. He was also found in possession of both Islamic and Christian

religious literature, five Tanzanian identification cards, a phone with a Safaricom SIM card, and a Tanzanite debit card.²⁶ Additionally, the largest arrest occurred in January 2024 when Pastor Mackenzie and 94 others were arrested and charged under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) in connection with the Shakahola Massacre in Kilifi County. In January 2024, Pastor Paul Mackenzie of the Good News International Ministries, along with 94 of his followers, was charged under the POTA after 429 bodies were exhumed from the Shakahola Forest. The charges included manslaughter, assault, engaging in organised criminal activity, and violating their right to education.²⁷ The case was postponed to March 2025 due to a shortage of prosecutors available to conduct the trial.²⁸

²⁵ Marita B. (2024) "Wanted Terror Suspect Linked to Killings of Cop, Two Chiefs Arrested," The Star, 29 April, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-04-29-wanted-terror-suspect-linked-to-killings-of-cop-two-chiefs-arrested>; Kinyanjui M. (2024) "Terror Suspect behind Brutal Killings in 2019 Arrested," Citizen Digital, 29 April, <https://www.citizen.digital/news/terror-suspect-behind-brutal-killings-in-2019-arrested-n341218>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

²⁶ Ombati C. (2024) "Police Detain Tanzanian National Allegedly en Route to Join Al-Shabaab," The Star, 16 January, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-01-16-police-detain-tanzanian-national-allegedly-en-route-to-join-al-shabaab>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

²⁷ See file:///D:/CHRIPS/FINAL%20Trends_of_Violent_Extremist_Attacks_and_Arrests_in_Kenya_2023.pdf; Ocharo B. and Ongala M. (2024) "Paul Mackenzie to face murder, terrorism charges: DPP," Nation, January 16, <https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/kilifi/dpp-approves-10-charges-against-shakahola-suspects-4493544> (Accessed on 11 March 2024).

²⁸ Ocharo B. (2024) "Shakahola Massacre: Why Case against Paul Mackenzie Was Pushed to 2025," Nation, 11 November, <https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/mombasa/shakahola-massacre-case-pushed-to-2025-4819572>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

Arrests by Counties

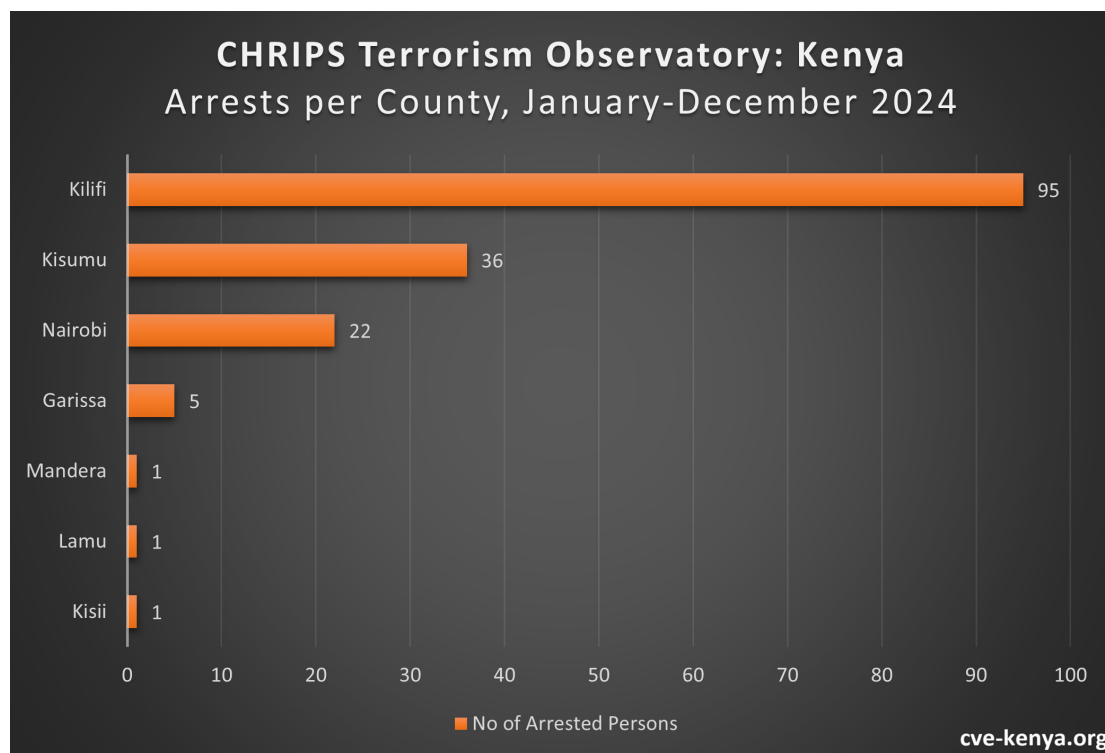


Figure 12: Arrests per County, January-December 2024

Kilifi County recorded the highest number of arrests (95) during the period under review. Kisumu had the second-highest number of arrests (36), with the suspects undergoing leadership training that was later suspected to be terrorism-related training. Garissa recorded five arrests, with the suspects accused of allegedly travelling to Somalia to join the Al-Shabaab terror group. One suspect, a 22-year-old man, and four others were arrested during an intelligence-led operation in Garissa.²⁹

Among those arrested in Nairobi, one suspect was accused of facilitating financial support for Al-Shabaab, including fundraising and money laundering for the terror group.³⁰ Three others were charged with the conspiracy to commit a terrorist attack in Kenya using

a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device³¹ (VBIED). Additionally, 17 suspects were arrested as part of an international counter-terrorism operation jointly implemented by INTERPOL and AFRIPOL in November-December 2024, aimed at identifying and apprehending individuals linked to terrorism and strengthening key border controls.³² In Mandera, the suspect was accused of transporting two individuals who allegedly planted the IEDs that detonated within the premises. However, the individuals who planted the IED escaped into Somalia and were not arrested. The arrested suspect was identified as a taxi driver and was also linked to the food kiosk terror attack in Mandera that occurred on 25 March 2024. On 28 April, a male suspect believed to be an Al-Shabaab militant was arrested for the brutal murders of a police officer and two chiefs in Lamu County that occurred in 2019.³³

²⁹ Mbaka J. (2024) "Police Kill 5 Suspected al Shabaab Fighters in Fafi, Garissa," The Star, 2 March, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-03-02-police-kill-5-suspected-al-shabaab-fighters-in-fafi-garissa>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

³⁰ See <https://nation.africa/kenya/news/man-seized-then-released-by-dci-now-linked-to-terrorism-4554552>

³¹ See https://x.com/ODPP_KE/status/1757410401837367311?t=_LJaFEeusFjCilul_bfHzA&s=08

³² See <https://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2025/01/2-isis-suspects-among-17-arrested-in-joint-interpol-afripol-operation-in-kenya/>

³³ Marita B. (2024) "Wanted Terror Suspect Linked to Killings of Cop, Two Chiefs Arrested," The Star, 29 April, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-04-29-wanted-terror-suspect-linked-to-killings-of-cop-two-chiefs-arrested>. (Accessed January 14 2025).

Arrests by Gender

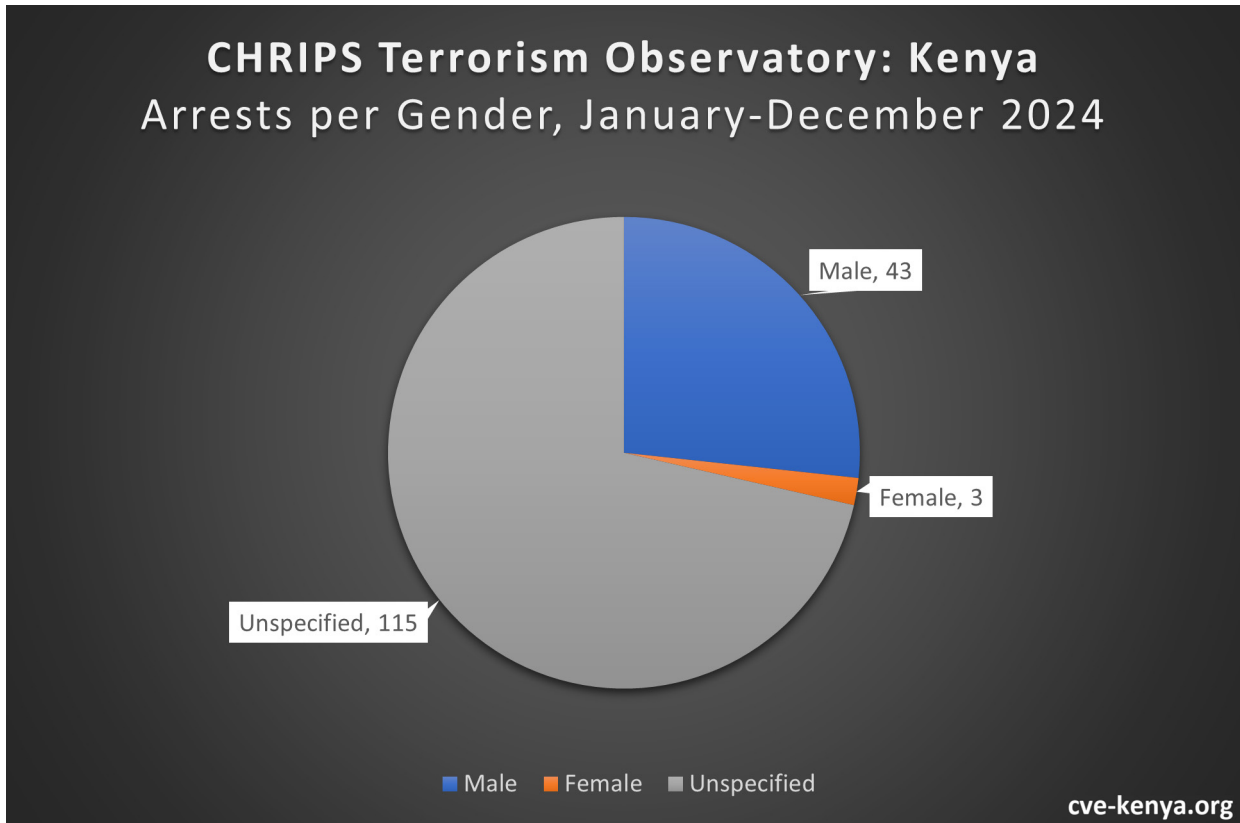


Figure 13: Arrests per Gender, January-December 2024

The largest number of unidentified suspects were in the Paul Mackenzie case. The case details did not provide the names of all the accused, making it difficult to determine their genders. Only seven suspects' names were provided, including seven males and one woman.

Arrests by Nationality

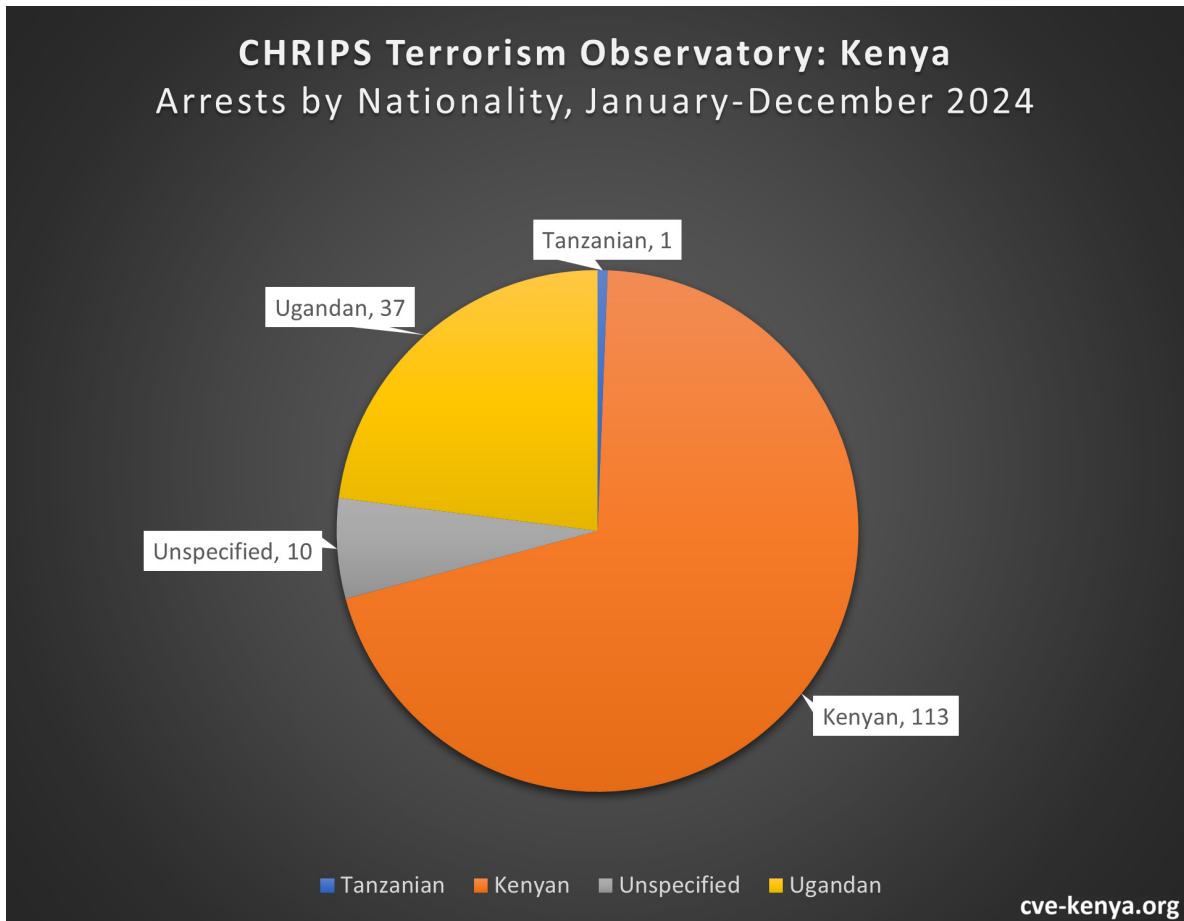


Figure 14: Arrests by Nationality, January-December 2024

A total of 113 Kenyans, 37 Ugandans, and 1 Tanzanian were arrested during the period under review. Additionally, the nationalities of 10 people arrested in 2024 were unspecified in media reports.

Acknowledgement

This report was authored by Joy Christine, a Research Fellow at the Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies (CHRIPS), with contributions from interns Doline Muia and Ashley Ng'endo.

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