Life & Peace INSTITUTE
Kenya Programme

PUSHED TO THE BRINK

Perceptions, Experiences and Knowledge of Urban Violence in Nairobi

CONTENT

Acknowledgements 4

List of Acronyms 5

Executive Summary 7

Introduction 10

Aim of The Study 11

Research Methodology 13

- Data Collection Procedure 13
- Research Population And Sampling 14
- Scope And Limitations 14
- Ethical Considerations 15

Background of The Study 17

- Urban Violence - An Endemic Epidemic 17

A Theoretical Framework For Understanding Urban Violence 19

- Urban Violence In Nairobi 22

Research Findings 27

- Conceptualisation of Urban Violence 27
- Manifestations of Violence 28
- Main Drivers of Urban Violence 40
- Gendered Dynamics in Urban Violence 55
- The Role Of The Youth In Urban Violence 66

Strategies For Addressing Urban Violence In Nairobi 69

CONTENT

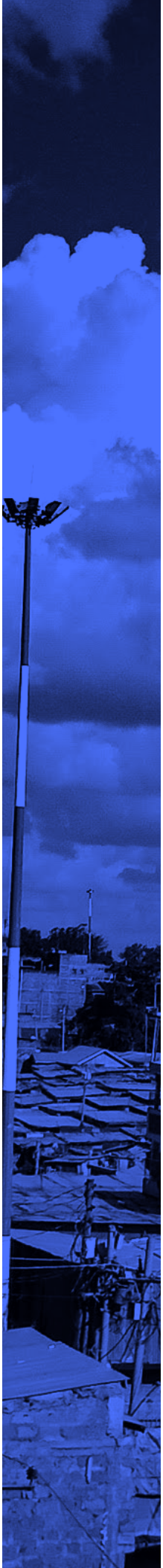
Conclusion 71

Bibliography 74

Annex 1: Summarised Research Questions 82

Annex II: Profiles of Authors 83

Annex III: Profiles of Researchers 87



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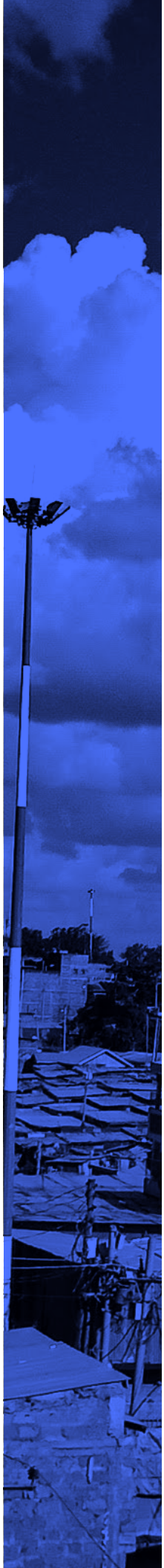
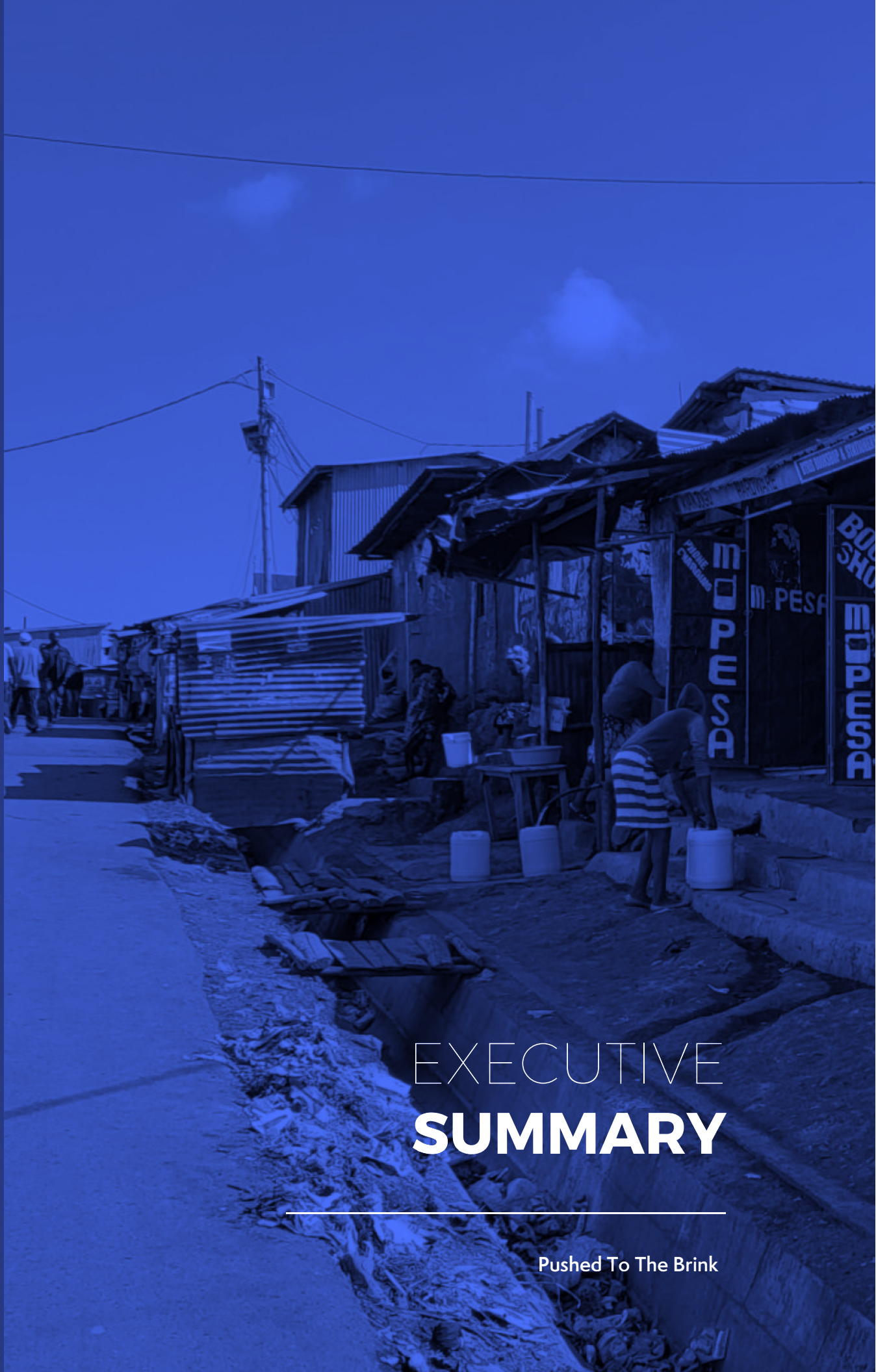


List of Acronyms

COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LPI	Life & Peace Institute
MCA	Member of County Assembly
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
PiOC	Peace in Our Cities
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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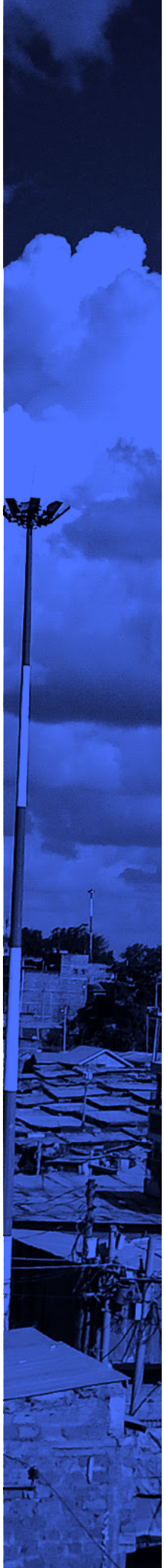
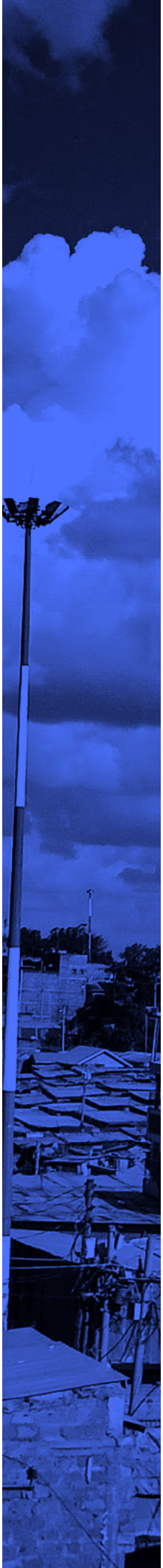


Executive Summary

This research investigates diverse perspectives and perceptions on urban violence in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, primarily from the stance of community members in the research sites. It is based on the knowledge and experience of urban violence as articulated by respondents living in six informal settlements in the city, namely: Kangemi, Kayole, Kibera, Korogocho, Mathare, and Majengo. These locations were selected because of their high population and pronounced prevalence of urban crimes. This study applies a descriptive research design that focuses on bringing forward particular contextual experiences of urban violence in the selected research locations. Further, the study applied a frustration-aggression theoretical framework that explores how dynamics of urban violence are connected to structural and relational dynamics in the research sites that create frustration among residents of informal settlements, contributing to their participation in violence. Researchers from the study sites locally designed the research which involved developing the research objectives, methodology and questions, identified the respondents, and led the data collection and data analysis processes.

All the respondents in the study experienced some form of violence in their own localities. As violence is a constant presence in these informal settlements, there is a notable tendency to normalise its occurrence. Perpetrators of urban violence cut across all identity groups. The cyclical nature of violence can be exemplified through violence that is 'inherited', whereby an individual who has experienced violence is likely to mete it out on others in what is commonly referred to as the victim-perpetrator-victim cycle. This is commonplace in instances of sexual and gender-based violence and creates a culture of violence that becomes considered the norm. This tends to not only normalise but also excuse violent behaviour.

This study reveals the differential experiences of urban violence between men and women. Both women and men are vulnerable to violence. However, based on this study's findings, women are more likely to be mugged or assaulted in broad daylight, as gender norms portray women as more vulnerable. Domestic violence often goes unreported, and women are said to be the frequent victims of domestic violence, mostly sexual and physical abuse. Although planning for violence is attributed to older men (and, in rare instances, women), in terms of perpetrating violence, the individuals doing so primarily appear to be male youth, with female youth an increasing minority that is steadily growing.



The study also reveals that young men suffer the most violence, either at the hands of the state (for instance, extrajudicial killings) or in attacks by fellow rival youth or gangs composed primarily of young people. Revenge, jealousy, notions of masculinity that prioritise violence to demonstrate manhood, and search for economic survival are key driving factors in youth violence. Youth violence is embedded in the complexities of gangs, organised crime groups, and other underground networks, often targeting the youth to recruit them into gang mem members.

In this study, men and women are viewed as perpetrators and victims of violence. The study concludes by making some recommendations to address urban violence in Nairobi, mainly putting emphasis on addressing structural causes of violence at social, economic, political and cultural levels. These include: the creation of employment opportunities for the youth for alternative livelihood; putting in place stringent accountability mechanisms against politicians who incite communities and children to violence; increasing efforts towards social cohesion to minimise and eradicate sectoral and ethnic violence; and building and supporting structures that support social welfare support to families (including single mothers and fathers) to eliminate domestic violence; on the professionalisation of security operations and an increase in the number of policemen and women.

INTRODUCTION

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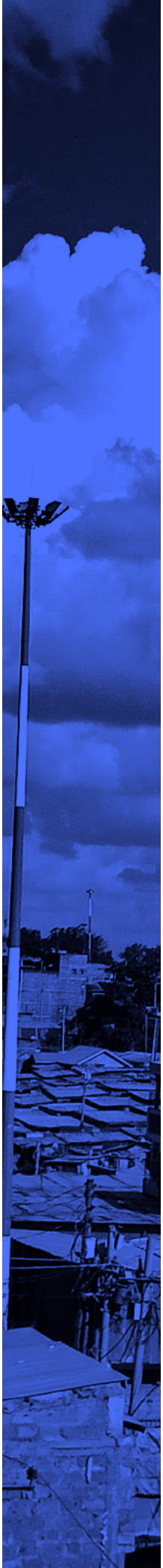


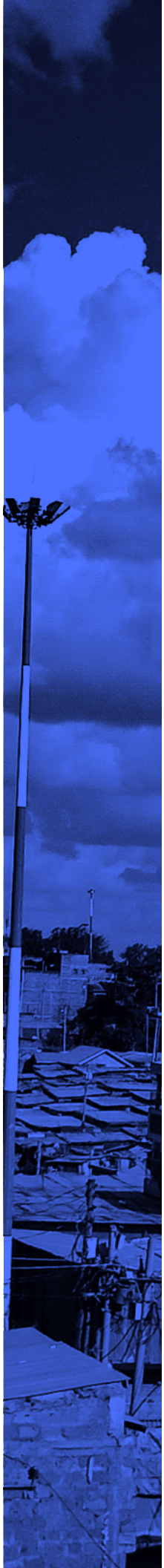
Introduction

The United Nations notes that most of the world's population currently resides in cities. This is expected to grow to two-thirds of the population, or an estimated six billion, by 2050. Although urbanisation is linked to increased economic and social development, chronic insecurity and violence undermine this development in certain cities. While there is no universally agreed definition of urban violence, this study defines it as acts that occur in the city and threaten, attempt, or inflict harm on persons in unexpected and frightening ways. Urban violence takes various forms – direct, cultural, and structural – as these manifest in specific geographic locations and neighbourhoods, which are often represented by diverse shades of identities such as ethnic, cultural, religious, and social. Urban violence in Nairobi is no different. Moreover, its manifestation varies: overt and covert, with its loci linked to informal urban settlements (but its occurrence ubiquitous, happening all over the city). This implies that, in Nairobi, like in many cities, criminal gangs are generated in informal settlement.

The informal settlements of Nairobi are characterised by high population density, limited urban services, insecurity, and informal housing, with 54.7% of the total population of Kenya living in these areas, accounting for 60% of urban families. Urbanisation, coupled with rapid population growth, has expanded these informal settlements, which are challenging spaces to reside due to the lack of public services, poor governance, unemployment, and high crime levels. Already prone to diseases, the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic had the potential to pose yet another severe threat to the residents of the informal settlements in Nairobi.

The above conditions in the informal urban settlements give rise to various other forms of violence in addition to those identified above (namely, direct, cultural, and structural forms of violence). These additional forms of violence include economic violence as a result of inequality, unequal access to economic opportunities, and poverty; politically motivated violence linked to ethicised politics and cronyism; poor governance, inefficient and corrupt security and judicial systems, and state failure to protect its citizens; and social violence as manifested in youth exclusion in decision-making spheres, gang culture, drug and substance abuse, the availability of small arms and light weapons, extrajudicial killings, and violence as a routine element of daily life.

This study was conducted in the light of the Peace in Our Cities (PiOC) campaign launched by the Peace Coalition on International Peace Day 2019, which sought "to galvanize momentum towards reducing global violence – one of the most critical crises of our time".



The campaign, which the LPI was part of, brought together city officials and civil society organisations as partners to work together towards halving urban violence by 2030. The campaign seeks to create evidence-based and participatory platforms for progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions, with a particular focus on SDG 16.1, reducing all forms of violence and related death rates. With the PiOC pledge, cities and other partners have agreed to generate knowledge and best practices in preventing and reducing violence at the municipal level.

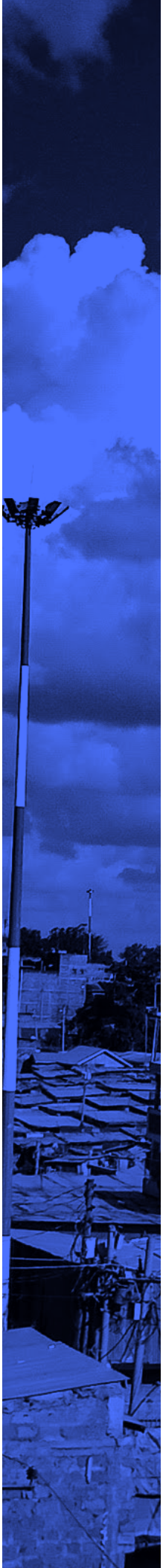
The study aims to contribute to the broader goal of the PiOC campaign by documenting community experiences, perceptions, and understandings of various forms of violence.

Aim of The Study

The study aimed to uncover the types and drivers of urban violence as perceived by those who experience it. It specifically focuses on the experiences of women and youth, two groups most affected by urban violence, either as victims or perpetrators. The study also examines both state and non-state violence and documents respondents' views on violence prevention and reduction strategies that can be used at the community level.

The research has a multi-sectoral significance. First, the study helped the researchers gain first-hand knowledge of people's experiences of violence to design relevant peacebuilding responses within and across levels. Second, the research offered the study respondents an opportunity to express their experience of violence and how best it can be addressed. Third, the study is relevant to diverse and multilateral policymakers committed to improving the living conditions in informal settlements. Fourth, the findings from this study may be helpful for human rights activists working against various forms of violence in informal settlements, including police brutality. Fifth, this study also seeks to generate information from community members and civil society actors to inform and engage peacebuilding policy actors and processes in Kenya and potentially other contexts experiencing high levels of urban violence across the globe. It is further hoped that the study findings will feed back into peacebuilding interventions at the community level in the informal settlements of Nairobi and across the city as a whole.

Further, the study draws attention to the epistemological interpretation of urban violence. The research thus challenges a historical dichotomy in the formulation of knowledge, whereby knowledge is termed as either "hard" (based on 'data' that is framed as objective or factual) or "soft" (drawing on memories, events, or perceptions that are understood to be subjective or opinion-led), depending on its source. This



dichotomy often prioritises "hard" knowledge and excludes lived experiences as valid. In contrast, this study emphasizes individual experiences of urban violence. Finally, it draws attention to the new knowledge generated by the documentation of these experiences in order to give a detailed description of the impact of violence in Nairobi's informal settlements.

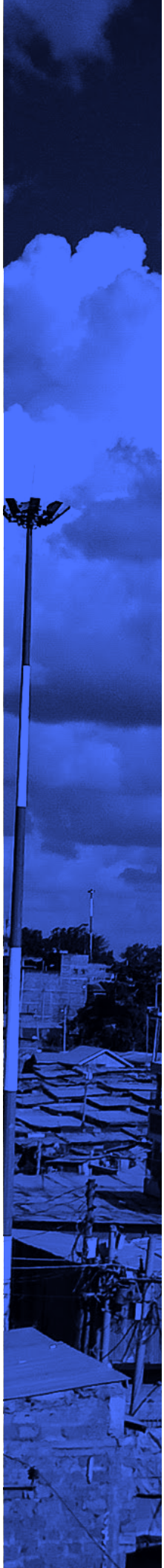
In light of the above broader strategic aim of the study, the research was guided by the following objectives and research questions:

The research objectives included:

1. Conceptualise urban violence.
2. Identify the drivers of urban violence.
3. Examine gendered dynamics of urban violence.
4. Study the role of the youth in urban violence.
5. Investigate possible strategies for addressing urban violence.

The following research questions were formulated along the same lines as the objectives:

1. What is the respondent's perception of urban violence?
2. What are the main drivers of urban violence?
3. What are the gendered dynamics of urban violence?
4. What is the role of the youth in urban violence?
5. What are the possible strategies for addressing urban violence?



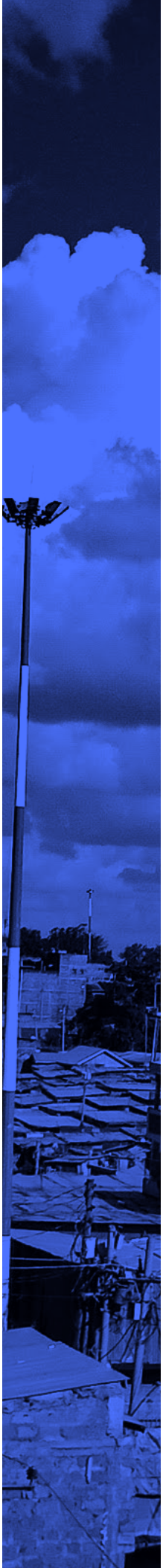
Research Methodology

This study applied descriptive research design that brought forward individual, contextually located experiences of urban violence in the selected locations of research. The research applied a qualitative methodological approach, using both Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in order to obtain in-depth narratives of urban violence. These experiences and experiential narratives were then analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data analysis tool based on the five objectives of the study.

The research was conducted in the six largest high-density locations in Nairobi, namely: Kangemi, Kayole, Kibera, Korogocho, Mathare, and Majengo. These locations were selected because of their high population, as well as the pronounced prevalence of urban violence. It is, however, important to note that these locations have their own particularities: they have diverse cultural, socio-economic, and historical characteristics while sharing commonalities in regard to urban violence, including the nature of violence, the types of violence experienced, the tools of violence, and prevalence of violence.

Data Collection Procedure

Upon acquiring the research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), the LPI team leaders embarked on training all the researchers. The researchers included six young women, and five young men from the six research sites (two per area, aside from Kayole) and the chairperson of the Nairobi County Peace Committee who also acted as a researcher in the Kayole area, as well as one representative from the Office of the County Commissioner (Nairobi), the agency that takes a lead in issues associated with peace. The researchers of the study were selected based on their knowledge in grassroots peacebuilding, demonstrable understanding of the societal dynamics in the project sites and credibility as recognised leaders within their communities and in Kenya. From the outset, the design and methodology of this study sought to be participatory, both at the researcher and respondent levels. This is since the researchers developed the research guide (which included the research aim, a description of the research process, ethical considerations, and a set of questions for both the key informant interviews and focused group discussions). Additionally, respondents' participation was prioritised as key stakeholders in the project sites took part in the research, thereby including different voices. The LPI Kenya Programme team accompanied the research team throughout the data collection process. The researchers developed the research guide that informed the study, including the aims



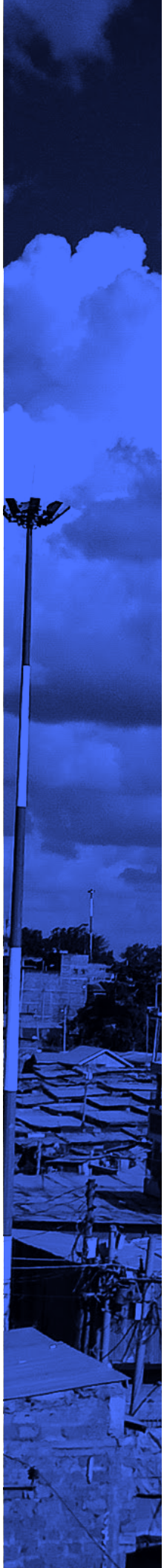
of the research, the description of the research process, the ethical considerations, and the set of questions for both the KIIs and FGDs. One validation workshop was held in each research site to allow research respondents to gain insight into the preliminary findings and presentations of the research report and provide inputs, comments, and recommendations to enrich the final report.

Research Population And Sampling

The research population was comprised of diverse community actors and individuals from the six research sites. Respondents were purposively sampled based on criteria developed by the research team drawn from the locations of the research. They include civil society representatives; religious, women, and youth leaders; youth engaged in crime and those who are reformed; boda-boda (motorbike taxi) riders; youth from 'bases'; peacebuilders, psychologists, community health volunteers, paralegals, commercial sex workers, persons living with disability, and community entrepreneurs; public sector representatives from Nairobi County Assembly and national government (chiefs, ward administrators, police), Sub-County Peace Committees, and community policing (Nyumba Kumi) members. In total, 199 respondents (92 women; 107 men) participated in the key informant interviews and 90 respondents (42 women; 48 men) participated in the focus group discussions (15 participants per focus group, for a total of six FGDs). Respondents ranged in age from 18-72 years old. A secondary literature review complemented the data collected in the research sites.

Scope And Limitations

The scope of this study was to understand and describe the various facets of urban violence. The description of the phenomenon of violence was limited to its manifestations, identification of actors and impact on the various sectors of the community. The research did not investigate the reported cases of urban violence, nor seek the veracity of the respondents' narratives beyond the triangulation methods of research, including literature review, KII, FGD and validation. The research was also limited in geographic scope, only focusing on the six informal urban settlements of Kangemi, Kayole, Kibera, Korogocho, Majengo, and Mathare. It is important to note that this research did not aim to reach generalisable findings, however sought to give a description of urban violence that depicts the representations and experiences of the phenomenon as described by respondents. In addition, the research does not consider the various ongoing initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges of urban violence in Nairobi. It instead sought the respondents' opinions on how best to respond to the challenge of urban violence.

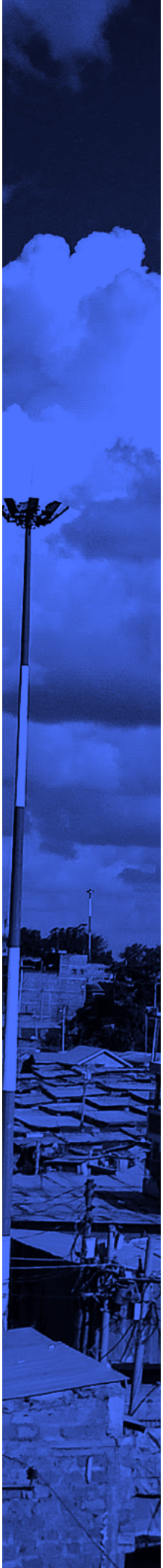


The research encountered further limitations that shaped data collection. Given that the study was conducted at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya (May–September 2020), access to respondents was limited, given the strict adherence to government public health protocols. As a result, all KIIs were conducted by telephone instead of in person. While to a great extent, the phone interviews were successful, there were incidences in which phone conversations were disrupted when the respondents had to attend to other needs. This resulted in researchers taking a longer time to complete a session as they had to reschedule and/or recap and ensure that the entire conversation was captured adequately. To some extent, some respondents felt much freer to respond to questions the researchers' assurance of confidentiality, anonymity and the respondent's agency to select time, place and mode of interview, either via phone or in-person. FGDs were conducted in person in strict observance and adherence to government protocols on COVID19 gatherings during the period that the research was being undertaken.

Given that this research was conducted in the course of the pandemic, during which there was increased household violence, it may be that some of the reported cases of urban violence could have been due to the timing of the research. Some of the dynamics of urban violence were exacerbated or brought to the fore during the pandemic, particularly domestic violence, petty thefts and robbery of pedestrians. Challenges in socio-economic factors such as unemployment or broader economic uncertainty escalated these incidences of violence. However, to address this limitation, the researchers triangulated the findings to capture the frequency, historical background and consistency.

Ethical Considerations

The study applied a set of standard research ethics guidelines, including ensuring respondents provided informed consent to participate, were provided with the option for certain testimonies to remain confidential, and were assured of their anonymity. The researchers also applied principles of 'do no harm', through which the research process sought to avoid respondents recounting traumatic events that risked them being re-traumatised. Further, the researchers adhered to the principles of conflict sensitivity by taking into consideration respondents' vulnerabilities and ensured that the respondents felt they were sharing their experiences and knowledge in a safe space. Given that the research was largely on the phone, the participant consent was attained orally after a detailed explanation of the research and how the findings would be used. Participants were assured that their identity would not be revealed, and that anonymity would be observed at all stages of the research. They were also informed that all the collected

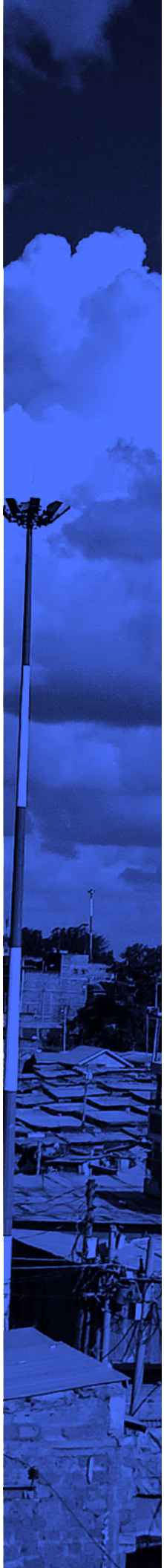


information would be treated with confidentiality regarding attribution, and identities would not be divulged to a third party without their consent. The respondents also selected the language they were most comfortable with, including English, Kiswahili or 'Sheng' (the local slang language) and, in some instances, vernacular languages. Flexibility was also provided to respondents in choosing the time and location for the phone interview.

All respondents were informed that the LPI and LPI researchers were not representatives of any political party, commercial entity, or other interest group that might compromise the integrity of the data collected. They were further informed that the study's findings would be used independently, and in an open-source manner, to inform peacebuilding knowledge and practice at large. The participants were allowed to stop the interview at any stage, and they were free not to respond to any question that they did not feel comfortable answering. The collected data was securely stored in encrypted recordings and protected passwords used for the transcribed interviews. During data analysis, all respondents were labelled using a particular code to ensure their identities were further protected.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality, Do no harm, conflict sensitivity, validation of findings and communication of results.



Background of The Study

Urban Violence - An Endemic Epidemic

This study relies on the definition of violence by the World Health Organization (WHO). It defines violence as *"the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal development or deprivation".*[1]

The conceptualisation of urban violence ought to be anchored in the diverse representations of the phenomenon of violence in any urban setting. The ways in which urban violence manifests, in which spaces, and at particular times, are also linked to a range of factors, such as: multiple marginalities of diverse categories of the population, historical injustices, economic systems that leave behind the majority of the population; social safety nets, in particular for the most vulnerable; financial credit; food security and employment opportunities. The linkage between these different factors tends to define the volatility of high-density urban areas to violence. Hence, urban violence is viewed here as related to, and resulting from, multiple layers of marginalisation. Urban violence tends to be more prevalent in less economically developed and supported neighbourhoods with high populations.[2]

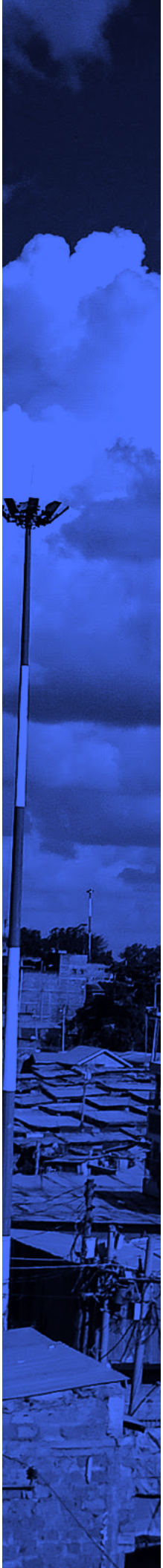
Globally, 82% of lethal violence occurs outside of conflict zones, with much of this violence concentrated in urban settings.[3] Considering this, addressing the urban violence issue becomes even more urgent. Urban violence is complex, multi-layered and volatile, projecting different dynamics, including the globalisation phenomenon that now presents new fault lines, including increased inequalities, poverty and rural-urban migration.[4] In some countries, 10% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) goes to

1 World Health Organisation (2020) Definition and Typology of Violence. https://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en/

2 Commins, S. (2018). *From Urban Fragility to Urban Stability*. Africa Center for Strategic Studies. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19331

3 Pathfinders. (n.d.). The Grand Challenge on halving global violence by 2030. Pathfinders for Peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Retrieved December 23, 2021, from https://www.sdg16.plus/

4 Moser (2004). Urban Violence and Insecurity: An Introductory RoadMap



addressing urban violence.[5] This indicates that it is an issue of global concern with both dire socio-cultural and economic impacts.

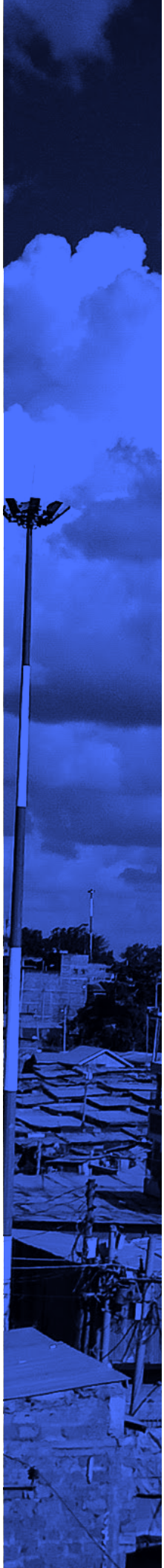
In the development literature, diverse theoretical arguments have been advanced to demonstrate the relationship between urbanization and economic growth.[6] Such arguments have been developed in two strains: first is the school that associates urbanization with economic growth, and second those that consider the link between city size and economic growth. Expansive urbanization leads to sectoral shifts, from agriculture to manufacturing industry and service provision, leading to high economic growth.[7] Similarly, urbanisation may lead to growth directly and should not be considered an accidental development driver. There are, however, views that hold that government policies that promote megacities tend to neglect rural areas and attract large numbers of populations into the cities, leading to the generation of slums and squatter settlements. In fact, with a high number of populations without jobs, -stress is high, leading to increased urban violence for survival. [8]

5 **The World Bank (2016).** *Urban Violence: A Challenge of Epidemic Proportions.* **Retrieved 03 November from https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/09/06/urban-violence-a-challenge-of-epidemic-proportions.**

6 **Biitir, S. B. (2019). Urban Development Context of Ghana. In** *Designing Land Value Capture Tools in the Context of Complex Tenurial and Deficient Land Use Regulatory Regimes in Accra, Ghana* **(pp. 7–15). Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; Harish, S. (2016). Urban Development, Housing and "Slums."** *India International Centre Quarterly*, *43***(3/4), 184–198.**

7 **Henderson, J. V. (2005). "Urbanization and growth," in** *Handbook of Economic Growth*, **eds P. Aghion S. N. and Durlauf. Vol. 1B (New York: North-Holland), 1543–1591.**

8 **Ades Alberto F Edward L Glaeser and National Bureau of Economic Research. 1994.** *Trade and Circuses: Explaining Urban Giants*. **Cambridge MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. 227; Henderson, J. V., and Kuncoro, A. (1996). Industrial centralization in Indonesia. World Bank Econ. Rev. 10, 513–540.**



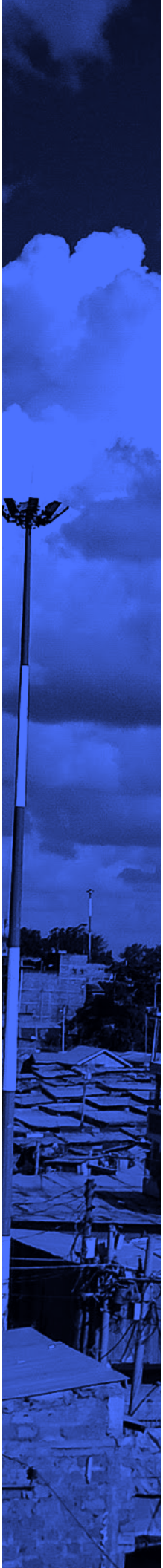
A Theoretical Framework For Understanding Urban Violence

Urban violence can partially be explained by the frustration-aggression theory, which holds that when a section of population is frustrated by their environment not meeting their livelihood needs, or certain circumstances preventing them from attaining their goals, it tends to vent such frustrations externally by identifying scapegoats that may not have anything to do with the frustration. According to the Frustration - Aggression theory, aggression is largely a result of frustration.[9] This theory uses the concepts of catharsis (the act of relieving emotional tension) and displacement (unconscious defence mechanisms). The theory hinges on the desperate situations where many people in informal settlements find themselves. Even though there may not be a direct correlation between frustration in meeting daily needs and violence, it is important to note that communities that have been marginalized are sustainable to discontentment and vulnerability to violence. Frances Steward, in her multi-country study, examines how horizontal inequalities across society can lead to high levels of discontentment and subsequent inter-sectoral conflicts. In a correlational analysis, one can conclude that in high-density urban settings, there tend to be high levels of violence, often associated with frustrations of failing to provide for their own livelihood. Such violence manifests itself through incidences of domestic violence, street violence, formation of territorial militia groups and gangs to protect neighbourhoods or attack specific groups. Such groups can be armed with crude weapons or even firearms.[10]

In Kenya, most urban dwellers live in Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu and Nakuru. The increased growth in population and rural-urban migration has led to the emergence of slums in major cities leading to accelerated cases of urban violence. The main cause of urban violence in Kenya is unemployment, poverty, low levels of education, political incitement, the existence of armed groups, gender-based violence, land ownership, terrorism threats and the police (Elverson and Hoglund, 2019, p.353-359; ARISE, 26 November 2019; Kuben Dei, 2018, p.13-18). The interventions initiated to curb urban violence in Kenya include setting up community-level structures to limit incidences of urban violence. Such include community policing, awareness raising on crime

9 Dollard John, Leonard William Dobb, Neal E Miller, Orval Hobart Mowrer and Robert R Sears. 1944. *Frustration and Aggression*. London: K. Paul Trench Trubner & Co.

10 Commins, S. (2018). *From Urban Fragility to Urban Stability*. Africa Center for Strategic Studies. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19331



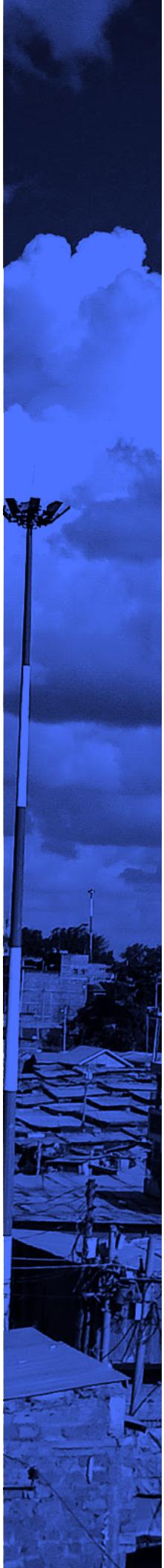
prevention, peacebuilding initiatives, setting up safe houses for the victims of gender-based violence, increased public surveillance, upgrading of the urban security architecture and technology used to alert authorities on any violence and security threats (Elverson and Hoglund, 2019, p.361; Mdrift Hurinet, February 2018). However, these interventions have not been adequate, and there are still gaps in addressing urban violence. Besides, excessive use of force and extrajudicial killings by police force are rising under the pretext of taming urban violence in Kenya.

In France, urban violence is due to radicalisation and terrorism, and marginalisation of minority groups (Dijkema, 2021, p.17-19). The disgruntled groups, therefore, use violence and riots to air out their grievances. The riots always turn into ugly confrontations with the police. South Africa has experienced urban violence for many years due to the apartheid policies, which implied heightened violence and crime. Urban violence has not ceased even after independence in 1994 due to the decline of social structures in South Africa.[11] The drivers of urban violence in South Africa are rapid population growth, institutionalised marginalization during apartheid, high unemployment rates, poverty, drug abuse, family disruptions, militarization of the police, and lack of adequate housing. In the last ten years, integrated policing strategies and efforts to build safer communities in South Africa have decreased urban violence exponentially in many cities. However, inadequately integrated policy frameworks have limited the success of the many interventions to curb urban violence.

Mexico City in Mexico has been the epitome of urban violence for decades. Crime rates have been high due to drug trafficking, organised crime, family disruptions and the incapability of the judicial system to deal with organised criminal networks (Vilalta and Muggah, 2016). Some of the strategies to lower urban violence included the creation of community watch committees, deployment of policing assets, empowerment of youths at risk and promotion community cohesion. Interventions to reduce crime rates have not been effective because of a fragmented implementation regime. The local authorities implement crime prevention policies, yet they are equally implicated. Hence, preventive measures adopted are not well executed.

The youth are generally an at-risk population as far as urban violence is concerned. A section of the youth experience youth delinquency and peer pressure in crowded urban

11 Meth, P. (2017). Informal Housing, gender, crime and violence: the role of design in urban South Africa. The British Journal of Criminology, 57(2), 402–421. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44503372



areas tends to groom the youth much earlier into gang violence. Such youth tend to grow up in marginalized contexts and feel left out of the general social structures of society. As a result: "Many gang members, who characteristically have been raised in marginalised, highly stressful families, have their social development arrested and remain peer dependent well into their thirties and even forties." [12] The only option is to vent out their frustrations through organized acts of crime that give them a temporary reprieve to their frustration. The World Bank notes that urban violence is "an endemic epidemic", with youth being the largest at-risk group.[13]

In 2016, Kenya was ranked by the World Bank as having one of the highest rates of youth unemployment globally.[14] Despite the fact that youth comprise about 30% of the total population, majority of them remain unemployed with the situation worsened by at least 800,000 young people joining the job market each year, with limited access to employment.[15] There are a number of factors that contribute to youth unemployment in Kenya: limited job opportunities, discriminatory cultural, gender and ethnic discrimination, limited access to information on job opportunities, corruption, lack of the right skills required for the job market, and limited mentorship on career choices.[16] According to the Kenya National Youth Policy, there is a direct correlation between youth unemployment and crime. When youth who have attained formal education are not gainfully employed, their vulnerability to peer pressure increases, drawing them into criminal activity.[17]

Although violence differs from city to city, its manifestation has been naturalised or normalised, and the focus on addressing urban violence has leaned more on management

12 Vigil, James Diego. "Urban Violence and Street Gangs." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32 (2003): 225–42. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25064828.

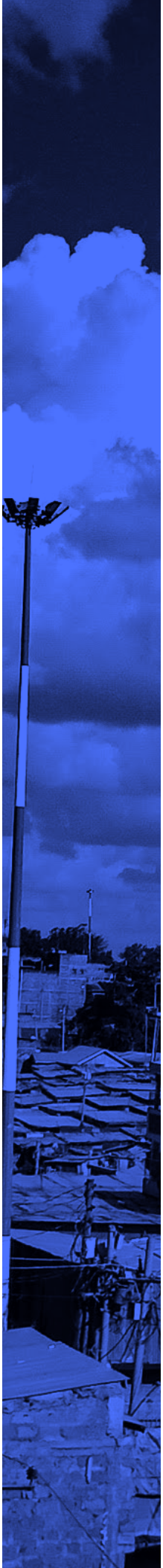
13 The World Bank. (2016, September 6). Urban violence: A challenge of epidemic proportions. World Bank. Retrieved December 23, 2021, from https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/09/06/urban-violence-a-challenge-of-epidemic-proportions

14 World Bank, Youth Unemployment: Challenges & Opportunities in Economic Development. Washington, DC: World Bank. Retrieved December 14 2022, From: https://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01259/WEB/0__C-107.HTM

15 Mutuku, D., & Mutua, J. (2020, March). Youth unemployment in Kenya: Policy gaps analysis. IEA Kenya. Retrieved December 24, 2021, from https://ieakenya.or.ke/download/youth-unemployment-in-kenya-policy-gaps-analysis/

16 Were, S. M. (2017). Effect of social economic development on youth employment in the informal and formal sectors in Nairobi Kenya. International Journal of Business, 22(2), 158+. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A492898951/AONE?u=anon~f67db239&sid=googleScholar&xid=a2ad4cd7

17 UNFPA. 2013. Kenya Population Situation Analysis. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/admin-resource/FINALPSAREPORT_0.pdf



or reduction of violence, and not necessarily its elimination.[18] According to the 2019 census by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 75.1% of the population in Kenya is below thirty-five years of age, with 31.1% residing in urban areas. At nearly 4.4 million people, Nairobi has the largest urban population in the country.[19]

Many of the youth involved in the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya were unemployed.[20] At the same time, youth in Kenya live their daily lives in a post-colonial context that continues to apply archaic vagrancy laws, criminalising any person who does not have lawful employment or lawful means of subsistence to meet the costs of their regular necessities.[21] According to undefined "reasonable grounds of suspicion", this outmoded vagrancy law also validates the arrests of young people by police without any valid (legal) reason.[22] The prevailing youth stereotype as a criminal means that a young person is guilty unless he or she proves himself or herself otherwise or buys his freedom by bribing the local authorities.[23]

Urban Violence In Nairobi

Nairobi City County is one of the 47 counties in Kenya, each with a semi-autonomous government, as part of a devolution project that began with the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010.[24] In 2013, the local city government was merged with the county, expanding the Nairobi metropolitan area's geographical boundary and political authority. Nairobi has a directly elected county governor who heads the county executive, with an oversight role passed on to the county assembly.

18 Pavoni, A., & Tulumello, S. (2020). What is urban violence? Progress in Human Geography, 44(1), 49–76.

19 Gitogo, W. (2020, March 9). Census 2019 data reveals Kenya's youths in Rurals. The Kenyan Wall Street. Retrieved December 24, 2021, from https://kenyanwallstreet.com/census-2019-datashows-kenya-has-a-youthful-rural-population/

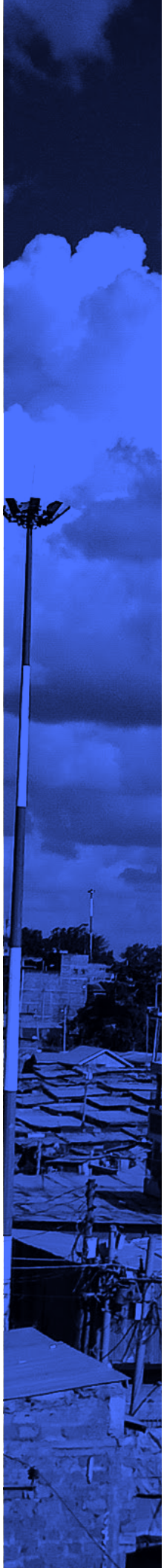
20 (UNICEF, 2020), (UNODC, 2020)

21 Muendo, M. (2017, March 15). Kenyans are still oppressed by archaic colonial laws. The Conversation. Retrieved December 24, 2021, from https://theconversation.com/kenyans-are-still-oppressed-by-archaic-colonial-laws-73880

22 Government of Kenya. (1982). Laws of Kenya - The Vagrancy Act Chapter 58. Retrieved December 24, 2021, from http://www.kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/RepealedStatutes/VagrancyActCAP58.PDF

23 While the vast majority of youth to whom this applies are young men, study findings also indicate that young women are a steadily growing minority.

24 The Constitution of Kenya, Nairobi: Government Printer, (2010): Chapter 11.



Nairobi's history goes back to 1899 when it became the site of the Uganda Railway's headquarters; prior to this, the city was uninhabited and was primarily a swampland. Nairobi was set up as a colonial European city, providing residential housing and business premises for the colonial settlers. Africans who lived in the city were present as labour servicing the colonial economy. They were settled in restricted residential areas with low-quality housing. It was assumed that the presence of Africans in urban areas was merely temporary. Nairobi's ongoing urbanisation since colonial times, as well as the failure of successive governments to curb deepening poverty, has over the years, triggered the growth of large poor urban neighbourhoods, often on the fringes of upscale neighbourhoods. The poor live near the richer neighbourhoods in order to provide services to the latter. In fact, six in ten residents – 60% of the city population – live in informal settlements, with high levels of poverty and poor living conditions.[25] The growth of the urban population has been unregulated and beyond the control of city planners.[26] Nairobi currently has a population of slightly above five million people[27] and is a very ethnically diverse city. The rapid growth in Nairobi's population has prompted additional attention to the causes and dynamics of urban violence.[28]

Urban violence in present-day Nairobi can be categorised into four overall forms: urban land conflict; election-related violence; state repression and extrajudicial violence; and terrorism and radicalisation.[29] The violence can take place in association with political processes, institutional grievances, economic concerns, among and within religious groups, or based on social relationships characterised by mistrust. More generally, urban violence focuses on criminal acts and the actors associated with them, such as gangs, armed groups aligned to particular political factions, and criminal cartels.

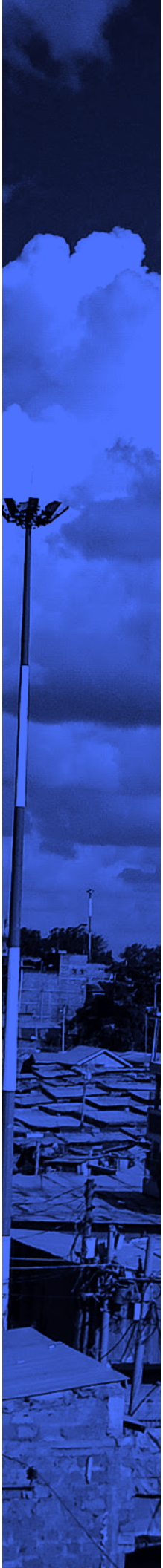
25 Jones, P. S. (2020, February 14). Nairobi: The Politics of the Capital. Oxford Handbooks Online. Retrieved December 24, 2021, from https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198815693.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780198815693-e-44

26 Claire Medard, "City Planning in Nairobi: The stakes, the people, the side tracking," *Nairobi Today: the paradox of a fragmented city*, Nairobi: Mkuki na Nyota Publications, (2020).

27 World Population Review, *Nairobi Population* 2022, (November 2022) https://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/nairobi-population

28 Emma Elfversson and Kristine Höglund, "Violence in the city that belongs to no one: urban distinctiveness and interconnected insecurities in Nairobi (Kenya)," *Conflict, Security & Development,* 19, no. 4, (2019): 347-370, DOI: 10.1080/14678802.2019.1640493

29 Ibid.



Security constitutes one of the main concerns for many of Nairobi's residents, in particular in the informal settlements.[30] The two major forms of violence being witnessed in the city of Nairobi, in general, are either direct human violence or property-related violence. Human violence involves acts such as robbery, assault, rape, hijackings, manslaughter and murder, whereas property-related violence involves acts such as burglary, theft of individuals, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Studies show that there is no single cause of violence in urban areas, but rather several, including urban decline, poverty, unemployment, politicised ethnicity, gangs, drug use, and unemployment. The youth seem to be the major perpetrators of urban violence in Nairobi, resulting from economic hardships, peer pressure and generational gang influence.[31] The living conditions in the informal settlements are dire, and this is where most of the youth reside. For instance, youth in informal settlements are organized in illegal gangs, giving them a social identity and hope of achieving a better economic status. At the same time, the youth are searching for belonging and recognition that could make them feel relevant in society. Often the youth face exclusion and victimisation, with limited opportunities for employment or income-generating activities.

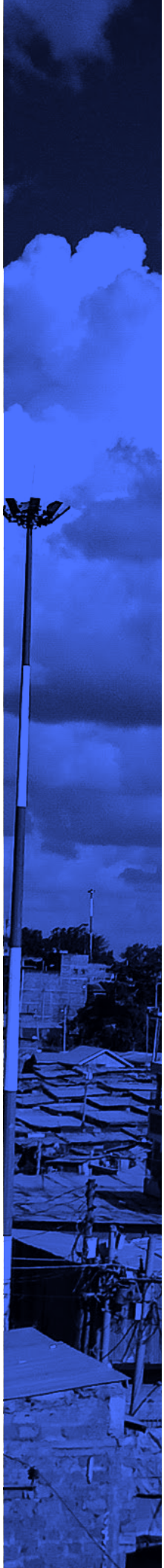
Gun proliferation has become common among the youth gangs in Nairobi's informal settlements, pausing a serious challenge to peace and security in the city and its environs.[32] Notably, women have a higher risk of being exposed to violence than men and the violence meted on them includes harassment and sexual and gender-based violence. Domestic violence has also been increasing in Nairobi and is largely associated with stress resulting from the immense social pressure families undergo due to the difficult economic times.[33] The growing population in Nairobi has caused strain on the city's infrastructure, hence residents are faced with an everyday struggle to survive due to high poverty levels in Nairobi.

30 APHRC, "Population and Health Dynamics in Nairobi's Informal Settlements," Nairobi: African Population and Health Research Centre, (2002).

31 International Crisis Group. (2020). *How to Shield Education from Al-Shabaab in Kenya's North East*. International Crisis Group. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep3162

32 Felbab-Brown, V. (2018). Wildlife and Drug Trafficking, Terrorism, and Human Security: Realities, Myths, and Complexities Beyond Africa. *PRISM*, 7(4), 124–137.

33 Jane Njue, Dorothy Rombo, Laura Smart, Anne N. Lutomia and Lucy Mbirianjau, "Domestic Violence in Kenya: Strengths-Based Research," (January 2014). DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483387635.n3.



The issue of land has been critical in shaping Kenya's politics, particularly in relation to competition for natural resources and political control.[34][35] In the colonial and post-colonial periods, land was primarily linked to ethnic identity, and often instrumentalised to instigate violence between individuals and communities.[36] The value of land in urban areas is higher compared to rural areas, and in addition, land conflicts in Nairobi are unique due to the heterogeneity of the large population in the city.[37] Wealthy individuals claim to own most of the land (and by extension the houses) in informal settlements, even in cases where the land belongs to the government. Land conflicts have been rampant in informal settlements such as Kibera, in which, due to its proximity to the capital's centre, the land is highly valued, with the rental property being a major source of livelihood for the landlords.[38] In situations such as this, persistent disputes over land ownership can lead to violence.[39]

Political violence is common in informal settlements, especially during the electioneering period.[40] This is frequently fuelled by politicians seeking to mobilise young people to use violence by offering them financial incentives. Often, such violent activities include attacking a political opponent, disrupting political rallies of the opposing side, or hiring militia groups to protect a politician, among others. It is important to note that while the types of urban violence in Nairobi may be more pronounced, they may not be so different from those in the other urban cities in Kenya.[41] In some instances, the same criminals or

34 International Crisis Group. (2017). The Legacy of Rift Valley Violence. In *Kenya's Rift Valley: Old Wounds, Devolution's New Anxieties* (p. Page 2-Page 4). International Crisis Group. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep31758.6

35 Schwartz, M., & Yalbir, N. (2019). Desecuritizing Kenyan Youth: Young People's Perspectives on Community Priorities in Mombasa. Global Center on Cooperative Security. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep20330

36 Oucho, J. O. (2002). Undercurrents of ethnic conflicts in Kenya (Vol. 3). Brill. Available at: https://rb.gy/v8iq5

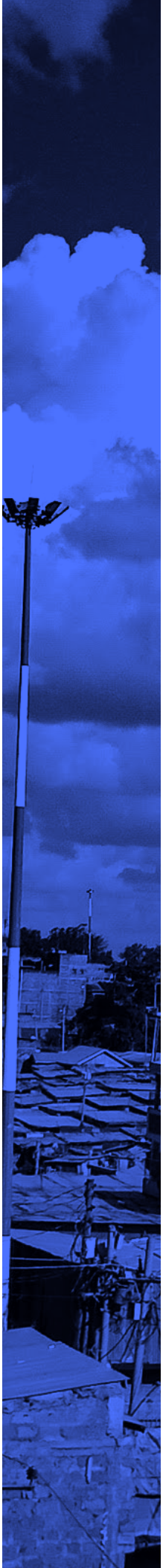
37 Ibid note 35

38 Ibid note 35

39 Elfversson, E., & Höglund, K. (2018). Home of last resort: Urban land conflict and the Nubians in Kibera, Kenya. *Urban Studies*, 55(8), 1749–1765. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098017698416

40 Andreas Jacobs, "Kenya on Fire," *Nairobi Burning: Kenya's Post-Election Violence from the Perspective of the Urban Poor.* Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, (2011). http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep14501.4.

41 Kamau Wairuri, Ahlam Chemlali and Mutuma Ruteere, "Urban Violence in Nakuru County, Kenya," *DIGNITY Publication Series on Torture and Organized Violence No. 16,* (May 2020): 35. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341549730_Urban_Violence_in_Nakuru_County_Kenya



groups of criminals traverse from one city to another. In addition, the recruitment of youths into terrorist groups is also a major issue of concern in Nairobi. There have been a number of terrorist attacks in Kenya by the Al Shabaab militia, and the composition of young people joining this terrorist group, mostly from Somalia, equally includes local Kenyans from different parts of the country.[42]

As with cities in other parts of the world, Nairobi has locations considered to be more dangerous than others, and violence tends to be more prevalent in these areas. The National Crime Research Centre calculates the various forms of crime in Nairobi County for 2020 as follows: burglary (47.6%), stealing (53.3%), assault (24.7%) and murder (23.9%),[43] and the locations are primarily the informal settlement areas – such as Kangemi, Kayole, Kibera, Korogocho, Majengo, and Mathare.

In order to address the urban violence in Nairobi, there have been community policing initiatives such as the Nyumba Kumi[44] ('ten houses' – meaning organised community vigilance over every ten houses), which calls on the community to be vigilant over crime and report any suspicious activities.[45]

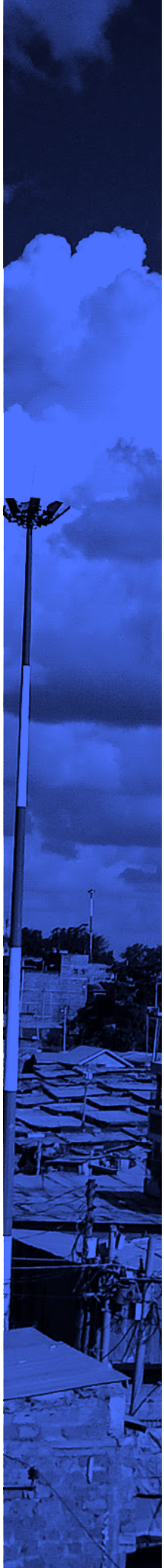
In 2020, there were 100, police personnel bringing the ratio of ratio of police to the population to 1:485, making it almost impossible for the police to respond to every

42 Badurdeen, F. A. (2018). Socio-legal implications of the laws to combat religious extremism in Kenya. In M. C. Green, T. J. Gunn, & M. Hill (Eds.), *Religion, Law and Security in Africa* (Vol. 5, pp. 105–130).

43 The National Crime Research Centre. https://www.crimeresearch.go.ke/nairobi-2/

44 'Nyumba kumi'literally means ten houses, and refers to community policing strategy in which there is security vigilance on every ten houses. This is anchored on the premise that citizens know their areas very well and are indeed able to spot and call out any suspicious or unusual activities in their surroundings. https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/PaperDetails/55236

45 Eva A. Maina Ayiera. "Community-Led Security Mechanisms: The Case of Mlango Kubwa and Kawangware in Nairobi." *The African Review: A Journal of African Politics, Development and International Affairs* 44. .no. 1 (2017): 27–61. http://www.jstor.org/stable/45341730.



crime.[46] There is thus a need for the county government to create forums for engaging the youth about city security, and come up with joint projects aimed at creating jobs for the youth, and subsequently reducing violence. This will increase the capacity of the residents to protect their city.[47]

Research Findings

The data analysis was thematised along the same lines with the research questions that examined respondents' conceptualisation of urban violence; the main drivers of urban violence; the impact of urban violence on women; the role of the youth in urban violence; and possible strategies for addressing urban violence.

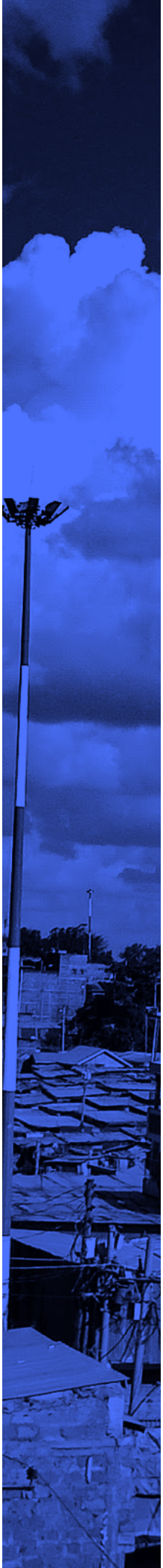
Conceptualisation of Urban Violence

The research sought to identify the types of violence taking place in Nairobi in order to increase understanding and trace interlinkages between its various manifestations. From the analysis of the respondents' opinions, three main forms of urban violence emerged: structural, direct, and social. All of these forms are visible in the lived experiences of respondents in the project sites.[48] As explained below, respondents elaborated on their views and observations about the different forms of violence above. The broad categorization of the forms of violence indicates the fluid nature of urban violence. In fact, given the changing nature of urban violence, approaches oriented toward reducing its prevalence also need to be versatile and adaptable if there are to be sustainable solutions to the challenges it poses.

46 Polity, 2021. "Fact-checked: Six claims by Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta in 2021 national day speech." https://www.polity.org.za/article/fact-checked-six-claims-by-kenyan-president-uhuru-kenyatta-in-2021-national-day-speech-2021-11-26

47 Mutuma Ruteere and Patrick Mutahi, "Youth Inclusion and Violence Prevention in Nairobi: A Research Agenda," *Centre for Human Rights and Policy Studies, (2020): 9.*
https://books.google.co.ke/books/about/Youth_Inclusion_and_Violence_Prevention.html?id=Lu11zgEACAAJ&redir_esc=y

48 This list is not exhaustive of the types of urban violence respondents identify. Rather, it is indicative of common types of violence they experience.



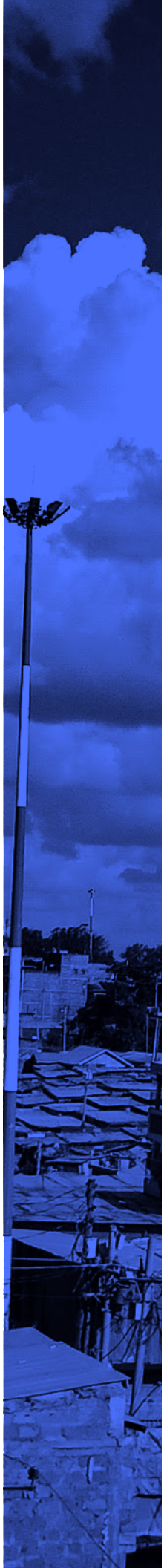
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in people spending more time in their homes and communities, domestic violence became more pronounced. Respondents noted that other forms of violence increased during the pandemic. For instance, robbery with violence has been consistent over time, but the increased use of motorbikes is a relatively new dynamic. Respondents offer detailed evidence of how broader socialisation patterns create a culture of violence that drives its use. At a focus group discussion in Korogocho, for example, most respondents disclosed that they either had been previously engaged in violence, are still engaged in violence, or know someone in their family that is. Engaging in violent crime is seen as a form of inter-generational inheritance, perhaps even pride. This is not unique to Korogocho but is also reflected in the other informal settlements.

Manifestations of Violence

The seasonality of violence: Depending on the type of violence, its frequency can be higher at specific times. Violence also has distinct seasonal patterns. Understanding the specific times and seasons when violence is prevalent, as well as how these factors correlate to types of violence, is critical for designing approaches to reduce it.

Respondents observe that sexual violence mainly occurs in the evening and night hours. It can also happen during the early morning hours. Women traders going to market as early as 04:00, for instance, are targeted for rape. Domestic violence happens mostly at night because, during the day, the majority of people are looking for or engaged in work. Night-time is also when quarrels break out at home especially when the financial expectations after a hard day of work have not been met. Robbery with violence is also common in the evening and night hours. Business owners tend to be targeted when they are closing their premises. In particular, respondents mention M-Pesa, an electronic mobile money withdrawal and transfer service, as a vulnerable business considered an easy target for robbery.

During the day, respondents observed that two types of violence tend to occur. The first is mainly related to the sharing of scarce resources. For instance, when women are queuing at water points, disagreements amongst themselves can lead to physical violence among them. Also, at car washes or boda boda pick-up points where many young people earn their living, arguments amongst the youth on task and resource allocation sometimes escalate into fist fights. The second type is petty theft, in particular by thieves on motorbikes. This is common during the day and in the early evenings because it is when many people walk freely. Violence also has a more extended temporal rhythm. Respondents agree that most violence happens on weekends - when victims get

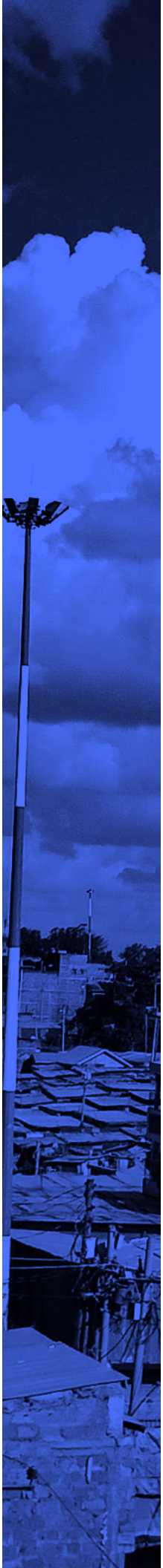


robbed of their weekly earnings. A human rights activist in Majengo observed: "Most people in Nairobi are not permanently employed. Therefore, they rely on short-term engagements that are paid weekly, and in most cases towards the end of the week." According to respondents, another reason for weekend violence is that people use recreational substances (chewing khat, drinking alcohol), which correlates to an increase in interpersonal conflict that can escalate into violence at home and in public spaces. For those employees on salaried incomes, the end or beginning of the month (when they are paid) is cited as a vulnerable time.

Respondents note that during the school holidays, the violent crime rate in the informal settlements increases significantly. In Kenya, school holidays are in April, August, and December. Respondents explained that a few students perpetrate violence because they are idle and have time on their hands. Moreover, students are not easily suspected when committing a violent crime because of their age. Respondents cite holidays in general as times when violence is more prevalent.[49] This is particularly the case in the lead up to the Christmas season. A respondent explains that Kayole becomes more dangerous during the months of October and November because people are looking for money and resources—to party, celebrate, and travel upcountry to their home villages during the Christmas season in December, while still managing to have enough money to pay school fees for their children the next year in January. The period after the December holiday festivities is equally prone to violence. Those without financial resources in the post-holiday period might, for instance, resort to robbery (often with violence) to obtain funds. Seasonality also plays a role for brokers in stolen goods, who take advantage of this situation to buy and sell the stolen goods at low prices.

Respondents also referred to a range of other holidays with the potential for higher rates of violence. For example, they mentioned Valentine's Day (14 February) as an occasion when women, especially among the youth, tend to have high expectations of being treated lavishly and gifted and if not met, this can result in conflict and domestic violence. They mentioned Easter and key national holidays – for example, during Ramadhan and

49 As respondents explain, during festive seasons, people want to enjoy themselves or impress and outdo other family members, friends, and neighbours, thus spending money that they often do not have, with some people accessing these resources through violence. Respondents note that disagreements about how to spend limited financial resources over the holidays can also result in violent conflicts. They further indicate that during festive occasions, most public places are usually packed to capacity and crowded with people out celebrating. This creates challenges for crowd control and managing security, which means fights are not easily stopped when they arise.



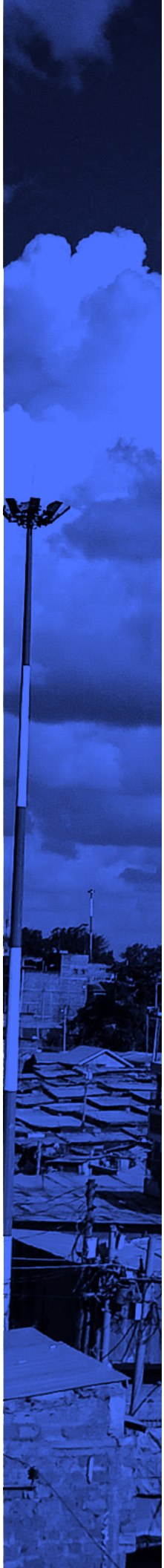
Eid – when domestic violence increases because some men opt to marry a second wife or decide to divorce and remarry.

According to respondents, women participating in informal micro-finance savings schemes also become targets in December. It is widely known that this timeframe is when many women's groups (chamas) share the funds they have been saving throughout the year. This can potentially become a source of domestic conflict because their husbands or partners tend to demand this money. On the contrary, for other women, as this male respondent from Kibera explained: *"During the month of December, there is increased pressure on men by their wives and side chicks (women with whom husbands are having affairs) to give out money for Christmas shopping and gifts."* All of these examples illustrate the links between social expectations around holiday seasons and economic drivers of violence.

Phases of rising unemployment and increased financial hardships, including experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, are cited by respondents as contributing to rising levels of violence, in addition to the daily economic challenges that residents in the informal settlements face. Respondents generally observe that when individuals lack finances or become too impoverished, they can vent out their frustrations on others, especially within households.

Urban violence happens at any time of day or night in the informal settlements. As one respondent from Kibera summarises: *"Violence happens anytime of the day or year, whether there are specific events or not. Given high unemployment rates among youth whenever they need something, for example, money, they go out to get it by any means."*

Bodaboda/senke riders and criminals on motorcycles have been accused of attacking people in different parts of Kenya, with respondents describing them as one of the key players in criminal activities. The use of motorcycles for quick theft and getaways (especially from pedestrians) is increasing, with the end of the month seen as a prime time for their use. This is linked, by respondents, to the high numbers of boda-boda riders with interchangeable number plates. It therefore becomes very difficult to trace them especially when used for criminal purposes. In areas such as Kayole, for example, respondents report that boda-bodas riders tend to be involved in the stabbing and beatings of the residents. Other crimes committed by *boda-boda* riders include the use of drugs, drug handling and trafficking, homicide, kidnapping and abduction, bribery, rape, smuggling of goods, and theft of motor vehicles and motor vehicle parts. Conversely, there are other innocent bodaboda riders who feel targeted and grouped with the criminal ones. They claim that police tend to extort money from them. For example, as



one male youth respondent from Mathare explained, *"Kama wasee wa boda, tunashinda tukishikwa na masanse na kupelekwa stenje bila hata kujua tumefanya nini. Na ni lazima utoe kakitu, na tayari doo tunapata haiwezi" (As a boda-boda rider, I am always being called to the police station over one allegation or another. And I must keep paying bribes with my already meagre earnings).*

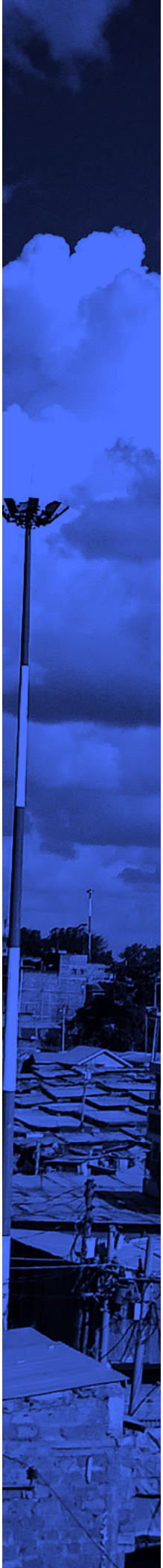
Direct violence in Nairobi: Regarding the main types of direct violence in their community, a male resident of Majengo, a community worker and a member of the *Nyumba Kumi* initiative, listed:

"Physical abuse (pinching, biting, and battering), sexual abuse (cases of marital rape and treating others in a more demeaning manner), emotional abuse (constant criticisms, withdrawing ones abilities, name calling or undermining an individual's self-worth and conscious), economic abuse (withholding ones access to money especially between couples and families) and psychological abuse (threatening physical harm to self, partner, children, family, or friends)."

A female counselling psychologist from Majengo stated that: *"There are many types of violence in my area: violence between boda-boda riders or matatu operators (vehicles used as a means of public transportation and the police, [and] extrajudicial killings by police which often leads to demonstrations by residents against the police."*

These examples were also highlighted by several other respondents, indicating that such kinds of urban violence experiences were common in all the six areas of research.

The different types of violence can be categorised into three diverse categories: structural, social, and violent extremism.



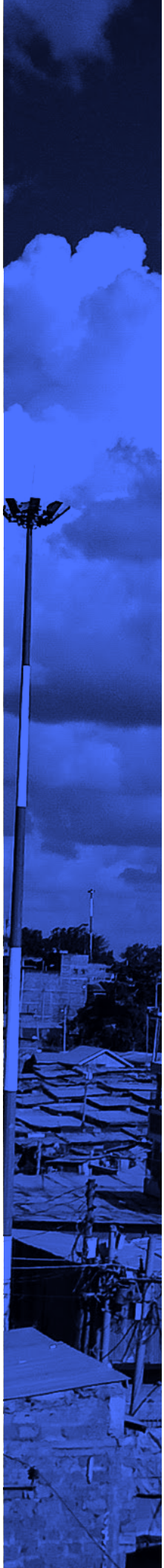
Structural Violence

During data collection, respondents referenced a form of violence known as structural violence, which occurs when social conditions, institutions, and structures (be they cultural, economic, legal, or political) perpetuate inequities in society.[50] In the six research sites, respondents gave their views on the various forms of structural violence they and those around them experience: poor governance, political manipulation, and growing economic disparities. One female youth respondent in Majengo sums up succinctly: *"My life is violent for as long as I do not get what I deserve as a citizen."*

Poor relationships between citizens and security actors: Effects of poor governance are manifested in ineffective security systems at the community level. In informal settlements, excessive use of force by the national police, illegal arrests that include beatings by the police, and extrajudicial killings are all frequent occurrences. The police utilise state machinery and weaponry to perpetrate violence against its own citizens. Protests by citizens intended to be peaceful, at times escalate to violence resulting in direct contest between security forces (using of tear gas or gunshots) and community members (throwing stones). According to the respondents in all six research sites, these types of events polarise relations between security actors and the common mwananchi (citizen). One male youth respondent from Majengo states: *"I hate the police, one day I was thoroughly beaten for an offence I did not commit. I see them as cruel people. I do not believe they maintain law and order."* Another male youth respondent from Kayole elaborates: *"Police support specific gangs in my neighbourhood and when they commit crimes, innocent youth bear the brunt of the blame."* Mob justice was identified as yet another effect of a poorly governed security system, connected to the absence of a trusted justice system upon which communities can rely to protect them from violence. As a result, vigilantism is becoming an accepted norm.

Respondents said that since the introduction of multi-party politics in Kenya in 1991, with the repeal of Section 2A of the constitution, each election cycle has been marred by election-related violence. They talked about the normalisation of political violence, with the country preparing a violence prevention strategy for every election but not investing enough resources into these strategies to stem its recurrence. Politicians have been accused of inciting people into violence by politicising ethnic identities, financing militia

50 The concept of structural violence was elaborated by Johan Galtung; see: Galtung, J. (2013). Violence: Direct, structural and cultural. Springer, 35–40. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-32481-9_3



groups to attack political opponents and using inciteful language, especially during electoral periods.[51]

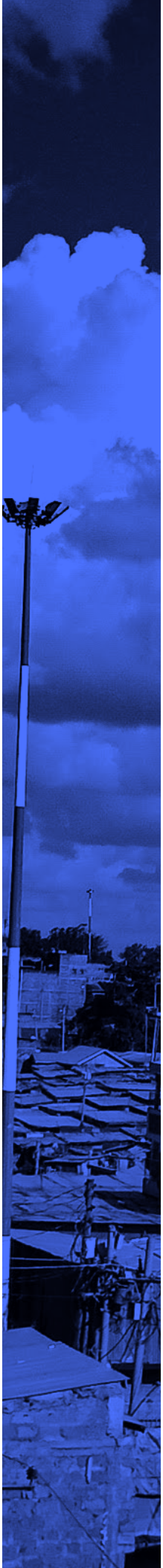
In informal settlements, people also tend to reside in clan and ethnic groupings.[52] While this spatial arrangement has advantages when it comes to physical protection and social support and gives a sense of belonging, it is not without risks, especially during election periods (also see election-related violence above). Tensions can emerge between various ethnic communities based on their opposing political allegiances, which can give rise to enmity between neighbours. When this results in displacements, property loss or damage, or injury or death, it takes a long time to repair these relationships.

In addition to manipulating youth (largely young men; also see Section 4.2 below for further findings on political manipulation), politicians also deploy ethnic identity as a tool for mobilisation, seeking to leverage divisions between ethnic groupings in the informal settlements to incite violence that operates in their own best interests (also see spatial violence below). Community members consequently suffer the brunt of election-related violence through retaliatory beatings, displacement, loss of property, and even lives.

Respondents go on to point out that the informal settlements in Nairobi are considered hotspots for politically instigated violence. During election periods, this means a heavy police presence in the informal settlements in the context of strained relations between police and community members as characterised by mutual mistrust and historical and ongoing heavy-handedness by the police and victimisation of already marginalised groups particularly youth, resulting in altercations between the police and community members. A total of 98% of the respondents mention the 2007–2008 post-election violence as the worst form of political violence they had ever experienced, with many saying they were still recovering from the effects many years later. One male adult respondent from Korogocho admits, *"I feel tortured mentally and physically because election-related violence deepens divisions between the rich and the poor. I have lost friends from different communities."*

51 Because politicians are key figures in election-related violence, political will (to stop using violence) is also critical.

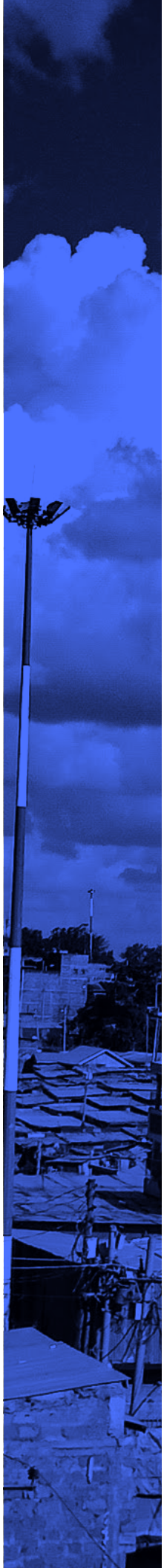
52 These areas are named accordingly. For example, Kitui village in Majengo is thusly named as it is dominated by members of the Akamba community, who originate in an area in eastern Kenya with the same name. Another example is Kisumu ndogo (Little Kisumu) in Korogocho: an area mostly populated by Luos, it bears the same name as the capital city of Nyanza, in south-west Kenya, where Luos reside.



A total of 95% of the respondents across all the study site further note that the identities of the main organisers and funders of political violence remain publicly undisclosed, with rumours circulating in abundance throughout the community about who these individuals and groups may be, but not enough evidence to bring these sponsors of political violence to justice. Instead, those hired to perpetrate it become the face of violence in the informal settlements.

Economic exclusion and lack of opportunities: Respondents from all six research sites mentioned economic violence, which manifests as large-scale corruption, and the inequitable distribution of resources, which leaves them in a state of underdevelopment and contributes to the perpetuation of cycles of poverty and violence, as a predominant feature of their lives. For instance, according to respondents, poverty and high levels of unemployment coupled with ethnic alignments and proximity to the power holders contribute to fighting over food and property and impact the distribution of opportunities in the informal settlements. The research sites are also locations in which a wide range of entrepreneurial activities take place, as residents look to improve their circumstances. However, respondents noted that youth groups seeking to generate income can create community conflict, in particular where disputes take place over control of sanitary blocks or parking spaces, or locations for small businesses, from which young people earn rent or management fees. Such conflicts become violent as the tougher (more violent) the group, the greater the chance they have of taking over and maintaining the management of such sites.

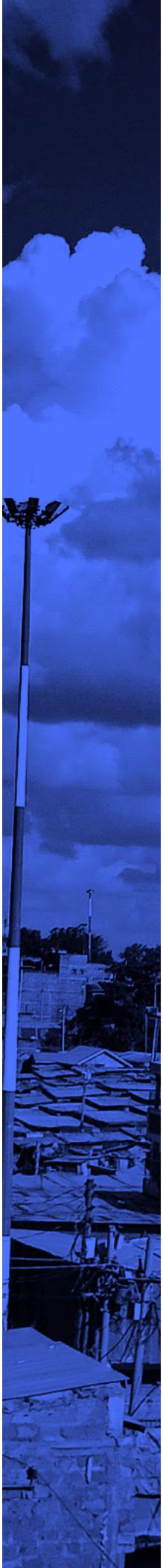
Respondents also referred to lack of information on available opportunities (for tenders or jobs) as structural violence – specifically having access to the right kind of information at the right time, which could change their lives for the better and reduce their over-reliance on handouts. Further, they see this useful information as being withheld from them so as to increase their vulnerability to being "bought at a low price" to engage in violence, their involvement often results in injuries, loss of lives and lack of community cohesion. Sex work also comes under the rubric of structural violence due to economic inequities that push individuals towards sex work as a means of survival, with respondents noting the main issue is that at times, sex workers conduct their business in market stalls at night, because they do not have a business premise to undertake their trade, creating tensions between them and those occupying the stalls during the day, which results to violence.



Gendered forms of violence taking place in urban areas: There was a general appreciation of culture and cultural practices by respondents. They stated that social values are anchored on a good cultural heritage of respect for human dignity and recognition of the role that everyone can play in society. However, in all the focus group discussions, respondents raised concern over certain cultural practices that can be termed as cultural violence against women. These cultural practices oppress women or create disparities in society. For example, at a focus group discussion in Mathare, respondents described Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as a form of cultural violence, referring to it as "the cut". They indicated that specific ethnic communities such as the Somali and the Kisii still practice FGM,[53] explaining that it is sometimes done in the informal settlements but more often, girls are taken to their home villages for FGM. Men encourage the practice of FGM through cultural sentiments that purport that a circumcised woman is marriageable and respectable in comparison to an uncircumcised one. Respondents further indicate that there is little to nothing being done in the research sites to address this form of violence, as it is a cultural practice based on ethnic identity. It is also regarded as a private family matter that does not affect most of the populace. Other cultural concerns included unfair treatment of women in the name of culture, including throwing them out of their homes whenever the husband dies, refusing to educate girls because they will eventually get married, and instituting 'wife-beating' as a culturally accepted norm.

Public facilities as locations of violence: Spatial violence is also another manifestation of structural violence in informal settlements. Generally, in informal settlements, houses are practically conjoined, with neighbours living in very close proximity. The six research sites in Nairobi are not an exception. Due to this high degree of congestion, respondents note that common areas can become areas of contention or conflict, at times resulting in violence. Common areas include shared amenities such as toilets, laundry lines, and water points. Spatial violence is further exacerbated by the uneven distribution of economic opportunities in different parts of the city of Nairobi – to a great extent (discussed further below), most informal settlements have limited employment opportunities and a large proportion of residents survive on informal small-scale businesses with low returns, including the management of such public facilities.

53 Respondents did not mention any form of cultural violence perpetrated against men.



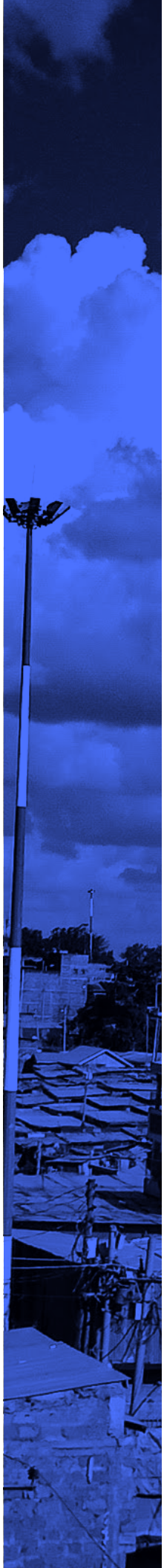
Social Violence

Social violence was described in various forms by respondents. There were concerns over gang violence or incidental robberies, domestic violence, psychological violence, cybercrimes and cyberbullying. Social violence was generally described as types of violence that occur between different social groups or individuals with subsequent social impacts on the society.

Perceived indigeneity as a driver of violence: According to respondents, in Mathare and Majengo, social violence is manifested in tensions between those who consider themselves to be the rightful inhabitants of the area and settlers or newcomers to these areas (also see intra and inter-community violence above). In Mathare, for example, the Gisu community from Uganda are often target of violence. They are also often the first suspects whenever a crime is committed. In Majengo, Tanzanian immigrants are (erroneously) held responsible for all the vices and societal ills in the community by those who consider themselves the rightful inhabitants of the area. These tendencies pose a challenge to efforts towards social integration and cohesion. In the cases in which immigrants are in Kenya illegally, they may be hesitant to report violent incidents to the police or other security actors as they fear being further victimised or possibly getting arrested for their immigration status. This makes them additionally vulnerable to victimisation and exclusion by the broader community(ies) in the research sites.

Organised criminal violence: In all six research sites, respondents note the existence of gangs and organised criminal groups (whose criminal activities are covert), indicating that these groups are well known to both community members and state actors. A community leader from Kayole noted that *"there are two gangs (Gaza and Usiku Sacco) well known for extorting members of the public through illegal toll collections from public vehicles and stealing from individuals and shops."* There were also claims from the respondents that in the same area, members of the 42 Brothers gang known as "guns for hire" have been terrorising the residents and are sometimes used by politicians to intimidate their opponents. These gangs have been accused of stabbing, shooting, and rapping their victims. As a woman respondent from Kayole explained, *"There is insecurity where I live because of the existence of gang groups. One does not feel safe, even when in church."* Respondents also identify in-fighting among gang members and organised crime group members as another layer of this type of urban violence (also see Chapter 4).

Robbery and violence: Petty crime is prevalent in all six research areas – Kangemi, Kayole, Kibera, Korogocho, Majengo, and Mathare. Petty criminal activities such as muggings and thefts are a daily occurrence. Pickpocketing is common during protests,

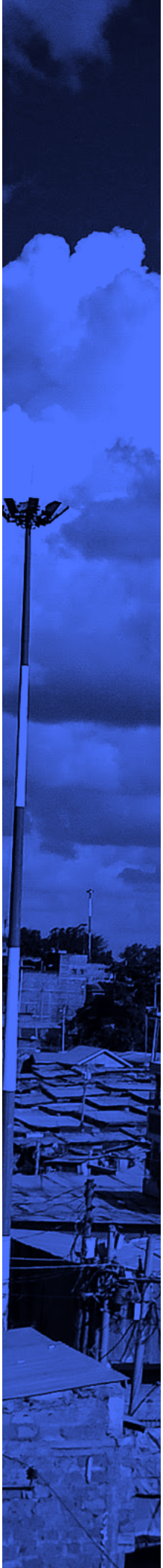


rallies, and public gatherings, and in every day crowded places such as at markets and in public transport. Home break-ins are also considered commonplace. It is not unusual, according to respondents, to leave home in the morning to earn a living and return to an empty house, devoid of any household goods. Although petty criminal activities generally do not entail direct (violent) confrontation between the perpetrator and victim, when this does occur, this type of crime can quickly escalate to robbery with violence – for instance, if the perpetrator feels threatened or the victim notices, reacts to, or attempts to resist the crime.

Respondents report that violent robbery also frequently happens in the research sites especially when the perpetrator presumes the victim will resist, out of fear, or when the stakes are high. This type of criminal activity involves contact or confrontation between the perpetrator and the victim. Perpetrators of robbery with violence use various means to achieve their end goal including ngeta (armlock), axes, knives, guns, and machetes. At times, it even results in severe maiming or murder. Linking petty crime to violent robbery, respondents indicate that muggings, for example, can leave victims gravely injured or even dead.

Violence hidden in households: Respondents noted domestic violence mainly occurs in the private sphere, between spouses or intimate partners, parents and children, and siblings. Although the majority of those on the receiving end of domestic violence are women and girls, men and boys can also be victims. A human rights activist in Majengo noted that domestic violence can be *"covert"* or *"hidden under cover of darkness"* because it most often occurs in the evening or at night. She goes on to explain that due to the close relations between perpetrators and victims of domestic violence, and in order to preserve the relationship and protect the family name and reputation, this type of violence often goes unreported unless it results in grievous bodily harm or death.[54] According to respondents, those who seek to intervene in situations of domestic violence or other forms of abuse within families often receive threats asking them to mind their own business.

54 The construction of gender identities and roles, patriarchy, and power dynamics are key factors in domestic violence, which are issues that are developed in Chapter 5.



Sexual violence: According to the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, sexual violence or abuse refers to any attempt or action towards obtaining a sexual favour including unsolicited comments, use of coercion, force or threat to attain sexual favours.[55] Respondents in all six research sites identify sexual abuse as a ubiquitous form of violence. Other examples of sexual violence presented by respondents include marital rape,[56] rape of underage girls and boys, sexual harassment of women such as catcalls and unwelcome touching of their bodies. One respondent from Kayole gives an example of *mtupe-mtupe* (knock-out drugs) as an example of sexual abuse: these drugs cause unsuspecting victims to lose consciousness so they can be raped (mostly women) and/or robbed (mostly men). The drug can be put in the victim's drink while in a pub or it can also be forced on a victim in order to sedate him or her.

Respondents also describe the nuances of sexual abuse. For example, in both Kayole and Majengo, respondents noted that although adolescent boys are often taken advantage of sexually by older women, who lure them into relationships with money or promises of an income, these young men do not seem to recognise this sexual exploitation as a form of abuse. Some young men from Mathare explained their own experiences of relating with older women, seeing themselves as lucky. They hardly looked at such experiences as sexual exploitation.[57] Equally, young women have been targeted for sexual exploitation. A female community leader in Kibera explained how young girls have been vulnerable to sexual exploitation in exchange for money. These young women and sometimes underage girls who are often targeted by older men.

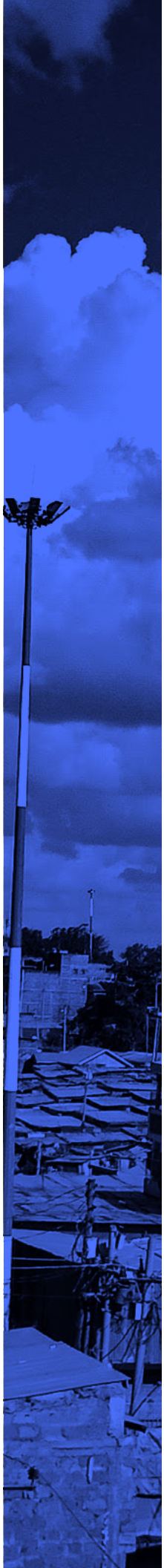
Mental health and stereotypes: Psychological violence emerged as another issue of concern. In fact, discussions on mental health are becoming more common in Kenya, with the stigma surrounding it slowly dissipating as awareness is raised. Respondents reflect this development when they comment that some of these mental health challenges are linked to alcohol, drug, and substance abuse associated with high levels of despair and disillusionment among those who live in informal settlements.

One youth from Majengo described psychological violence in terms of stereotypes that are often associated with youngsters from Majengo, particularly by schoolteachers:

55 Sexual Violence Research Initiative (n.d.). Definitions: Violence Against Women.

56 Marital rape is not classified as a crime in Kenya.

57 The inability to recognise or accept an experience of sexual abuse or violence, or to respond by actively ignoring or repressing such experiences, can have serious psychological and emotional consequences.



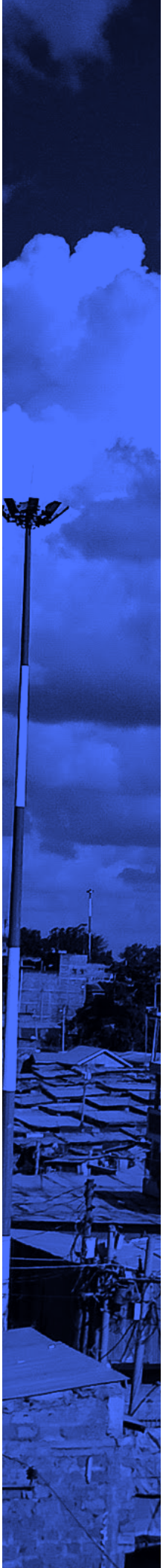
"Watoi wa Majengo ni wabaya/vichwa ngumu (translated as: children from Majengo are stubborn/hard-headed). This stigmatises young children and drives them to embody the negative characterisations that sometimes dissuade teachers from treating them as serious students. Respondents from Majengo further noted emotional violence resulting from physical and verbal abuse can lead to suicidal temptations that may sometimes lead to death.

Violence linked to digital spaces: Cybercrime and cyberbullying emerged as another form of social violence. All respondents indicated that the internet is increasingly being used for fraudulent purposes. For example, social media is used to lure victims into a robbery with violence or sexual exploitation – respondents explain how scammers use the images of other people to establish phoney web profiles. They blackmail and con victims either by declaring their love to play on the emotions of their target or by fabricating stories about how they need money for unexpected expenses, for instance, healthcare bills or travel. Another common form of online fraud involves M-Pesa,[58] a mobile money service. Normally an individual would be contacted about a money transfer that is about to be made from their account, with a claim that the line has a problem, so they should send it to a different line (the fraudster's line). Many Kenyans fall for this online fraud scheme due to the frequency of the exchange of funds via M-Pesa. Respondents note that social media also plays an increasingly key role in inciting inter-community, inter-ethnic, or politically motivated violence (see Chapter 4). They further discuss how cyberbullying via social media platforms is linked to increasing levels of suicidal thoughts and incidents of suicide. A respondent from Majengo stated that cyberbullying is anonymous and relentless: *"cyberbullies hide behind avatars when bullying people on the internet; the internet has no set timetable (unlike school or work), so bullies can harass their victims any time of day or night, leaving them with no safe haven."*

Violent Extremism

According to respondents, violent extremist groups often use direct and physical violence. However, various forms of structural violence might contribute to creating the conditions in which violent extremism gains traction and forms of structural violence are embedded in the communications approaches used by violent extremist groups. To a great extent, violent extremism was mostly associated with al-Shabaab. At a focus group discussion

58 Swahili for money, M-Pesa is a mobile phone-based money transfer service, payments and micro-financing service run by Safaricom, the largest mobile phone operator in Kenya.

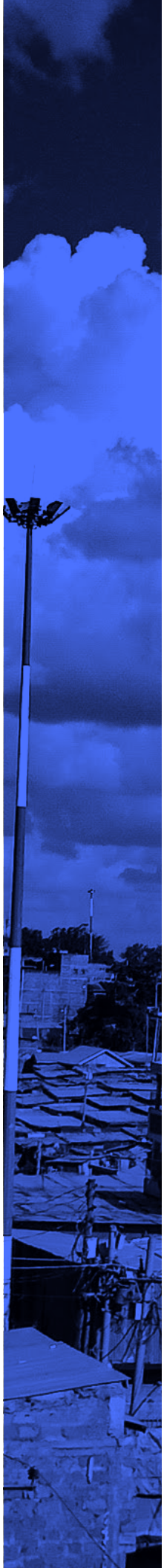


in Kayole, reference was made to the youth as being the most vulnerable in responding to the narratives used by al-Shabaab in their communications. Similar concerns were raised in Kibera, Majengo and Mathare. In Mathare, for example, a respondent noted that *"We have seen a lot of attempts to radicalise the youth in our neighbourhood, more than other urban areas in Nairobi. Some youths left our community here to join al-Shabaab in Somalia."* Respondents correlate violent extremism with other forms of crime. For instance, respondents explain that most youth already involved in crime are targeted as suitable personnel for activities associated with the tactics used by violent extremist groups. In particular, skills such as assembling grenades and other explosives, and knowledge of the use of guns are also of interest to those recruiting for violent extremist groups. Further, respondents note that marginalisation and historical injustices are deployed in recruitment strategies used by violent extremist groups.

A number of respondents define their daily experiences of violence as a form of violent extremism, given it is a perpetual risk that they face. Respondents across sites argued that recurrent violence perpetrated by police officers in their areas – including beatings, arrests, and extrajudicial killings – is more worrisome for them than attacks by violent extremist groups, which rarely happen where they live. They expressed greater concern about the lives they have lost due to violence at the hands of the police and other security actors.

Main Drivers of Urban Violence

In analysing the drivers of urban violence, it is useful to take into account both the primary and secondary factors. Primary factors are and located in the structures of social-economic marginalisation that affect poor urban areas. The congestion, poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to basic amenities create a fertile ground for urban violence. The secondary factors are largely related to crime, proliferation of small arms, inefficient government security systems, government's failure to provide basic social amenities like clean water, free education and adequate health facilities. However, it is important to note that such categorisations of primary and secondary drivers are not entirely separate and that there are cross factors that impact each other. There are diverse drivers that emerged from the data. These include cultural, social, the impact of COVID-19 as a driver of urban violence, psychological, political, and economic drivers.



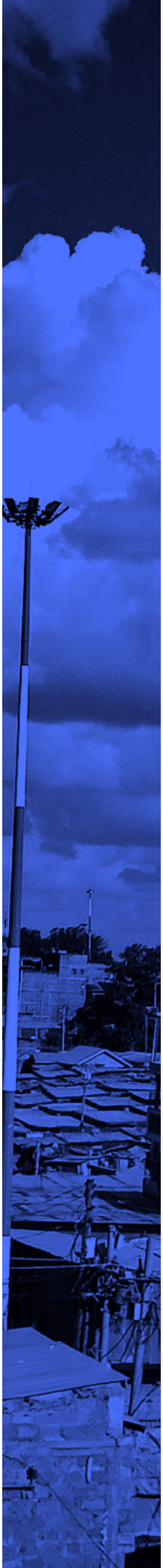
Cultural Drivers

Cultural drivers of urban violence varied from concerns over patriarchy and male domination to subsequent impact on parental care, youth delinquencies, and cultural stereotypes. Women have high expectations that men should provide for them and often make comparisons to the lifestyles and possessions of others. When these expectations are not met, the couples often end up in disagreements and engage in domestic violence. Thus, violence between spouses and intimate partners is very common in the informal settlements. When men fail to provide for the family, according to respondents, they may resort to violence to assert their power, position, and manhood.

Respondents cite poor parenting and broken homes as another key reason female and male youth are pushed into crime and violence. With their parents rendered incapable of parenting due to alcohol or drug abuse, or unable to provide for their families for other reasons (ill health, job loss, and so on), older siblings are put in a position of having to take responsibility for raising the younger ones. Other young people must fend for themselves while orphaned younger siblings are in some cases left without a responsible adult who can take care of their needs. Because of their child-rearing responsibilities, older siblings often are unable to continue with school, and so drop out, with an impact on their own livelihood opportunities. Consequently, child-headed families are not uncommon in the informal settlements. Such children are vulnerable to recruitment by gangs as the children seek a sense of belonging, a parental figure. A few respondents stated that there are cases where children have committed suicide out of desperation and frustration of running their lives at a much early age.

Respondents in Korogocho and Kibera attributed domestic violence to frustrations over poverty. This affected children who may be subject to violence at the hands of their parents and relatives. Moreover, men are socialised to believe that the only way to earn respect and solve conflicts is through violence, which is especially the case in informal settlements. Consequently, it is common to find men engaged in violent disputes or physically fighting at their places of work, for example, at bus stops amongst hawkers, *bodaboda* riders and *matatu* touts, at construction sites, income-generating sites such as public toilets, and so on.

By and large, according to the respondents, young people lack positive role models to emulate. They tend to lack positive mentorship and guidance. According to a male respondent, for young men who are raised by single mothers, and without positive male role models, they end up suffering from an identity crisis. Due to the cyclical (generational) nature of violence, there are, however, myriad of negative role models for young people.



For example, it is quite common for sons or daughters to follow in the violent footsteps of their parents or grandparents, especially if those familial figures of authority are well-known and feared gangsters. Based on these family ties, and having emulated their kin from an early age, members of the next generation acquire legitimacy and power in their community.

Patriarchy, combined with the broader cultural and gendered notions that justify it, also plays a key role in promoting and perpetuating a culture of violence. Respondents noted that in some communities' men batter their wives as a form of discipline and to assert their male prowess. According to some of the respondents, when wives get beaten up by their husbands, it is often because they have been deemed not to be respectful by their husbands or are considered to have wasted funds meant for the family by buying alcohol or drugs.

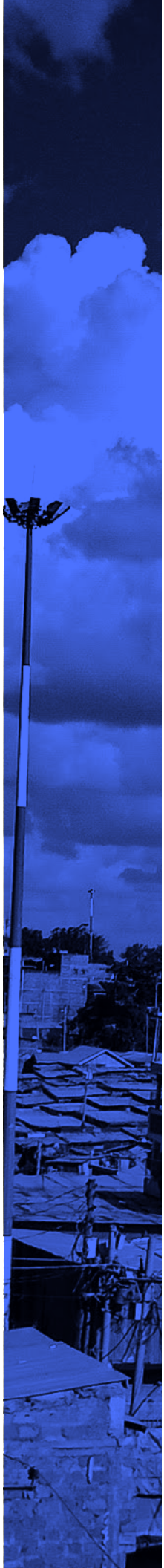
Social Drivers

Respondents cite the use of alcohol, drugs (including *bhang*, cocaine, and heroin)[59] and other substances (glue, codeine and other over-the-counter drugs, kuberr, khat) by both young and adult women and men as one of the primary drivers of the many types of violence. They say that in the informal settlements, a variety of drugs, along with both legal and illicit alcoholic brews, are easily available at affordable prices. Respondents report that young men between the ages of twelve and twenty are especially inclined to use drugs to boost their low self-esteem and cope with life.[60] They explained that the use of these various substances gives them a false sense of courage and when they are inebriated or under the influence, they tend to commit violence. Respondents also stated that alcohol, drug, and substance users are prone to domestic violence, justifying their actions by blaming their state of mind when they were under the influence of these various substances.

Respondents stated that once addicted, addicts feed their habits by any means possible, including violence. Drug dealers are also drivers of violence. They protect their territories by engaging in violence among themselves, with rivals, and at times with other community members they perceive to be against them. Respondents across the six research sites expressed concern about the use of drugs and other substances as they feel they are

59 *Bhang* is an edible preparation made from cannabis leaves. *Khat* is a leafy green plant that acts as a mild stimulant, with similar but less powerful effects than amphetamine (speed).

60 Youth are not only the majority consumers of drugs but sell and transport them, too. They are also the population segment most affected by drug use.



losing a generation to this widespread phenomenon.[61] Respondents further noted security actors contribute to perpetuating cycles of violence linked to substance abuse, explaining that when these actors come to make arrests, they arrest drug users instead of the drug dealers, and suppliers making profits from the drug trade.

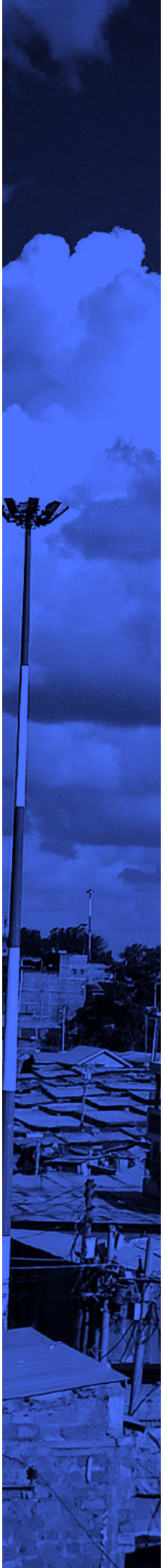
According to respondents, numerous gangs and organised criminal groups operate in Nairobi. One community leader in Kibera asserted that *"we are constantly under the threat of gangs. They keep mushrooming on regular basis."* Other respondents explained that criminal gangs are armed with knives and guns, using them to get what they want, and then making a quick escape by motorbike. They also identify in-fighting among gangs and organised criminal group members as a driver of violence. This is frequently linked to competition for power both within and between such groups.

Being a gang member is not frowned upon. On the contrary, it generally has broad appeal, especially in terms of the economic and social status benefits of criminal activity.[62] Burial practices further contribute to a life of crime as enticing. Respondents explain that in Mathare, for example, when criminal gang members are killed by the police, they are buried as heroes, with chants praising their prowess and bravery. At times, murals are even painted to celebrate their lives. For younger generations, this encourages them to become feared criminals so that they too can be famous.

At a focus group discussion in Kayole, respondents noted that popular culture also plays a role in validating crime and membership in gangs or organised criminal groups as a legitimate way of life. In Nairobi, most youth listen to music and watch films from the United States and other Western countries. The respondents stated that certain types of music content in hip-hop, reggae, and raga genres praise violence and promote violent themes, in particular gang violence, sexualisation of women which promotes violence and the use of illegal drugs. Respondents explain that some youth seek to emulate their favourite superstars. They cited the example of a gang in Kayole called "Gaza": this gang adopted the name of a gang in Jamaica of which the reggae musician Vybz Kartel is a member. Celebrities such as Tupac Shakur and 50 Cent are also revered by young gang members and get attracted by the lyrics of their songs. Respondents offer the quote *"get rich or die trying"* by 50 Cent as a case in point.

61 Once addicted, it is increasingly more difficult for addicts to return to life without drug or alcohol use. There are also extremely limited support services to help addicts give up their addictions.

62 See Chapter 5 for discussion of gendered dimensions in drivers of violence linked to gangs and organised criminal groups.

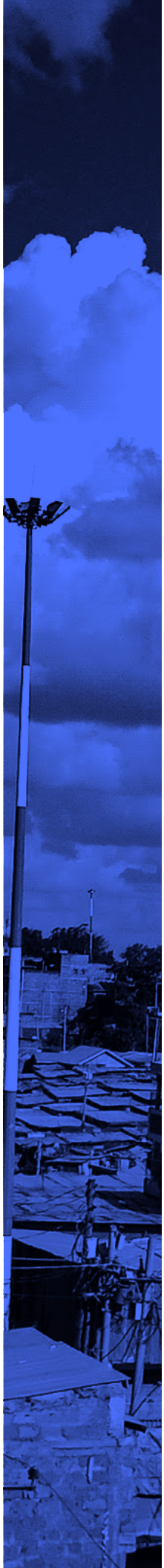


Most respondents feel that broader patterns of socialisation have created an entrenched culture of violence, in particular among the youth. Respondents stated that youth who grow up in homes and communities where they frequently see or experience domestic violence and other forms of violence outside the home tend to normalise it. In other words, the victim-perpetrator dichotomy merges into a single reality that is defined by violence, which is then normalised. Such youth begin to assume, over time, that people use violence to interact with one another. They also learn that it is important to engage in violence to be respected, listened to, and heard.[63] From such family and community backgrounds, the youth may grow up into adulthood with an ingrained violent mindset. As a result, they may use violence on others because it is familiar, normal, and acceptable. In addition, it makes them feel less vulnerable than they were when they were too young to defend themselves, and more powerful now that they can have power over someone else. This was also verified by researchers during the validation sessions in each research site.

People living with disabilities experience and survive various forms of violence, including direct, structural, and socio-cultural violence. In terms of direct violence, they are often caught in the crossfire because they are unable to respond or react quickly enough to protect themselves. A blind respondent explains that during the 2013 elections, she could hear commotion all around but was unable to escape fast enough, nor did she receive any assistance. Left on her own, she was trampled by those fleeing for safety, and then gang raped. Another respondent with physical mobility issues also talks about his experiences of the 2013 election-related violence, stating that while he could see people running away from the police, he was unable to run fast enough to get himself to safety. He was subsequently beaten up and teargassed by the police during a demonstration. A female resident of Kibera and a human rights advocate noted that *"people with disability and old people are mostly affected because they can't help themselves during skirmishes caused by violence outbreaks in the community. Often, they have nowhere to run to, and some die in the process."*

The experiences of direct violence of people living with disabilities are more complex because these individuals may have various forms of dependency. For example, when they are physically or sexually abused (whether in their own homes, day care, or full-time care facilities), they are often unable to report these violations because they are dependent on their caregivers. Moreover, they may not have anyone else to take care of them if the caregiver is arrested.

63 When violence is normalised, the capacity to instil fear in others is often misconstrued as respect.

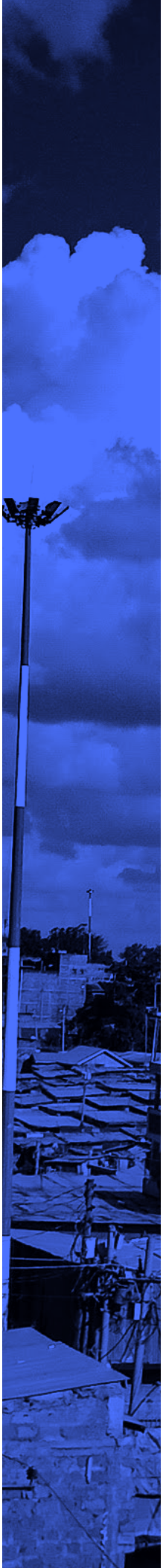


In terms of structural violence, people living with disabilities are often discriminated against. They are not given opportunities as their capabilities are questioned, misunderstood, or unknown. Their family members and society consider them a burden, which increases their economic vulnerability and dependence. When it comes to allocation and distribution of resources, people living with disabilities often receive less than others as they do not have similar access to the power holders including administrative and community leaders to negotiate for their needs. During the COVID-19 pandemic, several people living with disabilities missed out on humanitarian assistance because they either did not hear about it in time or were unable to access the aid distribution locations.

The structural violence experienced by people living with disabilities is reinforced by the socio-cultural violence already entrenched in society. The numerous stigmas that are attached to disabilities mean that most people living with them are kept hidden away from the public eye. Consequently, they miss out on or have limited access to educational opportunities and other social activities. As a result of the daily discrimination that they experience, many people living with disabilities suffer from mental health challenges.

At a focus group discussion in Majengo, respondents identify culture and religion as playing a key role as a driver of violence because of the way they perpetuate a culture of silence. They explain that when a violent act is committed by a church member, in particular sexual violence or sexual abuse, church leaders urge the matter to be settled out of court in order to preserve the name of the perpetrator and the reputation of the church. This is also the case in families. For example, if an uncle sexually abuses a niece, the family is urged to find non-judicial remedies to preserve the family honour, for example, convening the elders to levy a fine for the harm done. Such compromises imply that the perpetrator goes unpunished to a great extent.

Another important aspect of social drivers of violence is the family upbringing of children. Children are seen as both victims and perpetrators of violence. Children who live in the informal settlements of Nairobi are more vulnerable than others due to their impoverished living conditions and are victimised by violence in myriad ways. In households with domestic violence, children are both directly (on the receiving end) and indirectly (as observers) affected, with the COVID-19 pandemic putting even more children at risk. As victims of sexual abuse and violence, children tend to suffer in silence because they are too frightened to speak or have been told to be quiet. In addition to trauma and the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, girls are further vulnerable to pregnancy and physical abuse.



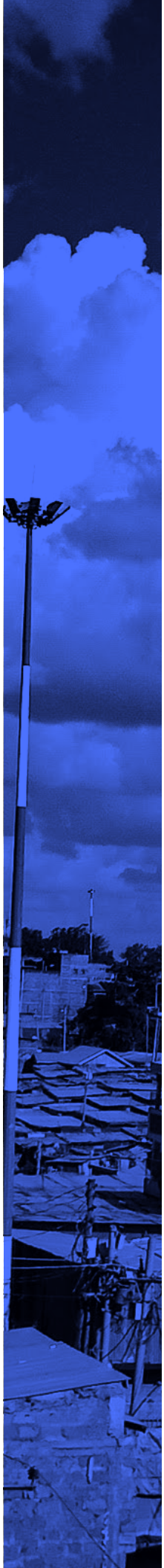
Children are also victimised by economic violence, meaning parental pursuit for economic success often leads to negligence of their duty to care for their children. In families where basic needs are unmet and school is unaffordable,[64] children tend to drop out of school. With peer pressure, they may resort to begging and later get involved in criminal activities with increased vulnerability for child-headed households. Along with petty theft and similar crimes, children are used as drug traffickers or dealers because the police rarely suspect them. They also work as spies when crimes are committed.

Children who use violence raise challenging issues related to culpability and the extent to which it is possible to hold children to account for their violent actions, precisely because of their young age. This is rendered more complex as most children in the informal settlements of Nairobi live with and learn about violence from an early age. They are socialised into violence, which they come to know as a way of life.

In Korogocho, respondents at a focus group discussion noted that communities that feel unified by ethnicity tend to shield and protect their members. For example, if one of them is arrested for being involved in a violent crime, they collect money to bail them out and then send them to their respective home villages to hide from the police until it is possible for them to return to the city. One respondent from Korogocho sums it up this way: *"Hata kama mtoto wangu ni mwizi, bado ni mtoto wangu, lazima nimtetee"* [Even if my child is a thief, s/he is still my child, and I must defend him/her]. It is also the case that when members of a similar ethnic background or religious affiliation have a conflict and one physically injure the other, the elders or religious leaders are brought in to ensure the aggrieved does not retaliate or escalate the violence. Such instances are also often resolved without reporting them to the police.

Another aspect of social divisions is between the perceived 'residents' and 'immigrants'. Those born in the informal settlements in Nairobi are considered 'residents', and those who migrate from other countries or happen to be refugees in the city are seen as 'immigrants' or 'foreigners' (watu wa kucome; immigrants). Due to the increasing scarcity of resources and opportunities, tensions are growing between these two groups, with disagreements escalating to violence at times. In some cases, residents argue that immigrants come in to take away their livelihood opportunities.

64 Kenya's education policy affords its citizens free primary school education from classes 1-8.



COVID-19 Impact As Driver of Urban Violence

In April 2020, due to the growing number of COVID-19 cases, then-President Uhuru Kenyatta put in place several measures to curb the spread of the virus. These included: a cessation of movement in and out of four counties in Kenya (Nairobi, Mombasa, Kilifi, and Kwale); a dusk to dawn curfew; and a ban on international and local flights.[65]

Respondents noted that some forms of urban violence increased during the pandemic, and others decreased. While altered to some extent, this does not signify a fundamental shift in the landscape of urban violence in the informal settlements of Nairobi. If anything, the pandemic has likely worsened the root causes of these many forms of violence.

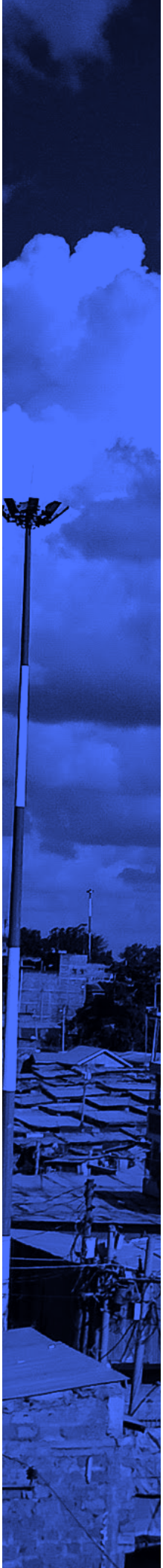
Increased financial constraints: the pandemic restrictions meant thousands of Kenyans lost their means of livelihood and hence became unable to meet their family needs. Purchasing compulsory masks and sanitisers posed additional economic challenge for many. According to respondents, these financial burdens resulted in increased levels of domestic violence and the break-up of marriages and families and reversed migration patterns, with some returning to their rural homes.

Sexual abuse and under-age sex: between April and June 2020, more than 150,000 teenage girls in Kenya became pregnant. When the movement was highly restricted, access to sexual health care became more difficult.[66] Consequently, there was an increase in maternal and child deaths and in high-risk illegal abortions.[67] Respondents explained that with teenagers idle at home and parents not always available to monitor them, risky sexual behaviour grew for a variety of reasons: vulnerability to manipulation by cyber criminals and readily available online content with inappropriate unrestricted sexual content.

65 Al Jazeera. (2020, April 6). Covid-19: Kenya bans travel in and out of Nairobi, other areas. Al Jazeera. Retrieved December 24, 2021, from https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/4/6/covid-19-kenya-bans-travel-in-and-out-of-nairobi-other-areas

66 Partridge-Hicks, S. (2020, August 19). Rise in teenage pregnancies in Kenya linked to covid-19 lockdown. Global Citizen Retrieved December 24, 2021, from https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/rise-in-teenage-pregnancies-during-kenya-lockdown/

67 Ibid



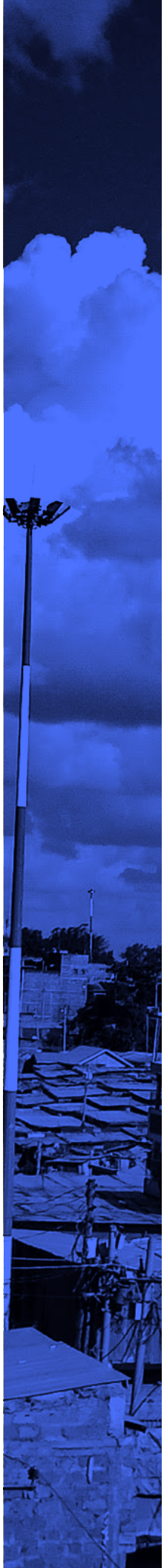
Reduced violence: whereas some respondents state violence increased during the pandemic, others note that it decreased. The key factor informing these differing observations is the type of violence in question. For example, while domestic violence and sexual abuse increased, violent crimes such as burglary and robbery decreased. Respondents attribute the decline in violent crimes to curfew restrictions that limited movements at night, given that most of the burglary and robberies tended to take place at night.

Securitisation of the pandemic: due to insufficient civilian oversight and ineffective leadership structures that define the chain of command, security actors used the curfew as an excuse to use disproportionate violence against those who violated the COVID-19 restrictions. According to the Kenya Human Rights Commission, the curfew period was marked by excessive use of force.[68] The police were accused of randomly beating up people and in some cases shooting at them for breaking the curfew protocols. The police were also reported to have broken into people's homes, extorted residents for money, and looted their food.[69] Respondents corroborated these events and added allegations of police officers sexually assaulting numerous women and girls who violated the curfew rules. Respondents in Korogocho observed that cases of police abuse during the peak of the pandemic are currently undergoing investigation by the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA).[70]

68 Kenya Human Rights Commission. (2020). Wanton Impunity and Exclusion A Report Based On Human Rights Violations Amid Covid-19 In Kenya (April - August 2020). Kenya Human Rights Commission. Retrieved December 24, 2021, from https://www.khrc.or.ke/publications/223-wanton-impunity-and-exclusion-a-report-based-on-human-rights-violations-amid-covid-19-in-kenya-april-august-2020/file.htmlv, p. 7

69 Human Rights Watch. (2020, October 28). Kenya: Police brutality during curfew. Human Rights Watch. Retrieved December 24, 2021, from https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/22/kenya-police-brutality-during-curfew

70 Protus, C. (2020, February 19). IPOA launches investigations into alleged shooting at mama lucy hospital. Kenyan news: Latest news in Kenya, Africa, World in real time. Retrieved December 24, 2021, from https://kenyannews.co.ke/news/ipoa-launches-investigations-into-alleged-shooting-at-mama-lucy-hospital/



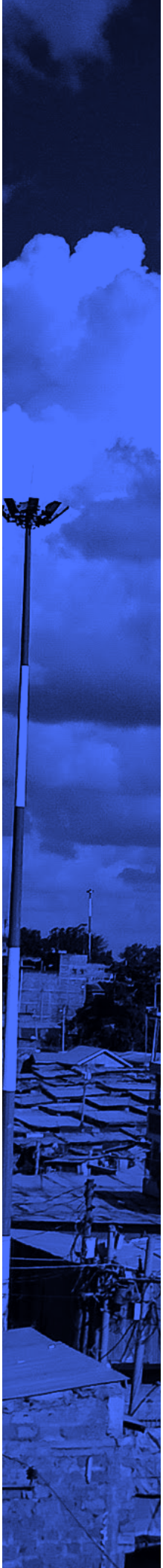
Reduced reporting of violent crime: restricted movement, along with the curfew, resulted in far fewer cases of violent crime being reported to local chiefs and police stations. Most violent incidents, including sexual assaults, went unreported and unaddressed.[71] Respondents pointed out that access to local administration and other security actors was more limited than usual because the police were distributing food, water, and soap to communities.

Increased mental health challenges: There were many unreported cases of stress, nervous breakdown, and emotional instability, among others, that were rampant during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a general lack of sufficient facilities to support people facing mental health challenges. This was combined with an increasingly isolated society due to lockdowns and other government protocols to curb the virus. Another contributing factor was the increasing emotional violence through verbal abuse designed to cause fear and humiliation. Emotional violence and verbal abuse have been on the rise in homes, workplaces, schools, and social media.

Cyberbullying: with more people working online from home or engaging with various social media platforms, respondents identified an increase in cyberbullying. In particular, they noted that arguments about the pandemic and its effects created heated arguments and personalised online attacks. There was also cyberbullying against COVID-19 patients that had recovered with their credibility being questioned with no action by the police being taken against cyber harassment.[72] The existing laws on cyberbullying and cybercrime are not well-defined or widely known among the population, making it difficult to implement cyber-policing. Consequently, victims of such crimes do not know how or to whom they should report the crime, nor do they know what constitutes adequate evidence for such a crime. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this trend of cybercrime, given that many people ended up spending much time on the internet following lockdowns.

71 Kenya Human Rights Commission. (2020). Wanton Impunity and Exclusion A Report Based On Human Rights Violations Amid Covid-19 In Kenya (April - August 2020). Kenya Human Rights Commission. Retrieved December 24, 2021, from https://www.khrc.or.ke/publications/223-wanton-impunity-and-exclusion-a-report-based-on-human-rights-violations-amid-covid-19-in-kenya-april-august-2020/file.htmlv, pp. 6-7

72 Monyango, F. (n.d.). Mask or muzzle: The impact of COVID-19 measures on digital rights in Kenya. AfricanInternetrights. Retrieved December 24, 2021, from https://africaninternetrights.org/sites/default/files/Francis%20Monyango.pdf, pp 6-8



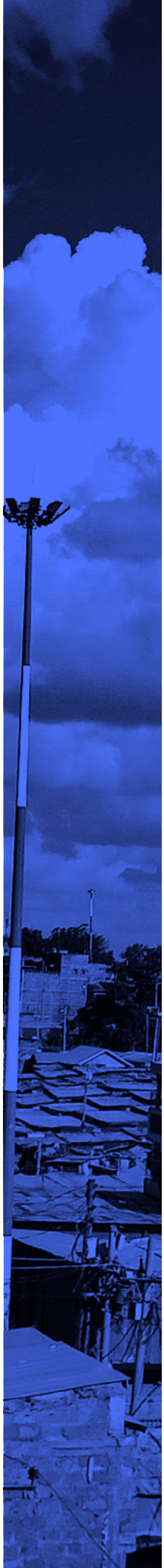
Psychological Drivers

Respondents from all the locations of research noted that anger caused by suppressed emotions, stress, depression, or abuse are frequent drivers of violence. In their view, mental health challenges play a major role in individual propensities toward violent behaviour. Respondents further indicate that increased psychological stress during the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated violent behaviour on the part of individuals. Some respondents held that some people use violence, unaware of their past traumas and how to deal with them, leading to cycles of violence.[73] Others identify self-interest as a driving factor for violence, noting that greed, protection from gang attacks, and amassing of property, or a need to have one's opinion heard, can incline people to engage in violence.

Respondents from both Korogocho and Kangemi noted that most people in the informal settlements cannot afford proper schooling, and some drop out due to peer pressure. This is also the case in other informal settlements in Nairobi. In certain circumstances where a lack of education, unemployment and violence is tenuous, this may contribute to further stigmatisation of vulnerable individuals and a lack of economic opportunities. In these circumstances where the social fabric and citizen-state relationships are already fractured, a lack of opportunity combined with a sense that life circumstances have been deliberately stacked against an individual may increase the likelihood that the individual in question resorts to illicit activity to secure the conditions that they feel will provide them with security.

Another notable driver of violence was ignorance of the right institutions to address disagreements, conflicts or injustice. When individuals take their concerns to the wrong institutions, there are often delays in addressing the issue, and eventually affected individuals may end up taking the law into their own hands and committing crimes. An example cited in Kayole referred to situations where one takes the case of theft to a Member of the County Assembly (MCA) who promises to address the issue but fails to do so. Such an incident should be reported to the police station or the chief's office. Another example cited was ignorance of court proceedings. For example, a thief can be reported and arrested but, after a few days is once again seen walking freely in the community. Community members then mistakenly conclude that the thief must be colluding with the government, when in fact, the thief is out on bail.

73 Hecker, T., Fetz, S., Ainamani, H., & Elbert, T. (2015). The cycle of violence: Associations between exposure to violence, trauma-related symptoms and aggression-findings from Congolese refugees in Uganda. Journal of Traumatic Stress, 28(5), 448–455. https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22046

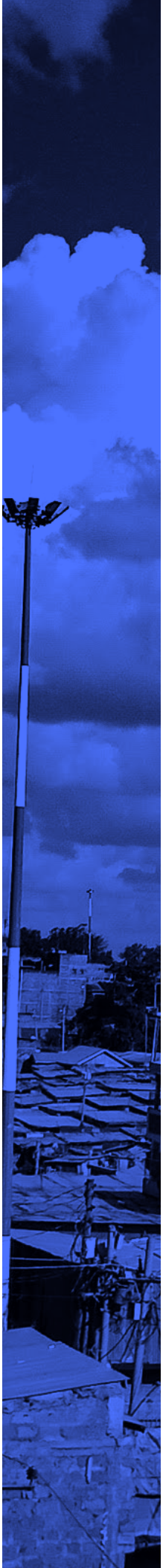


Political Drivers

There were varied responses on the political drivers of urban violence. Respondents noted that Kenyan society is defined by a high degree of ethnicised political polarisation, which can be a challenge to broader social cohesion. As a critical driver of violence, ethnic polarisation is especially visible in Kenyan political spaces, whereby people identify with and support political candidates and leaders from their ethnic communities. This creates tensions, as well as opportunities to exploit these tensions, notably during elections. Broader social cohesion is also fractured by the tendency of communities particularly in informal settlements, to live in clusters of ethnically affiliated groupings (which also feeds into political dynamics).

In addition, high population densities in the informal settlements means that people with different cultural norms live in very close proximity to one another. Instead of contributing to social cohesion, respondents indicate that this gives rise to misunderstandings, grudges, and various forms of discrimination that can escalate to violent conflict. Other ethnically divisive facets that limit social cohesion include churches being biased in favour of specific ethnic groups. Because church services and preaching are conducted in local languages and dialects, these places of worship end up being political spaces where religious leaders can influence those attending to consider voting for a particular political group or individuals from their ethnic group. Ethnicised politics, in these ways, leads to a breakdown in social cohesion, further rendering Nairobi County vulnerable to ethnic violence.

Political manipulations through tokenism have equally contributed to violence in the urban areas. As respondents in Mathare explained, politicians take advantage of the poverty in the informal settlements by providing small amounts of money or other meagre handouts such as access to bursaries, protection from arrest when crimes are committed, social protection allowances and inducements for community members (typically young men) to harass their opponents and/or carry out various acts of violence on their behalf. These politicians provide young men with drugs, cash, and the tools of violence, including guns and machetes. As a driver of violence, political manipulation has an insidious multiplier effect. That is, this increases incidences of violent crimes in communities because the tools are readily available. Politicians also entice young men to engage in violence with promises of quick money and jobs if they secure an election victory. In most cases, however, politicians have no intention or capacity to honour their promises.

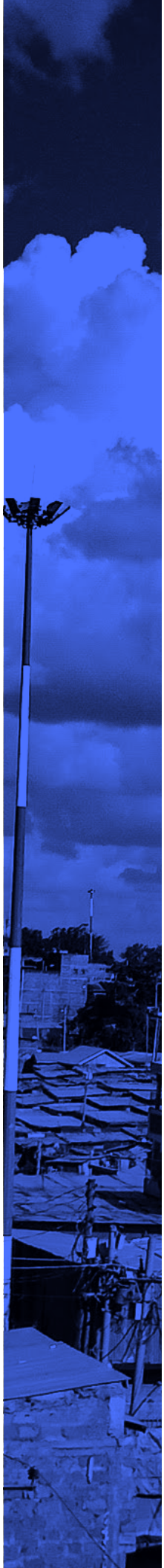


Respondents also referred to the 'hustlers versus dynasty' metaphor, which was part of the political discourse in the lead-up to the 2022 General Elections, as a driver of violence. This discourse symbolises a clash between low-income Kenyans and a small group of wealthy, influential people. In effect, they identify the emergence of class-based politics as a driver of violence in Nairobi. They explain that impoverished Kenyans find a focus of hatred in the juxtaposition of these two political metaphors, the hustler, and the dynasty. Respondents from Kayole and Mathare clarify that the poor are the hustlers. At the same time, dynasty represents affluent and influential people whom their class can identify, the cars they drive, where they live, or the expensive clothes they wear. When violent conflict erupts, the business community and the well-dressed (the dynasty) are the first in the line of fire because *"wamechapa look"* (well-dressed). Respondents explained that the poor (the hustlers) believe that the 'deep state' (the dynasty) is stopping them from earning a decent living. Instead, they blame their downtrodden position on those whom they view to be the source of their misery – the dynasty.

Economic Factors

Respondents gave their opinions on how ineffective and inefficient systems contribute to violence. They gave a number of examples – for instance, the police are seen as exacerbating violence through allegations of police brutality and extra-judicial killings. In particular, the youth from Korogocho stated that police brutality has recently increased, with the government remaining unresponsive to complaints about felt injustice. In turn, this unresponsiveness and lack of justice anger young people, who then riot, resulting in more police violence, thus perpetuating a vicious cycle of endless conflict and violence. Another example given is the abuse of power by some chiefs and government officials. These officials abuse their power by engaging in acts of corruption, such as the mismanagement of community resources resulting in strained relations between the administration and the common *mwananchi* (citizen). The question of land has also been a very emotive issue as the administration sometimes allocates land owned by a different person causing confrontation that sometimes results in violence.

Respondents also view actions by non-state actors as systemic drivers of violence by police. This is because they are complicit in corruption and other criminal activities such as grabbing public land, undertaking unauthorised evictions, and controlling electricity and water supply with anyone seen to be opposing their actions or viewed as intruding their space likely to be subject to threats and violence. In addition, the availability and

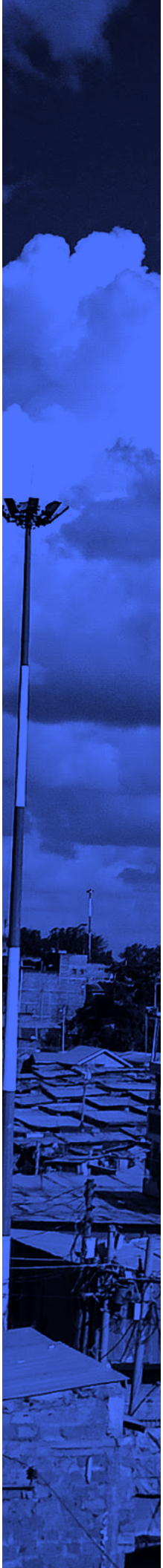


accessibility of illegal Small Arms And Light Weapons (SALW) further spurs violence in the informal settlements and other communities across the country, reflecting a systemic gap in the control of the proliferation of SALW.

Poverty was also cited as a significant driver of urban violence by a large number of respondents. In particular, high levels of youth unemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities are mentioned as contributing factors. Respondents stated that most of those who use violence are youth who desire a better life. With no other options, however, they engage in crime, including fraud, burglary, shoplifting, politically instigated violence, and violent extremism. Poverty was also cited as a driving force for membership recruitment into gangs or organised criminal groups. One young male respondent from Korogocho stated: *"Unenge na stress za life hupush msee Kwa mboka za mraa." (Hunger, combined with life's frustrations, can lead you into crime)."* A male respondent from Kangemi elaborates: *"Everybody is broke and cannot help each other out. I used to earn from crime but I reformed. And now I do not earn as much anymore" (Kila msee amesota, wako mawaya na hawawezi okoleana. Nilikuwa nakafunga but nikachorea na kureform. Na saa shughuli hazilipi kama tene).* In Kangemi, respondents observed that poverty has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic because most people have lost their livelihoods. Reinforcing the importance of poverty as a driver of violence, some respondents shared that criminal activities tend to be referred to by some community members in the informal settlements not as illegal but as an 'extra-legal means of survival'.

Financial challenges linked to the inability to meet basic economic needs was mentioned as a key contributing factor in domestic violence. As one woman from Majengo disclosed, *"My husband has beaten me several times, but I stay for the sake of my children. I have no means to provide for them."* Respondents also cited online betting as a significant cause for domestic violence, especially among young men, who bet on their favourite football teams. They gamble with the rent money, exposing their families to eviction, or funds meant for school or college, with those facing significant losses sometimes get frustrated and take this out on their families through violence or even suicide. A respondent in Majengo indicated that young children are also not immune. Using betting machines, commonly referred to as *"Kanyoni"* (common in Kayole), to gamble small amounts of money meant for food or other vital domestic needs, and consequently returning home to physical violence from parents and siblings after losing the money.[74]

74 The amounts can be as little as KES 20 (EUR 0.16) to try and win KES 100 (EUR 0.77). Exchange rate on 28 September 2021; see: https://www1.oanda.com/currency/converter/

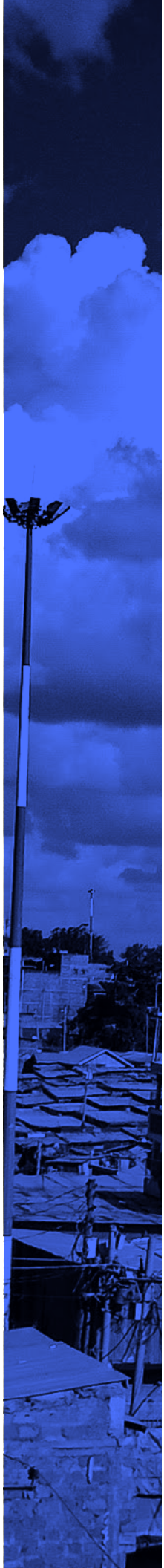


Respondents highlighted diverse drivers of violence related to the police. These included strained relationships between the police and communities, with underlying mistrust and tensions. Security actors and community members in the informal settlements in Nairobi have a complex, multi-layered relationship. Respondents in all six locations indicated that they did not trust the police, and sometimes saw them as perpetrators of violence. The police have often been accused of extortion – for instance, taking bribes or collaborating with criminal gangs for financial gain. A male youth from Korogocho stated, "*The police are a trigger-happy force and not service force, as their motto claims.*" In addition, respondents said individual police officers intentionally target the youth because they perceive the latter as criminals, particularly male youth. In some cases, such youth are subject to extrajudicial killings by the police.

Respondents elaborated on how police brutality works. During large-scale demonstrations and election-related violence, for example, they perceive the people in informal settlements as a single entity, regardless of whether an individual is directly involved in violence or not. This indiscriminate treatment goes to the extent of harassing, beating, teargassing, and shooting community members and committing acts of sexual violence. One of the community leaders in Mathare asserted: *"To some extent, the police are part and parcel of violence in Nairobi. They rent firearms to young people and stage manage crime scenes to criminalise the youth. Afterward, they are compensated by the state for their good work. This is the bitter truth that should be known."*

Alongside these allegations, respondents further underscored the complexity of the relationship between security actors and the communities by acknowledging that if their communities did not harbour or protect individuals engaged in crime, then the police might have a different relationship with them. At the same time, they still argue that the police should be bound to uphold the law and follow procedures. Respondents also understand that security actors are victims, too. That is, the police and their family members can be directly affected by outbreaks of violence, with some injured or killed.

Adding yet another layer of complexity to police-community relations, a woman leader from Kangemi emphasised that: *"The police are a necessary evil in our communities. We cannot survive without them, even though some have caused undue harm to us as a community. They are still the better option, with some going the extra mile to ensure our areas are secure."* Indeed, respondents point out several ways security actors are helpful. They note, for example, some police are keen to maintain law and order, as is evident in how they respond to calls for assistance, and that their presence increases a



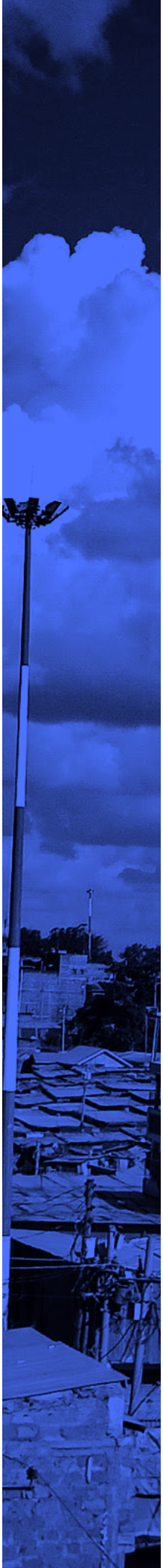
sense of safety among more vulnerable community members. Other positive actions that demonstrate interest in fostering good relations with the communities the police serve include helping the youth to abandon the life of crime, to the extent of even providing transport to relocate them when their safety is compromised, participating in community activities such as peace dialogues and humanitarian actions, and helping with food and mask distribution, as well as raising awareness on COVID-19 protocols during the pandemic.

Respondents also stated scarcity of resources as resulting in violence in the informal settlements. For example, lack of adequate water and housing. Accusations of illegal possession of land are also common drivers of intra and inter-community conflict. Most land in the informal settlements has no title deeds, with parts of it belonging to the government. If there is a title deed for the land, respondents indicate its authenticity is often questioned. They also note that criminal gangs are key culprits in land grabbing, usually done in collaboration with village elders and the local administration, who get a financial benefit from it when the land is sold to unsuspecting individuals. The gangs are paid back by the persons who buy the land.

Conflicts over ownership of structures, termed as landlord–tenant conflicts, are common in informal settlements. As with other types of violent conflicts, this type has also been exacerbated during the COVID19 pandemic, with job losses resulting in most people being unable to pay their rent. As a female respondent from Kibera comments, *"Conflict between landlords and tenants is common because people default on paying rent on time. Sometimes they also take advantage of political upheavals not to pay the rent."* Such situations escalate urban violence.

Gendered Dynamics in Urban Violence

In addition to being systematic and complex, urban violence in the informal settlements of Nairobi is highly gendered. Both women and men are simultaneously perpetrators and victims of violence, victimised in distinct patterns and in overlapping ways. In assessing how to reduce urban violence, it is, therefore, necessary to better understand the gendered effects of violence – how it affects women and men differently. Respondents identify several ways in which this is the case.

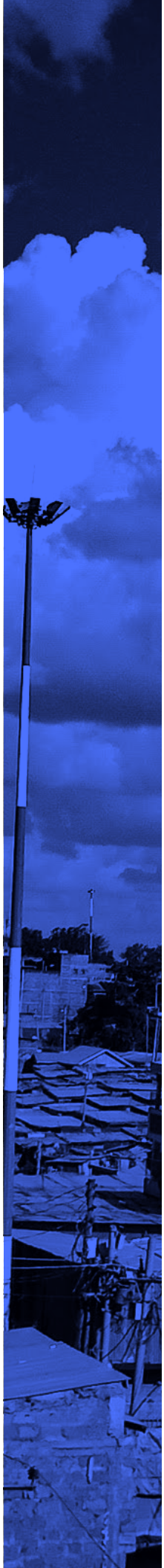


In particular, it is important to analyse how patriarchal and misogynistic socialisation patterns and cultural tradition contribute to violence through the construction of masculinity and femininity. A simplistic view based on common gender stereotypes (men as macho violent abusers; women as soft-natured innocent victims) excludes many voices and experiences and reduces the complexity of urban violence. Moreover, such an approach overlooks the mutually reinforcing character of gender identities and consequently fails to understand the nuances and intricacies that define the gendered dimensions of urban violence. Ultimately, these deficits limit the effectiveness of durable solutions to urban violence in Nairobi.

At a focus group discussion in Mathare, respondents noted that often women are unable to defend themselves, particularly during incidents of domestic violence. Sometimes women are pushed to the extent of seeking separation or divorce due to excessive violence. They, however, face the dilemma of leaving with their children (which, in most cases their male partners or husbands may refuse) or leaving without their children. Besides, according to respondents, women must contend with cultural and religious expectations that they endure violence to maintain and protect the family name and honour their marriage vows for life. However, respondents in Kibera stated that in some instances men also experience domestic violence and tend to stay in the relationship because they do not want their masculinity to be queried by the immediate social and family networks and the broader community or society to which they belong.

Most women respondents feel they could not deal with the societal shame of a broken marriage because often they tend to be blamed for failed marriages. They also worry about the psycho-social effects of separation on their children, so they frequently end up staying in abusive relationships.[75] For men who have suffered domestic violence, there is a risk that they would be perceived as having failed to take care of their families. For this reason, men rarely report incidents of domestic abuse to the police, in part to

75 **Respondents indicate that they are aware children tend to suffer most in an abusive marriage because of these potential psycho-social challenges. They also indicate that children can be unable to concentrate on their studies given the violence that is occurring in their homes.**



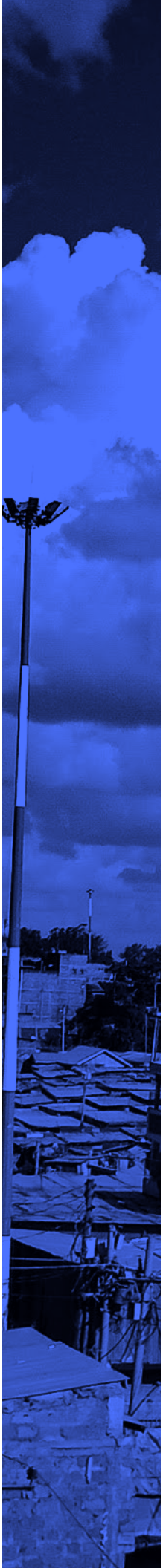
safeguard their masculinity. According to respondents, the few men who do report domestic violence to the police are not taken seriously. Worse still, they are often met with ridicule and derision, opening themselves up to have their manhood questioned: As one of the respondents stated, men are taunted, *"Wewe ni mwanaume wa aina gani unachapwa na mwanamke?* [What kind of man are you to be beaten up by a woman?]" Such experiences serve to dissuade men from reporting domestic violence and further victimise them.

Should a woman decide to leave an abusive marriage, she is additionally burdened. As one community elder in Kangemi observed: *"Yeye ndio atafute chakula, kulipa rent na kutafuta school fees, sio rahisi kwa wanawake* [She will be the one left to look for food, pay rent, and school fees. It is not easy for women]." When a woman leaves an abusive marriage to raise her children on her own, if the children happen to engage in crime or violence, the woman would be blamed for negligence.

Respondents also reported cases of intimate violence and abuse. There were concerns over how the police have responded to domestic violence against women. For example, in Majengo, respondents observed how women who report to the police cases of rape in marriage tend to be ridiculed and the matter taken lightly by the police. Similarly, when the husband rapes a relative in the house, the matter is dealt with quietly within the family. Respondents also noted that more women report to the police incidences of domestic violence and incidents of domestic abuse compared to men.

Gender and Structural Violence

In looking at gender dynamics linked to structural violence in the private sphere, respondents asserted that women's labour in the home remains unacknowledged, unappreciated, and unpaid. In the public sphere, they noted that men dominate, while women are not considered for major decision-making processes in their families. Respondents in all six locations see gendered patterns of structural violence in the political sphere. Respondents observed that during election campaigns, many young people are killed, especially young women, because they are used as blood sacrifices in witchcraft practices by those seeking elective positions, disappearing under mysterious circumstances and bodies found without some organs, badly mutilated or sexually violated. However, this observation could not be verified further by the researchers. Stressing the vulnerability of young women, one male respondent in Korogocho asserted: *"Hawa watu wana sacrifice watoto wetu"* [These people are sacrificing our

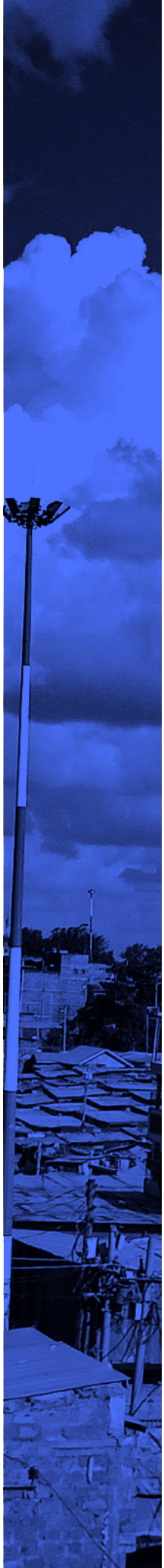


children]. According to respondents in Majengo, many traffic accidents particularly on 'black spots' and violent crimes that occur months before elections are occasionally attributed to the sacrifices made by politicians to secure seats.

Respondents repeatedly indicated that while criminals violently target male youth, female youth are targeted for sexual violence by different people in society such as businesspeople, relatives, gangs and criminals. They identified a number of different reasons why most victims of urban violence in Nairobi are young men. Some resist being robbed and end up being beaten or shot by the criminals trying to do so. Others are physically assaulted in intra- and inter-community violence. Yet others put themselves in the line of fire (figuratively and literally) by engaging in violent crime and other forms of violence. Police and other security actors also perpetrate violence on young men because they generally regard them as a security problem.

Some respondents (in Mathare and Kayole) viewed women as weaker, and are thus more likely to be robbed or sexually assaulted while walking home. As a result, most women respondents say they live in constant fear, never knowing when or from what direction they will be attacked. This affects their ability to engage in economic activities late in the evening and at night, thereby increasing their economic vulnerability and dependence on men. Women respondents further indicated that women suffer from emotional and social abuse because they are not allowed to make decisions or have an opinion, even when they are the affected party. Defined by patriarchal social relations, such restrictions can manifest in women as a mental health concern, such as depression. When children are involved, this can subsequently lead to child neglect. According to female respondents, mothers whose children are involved in crime are also seen as aiders and abettors of these crimes – regardless of whether they are involved or not. Patriarchy also conditions multiple forms of structural violence. For example, some men view a woman's place as focused primarily on domestic tasks, and forbid them from pursuing their ambitions, thus ensuring that the woman is fully controlled by and dependent on the man.

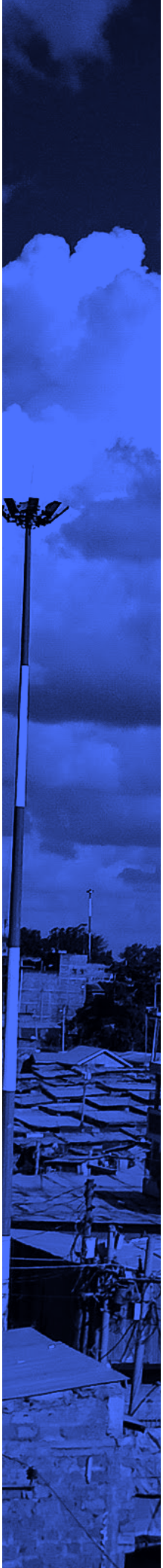
As explained above, male youth in the informal settlements constantly fear arrest for both real and fabricated crimes. They also bear the direct brunt of violence because they are also victims, so they often end up injured, living with a disability, or losing their lives. In Korogocho, a community leader disclosed that it is not easy to find a young man who has never been arrested or been to prison. As one respondent states, early death by killing, either by the police or rival gangs, is commonplace: *"Hakuna boy amededi natural death hii mtaa yetu [There is no boy who has died a natural death in our locality]."* Young men in the research sites may lack positive role models. As one male youth respondent



asserts, *"Hatugwai kudo ngori [As young men, we are not afraid to engage in crime]."* In perpetuating the cycle of criminality, if a young man's father, uncle, or older brothers are involved in crime, it is presumed that the young man will eventually engage in criminal activity, keeping the family's negative 'legacy'. One of the male respondents in Majengo who had been imprisoned before stated that those released from prison are never entirely accepted back into the society. He underlined that such former prisoners tend to be treated harshly, with words such as: *"Nyinyi mulishapatia shetani roho yenu [You have already sold your soul to the devil]."* Another youth from Kangemi recalls being taunted by his peers: *"Umehang boots, wewe ni mrazi [You have left a life of crime. You are not brave]."* Not feeling welcome or appreciated in their communities, these individuals may return to criminal activity – and their personal cycle of violence begins again, taking its place in the broader city-wide cycle of urban violence.

Respondents in all six locations observed that young women in informal settlements often place demands on their intimate partners (usually young men in the same age group) to provide for their needs. They do so through comparisons of how other young men provide for their partners. In response, these young men may turn to crime to be able to meet these demands. Respondents also indicate that young women incite young men to engage in violence to defend their honour. Moreover, men (youths and adult men alike) who engage in crime and/or are members of gangs or organised criminal groups tend to be famous among young women, as they are seen as 'real men' – confident, well-dressed, and able to provide for their loved ones – while those who opt out of violent criminality are considered to be weak. In this way, violence is portrayed as attractive and cool, with young men desiring to be a part of urban criminal networks (gangs and organised groups) to gain fame and fortune to impress others – other men, but especially women. Respondents further explain that young men involved in crime frequently have children at an early age.

The reason for doing so is the desire to leave behind their hereditary trace, a child from their own blood, based on an awareness that their lives are most likely going to be short-lived. In case the young criminal gets killed, they leave behind teenage mothers, female-headed households, and children with multidimensional vulnerabilities. In order to cope with the sudden loss or absence of their male partners who have died or been jailed, it is common for these young widows and girlfriends to marry another gang member. As one male respondent in Mathare emphasised: *"Unatoka jela unakuta dem yako anaishi na beshte yako, inauma sana* [You get out of jail, and you find your girlfriend is living with your friend. It is very painful]."



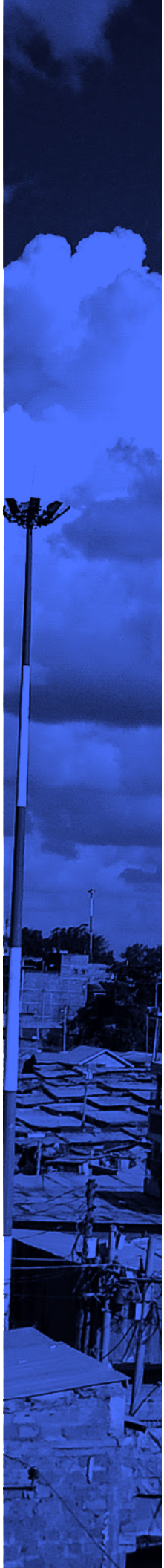
Gangs and organised criminal groups are variously composed. Some have a membership that is comprised of only young men, while others are made up of just young women. Still, others have both young men and women members. In criminal groups and gangs with diverse membership, there are clearly designated gender-specific roles. In particular, these roles can take advantage of social and cultural stereotypes about women (and men). For instance, the tasks assigned to young women include hiding firearms or stolen goods (either in their purses or houses, depending on circumstances and quantities), transporting them, and/or finding markets to sell them. Girls and young women may also be able to transport hard drugs without being easily detected. Young women are further tasked with passing on or sharing critical information. Young men, in contrast, do the actual stealing or robbing.

In some cases, both young women and young men engage in similar criminal activities but with different targets: whereas young women use charm and good looks to attract older men to have access to their money and extort them, the young men use their charisma and virility to entice older women with the same motive. While young men commit the vast majority of actual violence, young women occasionally engage in direct violence. They use the element of surprise to their benefit – given that most victims would view them as less of a threat. Some women use sex to gain financial favours or participate in schemes to rob men – for instance, working in collaboration with male gang members to spot potential victims, spike their drinks, and take advantage of them.

Women As Perpetrators And Victims of Urban Violence

Demonstrating a clear understanding of the complexity of the gendered nature of violence, respondents offered a range of examples of women as both direct and indirect actors in urban violence. There are cases where women engage in direct verbal violence at the domestic level (taunting and mocking) or emotional abuse. Male respondents in both Mathare and Korogocho observed that their wives constantly track or monitor them, showing an evident lack of trust; others explain how women weaponise silence when they are displeased, remaining silent for weeks in order to manipulate the psychology of the men.

In addition to the direct physical abuse of men in incidents of domestic violence, respondents indicate that women pick fights with other women over scarce resources such as water in the community. They can use physical violence to interfere in fights

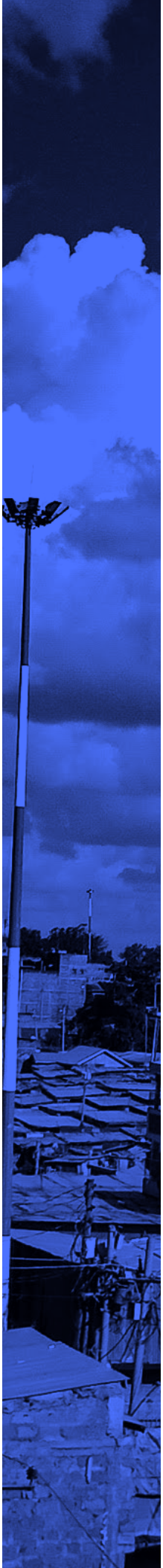


among their children or in cases of rivalry over a man. Armed with knives and guns, some young women organised criminal group members also perpetrate direct violence. A few respondents in Majengo, Kayole and Kangemi allege that some women are known to have killed their husbands to inherit property (including land) or escape domestic violence.

Respondents also explained that when a woman is angry because her needs or demands have not been met, her possible responses range from withholding sex and affection to making false reports of sexual abuse, resulting in the man being arrested and suffering the consequences of her wrath over his failure to provide. A middle-aged man from Mathare was emphatic that women are known to have plotted for their husbands to be killed in order for the concerned women to inherit the wealth of the man.

Women also play a crucial role in riling up men to fight, as this respondent from Mathare elaborated: "*Women, both young and old, are the inciters and instigators of violence in our community. They are very bad rumour mongers. Since we trust them as our mothers, wives, and sisters, we take their word as truth*" ***(Madem na ma matha, wambichi na wazae ndo huchocha ngori Mtaani. Wao huspread udanye. Sa juu si tunawaaminia kama wamathe, ma siste na wamamaz wetu, tunakubali Kila kitu wanabanja)***. In addition to making and selling various illicit substances (that motivate and encourage men to violence), women who traffic in small arms and light weapons supply men with the tools to engage in violence.

Respondents in all the locations of the research described women as victims of violence. Considered vulnerable, weak, and soft, women are seen to be more prone to be negatively affected by their experience of urban violence. They suffer both physical and psychological harm because of domestic violence. A government official in Mathare observed that *"many women who are single parents tend to get mentally affected when their children join gangs. At the same time, these women tend to be more vulnerable to gender-based violence, sometimes leading to rape and subsequent sexually transmitted diseases."*

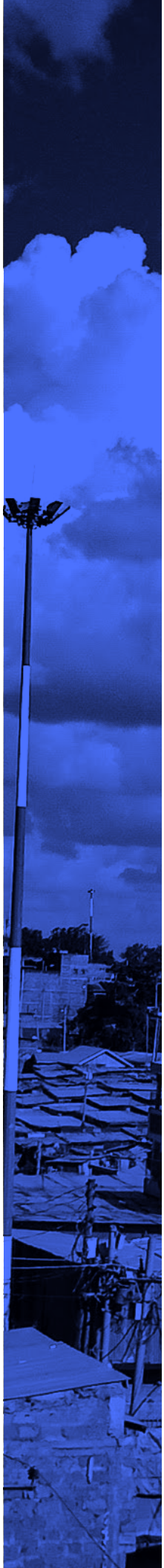


Women are raped in their homes by their husbands,[76] as noted above, but also by male family members and friends, and men who invade their homes, especially during election-related violence. Women also suffer more than men from the loss or destruction of property, and the loss of loved ones, when their sons or husbands are killed.

In particular, most respondents asserted that when an individual is killed (either by the police or as a result of criminal activity) or jailed for engaging in crime, it is their mothers who bear the brunt of this loss or absence. While fathers, too experience pain and loss for their children, mothers/wives alone face judgement and ostracism from other community members. A woman respondent from Kibagare shared a personal and painful memory that has affected her, in which she watched as her child is killed due to mob justice because he stole something. For women with children or husbands who have joined violent extremist groups, they (women) face numerous questions from both state and non-state actors and are left alone to deal with their questions, uncertainty, and pain as members of their community distance themselves. In instances where the main breadwinner has been killed or jailed to provide for their children, some women resort to illicit business activities such as selling *chang'aa* (homemade alcoholic brew), commercial sex work, or dealing drugs.

The socio-economic vulnerability of women likewise impacts their status as victims of violence, particularly when it comes to reporting it to the police. For instance, they often cannot take legal action because they cannot afford it. They can also be afraid of the repercussions for themselves and their children. As a woman respondent discloses: *"I have been beaten up together with my children and sent outside the house when it was raining heavily. I had nowhere to go" **(Nishakutwa war plus watoi na tukaoneshwa mlango kama kunanyesha viserious. Na sikuwa na kwakwishisa).*** In addition, women can experience psychological effects – loss of confidence, depression, anxiety, trauma, and so on – due to their experiences of violence and the social stigmas attached to these experiences (which further victimise women). Among other things, this can impact on their capacities to earn a livelihood, thus exacerbating their socio-economic vulnerability. Some women are victims of husbands who exercise power over them by banning them from undertaking any entrepreneurial activities or jobs outside the household. Refusal to comply can be met with violence. As previously noted, young women and teenage girls can suffer from financially incentivised forms of violence – for instance, exchanging sex for food, goods, or other necessities.

76 Because marital rape is not classified as a crime in Kenya, women tend not to report it.

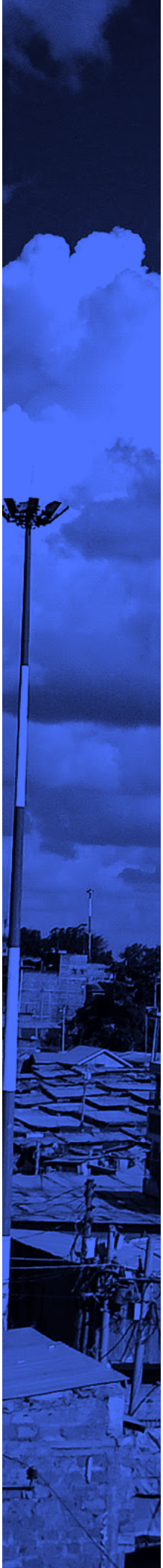


Men As The Perpetrators And As Victims of Urban Violence

According to respondents, men are the key actors when it comes to perpetrating violence. This is the case in both the public and private spheres. Respondents outlined a variety of contributing factors that lead men to commit violence, with the definition of masculinity primary among these. Due to patterns of socialisation, for instance, men in the informal settlements of Nairobi would rather fight things out (and be seen as 'real men') than accept defeat (and be seen as weak). Their role as protectors and breadwinners for the women in their lives (their mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, and other female family relations) reinforces this version of masculinity as an additional motivating factor to perpetrate violence on others outside the home, as do broader norms around men playing a protective role in their communities. For example, a male respondent from Majengo, who is also an opinion leader, noted that *"men are the ones who are often used to violate their fellow men, to violate their fellow men's wives and children. They are used to destroy other people's businesses and are also easily shot or killed by the police."*

Respondents in all the research locations described numerous factors contributing to male violence in the private sphere. They noted that men who grew up in abusive homes or were abused as children may perpetrate domestic violence (against wives or intimate partners, and children) later in their lives. At a focus group discussion in Kayole, respondents described men as lacking in patience, and reacting violently to any form of incitement or provocation, no matter how slight. For instance, when asked to meet their obligations as parents or husbands but unable to do so, some men resort to violence, claiming they feel unduly pressured. Others say they are driven to violence when their wife or girlfriend is unfaithful.

One middle-aged woman from Kangemi explained how male violence at home can be a reaction to external events: *"Mwanaume anatoka huko nje na hasira zake anakuja kukuletea kwa nyumba [A man comes into his house having been made angry out there and lashes out at those he finds inside]."* Respondents in Mathare add another layer of complexity to the blurring of violence in public and private spaces, particularly in relation to male perpetrators of violence. They allude to the fact that young men can seek revenge against other men they feel have wronged them (or their friends and family members) by seeking out and impregnating the sisters or daughters of those other men, and then intentionally refusing to take responsibility for those children.



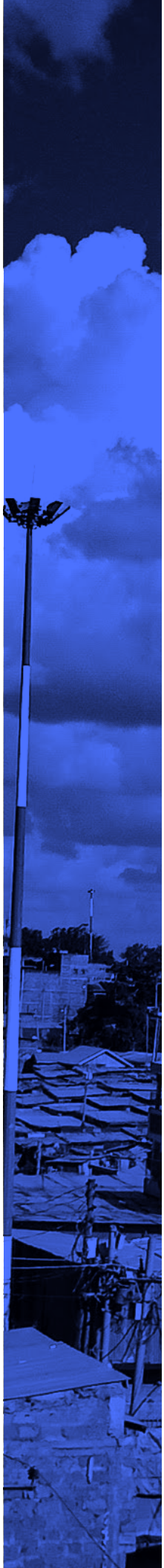
Men of all ages are also primary victims of violence as well. According to a female resident of Kibera, who is also a government official, *"men are both victims and perpetrators of violence. Sexual violence against men is treated differently from that committed against women. Such cases are never taken seriously."*

According to a male respondent from Korogocho, many men live with scars from bullet or machete wounds as a result of injuries sustained from violent encounters. They are disabled, maimed, or lose their lives. They are victims of mistaken identity, police brutality, extrajudicial killings, and mob killings. They put their lives at risk when they provide for their families by using violent criminal means. They also face violence when trying to earn their livelihoods, with respondents telling stories of men whose businesses were vandalised by criminals or experienced high cost of doing business due to high licensing and taxation costs.

Respondents offered details of individualised male-on-male violence. They talk about men being victimised or exploited by other men who are physically stronger or more powerful, with the threat of violence allowing the latter to get what they want, for example refusing to pay *boda-boda* drivers (motorbike taxi) or vandalising their businesses creating significant financial losses. At a focus group discussion in Majengo and Mathare, respondents viewed men as victims of structural violence, especially those who experienced job losses during COVID-19 pandemic. Unemployment can put men in a situation of desperation, particularly given that they are expected to provide for and support their families. This likewise increases their vulnerability and their propensity to violence. Respondents say this is the case for most men who lost their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another form of victimisation that men experience is the instrumentalisation of men as tools of violence. As noted above, they can be hired by political actors, community leaders, and businesspeople to engage in violence. Young men between the ages of 19 and 25 are especially susceptible to this form of victimisation.[77] Also, as previously noted, young men may be goaded into violence by their peers, older men and women,

77 A generational element is often introduced into the dynamics of urban violence. If young men are arrested, the older men bail them out or bribe the police (although this is not always the case). Creating a vicious cycle of violence and injustice, the older men remain safely above the reproach of the law, while young men end up with arrest records or in prison.



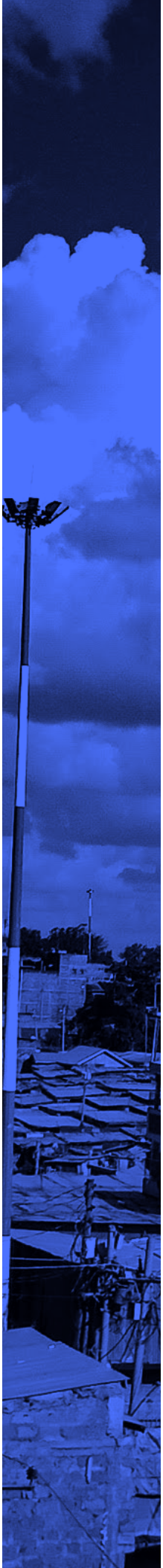
or their wives and intimate partners – not only to make money or provide for them, but to demonstrate strength and might. Although domestic violence against men is rising, the stigmas attached to men who experience such violence (shame, diminished manhood, and so on) remain firmly in place.

As a result of being used for violence or victimised in violent situations, men can suffer psycho-social problems, which further victimise them. As one female respondent from Majengo explained, what hurts men the most is that they are consistently stereotyped as being violent, while those who are not violent are not seen to be real men. Gendered presumptions that men are strong make it difficult for them to show vulnerability when they experience violence (including sexual abuse). In addition, men who engage in violence often live with feelings of inescapable guilt because of the harm or irreparable damage they caused to others. Since talking about any sort of challenge or problem is not considered masculine, many men thus suffer in silence to avoid being seen as weak. This can create psycho-social problems, encourage substance abuse and addictive behaviour as coping mechanisms, and even lead to suicide.

Gender-Biased Security Approaches

Respondents noted that some security actors deal with communities in informal settlements with bias and intimidation. Men overwhelmingly tend to be on the receiving end of this bias and intimidation, although women are often also affected. According to respondents, during the 2017 general election, violence in Korogocho was openly evident. The police went from house to house at night, calling on men to come out or risk dire consequences. One respondent in Korogocho said that one of the policemen shouted, during their night patrols: *"Nyinyi leo kwa hii plot msipotoka, tutapanda mpaka bibi zenu [If you do not come out, we will not only sexually assault you but your wives, as well]."* In this way, women's vulnerability is used against them.

At a focus group discussion in Kangemi, respondents generally asserted that most men do not report violent incidents against them to the police because they are frequently held liable for the crimes they want to report. One male respondent in Kangemi underscored: *"Nikienda kwa polisi, ni kama ng'ombe inajipeleka kichinjio* [*Going to the police station is like a cow taking itself to a slaughterhouse]."* Speaking about the strained relations between community members and security actors, a female respondent in Majengo explained that *"Ukiona polisi, umeona adui* [*When you see a police officer, you have seen*



an enemy]." A male youth from Majengo shared his experience of turning in a weapon to the police, who said in response: *"Kama ulirudisha hii moja, si bado uko na zingine [If you have returned this one, then surely you still have others]."* He goes on to say that he was subsequently tortured by the police to provide more information.

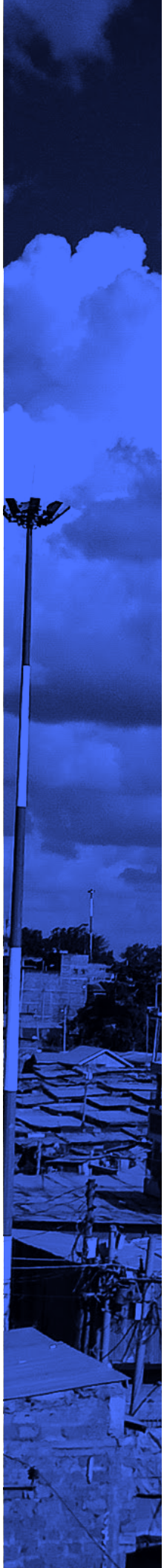
The Role Of The Youth In Urban Violence

Many young people in the informal settlements are unemployed, due to limited decent job opportunities and a lack of employable skills. In this capacity, they are also considered to be 'idle', insinuating an element of laziness into their unemployment. According to Kenyan census data released in early 2020, nearly 40% of the youth population between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four years old were jobless.[78] While past economic growth has created jobs, the majority of these are informal and low paid. Moreover, the rate of job creation is too slow to match population growth. Young people compete for jobs in an economy that is suffering from job cuts and hiring freezes due to sluggish corporate earnings, with the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating these negative trends.

To address unemployment, youth in the informal settlements may seek low-paying jobs, for instance, managing the public toilets, water tanks, and car washes. Too few in number, these jobs become a driver of violence as various youth groups compete over them (despite being poorly paid). As previously noted, youth are also hired temporarily by political actors and businesspeople to use violence for a variety of purposes. Given these types of opportunities and the low pay that goes with them, there is widespread low self-esteem and desperation among youth living in informal settlements. Moreover, some young people end up looking for alternative livelihoods and means of survival with the many gangs and organised criminal groups in Nairobi, or they may come together to form their criminal gangs that operate in specific territories.

The young people in informal settlements have been born and raised in the same context. They are familiar with the area. It is home as they know it. They have friends they have known since childhood, who are like a family to them. As stated by some respondents, when these friends participate in crime (a gang or organised criminal group), it is easy

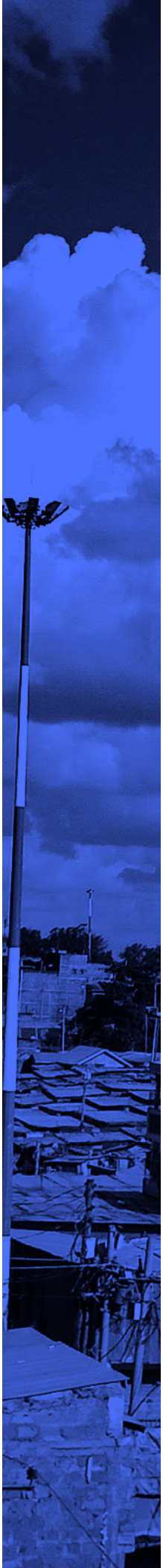
78 See: https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/bd/economy/census-39pc-of-kenya-youth-are-unemployed-2281430; the insights about the broader economy in this paragraph also derive from this source.



to be drawn into the "good easy life" as a matter of survival or to be able to feed and clothe their families. Respondents stated that young women in this context still expect the men to contribute to their needs irrespective of the challenges they both face, or whatever activities they engage in to make their ends meet, including engaging in crime. A respondent from Majengo succinctly summarises the situation: *"Young people have no choice but to engage in violence. They are surrounded by violence. It is their environment" (Mayuth hawana uradi inabidi wajiengage kwa noma juu noma ndio kamaisha uku na iyo ndio rada mtaa).*

Young people in informal settlements are often judged as only being interested in crime, drugs, and prostitution. They are considered to be homogenous in both their interests and identities. Despite being diverse and multifaceted, youth are offered job opportunities such as sports, arts, or garbage collection, cleaning public toilets, and water tanks, working at car washes and community clean up – without being asked what their interests actually are or those interests being ignored entirely. Those that do not fit the given opportunities or categories are left feeling frustrated. They also feel they are being denied opportunities to earn a living and prosper. One female respondent from Kayole observed: *"I went to look for a job at a restaurant in town. The minute I mentioned I am from Majengo, I was presumed to be a prostitute. And on that basis, denied the job." Another respondent from Kayole had a similar experience and stated, "when I mentioned in a meeting in town that I was from Kayole, I was treated with suspicion and seen as a dubious person, a criminal."* Youths from the informal settlements therefore come to recognise from an early age that they may be perceived as criminals based on the area where they live, and blocked from job opportunities that could transform their lives. Hence, out of frustration, a respondent from Majengo reiterated: "*To survive, you must be violent because violence raised you."*

Respondents in Mathare indicated that most young people in gangs or organised criminal groups are linked to other social activities in the area that bring young people together. As a youth leader in Mathare explained: *"It is rare to find a footballer in Mathare who has not been engaged in any criminal activity all their life." Another respondent from Korogocho offers a more generalised perspective: "It is almost impossible to find a young person in Korogocho who has never participated in crime at some point in their life or been a girlfriend to someone involved in crime or have a sibling in crime. Here, it is the norm, not the exception."* Revenge and retribution also factor into peer influence, contributing to youth engagement in crime. When a brother, intimate partner, or friend



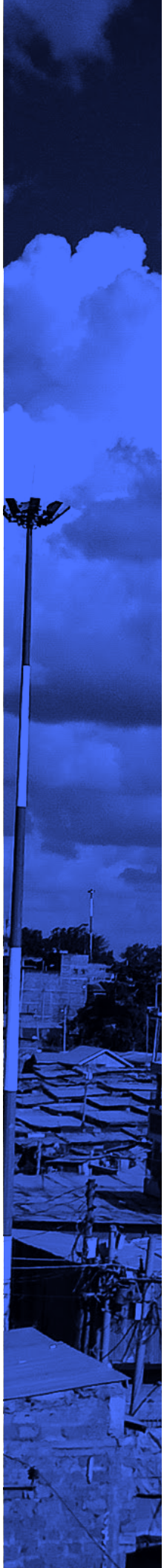
is killed by the police, for example, some youths participate in crime to honour the life of that person through violent acts of revenge.

Many members of violent gangs in Nairobi, especially the youth, are often recruited through the internet, predominantly through social media. Respondents in all research locations indicate that this is particularly the case when it comes to creating ethnic tensions that result in violence due to political manipulation. In addition, recruiters of violent extremist groups use social media to attract young people to join and support their cause. The invisibility and anonymity of social media users have also led to increased incidences of cyberbullying. Respondents further explain that social media has enabled organised crime groups and gangs to be more efficient and effective. The advantages of using social media include: timely communications; planning violence more quickly and simultaneously; and creating networks among organised groups, which can operate in different areas and provide protection for one another as needed. Social media pages have also been used to name violent perpetrators, with some individuals being erroneously named and killed as a result.

A culture of violence is also apparent in the normalisation of police brutality, which often goes unreported. A number of respondents indicated that they had experienced beating by the police and occasionally were sent to prison overnight with no justifiable reason – other than being put in a bracket of "stubborn youth". Others state that they had been beaten up and arrested because their hairstyle looked suspicious, they appeared to be idle, or the police wanted to teach them an advance lesson in case they ever intended to undertake criminal activities. A male resident of Eastleigh and a peace activist raised the following concerns over police brutality:

"The relationship between police and youths is very poor. This is mainly caused by the fact that some police use excessive force in their line of duty. I have this case example of a 30 years old bodaboda operator. One month after the curfew was imposed, he was hit by a blunt object in his right eye by the police. He was then rushed to Mama Lucy Kibaki hospital, went through an operation and his eye was removed. When youths face such incidences, they perceive the police as their enemies."

In these close-knit and high-density communities, those who report violent incidents to the police or other security actors are dubbed *"mtiaji"* (informer, snitch). Reporting violent incidents to the police may lead to being ostracised and at times, physically harmed, which serves to reinforce the culture of violence in the informal settlements.



Strategies For Addressing Urban Violence In Nairobi

From the research findings, several recommendations emerged that could be important in addressing urban violence in Nairobi:

To the Government:

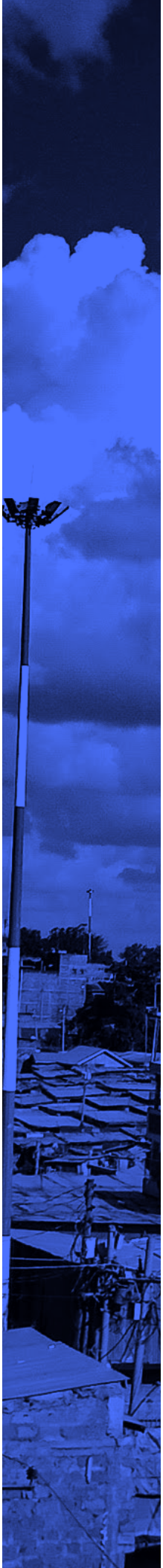
a. ***Employment opportunities for the youth:*** The government should create diverse formal and non-formal employment opportunities for the youth. This could include youth economic empowerment programmes that enhance youth job skills and expand opportunities for self-employment and formal employment; financial credit facilities for business capital; and education scholarships, among others.

b. ***Professionalisation of police operations:*** From the study, there are many complaints about police brutality and lack of professionalism in handling issues around urban violence. It is crucial that police are held accountable for their actions linked to excessive use of force and human rights abuses.

c. ***Addressing systemic violence:*** Urban violence, as noted in the research findings, is a systemic problem that needs to be addressed from various dimensions. The government is responsible for providing decent housing, social security for supporting the people's livelihoods, physical security of persons and property, and social amenities such as schools, hospitals and roads, amongst others.

d. ***Address corruption in different government sectors:*** Corruption is at the core of urban violence. There is a need for the government to curb corruption in the security sector that sometimes cooperates with the criminals by hiring arms to them, taking bribes to release suspects of crime, failing to address the proliferation of small arms, and releasing criminals due to lack of evidence given inadequate investigative work done by the police, among others.

e. ***Strengthen community policing:*** The Nyumba Kumi initiative on community policing has gained traction but has yet to operate in its full capacity. There is a need to raise awareness of the need for full cooperation from community members as well as security agents. This means strengthening and building greater capacity for community policing initiatives is imperative. This would entail building and strengthening police-community relationships through dialogues, exchanges, and training on peacebuilding. This collaborative approach will build trust between communities (especially young people) and security actors. It will also provide space for information sharing and a commonly agreed approach to reducing violence.

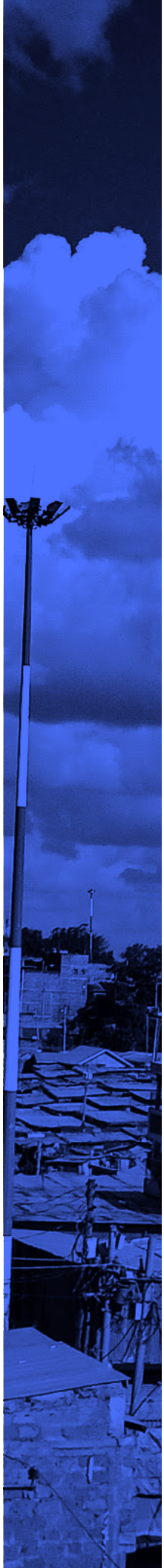


*f. **Mitigate the spread of small arms and light weapons:*** Armed violence has increased in urban areas, and this can also be attributed to the increased circulation of SALW. The police have the capacity to ensure that illegal arms do not circulate in the country, and that those found with arms are held accountable.

To civil society organizations

*a. **Enhance community awareness on strategies of violence reduction:*** Working with communities to raise awareness of the negative impact of violence is important in addressing urban violence. Family education, at individual and communal levels, is one of the strategies that can be used. This would entail counselling, mentorship, and training sessions on violence prevention, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, conflict mitigation and peacebuilding, responsible parenting, the dangers of drugs and substance use, life skills, financial literacy, and so on. The aim of this approach is to reduce domestic and family-based violence as well as other forms of urban violence. Moreover, when young people are engaged in gainful activities that they enjoy, there is a likelihood that they will not have the time or motivation to engage in violence. As mentioned by respondents, during the government '*Kazi kwa Vijana*' (work for young people) initiative, crime levels in the informal settlements where it was implemented significantly reduced. Young people in informal settlements have multiple talents that can be nurtured. They also require adequate support for these talents to be channelled into activities from which they can earn a living. Related to this, public spaces that have been illegally grabbed by strong and powerful actors should be reclaimed so that youth have available spaces to nurture their talents and interests.

*b. **Address male socialisation of violence:*** Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) can organise workshops and training that address male socialisation to violence. According to the study, male youths and men are often the critical perpetrators of urban violence. As such, there is a need for programmes that specifically address issues related to male socialisation and concepts of masculinity, especially the deeply embedded propensity for using violence as a source of power, relevance, and manhood. Male mentorship and role model programmes are important to give men, male youths, and boys space to share their experiences and motivate one another to go in a different direction that moves away from violence. These approaches should include men and male youths previously engaged in violence and violent crime, as they can be credible voice for change. Moreover, peer-to-peer mentorship is often effective for supporting transformation at the individual and personal level.



c. ***Advocacy against human rights abuses by police and criminals***: CSOs should raise awareness of human rights abuse by the police and criminal gangs. They can lobby the public to speak against police brutality or lack of response to criminal activities through media and documented reports that can be presented to the IPOA.

To Religious Leaders

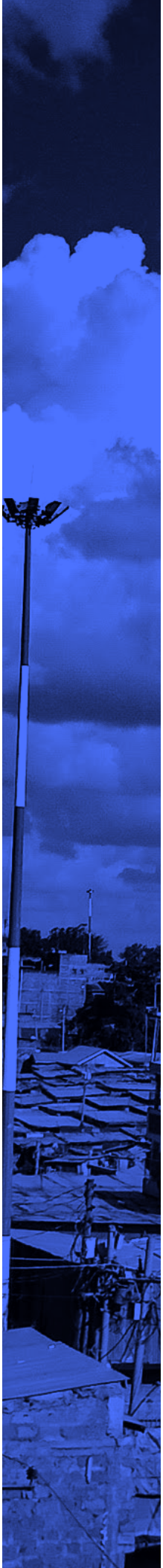
a. ***Enhance social cohesion:*** Religious leaders in Kenya have a large following and can enhance social cohesion in the country. As noted in the research findings, there are ethnic and social tensions in the informal settlements. These tensions are often heightened during election periods. It is, therefore important that religious leaders foster social cohesion by calling for an end to impunity by politicians who use the youth as tools of violence, and the divided populations as instruments of ascending to power.

b. ***Advocate for security, employment opportunities and better housing:*** The religious leaders can use their voices to call for better living conditions in the informal settlements. The focus could be to lobby the government to develop informal settlement by developing better housing and infrastructure that improves the living conditions of most Nairobi population, such that their marginalisation and exclusion is reduced.

Conclusion

This study reveals the complexity, pervasiveness, and interconnectedness of urban violence in Nairobi, and the various social, economic and political factors contributing to it. The study provides insights on the socialisation of violence amongst the residents of the informal settlements, with a far-reaching effect that may lead to a culture of violence. The context of informal settlements often includes underdevelopment, marginalisation, injustices, and corruption, which may provide the basis for urban violence.

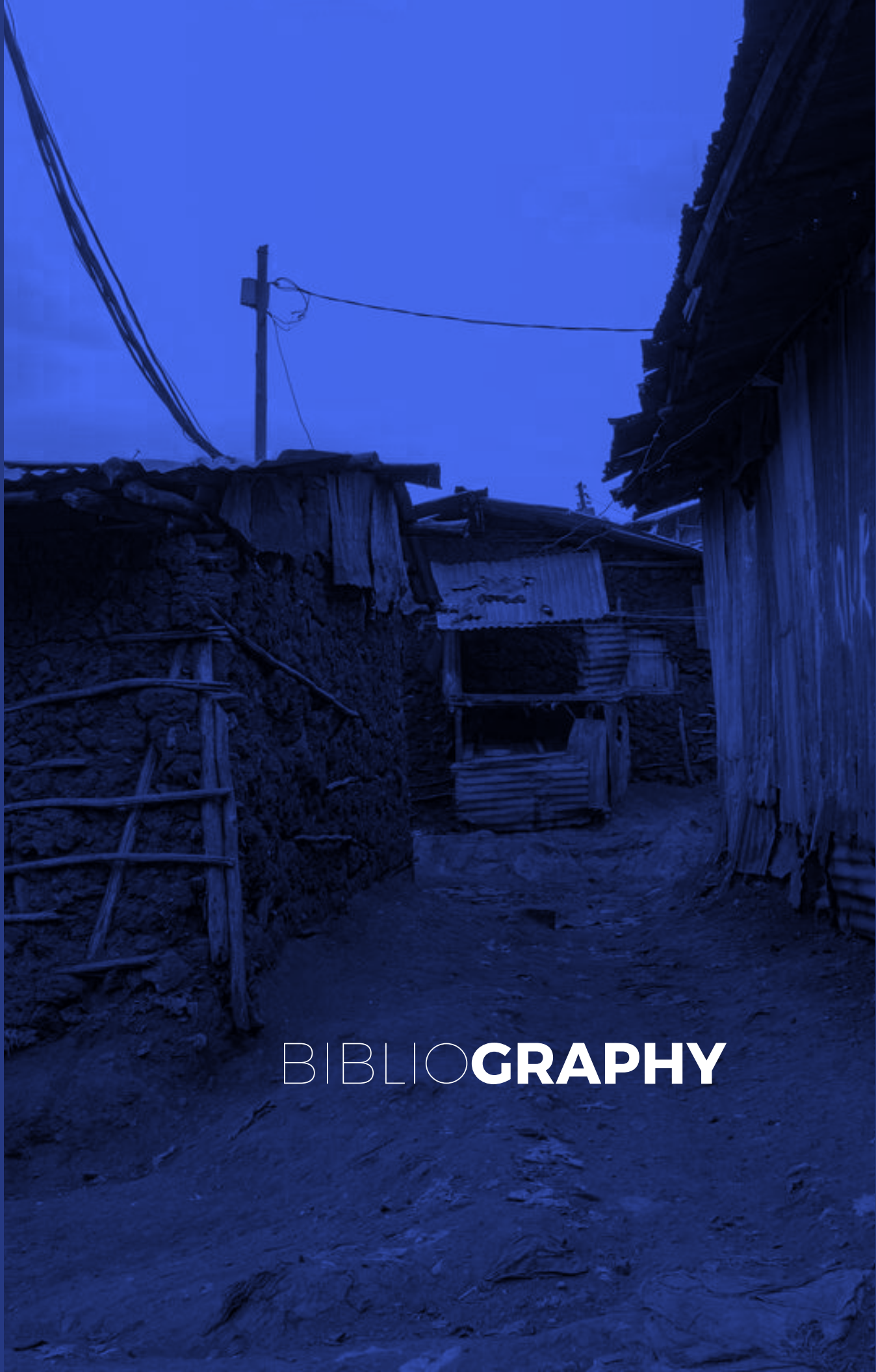
This normalisation of violence – its reality as an everyday fact of life and death – makes it difficult to address as a separate phenomenon from the daily life occurrences in the informal settlements. This is exacerbated by dynamics associated with patriarchy, cultural biases against women, political incitements to violence, poverty and unemployment, among other factors. According to the respondents across the six research sites, addressing urban violence requires a multiplicity of actors (both state and non-state) and multi-level, multi-pronged approaches that are flexible, responsive, and adaptable. This large-scale, long-term work also needs both practical strategies and systemic solutions



that address key governance challenges, including poverty, unemployment, political impunity, uneven development, and access to basic services such as water and health, among others.

As much as urban violence is a negative experience, some positive actions have been taken to address this phenomenon. For example, the incorporation of community policing (known as *Nyumba Kumi* initiatives) has mobilised residents to address urban violence communally. This approach to collective security provides a framework for early warning of security concerns within the neighbourhood. Peace committees have also played an important role in motivating people to own this collective security concept daily, and more so at points heightened tensions, for instance during the election periods. The committees are also crucial in engaging perpetrators and victims in alternative dispute resolution, reducing the potential for the occurrence and/or recurrence of violence. Government initiatives such as *Kazi Mtaani* (youth engagement in cleaning up their neighbourhoods) and provision of development funds (such as *Uwezo* and Youth Enterprise Development Funds) are being used to address the issue of youth unemployment, with some youth groups starting income-generating ventures. These offer sources of youth livelihoods, and employment opportunities for others in the urban areas.

The government still needs to do more to address urban violence, especially by professionalising the police force, improving the living conditions in the informal settlements, and holding police forces accountable for their actions. Cases of police brutality and abuse of office ought to be addressed promptly. Therefore, it is equally important to raise awareness amongst the public on the need for social cohesion, community policing, and ending domestic violence through learning around dialogue and mutual understanding.



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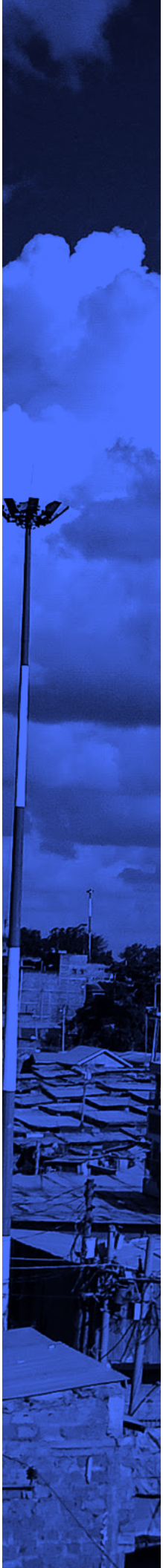

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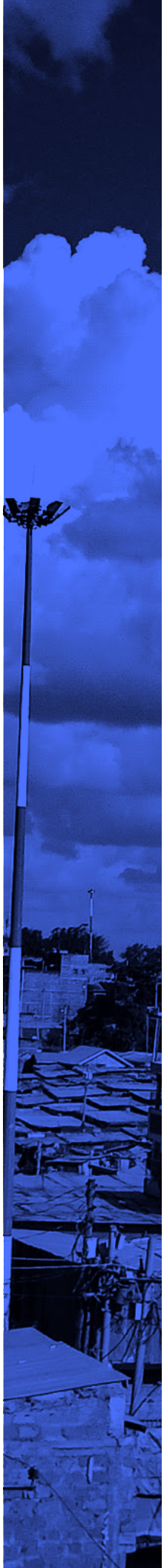

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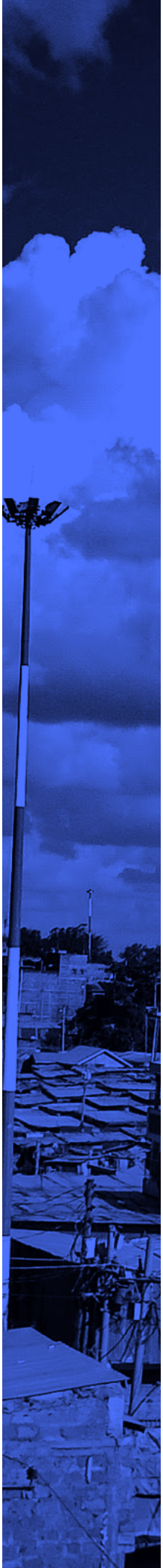

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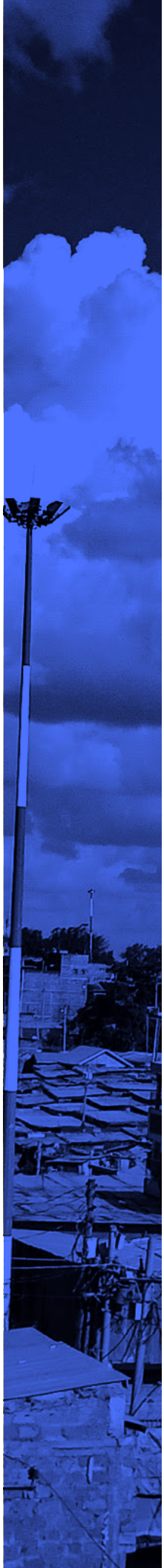

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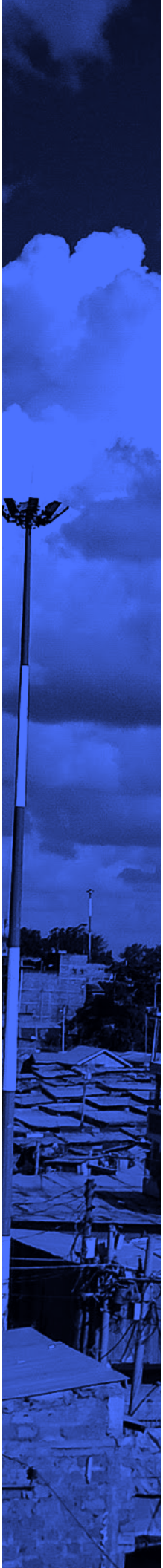

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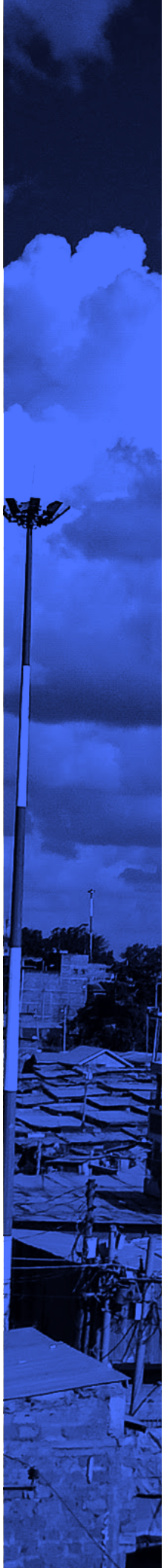

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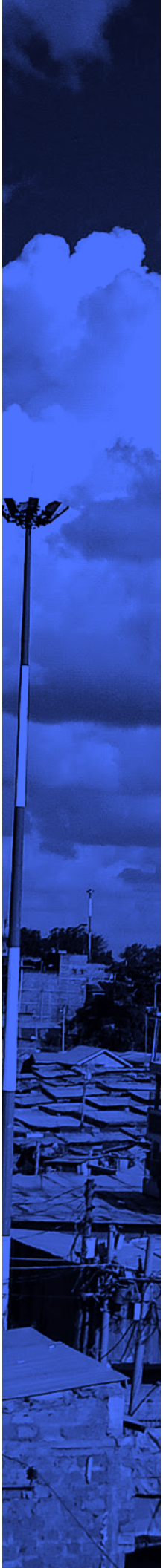

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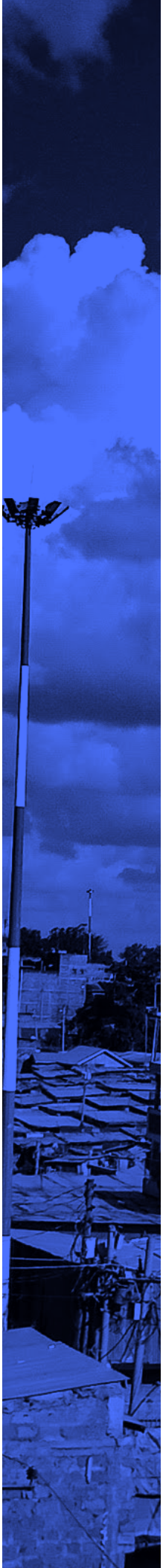
ANNEXES



Annex 1: Summarised Research Questions

1. What are the main types of violence you are aware of, in your area/community?
2. What are the most important drivers of violence – why do people use violence?
3. How are individuals in the community affected by violence in different ways? [This could be women, men, young people, or others]
4. How are you individually affected by violence?
5. At what times does violence increase – times of the year, of the day, around specific events?
6. What are the emerging trends – what new dynamics of violence are starting to be seen here?
7. What is the relationship between women and violence here? How are they involved?
8. How do young people relate to violence here?
9. What do you think are the main ways that urban violence can be stopped?
10. Has anything changed in regard to violence as a result of Covid-19? How has Covid-19 changed dynamics of violence?

Annex II: Profiles of Authors

Beatrice Kizi Nzovu

Beatrice Kizi Nzovu is Team Leader, Africa Country Programmes at the Life & Peace Institute (LPI). Her work focuses on peacebuilding in the Horn of Africa with special emphasis on the nexus between peacebuilding, governance and development and a bias towards gender. Her research interests include violent extremism from an African feminist perspective; transitional justice and reconciliation; and the contextualisation of international policies with an interest on youth, peace, and security. She is responsible for strategic leadership and oversight of five country programmes namely Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan and provision of support to the country managers. Beatrice holds a Master's degree in Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation from the European University Center for Peace Studies; a graduate certificate in Women's Peacebuilding Leadership from the Eastern Mennonite University; and a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from Maseno University. She is a doctoral candidate at the African Women Studies Centre, University of Nairobi. Prior to joining LPI, she worked at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Nairobi and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes in South Africa.

Elias O. Opongo

Elias O. Opongo is senior lecturer and the director of the Centre for Research, Training and Publications (CRTP) at Hekima University College, Nairobi, Kenya. Opongo, a Jesuit priest, is also the former dean of the Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR) at the same university. He holds his PhD in Peace Studies from the University of Bradford, UK, and MA in International Peace Studies from J.B. Kroc Institute of International Studies, University of Notre Dame. His main research interests include: transitional justice, post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation, religious extremism

and violence, state-building and democracy, and extractive industries and conflict. His most recent book publications include: (2022) Elections, Violence and Transitional Justice in Africa by Routledge; (2019) Elias Opongo (ed), Religious Extremism and Violence in Africa: Reviewing the Practice of Intervention & Interreligious Dialogue. Nairobi: Hekima University College; (2021) African Theology in 21st Century: A Call to Baraza by Paulines Publications; (2018) Pope Francis on Good Governance and Accountability in Africa by Paulines Publications; (2016) Transitional Justice in Post-Conflict Societies in Africa by Paulines Publications, among others.

Fatuma Aden Ahmed

Fatuma Aden Ahmed is a mother of three children currently working as a freelance consultant in peace building and gender mainstreaming. She has over 10 years' experience in program planning, implementation, program management, stabilization and peacebuilding as well as administration and women empowerment programmes, advocating against women inequality. With the experience, gained from the work she developed very effective verbal and written communication with Keen insight into the needs and views of others in a way that she can listen to and identify issues or problems and articulate in presenting. This experience has also allowed her to be able to relate well to people from varied cultural, ethnic, religious, and professional backgrounds. Fatuma is an innovative thinker, a quick learner, and possesses the ability to take initiatives and see programmes through to completion. By focusing on women in occupying the decision-making spaces Fatuma has started Northeastern women association. An organization that focuses on giving women the space to share their stories and learn from each other. When not in the advocacy space Fatuma spends time with her family and enjoys participating in community initiatives.

Leonie Falk

Leonie Falk is the Lead Research Analyst for Global Health and Well-being at Woodleigh Impact, a charitable foundation, committed to funding the most impactful organisations. She is a graduate of Charity Entrepreneurship's Incubation Program and has worked with non-governmental organisations in India, Kenya and Uganda. Her career is focused on using rigorous research and implementation to alleviate suffering.

Michelle Digolo Nyandong

Michelle Digolo Nyandong is a peacebuilding and security professional and currently serves as a Programs Officer at the Life & Peace Institute. She has experience in research, strategic security planning and programme management. She previously served as the Lead Facilitator for the Integrated Mission Planning Course conducted at Eastern African Standby Force (EASF). In this role, she supported the development of the Eastern African Integrated Mission Planning Process and its associated courses; led and conducted training for civilian, military and police components for EASF member states in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Seychelles and Sudan equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to assume positions within an integrated mission headquarters during operations. Her research interests are in gendered dimensions of conflicts, peace support operations, and post-conflict reconciliation with an anthropological bias. Michelle has contributed to several peace-related research efforts in thematic areas such as violent extremism, climate, peace and security and ethnic identity conflicts. She has a trans-disciplinary background holding a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in International Relations and Law (Keele University, UK) and a Master of Arts (MA) in International Relations and Peace Studies from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International relations, Nairobi, Kenya) and certified in Gender Awareness and Integrated Mission Planning. Michelle is also a trained mediator and an accredited member of FemWise Africa on Mediation and Conflict Prevention in Africa.

Sophia Ngigi

Sophia Ngigi is a Peacebuilding Advisor at the Peaceful Change initiative (PCi) working on the Swahili Project in East and Southern Africa. The project is being implemented along the Swahili coast of Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique. She has over 12 years' experience in training, research, conflict transformation programmes at community level and national levels. She has engaged in participatory action research, national survey and researches. She has worked widely with the youth and has interest in development of innovative solutions to peace and development. She holds a BA in Philosophy and sociology from Catholic University of Eastern Africa and an MA in Development Studies from University of Nairobi. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Social Transformation from Tangaza University College.

Annex III: Profiles of Researchers

Editar Ochieng

Editar Ochieng is a feminist activist, convenor, and social justice champion. Founder of Feminist for Peace Rights and Justice Center located in Kibera. Her centre aims to build leadership among young women, serving as a multi-generational organizing and networking platform. Her voice on gender equality can never be stopped. She believes that championing for gender equality in all spaces will accelerate gender parity and inclusion thereby attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She has championed the inclusion of women in peace and security plans that aim to promote peace in the once crime-ridden community of Kibera by pushing for the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. In 2023, she was recognised as 7th of 60 women recognised for being influential female powerhouses by the Daily Nation. She has also been recognised as African rising activist of the year award 2022 and one of the 100 most Influential People in Gender Policy 2021. Editar was awarded in 2020 as an upcoming human rights defender by Defenders Coalition and in 2018 by Echo Networks for individuals who have extraordinarily served their communities and in 2020, nominated as Top 35 under 35 award of Exemplary leader by the Youth Agenda. Editar was also an aspirant for 2019 byelections in Kibra constituency.

Emelda Wanjiku

Emelda Wanjiku is the founder Recoup Initiative, a community-based organization in Kayole, Nairobi, and focuses on sensitizing the youth on the effects of drugs and substance abuse and crime. She was born and raised in Kayole where she went from being a drugs and substance abuse addict and a criminal to a leader in the community and among her peers. She has served as a volunteer in several organizations working with

the youth, identifying and seeking solutions to the challenges in the community affecting them. Emelda is a peace champion dedicated to bringing change to her generation. Emelda has also received several acting awards and in 2013, 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2019 received the best actress award in Nairobi County.

Fredrick Oyugi

Fredrick Oyugi is a Community Governance and Development specialist. Currently working in the Research docket at The Leaders Guild, Centre for Leadership and Management at Tangaza University College. Fredrick holds a Bachelor of Arts in leadership and management Option Public Administration from The Catholic University of Eastern Africa. He is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Ethics and Organizational Leadership from Tangaza University College. He is passionate and committed towards positively impacting lives and transforming societies through Leadership Development Programs, Youth Mentorship, Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Programs.

Kennedy Kimeu

Kennedy Kimeu is a Prevention Coordinator at Haart Kenya, a non-governmental organisation based in Nairobi dedicated to fighting human trafficking in Eastern Africa. He is also the founder of a community-based organization Naweza254 in Kamukunji Sub County (Nairobi, Kenya). The organization focuses on peacebuilding, mentorship, and art. He holds a Diploma in Child Care and Protection. Kennedy was born and raised in Majengo informal settlement in outskirts of Nairobi, where he went from being a street boy to a leader in his community and among his peers. He has served as volunteer in numerous organisations, working with children and youth and worked with local media platforms to raise issues of the youth in his area. For his efforts, he was awarded 'Agent of Peace' award by Global Communities in 2015. He has served at Life & Peace Institute

as a community moderator in a peacebuilding program for the youth in Fredrick Oyugi Kennedy Kimeu Pushed To The Brink Page 88 three informal urban settlements in Nairobi. He was a pioneer researcher in resilience in peace and conflict toolkit. Kennedy Kimeu was awarded a Course Diploma by Fryhuset Sweden in Peacebuilding Skills for Young Peace Leaders in Africa and was featured in Fryshuset's documentary The Missing Peace in 2018.

Mohamed Malicha Boru

Mohamed Malicha Boru is the Founder of Mathare Big Dreamers and Youth Engagement Link community-based organisations which provides platforms, resources, and training to empower young people to become active agents of peace and conflict resolution in their communities. With a peacebuilding resilience lens, Mohamed promotes peace education and awareness programs targeting youth focusing on topics such as value leadership, conflict resolution, tolerance, diversity, and human rights. He has a background in community-led development and counselling and testing, having served as a counsellor for Kenya Medical Research Institute. Mohammed has advocated for peace on various platforms engaging in peace processes involving security actors, administration, youth and local community (Mlango Kubwa Ward) since 2016 and has facilitated many dialogues on topical issues which arise with Life & Peace Institute. He is also the co-author of the Resilience In Conflict Analysis Toolkit. His hobbies are watching documentaries, engaging in community work, and playing football.

Rose Alulu

Rose Alulu is a Program Assistant at Life & Peace Institute. She holds a Bachelor in sociology and Diploma in social work and social development. She co-founded a community-based organization, Rising Dada in 2018, which emphasizes on empowerment of young women in leadership. She has also worked as the Coordinator of the Mathare Peace Initiative Kenya, a youth-led community-based organisation working with young people from informal settlements to promote peace and self-employment through community empowerment. Through her work, Rose has been able to change the lives of youth, including by supporting a shift from criminal activity to empowerment, promoting positive changes in mindset and attitudes towards peaceful communities. She is also a professional research practitioner having attained certification with Open Society University Network, (OSUN). Rose is an avid believer in youth empowerment and opportunity and works tirelessly toward the goal of equal opportunity for young people.

Rose Mbone

Rose Mbone has worked for over 12years as a peace/human rights and restorative justice advocate in the informal settlements in Nairobi County. She has vast experience in disarmament, disengagement, reintegration, trauma healing awareness and resilience among youths and women in informal settlements. As a community mobilizer Rose has vast practical experience in bringing together youths from diverse backgrounds to have conversations on different issues and concerns that affect the youths and community. She has facilitated training programs in peace, security and entrepreneurship. other skills include planning, management, Mediation/Negotiation and counselling. She coordinates youth's reform programs under The Legend Kenya (TLK) community-based organisation in partnership with the police and several partners of TLK from violent

crimes. She is also a pioneer of localization of UNSCR 1325 and 2250; Rose is a member of second Kenya National Action plan working group under the state department of gender and her key role is to represent voices of youths and in particular young women working on issues of peace and security at the grassroots level. Recently in 2021 on international women's day Rose received trail blazers award for her outstanding role on women peace and security in Kenya, from the State Department of Gender and Office Of The First Lady of The Republic Of Kenya. She was also awarded the International Young Women Peace and Human Rights Award 2021 by Democracy Today. Rose has been featured in Forbes magazine twice in 2020 and in mid-2021 stories highlighting her outstanding role on issues of sexual and gender-based violence. Rose was also featured in a publication by Perimetro as 100 most influential leaders in Nairobi 2020/2021.

Samson Kuboko

Samson Kuboko has worked for over 10 years as a peace and justice advocate in the informal settlements in Nairobi County. He has experience as a youth leader in disarmament, cohesion building, reintegration, trauma awareness and resilience among youths in informal settlements. He also has experience in carrying out dialogue process among youths and police in disarmament and crime reduction. As a community mobilizer Samson has vast practical experience in bringing together youths from diverse backgrounds to have conversations on different issues and concerns that affect the youth's and community. He is part of a network of youth peace builders in Nairobi County and a trained facilitator in dialogue, trauma awareness/ resilience and entrepreneurship. In 2018, Samson was part of a team that led a peaceful disarmament process where He was able to intervene between a young man who was surrendering an illegal firearm and the police.

Thomas Akendo

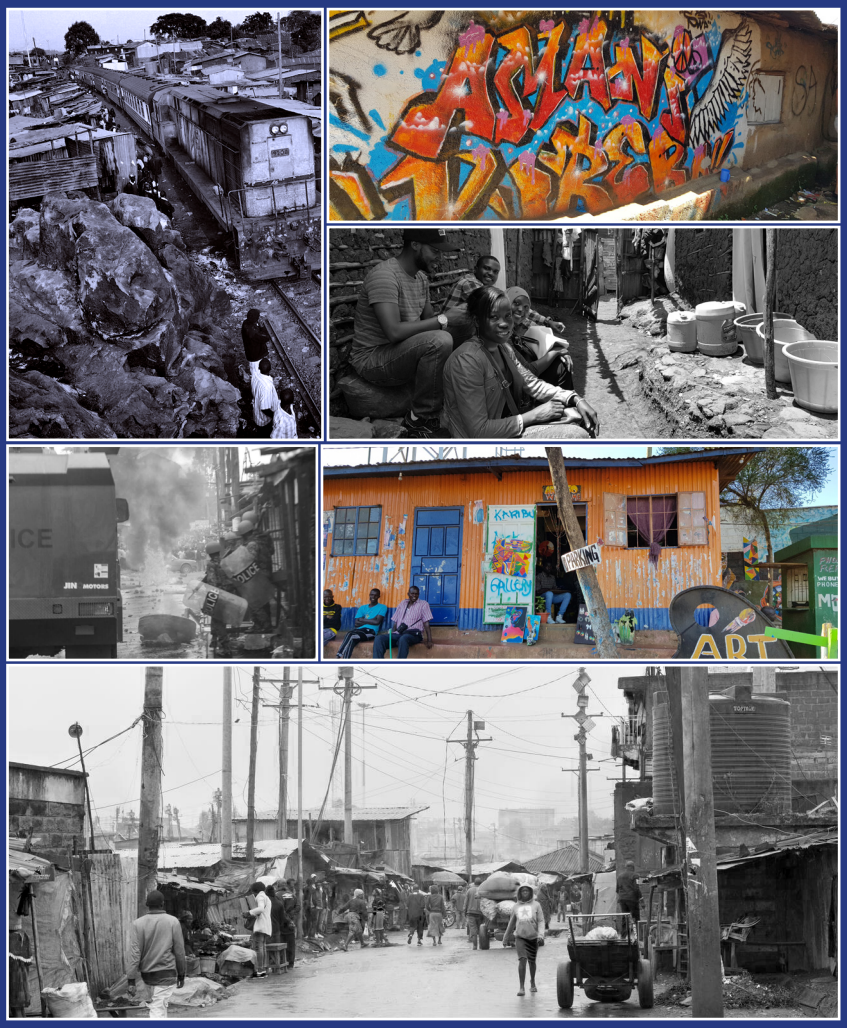
Thomas Akendo is currently the Nairobi County Peace Forum chairperson, and doubles as the Sub-County Peace Committee Chair for Embakasi. He has been in the peace building and conflict management fields since the Kenya's post-election violence of 2007/2008. In his capacities as a Sub- County Peace Committee chair, he has resolved disputes, reconciling both individuals and members of local communities through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) realised through Mediation, Negotiation and Conciliation. In 2018, he was privileged to be enlisted for training by the Office of the President for a three-week training Security Sector Reforms and Gender at the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) in Karen, Nairobi. Mr. Akendo is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Peace and Conflict Studies at Mount Kenya University. He holds three Diplomas in Social Work, Community Development and Theology.

Vincent Kenvin Odhiambo

Vincent Kenvin Odhiambo is the founder and Executive Director of the Wasanii Sanaa Community Based Organization situated in Kibera. Vincent is also the current East Africa Youth Think Tank President. The Youth Think Tank comprises youth from 15 African countries empowered to take lead in democracy innovation. He is a trained paralegal and a human rights advocate who champions pertinent issues affecting the society. Vincent is a 'he for she' when it comes to Sexual and Gender Based Violence as he empowers the community using different methodologies to advocate for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Born and raised in the informal settlements of Kibera, Vincent is passionate about the community development work and has been a facilitator in many peace, development, and human rights processes in collaboration with scores of non-governmental organizations and government institutions. He received recognition as the Peace Champion of the year 2022 - 2023 under the Kibera Right Town.

Zelpha Ingasiah

Zelpha Ingasiah is a development practitioner with diverse knowledge on project management, transformative development, conflict transformation, peacebuilding and governance. She has been involved in both theory and practice on the mentioned fields since 2011. Moreover, she has amassed knowledge and skills in needs assessment, concept development and implementation of community driven projects that were focused on preventing and countering violent extremism. Zelpha has also supported research processes as a respondent, mobilizer and research assistant for studies on peace building, preventing and countering violence extremism and governance. An avid reader and analyst, Zelpha has ghost written articles on sustainable development and climate justice.



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