

## Understanding community resilience amidst rising violent conflicts in Tanzania

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### **Abstract**

*Tanzania is experiencing an upsurge of violent conflicts, some of which have tended to have extremist bearings. Based on a qualitative study in Mwanza and Pwani regions, this paper posits that the relative presence, absence or prolongation of violent incidents in some areas, is best explained by community resilience mechanisms in place to prevent and counter violence. Subsequently, communities that have invested in early warning and response mechanisms are relatively positioned to prevent and counter violent conflicts. In the absence of functional community early warning structures, as is the case in Pwani, it makes it so difficult for the state security organs to interact with communities and gather intelligence security information allowing responding to insecurities. The paper calls for a policy shift to invest in community early warning and response systems as vital forms of resilience to prevent and to counter rising forms of violent conflicts in Tanzania.*

**Keywords:** Tanzania, Resilience, Violent Conflicts, Security, Community

### **Introduction**

The dominant Liberal interventions to conflict situations in Africa have often tended to favour Liberal economic and political principles, such as the adoption of free market economy and democratic governance through free and fair elections as viable solutions to violent conflicts (Ramalingam, 2013). It is indeed premised that the adoption of a free market economy and conducting free and fair elections would ultimately help to address violent conflict situations. This is to say, in other words, that Africa countries experienced violent conflicts because they never adopted the neo-Liberal economic and political principles. Liberal democracy, as Fukuyama (1992) would posit, is considered the best and ultimate form of government for each other country.

Nonetheless, the Liberal way of approaching conflicts has several shortfalls. In the first place, it leads to undermining the existing home-grown efforts to address violent conflicts. Relatedly, it tends to emasculate local communities' resilience mechanisms, which are crucial aspects in explaining and understanding why some communities with similar socio-economic and political characteristics fight and some do not. As Caning

(2016:165) concludes, “International peacebuilders can assist this process, but if they can interfere too much they end up undermining the self-organizing process necessary to generate and sustain resilient social institutions.”

Emphasizing resilience as an approach to peace building and understanding conflict situations goes beyond conventional Liberal peace building approaches that have tended to stress on the analysis of conflicts for purpose of programming (Ramalingam, 2013). Conflict analysis involves examining the context, conflict relationships, sources, interests, parties, attitude, behaviour, interventions and outcomes emanating from the interventions in conflict situations (Abdalla, 2016). The dominant Liberal approaches promote conflict analysis, in the first place, for purpose of putting in place programming interventions. Nonetheless, this has tended to overlook the importance of existing resilience mechanisms in fragile and non-fragile communities to respond to violence. Certainly, Interpeace (2016:1) concludes:

Whilst a sound understanding of conflict dynamics, including root causes is necessary in order to develop an appropriate response, the fragility focus tends to overshadow the capacities and processes, which are present, even in fragile contexts. Because even in the most challenging situations, there are individuals and communities acting to counter the effects and causes of conflict. Failure to take stock of these efforts can, and often does, undermine the effectiveness of peacebuilding interventions, warranting criticism that programmes and policies are too generic and not sufficiently context specific.

Understanding community resilience is thus a crucial element towards finding viable solutions to violent conflict situations. When used in peace and conflict studies, the concept of resilience would often refer to the capacity of communities, societies, nations and/state to prevent and counter incidents of violence. In the conflict situations, resilience may come from different sources, such as family ties, social networks, friendship networks, communities and leadership in place. Accordingly, as Walsh (2007) would argue, strong leadership is an important ingredient helping to reinforce community resilience from traumatic events, such as violent conflicts and ecological problems. Leadership as referred to here is not limited to the government and political elites only, but it also involves a broad range of other formal and informal institutions like community-based and religious organizations. Resilience should, in this respect, be viewed as an important input allowing fragile and non-fragile communities to prevent and counter violent conflicts (Interpeace, 2016).

In practice, resilience appears in different forms – be it horizontal or vertical. Virtually, however, the horizontal form of resilience is more adaptive to local contexts since it allows for engagement of different segments in the community to counter and prevent

social tensions. Nonetheless, resilience should be seen as manifesting at different levels, such as community, society or nation. According to Interpeace (2016), for example, resilience among indigenous communities in Guatemala has helped to reinforce and promote social cohesion and belonging. Eventually, this enables the community to enhance social bonds and respond to internal and external challenges.

This paper does not circumscribe resilience as used in the natural science to refer to the ability of a physical object to regain its original shape after being subjected to stress, or the ecological definition, which looks at resilience as ability of the ecological systems to adapt to environmental stresses (Menkhaus, 2013). It rather operationally conceives resilience as the presence or absence of established and functional community peace infrastructures with the capacity to prevent and counter conflicts and violent incidents. In other words, as Berkes and Ross (2013) would posit, resilience as conceived in this paper is the capacity and/or functional strengths of communities to prevent and counter violent conflicts (Berkes and Ross, 2013). This capacity of communities to respond to violent conflicts is dependent on the environment in which the conflicts are taking place (Aisenberg and Herrenkohl, 2008). The presence of community early warning systems, for instance, is an important contextual ingredient helping communities to mitigate violent conflicts.

An example of community early warning system allowing reinforcing community resilience to violence is community policing. Tanzania, for example, was well known for its noble well-functioning community resilience mechanisms, especially *Nyumba Kumi* (ten cell leadership system), which in the view of Samoff (1973) helped to maintain order even though it happened to be one of the arenas of control and power struggle at the local levels. According to Pandey (2014), community policing provides a combination of benefits allowing preventing and countering growing forms of conflicts in the world. The same, in the view of Nicoll (2000) allow fostering social cohesion by bringing together community members to address and deliberate on matters of common interests to their security. Again, according to Ansar and Bruell (2009), community policing allow community members to deliberate on and find solutions to their shared common interests and security problems. Accordingly, Pandey (2014:233) concludes:

Community policing indeed is an instrumental strategy, a philosophy that provides hope and paves the action for conflict resolution and building up community resilience only if it is nurtured with willingness by all the stakeholders; the willingness which is imperative for community empowerment.

In Dar es Salaam region, for instance, community policing through *ulinzi shirikishi*

(participatory security) has helped to reduce the number of insecurities in areas where it has been promoted and established. The same has helped to foster social cohesion by bringing together community members to find solutions to security problems of common interests. In the view of local people, *ulinzi shirikishi* is more close to them than the police whose presence is always felt when criminal incidents have already happened and people have already been injured (Walwa, 2017).

In connection to the existing body of knowledge about resilience and conflicts, this paper analyzed the growing violent conflicts in Mwanza and Pwani regions. The analysis was so done by way of exploring and explaining the forms of resilience that local communities in the two regions turn to when responding to violent incidents. In a similar vein, the analysis explored and explained the reasons as to why violent incidents were swiftly contained in Mwanza within a short period of time as opposed to Pwani where they were protracted for over two years. Findings emanating from this paper suggest that the investment and relative presence of established and well functioning community early warning peace infrastructures offer an important avenue for community members and the state to counter and prevent violent incidents. This is indeed a case about Mwanza.

Based on Menkhaus (2013) explanations about resilience, the paper defines resilience in the context of conflicts situations to refer to three dimensions. First, it is the capacity of a community to uphold and maintain positive peace during violent conflict situations. Upholding positive peace entails, among other things, to prevent resorting to violence during conflict situations. Second and related to the first dimension, it entails the capacity of a community to transform negative peace (violent situations) into positive peace (non-violent situations). Finally, it entails the capacity of a community to heal broken wounds (reconcile) after incidents of violent conflicts.

The study employed a qualitative research approach collecting data in Kibiti and Rufiji districts in Pwani region and Nyamagana and Ilemela districts in Mwanza region. Data collection took place at different times from January to September 2017 allowing to conduct a total of 82 key informant interviews in Pwani (42 in Kibiti and 40 in Rufiji); 18 of the key informants were women and the rest were men. For Mwanza, a total of 47 key informant interviews were conducted (23 in Ilemela and 45 in Nyamagana. Similarly, two focus group discussions (FGDs) (one from each district) with Nyumba Kumi (ten cell) leaders were conducted in Mwanza. Further, an archivist from the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) library was commissioned to assist getting hold of daily newspapers that reported about violent incidents in Pwani and Mwanza, and Tanzania in general. This allowed understanding the context before going for fieldwork.

Nonetheless, given that the study in Kibiti and Rufiji was conducted during the time when violent incidents had already taken place, researchers encountered difficulties in terms of identifying respondents and collecting data. More specifically, some of the key informants, especially local government leaders had escaped to other areas fearing to be killed by the suspects. Also, some respondents that were in Kibiti and Rufiji feared talking to outsiders because the suspects were purportedly monitoring what was happening. Addressing this challenge, a snowballing sampling technique was employed to compliment purposive sampling technique. The use of snowballing technical implied purposively identifying and selecting an individual or a small number of individuals having the information that was needed. Those selected were then asked to recommend other individuals with similar information.

### **Violent Conflicts in Tanzania: The Context**

Commonly portrayed as a 'haven of peace' in the conflict-ridden continent of Africa (Heidelberg Institute 2012; Marshall and Cole 2011), Tanzania is nonetheless witnessing the growth in number and magnitude of violent conflicts. While the socialist phase of President Nyerere was relatively peaceful, as it was not marked by notable incidents of religious, political and natural resources polarizations, violent conflicts in the neo-Liberal phase starting in the 1908s have become more prevalent (Mukandala 2006; Mpangala 1999). Accordingly, the period from 2010 to 2015 was more turbulent, so much so that, the position of Tanzania in the Global Peace Index (GPI) plummeted continually for about five years, i.e. 51 in 2010, 52 in 2011, 53 in 2012, 55 in 2013 and 64 in 2015 (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2017).

The growing violent conflicts in Tanzania have involved a range of factors, notably natural resources and political competition. Tensions over natural resources in the North West regions, namely Mwanza, Geita, Mara and Shinyanga where large-scale mines have been established, have been a common phenomenon. In North Mara, clashes between the police and security guards of an investor on one hand and the local people on the other hand, have been a common trend (Walwa, 2016).

Relatedly, natural resource tension started to surface in Mtwara region following the recent discovery and exploitation of natural gas. The region has witnessed violent tensions between the government and investors on one hand and local communities on the other hand. In April and May 2013, for instance, the local residents in Mtwara organized demonstrations opposing the construction of a natural gas pipeline from Mtwara to Dar es Salaam. The demonstrators vandalized properties such as vehicles belonging to the state, government officials and the ruling party Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) (Revolutionary Party) (Heilman and Jingu, 2015).

The other forms of growing natural resource tensions have involved farmers and herders in several districts, such as Kilosa, Mvomero, Kilindi, Rufiji, Kiteto and Ifakara. The Kilosa and Mvomero conflict, which was first reported in 1998, has since then been repetitive. On December 8, 2000, for example, the farmer-herder conflict in Kilosa claimed the lives of about 38 people (Benjaminsen, Maganga and Abdallah, 2009). Further, recent farmer-herder fights in Kiteto, which erupted at different times from mid December 2013 to January 2014, claimed the lives of about 30 people (Njoji, 2013; 2014; Mangala, 2013; Njoji, Massano and Kitomari; 2014).

The country has also in recent years seen an increase of political polarization during electoral competitions. These violent conflicts were especially noticeable during the previous two general elections in 2010 and 2015. The political and natural conflicts have compounded religious conflicts that have also become more prevalent. Notable cases of religious tensions include the 1998 clash between security organs and Muslims in Dar es Salaam region leading to the killing of four people by the police (Heilman and Kaiser, 2002).

Nonetheless, in the last five years, religious conflicts have increased significantly. Incidents of this nature have been reported in several regions, such as Pwani, Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza, Kagera, Mtwara and Tanga where brutal killings, such as those targeting government officials, security organs and religious leaders have been witnessed. Some of these cases include: the May 2013 bomb attack that killed three and injured sixty people at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church near Arusha; the events of February 2013 where a Catholic Priest was assassinated and the protestant church burned in Zanzibar; the December 2012 shooting of a Roman Catholic priest, Father Ambrose Mkenda in Zanzibar.

Also, other related cases include recent incidents involving fights between Christians and Muslims over the right to slaughter. On February 11, 2013, for example, a Christian preacher, Mathayo Kachila was killed and several people were injured during fights between Christians and Muslims at Buselesele village, Chato district in Geita region. The fights erupted due to misunderstanding over who between Muslims and Christians has the right to slaughter domesticated animals. The fights originated from the act of one of the Christian followers to slaughter two goats and one cattle and went ahead selling the meat in his butcher. This act riled Muslims who maintained that they have the right to slaughter and that they have often previously exercised this right (Muyomba, 2013), which to them is part and parcel of their prayer. The question about who has the right to slaughter polarized the relation between Muslims and Christians in Mwanza and Geita regions – some Christian leaders asked their followers to refrain from buying meat slaughtered by Muslims arguing that they too have the right to slaughter (Raia Mwema, 28.2.2013).

Related incidents include the killing of a soldier from the Tanzania People's Defense Forces (TPDF) during fights with a suspected extremist group at Amboni caves in Tanga region on February 15, 2015 (Majani and Yacub, 2015); and the attack of Stakishari police station in Dar es Salaam on July 12, 2015 killing four police and three civilians. The assailants stole more than 20 weapons from the police station (Mwilo and Chilongola, 2015). These violent incidents have become more prevalent and fatal with potential for escalation.

### **Resilience and Violent Conflicts in Mwanza and Pwani**

As posited in the section above, Tanzania is experiencing an upsurge of violent conflicts. Mwanza and Pwani regions are the points of reference where such violent conflicts have been experienced. The most notable recent incident in Mwanza is the May 19, 2016 involving the brutal killing of two Muslim believers and one *Ustadhi* (religious teacher) at the Rahma Masjid in Utemini, Mkolani ward. During the evening prayer, those killed were ordered to lay face down and afterwards the killers slaughtered them from behind. The killing was carried out by a group of about 12 armed people hiding their faces. When the attackers entered the mosque, they first killed the *Ustadhi* who was heading the prayers. Then the attackers killed two other people who had close personnel relations to the *Ustadhi* and the Imam of the mosque. During the attack a boy managed to escape from the Mosque, likely saving many lives, as the killers ran away fearing that the boy would alert the public.<sup>1</sup>

In Pwani, Kibiti and Rufiji districts have witnessed rising tensions occupying media reports in recent years. In the last two years, for example, about 38 officials of government and the police have been killed by an unknown group of suspects that have not unveiled their identity (Mwananchi, 24.5.2017). The suspects have been targeting government leaders and officials, the police and functionaries of the ruling party, Chama cha Mapainduzi (CCM) (Revolutionary Party). The recent incident is the February 2017 in which a senior police officer and two officials at the farm and forestry levies collection center in Kibiti were killed (Mwananchi, 15.4.2017).

The two regions offer different experiences and lessons in terms of understanding the role and forms of resilience in place to counter and prevent violent conflicts. As the subsequent sub-section will unveil, for example, Pwani is more vulnerable to violent conflicts because it lacks well-established and functioning community resilience structures that would help to complement efforts of the state. This is not a case in Mwanza, which has markedly well-established forms of resilience, such as community policing and the *Nyumba Kumi* (ten-cell leadership system). It is on this basis that violent incidents in Pwani have been protracted and difficult to address.

### **Collapse of Community Resilience and Prolonged Violent Incidents in Pwani**

One of the greatest challenges to security management in Kibiti and Rufiji is the less presence of local security and peace infrastructures that could compliment activities of the state security organs. This has eventually reduced the resilience of local communities to detect and counter violent incidents. This too makes it difficult for the police to gather intelligence information at the local level and integrate community members in addressing security challenges. According to the police, it took a fairly long time to detect and counter what was going on because of the difficulties related to gathering information at the local level. It is because of the same challenge that violent incidents in Kibiti and Rufiji ended up taking a fairly long time of about two years – as opposed to similar incidents in places like Mwanza and Arusha where the security organs were able to detect and counter them after a short while because of the assistance they were receiving from established community security and peace infrastructures.

An observation to draw here is that for many communities in Kibiti and Rufiji and in general terms along the Coast of the Indian Ocean, Islamic religion was an important resilience mechanism that has had helped to promote social fabric and cohesion. In these areas, Islamic religion needs to be understood not as a religion only, but it encompasses all aspects of socio-economic and cultural affairs of the local communities. Tensions within Islamic religion due to the emergence of alleged radical groups have reduced the capacity of Islamic religion to provide for community resilience against violent conflicts. Accordingly, the role of religious leaders to provide and promote social cohesion has now been compromised given that some of them are accused of harbouring and supporting the suspects.

The arrival of the new religious groups accused of spreading and promoting radical ideologies has yet divided the society. The local population that used to identify itself as Muslim has now been forced to identify themselves on the basis of religious sects, notably Ansar, Shia or Sunni. Each of these sects is now promoting itself to get hold of followers while at the same time retaining the existing followers. This is rendering the role of religion and religious leaders to that attracting and retaining followers rather than promoting social fabric and cohesion. As the quotation below drawn from an interview with one of the village leaders suggests, the spread of radical ideas has now divided the community between the so-called Kafiri and non-kafiri.

Before these killings we witnessed children being removed from primary schools under the pretext that they were going to study religious education; also, there was a strong move of children refusing to greet elders and calling them (us) Kafiri (disbelievers). Some madrasa teachers started to prevent children to attend school saying that formal education is illegal and it has no

any legality. At Mabanzi mosque, radical preaching continued something that caused some of the people that used to pray in that mosque to deny their parents, their relatives, preventing children from going to school, stopping women from attending clinic and hospital when they are pregnant, and refusing to participate in government activities like national census.<sup>2</sup>

Groups of people, especially elders that have mainly refused to embrace the new doctrines are called Kafiri. One of the elders complained that his son refused to say shikamoo (greeting that infers respect to a person above ones age) after joining the accused group (Interview, 04.09.2017). The son also called his father Kafiri because he had refused to embrace the radical ideology.<sup>3</sup> This division that penetrated the family and community level implied that the accused group could easily operate without the intervention of the community. As such, the new forms of doctrines that have tended to divide the community and religious leaders have frustrated Islamic religion that used to be an important and dominant form of community resilience.

When asked about where they normally report insecurity incidents, local communities in Rufiji and Kibiti replied that they often report to the local government officials, police and *mgambo* (reserve army).<sup>4</sup>The local government officials referred here include Village Executive Officers (VEO) and Ward Executive Officers (WEO). As it is for the police, officials of government at the local level are very few and they hardly could cater for the security needs of the huge population at the local level. Some villages have above 500 inhabitants, which they all need to be attended by one employed official of the government.

Thus, the only source of resilience and security by local communities is that which is provided by the state. An important observation to highlight here, however, is that, this same security that local people depended on is that which the suspects targeted. Revealingly, the suspected killers targeted the police, local government leaders, *mgambo*, functionaries of the ruling party and anyone else who was close to these organs of the state. "We government officials are hunted as animals; that is why I have escaped to Utete because they displayed posters showing that they would kill us", narrated one of the local government officials who has run-away from his working station following threats to kill him.

A related point to highlight is that there is also a broken relationship between local government leaders, the police and *mgambo* on one hand and the local communities on the other hand. The tension between these groups made it difficult for the police to receive intelligence information and cooperation from the local communities so as to prevent and counter the violent incidents before happening. It was claimed during interviews that some local people knew very well about the presence of the so-called

radical groups, but they were hesitant to share information with the police whom they accused of being corrupt and abusive. The suspects also enjoyed support and protection from some local people that happened to be victims of the abuse and misconduct by the police, *mgambo* and natural resources and wildlife officials and wardens.<sup>5</sup>

Local communities accused the police for cooperating with natural resources officers and local government officials to impound and/or impose high fees on the natural resource produce, especially charcoal of local communities. The same are also accused of abusing the rights of local people who are involved in business related to natural resources produce. Charcoal and other natural resource produce are especially some of the major sources of livelihoods of local communities in the two districts, which are surrounded by natural forests and the Selous Game Reserve. The quotation below, which is drawn from an interview with one of the local community members summarizes,

People in Ikwiriri were complaining a lot about the abuse that used to be done by wild animal wardens and officials of the natural resources department when they arrested people; they have been confiscating people's charcoal and selling again and putting the money in their pockets. The *mgambo* and natural resources wardens in Jaribu village were killed because they cooperated with the police in abusing *wananchi*, especially charcoal and natural resource produce sellers (Interview, 19.8.2017).

Accordingly, in some incidents, some local people dared to cooperate with the accused killers to act against the police, *mgambo* and natural resource wardens. This is a case about the February 22, 2017 incident in which the Criminal Investigation Officer (CIO) of Kibiti and two other officials of government from the Ministry of Natural Resources were killed in an ambush attack at the tax collection revenue that is located in Majawa ward. After implementing the killing, the suspects mobilized local communities around the area to collect and share with them the sacks of charcoal and other natural resources produce that had been confiscated by the government and kept at the tax collection center (Mwananchi 24.5.2017). The killers left a message that read:

We are announcing to the *wananchi* that we have killed these because they are abusing people through their work, and any one that will work here we will follow him even if it is at his home. We have sacrificed ourselves to die instead of living, so a driver of *mwananchi* anywhere when you see give information be it at home or work. There is no way to get rid of this abuse; it is (through) a gun only.

Based on this quotation, two observations are further worthwhile highlighting. First, virtually mobilizing local people to share the impounded forestry and natural resources produce was so done to attract support from the local population. Tellingly, this was meant to send a message to the local people that the police and government officials are their enemies. Secondly, concerns about unfair confiscation on local communities' forest and natural resources produce are widespread in Kibiti and Rufiji. Local communities accuse the police and government officials at the tax revenue collection for confiscating forestry produce of people who fail or refuse to bribe them. These concerns compounded with the lack of functional local peace infrastructure are creating and reinforcing a breeding ground for violent conflicts.

### **Prevention of Violent Incidents through Community Resilience in Mwanza**

Unlike Pwani, Mwanza region presents a unique case in reference to the questions about the role that forms of community resilience in place could play in preventing and countering violent conflicts. The region is markedly by the presence of different forms of functional peace and security infrastructures helping to respond to and prevent insecurities. Apart from the formal security committees, such as Kamati ya Ulinzi na Usalama ya Mtaa (Street Security and Defense Committee) and the Ward Security and Defense Committee, it was learned that community members in various areas organize themselves in different ways to provide for their own security. In Kiloli and Buswelu markets, for example, businesspersons hired private companies to secure their properties at night while during the noon they appointed a Kamanda wa Soko (Commander of the market) for the same purpose.<sup>6</sup>

Also, across the region, there are other informal security arrangements notably nzengo (community) and kutulija (impose punishment to offenders). In nzengo, members of a particular locality agree to work together to address various issues that face the society. Through nzengo, community members work together during funeral, disasters, and security protection. Although the participation in nzengo is supposed to be voluntary; there are rewards and sanctions for compliance and non-compliance. The sanctions are imposed through kutulija, which is an arrangement whereby members of a community impose punishments to offenders committing crimes like theft, deviant behaviour and/or not taking part in societal functions. Punishments imposed on offenders include payment of fines and where the offence is grave the punishment would include excommunication from the community.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, nzengo and kutulija are less pronounced in urban settings whereby the population is very high and mixed. This is indeed a case in Nyamagana district.

Further, Nyumba Kumi is the most pronounced community early warning system for most communities in Nyamagana and Ilemela. Community members in Igogo and Mkolani wards in Nyamagana, for instance, organize patrols at night and during the

day through the Nyumba Kumi leaders. Local people and government officials in Igogo ward narrated that their area used to be known for harbouring bandits that were responsible for many crimes in Mwanza, but recent patrol units organized through Nyumba Kumi have helped the police to arrest these networks of criminals.<sup>8</sup> Patrol units organized through Nyumba Kumi arrest the suspects and hand them over to the police for further investigation.

Nonetheless, like in other areas, the problem with Nyumba Kumi arrangement in Nyamagana is that it is engraved and organized through the ruling party structures at the local levels. In effect, despite its inimitable usefulness in providing security and promoting social cohesion at the local levels, Nyumba Kumi leaders do not enjoy legitimacy from some community members that are not members of the ruling party. As such, in neighbourhoods, which are headed by opposition leaders, Nyumba Kumi has not been functional.

In Ilemela, however, the district government resolved in 2016 to detach Nyumba Kumi from the ruling party structures in order to avoid the allegations that it is an instrument of the ruling party for mobilizing votes and support during and after elections. Leaders of Nyumba Kumi in Ilemela are no longer called Balozi (ambassador), but they are now known as Waratibu wa Nyumba Kumi (Coordinators of Nyumba Kumi). The Nyumba Kumi leaders in this district have been given a book registry with names of all permanent and temporary residents. Any new comer that arrives in the area is obliged to register his/her name to the Nyumba Kumi leaders. Community members are also obliged to report to the Nyumba Kumi coordinators when they receive guests. The records in the registries are used to serve other purposes, for instance, when a resident wants to apply for passport or any other official document whose issuance is subject to approval by the Nyumba Kumi or local level leaders.<sup>9</sup> Residents have been obliged to notice any new and/or foreign person and make a follow up of whatever he or she is doing; and, in case, doubts develop over the person – the Nyumba Kumi and/or mtaa leaders have to be informed.<sup>10</sup>

Community members have established different ways of detecting the insecurity incidents and prevention of violent conflicts through the Nyumba Kumi arrangement. Apart from regular meetings of community members at the local level, the use of mobile phone communication has been effectively employed to communicate insecurity and violent incidents. Nyumba Kumi leaders have shared their mobile numbers with the community members in order to allow them to communicate on insecurity incidents and violent conflicts. Community members have also been given phone numbers of government leaders and the police at the village and ward levels to allow them to communicate insecurity and violent incidents with patrol units and their

leaders. Relatedly, each household is obliged to have a whistle, which is blown in an agreed style in case a violent incident occurred.

Another new community peace and security infrastructure in Mwanza is that which has involved the use of youth motorcyclists known as boda-boda drivers to provide security at night and during the day. Across the country, while cyclists serve the communities in different capacities – especially providing affordable transport, they play two competing roles in terms of dealing with security challenges. In the first place, cyclists have been used by criminal networks; this has, for example, been the case in Dar es Salaam in which cyclists have for several times been involved in robbing and killing people and withdrawing money from the banks. On the other hand, cyclists have played an important role in helping to address and stop criminal incidents. On April 14, 2015, for example, cyclists in Kidatu, Morogoro helped to disclose information of nine (9) customers that they suspected. Upon their arrest the customers were found with military uniforms, a black flag of one of the terrorist groups in the world, daggers, masks, metal saws, notebooks, receipts and various books (Lucas, 2005a; Lucas, 2015b).

In Mwanza, after the brutal killing at the Rahma Masjid, it was established that there was a group of people hiding and training in the rocky hills and caves located a few kilometres from the mosque where the brutal killing took place. This group, which the police labelled as bandits, lived in the caves. They made their meals inside the caves; they had cooking stoves, rice, cooking oil, and maize flour. Information about the presence of this group was leaked to the police by one of the boda boda drivers who provided transport to one of the suspects who walked out of the caves. The police later arrested this suspect. Subsequently, on June 4, 2016, the police, accompanied by the suspect, surrounded the caves. Those in the caves responded by shooting erratically at the police. Exchanges between the police and the 'bandits' took place between 17:00 hours on June 04 until the next day in the morning when the bandits in the caves threw a bomb towards the police and managed to escape. Nonetheless two 'bandits' died on the spot and one died later in Nyasaka while trying to shoot the police who attempted to arrest him.<sup>11</sup>

Considering the mounting importance of boda boda drivers in providing community resilience against violent conflicts, the regional and district governments and the police in Mwanza are in the process of identifying all cyclists and ask them to register in their associations at the street and ward levels. This, according to officials of the government at the regional and district levels and the police will help to provide identification numbers to all cyclists. It will similarly allow cyclists to know each other and provide information about the presence of suspects. Further, the registration of

cyclists in groups is expected to allow the government at the local level to engage cyclists in community policing programs, such as neighbourhood watch.

Already, the regional and district governments and the police have started discussion with one of the mobile companies that will assist to provide identification numbers and devices that help to track the movement of cyclists. On this, a police official in Mwanza noted “We want all motorcycles and their drivers to be registered. We have agreed with (mobile) company to make available devices that can help identify motorcycles.”<sup>12</sup> According to the police, boda boda drivers are seen as important for maintaining security since they are more close to the community and that they are aware of some of the criminal incidences and criminals.<sup>13</sup>

The community security structures in place interact with other stakeholders like the state and non-state actors allowing the security organs to interact with local communities and gather intelligence information at the local level. Nyumba Kumi in Ilemela, for instance, has a direct link with the government and the police. Throughout their operations, such as patrols or sharing of information these community security and peace infrastructures work hand in hand with government officials by sharing information with the Ward Executive Officers (WEO), police and district commissioner’s offices. In some circumstances, the police have been joining members of Nyumba Kumi in their patrols. On a different note, it was interesting to learn that non-governmental organizations as exemplified by Foundation Katiba Tanzania (FKT) and KIVULINI cooperate with community structures in addressing problems at the community levels.

Interesting also, local communities are very positive about the community peace and security infrastructures. They, particularly, maintained that such structures are cheap as one needs not to offer anything (monetary or otherwise) to be served; the proximity is much closer; it is easy for members of Nyumba Kumi to know each other as opposed to Mtaa (street), which is relatively bigger in size, and that there is high trust among community members organized through the community security infrastructures. Summarizing this, one of the Mtaa Executive Officers remarked “Jamii inapenda Nyumba Kumi” (the community likes Nyumba Kumi) (Interview, 28.8.2017).

Despite these positive responses on the accessibility and acceptability of community peace and security infrastructures as important source of resilience in Mwanza, there are challenges that compromise the effectiveness of such mechanisms. The most striking challenge relate to the mistrust between the police and local communities. In particular, there is widespread suspicion and even fear of the police. Some local communities claimed that they were fearful of sharing information about violent incidents and criminal activities thinking that they could be victimized, in part because

people believe police often disclose to the suspects who their informants are. In Igogo ward, for instance, participants in the FGD alluded that a good number of the police have served in the nearby stations for a long time; in effect, they have forged relationships with wrong-doers and sometimes they tend to buffer them. Accordingly, one of the participants during FGDs claimed:

When the mtaa members arrest some people suspected of committing a crime, the police become furious and in some circumstances, they release them in a matter of hours. In other circumstances, when a crime is reported, the police ask for *hela ya mafuta* (money for fuel) before they can show up to the area where the crime is being committed.<sup>14</sup>

Relatedly, some religious leaders accused the police for not proactively responding to the group that was responsible for the brutal killing in the mosque. According to these religious leaders, a leader of this group was very well known and was reported to the police. One of the religious leaders asked, “We were asking ourselves, was the government not seeing him?”(Interview, 17.3.2017).

### **Conclusion**

This study has unveiled that resilience is a crucial element in terms of understanding and explaining the reasons as to why violent conflicts could easily be addressed in some areas and they may be protracted in some. This is to say, in other words, that communities that have invested in resilience mechanisms, such as Nyumba Kumi are less vulnerable to violent conflicts and related insecurities while communities that have not are more vulnerable. Pwani is a point of reference in which the lack of well functioning community peace and security infrastructures has made it more vulnerable to insecurities. When asked about where they often turn to when faced with insecurities, local communities in Pwani made reference to formal structures, such as local government leaders, *mgambo* and the police. These, however, are very far from the people – and the officials of the government and the police are very few to be able to provide for security needs of local communities in all locations. Some villages have more than 500 residents, which makes it difficult for the formal structures at the local levels to have control over all areas. Ultimately, this allowed the suspects to penetrate and establish at the local levels without the knowledge of the state, which is far away. The state knew about the suspects at the later stage when they had already started attacking, causing injuries and killing.

The lack of well-functioning community resilience mechanisms in place implies that it would be difficult for the state security organs to interact and gather intelligence information regarding violent groups at the local levels. Eventually, this protracted the process of countering and preventing violence as the case of Pwani. In this respect, the

nonexistence of resilience does not only affect a community as a whole, but it also affects the effective operation of other organs, notably security organs of the state. For Pwani region, however, Islamic religion needs to be understood as a form of resilience that local communities depended on to detect incidents of insecurities and address other socio-economic and political challenges. Many community members depended on religious leaders to provide solutions to insecurities and interact with the state security organs. However, recent tensions within Islamic religious have made it difficult for divided religious leaders to play the role of upholding social cohesion. An immediate intervention should, therefore, focus on promoting interfaith religious dialogue in order to bridge the gap among Islamic religious leaders belonging to different sects.

Nonetheless, unlike Pwani, Mwanza offers a unique case in which the prevalence of different forms of resilience manifested through well functioning community peace and security infrastructures have played a decisive role in heightening and reinforcing community resilience to violent incidents. Patrol units organized through Nyumba Kumi leaders in places like Igogo and Nyasaka wards, which were previously accused of harbouring suspects, have helped to reduce insecurities. The same have also helped the state security organs to easily interact with community members and the local government at the local levels. Eventually, this helped to reduce community vulnerabilities to insecurities. The same helped to enhance social cohesion by allowing community members to work together towards finding solutions to security problems of common interests.

Thus, the findings from Pwani and Mwanza offer important policy implications regarding the usefulness of promoting and investing in community early warning and response systems as avenues helping to enhance community resilience against violence. Given the changing nature of conflicts, and more particularly, the emergence of new forms of violent conflicts having extremist bearings, key stakeholders at the local and national levels should equally invest and place emphasis on prevention to compliment efforts by the state. The state could only be effective in countering insecurities when resilience at the local levels is strengthened. This could, however, only work and be more effective when the current negative perceptions of some local communities against some police, *mgambo* and government officials, is addressed. Local communities would only effectively interact with the state and government organs when assured that the security information they share would not leak to the suspects.

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### **Notes**

1. Interviews with the police, local government leaders and the survivors of the brutal killing in Mwanza (11.1.2017 and 15.8.2017).
2. Interviews with village leaders in Kibiti (7.9.2017).
3. Interview with one of the elders in Rufiji (4.10.2017).
4. Mgambo (auxiliary or reserved army) operates at the local level (village, ward and district levels); they possess some basic military training organized and conducted by the coordinator of mgambo who is based at the district level. They assist the Ward Executive Officers (WEO) and Village Executive Officers (VEO) in collecting of revenue at local level and sometimes arresting when ordered by their superiors. The same are used to provide security during general elections, national examinations for primary and secondary schools and visitations of national, regional and district leaders.
5. Interviews with local communities in Rufiji and Kibiti (August to October 2017).
6. Focus group discussions (FGDs) with businesspersons in Kiloleli and Buswelu markets in Mwanza (18.8.2017 and 19.8.2017).
7. Interviews with leaders and government officials in Ilemela district (01.08 - 30.9.2017).
8. Interviews with government leaders and FGDs with local communities in Igogo ward, Mwanza (1.8 - 30.9.2017).
9. Interviews with leaders of Nyumba Kumi and government leaders in Ilemela district (1.8 - 30.9.2017).
10. FGDs with Waratibu (coordinators) of Nyumba Kumi in Kahama and Igogo wards in Nyamagana and Ilemela districts, respectively (1-30.8.2017).
11. Interviews with government officials and local communities in Mkolani and Nyasaka wards in Mwanza (1-30.8.2017).
12. Interview with the police in Mwanza (12.8.2017).
13. Interviews with officials of regional and district government and the police in (1.8 - 30.9.2017).
14. FGD with *boda boda* drivers in Igogo Ward (25.8.2017).

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