Deconstructing Terror
Assessing Media’s Role in Religious Intolerance and Radicalisation

MEDIA COUNCIL OF KENYA
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INTRODUCTION

Radicalisation may not be a new phenomenon globally. However it presents journalists with various challenges due to its sensitive nature. Some of these challenges include professional and ethical issues that journalists grapple with on daily basis. That the media has the potential to deepen divides by offending or confronting another's culture or identity is a painful fact. This is more especially when covering issues like religious intolerance and radicalisation. The example of cartoons published in the Danish Press in 2005 that depicted the Prophet Mohammed, for instance, set off protests throughout the Muslim world, with critics calling the cartoons racist and blasphemous and insensitive is a good example which Kenyan journalist can learn from.

The role of the media in facilitating and maintaining a cohesive society is enshrined in its social responsibility theorem. The importance of social cohesion and intercultural and religious tolerance and understanding as a key element in reducing drivers for radicalisation and extremism cannot be wished away. The extent to which the media sensationalises issues and the coverage of unbalanced stories around Islam and terrorism are considered part of the radicalising agents in Kenya.

Journalists in the course of their work should ensure that they observe professionalism and patriotism. Granted, they should guard against manipulation and distortion. A good journalist, privileging truth and adhering to ethical and professional standards, will always be a good citizen. A patriotic journalist neither engages in subterfuge, deceit, propaganda nor twists the truth.

Regrettably, the entrepreneurial tendencies of many media organisations and the propensity to sell more papers and attract more advertising have been considered a dominant feature of media framing of Islam and terrorism. This has pushed accuracy, balance and objectivity to the back seat as economic drivers become prioritised. This is compounded by the use by various actors, sometimes discreet news sources, to push certain agendas, including those ethno-religious in nature. Journalists should avoid emphasising the dramatic, most violent, and conflicting accounts on war against terror, radicalisation and religious intolerance. They should instead focus on historical, cultural, and social explanations for terrorism and the war against it.

HARON MWANGI

Chief Executive Officer & Secretary to the Council
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The war on terror has gained currency given its increasing threat to Kenya’s security, stability and economy. Corollary to this, issues of war on terror, radicalisation and religious extremism have been identified as root causes of the serious challenges facing the country today. While the implication of the media in such malaise is obvious, journalists now face serious challenges as they deal with these issues in their everyday work practices.

Compared to politics and the economy, religion often attracts little media attention. When it does make news, it is mainly because of extremism or intolerance. Granted, recent events make it critically important to explore how the media covers issues of war on terror, radicalisation and religious intolerance.

The study examined various sampled media content and interviewed key informants to understand professional and ethical considerations informing media coverage of terror, religious extremism and radicalisation. From the findings, it is evident that the media somehow contributes to the propagation of the dominant narratives that: People of Somali origin are potential terrorists; all Muslims are potential terrorists because most suspects arrested are Muslims; and that Islam preaches and supports radicalisation and extremism, among other narratives.

The study reveals that journalists now face serious security risks especially in the coastal region following perceived media biases. In fact, some have been attacked or threatened.

The media does not strictly adhere to professional tenets and code of conduct. Some of the noted violations include use of bloody pictures and abhorrent scenes, inability to separate fact from commentary; and use of single news sources which creates impressions of biased reporting. Journalists should equally be careful about words and phrases they use when reporting terrorism and associated issues. They should promote diversity, and have different voices and perspectives on terrorism, religious and radicalisation issues. Consequently, promotion of inter-religious dialogue through the media is important in ensuring a cohesive society. The media should also go beyond superficial reporting and critically interrogate social, economic and political issues and provide a platform for better understanding of the problems that face society.

Overall, media coverage of issue of war on terror, radicalisation and religious intolerance is wanting.
## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CTV</td>
<td>Citizen Television</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus group discussions</td>
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<td>IRIN</td>
<td>Integrated Regional Information Networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>KBC</td>
<td>Kenya Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<td>KTN</td>
<td>Kenya Television Network</td>
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<td>NTV</td>
<td>Nation Television</td>
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<td>NSCI</td>
<td>National Security Criminal Investigations</td>
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<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organization for Security and Co-operation</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCMP</td>
<td>Royal Canadian Mounted Police</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
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Introduction

The war against terror often receives hyperbolic and sensationalist media coverage. Such coverage can inevitably lead to heightened religious intolerance and radicalisation. Radicalisation creates a sense of indignation and profiling and may, in fact, lead to further extremism and radicalisation among people labelled as a threat to society. This in turn breeds terrorism. Accordingly, dealing with extremist and radical views can be seen as a pro-active approach in the fight against terrorism.

As Kenya grapples with several threats, the media has become implicated in the fight against extremism, radicalisation and terrorism. The role of media is not restricted to presenting information and relaying images to its audience; it also possesses the ability to shape opinions and present a particular perspective as reality. Continued terror attacks and attendant radicalisation have been of great interest not only to moral entrepreneurs but also the media. Media coverage of increased radicalisation, religious intolerance and war on terror has intensified debate on the consequences of media coverage on various phenomena.

The issues of war on terror, radicalisation and religious intolerance are intricately interwoven in our society. Until recently, radicalisation and Islamophobia was a new phenomenon in Kenya. In other parts of the world, Islamophobic media coverage and perceived discrimination of Muslims has affected public perception of Islam and Muslims. In effect, Muslims now feel ‘isolated’ particularly in societies where most of the people are Christians. And some believe the media is culpable for this situation.

There are many drivers of radicalisation, however. Perceived inequalities, indiscriminate arrest of Muslims during security operations and misrepresentation of Islamic teachings have all contributed to religious intolerance. This is often exacerbated by skewed, inaccurate and unbalanced reporting.

The Media Council of Kenya has been at the forefront of attempts to balance public discourse on media coverage of Islam and terrorism. Accordingly, as radicalisation gains currency and prominence particularly in the media, it has become fundamentally important for the media to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism and other professional journalistic principles.
Key Findings

• Some media houses have promoted healthy dialogue on critical issues of the war on terror, radicalisation and religious tolerance. A good example is KTN’s interactive programme ‘The Bottom Line’ which brought together victims, leaders, human rights experts and members of the public in the coastal town of Mombasa. The show was moderated by a journalist.

• Journalists in the coastal region continually face security threats due to the general misconception of bias in their reporting. Some respondents say they have been attacked at one given point or another because the media houses they work for are thought to be biased. One respondent reveals their vehicle was stoned in one such incident.

• 2% of the articles analysed contain bloody and unpalatable photographs. This is in contravention of article 10(2) of the code of conduct which states that the publications of photographs showing mutilated bodies, bloody and abhorrent scenes shall be avoided unless done in public interest.

• There exists Christian and Muslim biases in reporting issues of war on terror and radicalisation. Majority of respondents agree that their education, experience, and beliefs and traditions influence the way they report on the war on terror, radicalisation and religious issues. This is evidently a threat to objectivity and fairness.

• The media has in some instances been involved in the propagation of the dominant narrative that borders on stereotypical labelling of Muslims and their involvement in terrorism and religious intolerance. Some of the narratives monitored include: People of Somali origin are potential terrorists; all Muslims are potential terrorists because most terror suspects are Muslim; and the war on terror is a war involving Muslims and Christians.

• Mainstream media has facilitated negative discussions of extremism, radicalisation and religious intolerance on several platforms including social media and online sites. Excerpts of writings posted on online publications of mainstream media show that audiences post bitter, uncivil, invective and hateful statements based on their religious and ethnic affiliations.

• The media does a commendable job in undertaking investigative journalism related to the war on terror, radicalisation and religious intolerance. Good examples include “foul winds” and “wave of extremism” on NTV and K24 respectively. However, the media gave extensive space and airtime to people with radical opinions and extremist sentiments with regards to terrorism and jihadism. According to some respondents, such statements can inflame religious intolerance and indignation from both Christians and Muslims.

• Most respondents agree that majority of Kenyans may not understand and appreciate satirical articles on their religious beliefs or ethnic affiliations.

• News stories analysed used the consequence, morality, human interest and conflict frames when covering the Masjid Musa raid by security apparatuses. However, most stories did not capture any clear frames in their coverage.

• The media emphasised the dramatic, most violent, and conflicting accounts on war against terror, and ignored historical, cultural, and social explanations for terrorism and the war
against it. 48% of analysed TV news stories depict police either firing bullets to disperse rowdy crowds, ordering youths to crawl on the floor, kneel, lie on their bellies or even being battered as they are forced to board police vehicles.

• Most respondents indicate that the media ignores moderate Muslim voices in favor of radical or extremist Muslim perspectives. With such biased news selection, the Muslim community risk being misrepresented by the media-aired voices of people with extreme views.

• Religious intolerance has been exacerbated by the media based on coverage of radicalisation and the war on terror. It is also clear that the issue of terrorism divides Christians and Muslims, and security operations in Kenya have driven a wedge between Kenya’s Christians and Muslims.

• Reporting by journalists was found to be mostly superficial and failed to provide the critical context and background for the understanding of the social, economic, political and religious effects of the war on terror, radicalisation and religious intolerance.

Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

i. To establish the level of adherence to the code of conduct by journalists when reporting on the war on terror, radicalisation and religious extremism.

ii. To understand the ways in which the media has shaped perceptions on Muslims and Islam with regards to radicalisation and the fight on terror.

iii. To establish the possible effects of media reporting on radicalisation and the war against terror on the religious tolerance, peace and national cohesion in Kenya.

iv. To establish the nature of media framing of stories related to radicalisation, the war on terror and religious intolerance.

Research Questions

i. Do media adhere to the professional and ethical guidelines in their coverage of war on terror, radicalisation and religious intolerance?

ii. Do the media promote some of the dominant narratives, negative ethnic profiling and stereotypes against Islam with reference to radicalisation, war on terror and religious intolerance?

iii. What are the possible effects of media reporting on radicalisation and the war on terror on religious tolerance, peace and national cohesion in Kenya?

v. What are some of the frames used by the media in coverage of radicalisation, the war on terror and religious extremism?

iv. What are some of the challenges journalists face in the coverage of war on terror and radicalisation?
Methodology

This study used content analysis, key informant interviews and focus group discussions as data collection instruments.

Content analysis considered a sample of the most watched TV stations and the most read print media in Kenya based on audience research data from Ipsos Kenya. The TV stations monitored were NTV, KBC, CTV and KTN. The print publications analysed were *The Standard*, *Daily Nation*, *The Star* and *The People*.

Key informant interviews were conducted with media experts and practitioners, religious leaders, human rights activists, security personnel and NGO personnel. Two focus group discussions were conducted. They consisted of eight respondents each. One set consisted of practising journalists and the other non-journalists.

Focus groups were used because it allows for the expression and sharing of subjective experiences and are an efficient way to collect large amounts of data that describes, compares, or explains social phenomena as they allow participants to interact with one another and build on one another’s comments. They also allow the facilitators to probe for details.

Respondents rating matrix was also used to find the score of media in terms of reporting different aspects related to the study. A questionnaire containing a grid sheet was administered to respondents after discussions of specific topics related. They filled the questionnaire after discussions. The perception of respondents ranging from 1(low) to 5 (high) was then given a weighted score and the aggregate calculated.
Chapter One

Background of the study

In the recent past, Kenya has witnessed a wave of terrorist attacks that have been perpetrated by people believed to have links with the terror group al-Shabaab. Some of these groups have indiscriminately attacked churches and eating joints, killing many innocent people. To forestall such attacks, security apparatuses often respond to such attacks by hunting down and raiding hubs believed to be training ground for mostly Islamic extremism especially in coast region and Nairobi. The Masjid Musa Mosque raid is a classic example of police reaction and action. During the raid, police found literature, flags, riffles and other items believed to have been used for the radicalisation of hundreds of youth who were also arrested.

A string of grenade attacks have occurred in various parts of Kenya although most are confined to Garissa, Mombasa and the capital Nairobi. These attacks have intensified since the military incursion into Somalia in October 2011. Granted, youth radicalisation and religious intolerance goes back to the 1998 US embassy attacks in Nairobi and the Tanzanian city of Dar es Salam that killed 220 people. In 2002, a dual car bomb and suicide attack on a hotel and plane in Mombasa led to the arrest of one suspect.

Following such attacks and subsequent police reaction, there always follow a spate of riots. For example, the killing of two controversial Muslim clergy believed to be behind the jihadist ideology led to serious riots in Mombasa. Such riots have resulted in the burning of churches and the killing of people thought or suspected to be Christians.

The coverage of the Eastleigh Usalama watch operations is illustrative of what sensationalised and sometimes emotive coverage of such issues can do. The scare-mongering as well as profiling of Somali ethnic groups as potential terrorists resulted in some of them being bundled out of public transport and social places.

According to IRIN (2013), unemployment, poverty and political marginalisation have contributed to the radicalisation of Kenya’s youth. High youth unemployment (reports indicate estimated 75 percent of youth who have completed school have no jobs) coupled with rising political disenchantment have also led to serious challenges in Kenya. Such issues breed radicalisation as youth seek avenues through which to ventilate. The role of media as purveyors of information in this difficult environment, and the adversarial politics that plays out in the public domain, means the youth are increasingly frustrated by the state of affairs. What’s more, the struggle for media space especially between powerful (and often wealthy) state and non-state actors means youth affairs are relegated to the periphery. The media has therefore been caught in a mesh of quagmire where professional and ethical considerations and guidelines are often compromised or abandoned all together. In this, the media has often been accused of promoting divisive and contentious narratives. From a terror and scare-mongering perspective, the narrative insinuates that some Quran-wielding psychopaths are threatening the social fabric and well-being of Kenyans.
Ethno-religious composition of Kenyan society and the war on terror: Convoluted Intricacies

Kenya is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural society. Christian, Muslim and Hindu communities are some of the largest religious groups in Kenya. The Muslim community comprises approximately eleven per cent of the Kenyan population. The composition of Muslim community in Kenya majorly consists of the young, up to 65 per cent of this group being between 18 and 35. About 30 per cent of Kenya’s Muslims are of Somali origin but born in Kenya (Kenyan-Somalis). Another 10 per cent are of Borana origin residing in the regions bordering Ethiopia. The remainder constitute Muslim minorities living in Christian-dominated regions.

According to a report by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the Muslim community, especially Kenyan nationals of Somali origin, are confronted with increasing accusations of being responsible for the growing security risks in the country. Granted, Kenya’s Muslims are moderate, with the community involved in every facet of Kenya’s activity, social, economic and political. However, there is increasing perception that the Muslim community is marginalised, this going back to negotiations for Kenya’s independence in which ethnic Somalis, who are mainly Muslims, were unrepresented.

The fact that they are visibly part of the Muslim community, even if not in any way part of al-Shabaab, contributes to them sometimes being treated differently. Most notably, members of the Somali-Kenyan and Somali communities claim to be victims of racial or ethnic profiling and to have been rounded up and arrested for no other reason than their background and ethnicity.

The ISS report further states that Muslim youths in Kenya are victims of the justice system that considers every Muslim ‘guilty of terrorism until proven otherwise’. Joining extremist groups for such youths is, therefore, an accepted or even expected option. They are already viewed as terrorists, whether they are or not, and thus find it easy to join extremist groups and terrorism.

What is Radicalisation?

Radicalisation is a critical subset of the terrorist threat. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police defines radicalisation as the process by which individuals, usually the young, are introduced to an overtly ideological message and belief system that encourages movement from moderate, mainstream beliefs towards extreme views.

While radical thinking is by no means problematic in itself, it becomes a threat to national security when radicalised individuals engage in violence or direct action as a means of promoting political, ideological or religious extremism. Sometimes referred to as “homegrown terrorism,” this process of radicalisation is more correctly referred to as domestic radicalisation leading to terrorist violence (NSCI, 2009).

Radicalisation is not a threat to society if it not connected to violence or other unlawful acts, such as incitement to hatred, as legally defined in compliance with international human rights law. Radicalisation can actually be a force for beneficial change. For instance, people advocating the abolition of slavery or those who championed universal suffrage were once considered radical given their opposition to the then prevailing views in their societies.
Demystifying Radicalisation

It is an axiomatic fact that radicalisation has and continues to inform many transformative and progressive occurrences in human history. Remarkable historical events have been an outcome of some form of radicalisation and the mindset that accompanies it. Martin Luther King, the great American civil rights activist and leader, was considered a radical, as were a host of other people that we now view as important and entirely legitimate historical figures, from Moses in the bible, Mohammed and Jesus to Gandhi, Nelson Mandela among many others. In some cases, even violent radicals have later been deemed to be acting in the name of causes that were just. John Brown, the 19th century American abolitionist, is an example of such an individual.

Radical thought and action does not necessarily translate into terrorism. In fact, radicals can play a highly positive role. Radical views only become a problem when they are used to promote or condone violence or other forms of extremist behavior, including terrorism.

Radicalisation has often been discussed with Islamic ideologies and youths in mind. Nevertheless, domestic radicalisation associated with violent Islamist extremist ideology is a particular concern for law enforcement and security agencies. Virtually all planned or actual terrorist attacks in Western Europe and North America since 9/11 have been carried out by young Muslims (NSCI, 2009).

Drivers of Radicalisation: Is the Media involved?

Terrorist radicalisation is a dynamic process whereby an individual comes to accept terrorist violence as a possible, perhaps even legitimate, course of action. There is no single profile that encompasses all terrorists. Nor is there a clear-cut pathway that leads individuals to terrorism. Possible drivers of terrorist radicalisation are varied and complex and combine in a unique way in each case. Profiles built on stereotypical assumptions based on religion, race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, etc. are not only discriminatory but also ineffective (OSCE, 2014).

Radicalisation can occur due to a multitude of factors and influences. There is no single group that seeks out vulnerable and impressionable young people. Nor is radicalisation limited to any single ethnic or interest group. Historically, violent factions of various political ideologies have employed similar recruiting strategies and targeted similar demographics.

Hogan and Taylor point out that the process of radicalisation is gradual and includes many occurrences, experiences, perceptions and role-players. Some of these factors are driven by the media. The media plays an important role in social and political learning which are gradual and incremental processes. Political socialisation, which is a gradual molding of the political self and a driver of radicalisation, is sometimes driven by consumption of media content.

More often however, security forces have tended to assume that material deprivation, unemployment and alienation are the core causes of radicalisation that leads to extremist actions and violence. According to RCMP’s Radicalisation: A Guide to the Perplexed, mature and well-educated individuals are likely to be receptive to much more sophisticated radical messaging than their younger counterparts. More importantly, they have both the intellectual and emotional wherewithal to translate this into meaningful direct action and to take on leadership roles within terrorist cells.
According to ISS, socioeconomic drivers of radicalisation in Kenya include real and perceived marginalisation and exclusion from national resources, frustrated expectations, and relative deprivation. These are sometimes driven by the media.

Latent social conflict caused by factors such as inequality, ethnic and linguistic fragmentation, and social distrust in government institutions play a key role, directly impacting on the state’s ability to deal with social conflict. In other words, the greater the latent social conflict, the less state institutions will be able to effectively manage that conflict.

Inhabitants of the coastal region in Kenya, where 30 percent of the country’s Muslim population lives, complain that this area is less developed than the rest of the country. What makes this uneven development more volatile is the perception that the religious divide in the country ultimately contributes to this situation. It is therefore not only a debate about development. It has become a religious and political issue.

The media is a mirror of society. Some of these issues are reflected in its content. The failure in the gatekeeping process has inevitably left some of the problems covered unprofessionally without objectivity, accuracy and fairness.

Media and religious intolerance

The proliferation of media, especially the religious and local language radio stations, has had both positive or negative impact on ethnic and religious relations. Given that bad news spreads much faster than good news, acts of hate broadcast over and over again can have devastating consequences for relations between different ethnic and religious communities. This fact is compounded by the religious undertones that often accompany the fight against terrorism. There is little doubt that the media has the potential to deepen divides by offending or confronting cultural and ethnic sensitivities. The example of cartoons published in the Danish Press in 2005 that depicted the Prophet Mohammed as a terrorist, for instance, set off protests throughout the Muslim world, with critics calling the cartoons racist, blasphemous and insensitive.

According to UNESCO (2011) the media can serve to promote tolerance and acceptance of difference. Accordingly, the media must challenge prevailing attitudes and assumptions concerning religious diversity, move beyond scripted stereotypes and strip away the ignorance that breeds mistrust and suspicion. Ghassan (2011) identifies three categories where action can be taken to mitigate the issue of religious intolerance: wider dissemination of inter-religious news that reflects compassion and understanding, advocacy for responsible use of the airwaves, and monitoring of the media.

Ghassan further underscores the need for more effective action in dealing with religious intolerance. He argues that if religious bias in the media cannot be stopped, it can be tempered with positive stories that demonstrate inter-religious understanding. Tolerant and diversity-based religious education can generate compelling stories.

There is also need to challenge media standards and advocate for socially responsible journalism both within the main networks and in online forums to allow for greater balance in reporting. And creating effective institutions for monitoring the media would create greater pressure on editors, producers and reporters to disseminate content that gives hope (Ghassan, 2011).
Impact and influence of the media on extremism / radicalisation

The media is a significant and powerful social agent, with the potential to influence community perceptions. Its influence can seriously impact religious and minority groups by subjecting them to exclusionary pressures. Because the media plays an important social role in the society with the ability to influence people, journalists too are shaped by various social forces which contribute to their understanding and consequent portrayal of Muslims and Islam.

It is clear that how one perceives particular events is always influenced by factors including background, experience, education, and wider social and cultural environment. In addition to this, and perhaps more relevant to this report, is that the editorial practices and writing styles also significantly shape the type of language and images used to cover Muslims and Islam, and the type of information provided. This affects how, for example, a particular media house reports on terrorist related activities. All these are contributory elements when it comes to spread of extremist messages through the media.

According to a report by the Transnational Terrorism, Security and the Rule of Law Institute, the media can provide an indispensable forum for informed discussion concerning the social and political implications of terrorism and extremist views that can intensify terrorist acts.

The media, by exercising its professional and ethical mandate, can also ensure that its reporting is fair, balanced and accurate and facilitates good decision making in society. The media creates an informed citizenry that will embrace unity in diversity only if it adopts factual and objective reporting.

Apocalyptic media coverage of ethno-religious conflict: A Case of Nigeria

Nigeria presents a very unique case of ethno-religious conflict that is further compounded by terrorist attacks. In Nigeria, there is serious conflict pitting the two dominant religious groups – Christians and Muslims. Because of the country’s configuration, however, the strand of religion is usually intertwined with that of ethnicity and is made worse by terrorist attacks that are perpetrated by the militant Islamist group, Boko Haram. Considering that the media plays a major role in social, and cognitive identity construction, conflicts caused by a crisis of identity are usually the most dangerous and most violent. This is because identity is an unshakable sense of self-worth, which makes life meaningful and includes the feeling that one is physically, socially, psychologically, and spiritually safe (Faleti, 2005).

The media sometimes, in Nigerian context, is involved in this ethno-religious drama. Nigerian newspapers, variously, narrate the stories and comment on the conflicts based on their own ethnic and religious nature. The ethnic identity of a Nigerian newspaper is determined by the location of its headquarters, the ethnic identity of the publisher and the main market that the paper seeks to cultivate and patronise.

Salawu (2004) gives the example of the New Nigerian and Daily Trust, both Northern-based newspapers which often narrate and comment on the events of the religious riots based on their own regional and religious perspectives. This differs with the coverage offered by New Tribune and The Punch, both Southern-based and owned by Southerners. Salawu indicates that the issue is more apparent with indigenous language newspapers. Some of the newspapers identified can influence and modify the opinions of their people, forming stereotypes for them about other ethnic and religious groups, and thus fuelling further the conflicts (Salawu, 2004).
Deconstructing Terror

The Media as image-makers: A Case of Australia

Dunn (2001) argues that in discourse of the development of mosques in Sydney, stereotypes of Islam and Muslims are often used in different ways to influence local perceptions. He notes that news articles on Islam were derogatory, and associated Islam with fundamentalism and terrorism. He also concluded that Islam was repeatedly associated with Middle Eastern people and culture, ‘jihad’ was misrepresented, and that Islam was a threat to Western security. He argues that these perceptions contribute to the ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ divide and creates fear in the community.

Accordingly, Islam and Muslims seem to have a problematic history with the media. As Dunn’s research demonstrates, with the heightened attention given to Muslims and Islam because of the recent terrorist attacks, there has been an increase in racial and religious vilification, and, surprisingly, rising desire to understand Islam and Muslims among the Australian public.

Media drives perceptions of the relationship between Islam and terrorism

The media sometimes sensationalises, stereotypes and distorts issues of Islam and terrorism. Consequently, the oversimplification of issues around Muslims, extremism and terrorism and the propensity of mainstream media to marginalise, dismiss or ignore diverse and/or moderate views across Muslim communities are sometimes considered culpable of the link between Islam and terrorism.

Entrepreneurial tendencies of many media organisations and the propensity to sell more papers and attract more advertising have been considered a dominant feature of media framing of Islam and terrorism. This has pushed accuracy, balance and objectivity to the back seat as economic drivers become prioritised. This is compounded by the use by various actors, sometimes discreet news sources, to push certain agendas, including those ethno-religious in nature.

Media freedom: Reflecting media’s role in society’s security challenges

The media plays a key role in seeking, receiving and imparting ideas and information. The strength of a democracy can, to a large extent, be gauged by the independence and pluralism of its media. Although the media has rights, it also has responsibilities. The media is encouraged to ensure that hate speech and content inciting people to terrorism is not presented as something that can be justified and emulated.

It is now evident that terrorism, radicalisation and recruitment do not occur in a vacuum. It should be viewed as an interactive process between the individual and external influences, including terrorist propagandists and recruiters, broader developments in society, actions of public authorities as well as the media.

While the media’s platform for self-expression should be unlimited to all individuals, the sanctity of societal good should never be sacrificed by allowing it to be used as an avenue for incitement and hatred. A delicate balance between professionalism and patriotism is therefore important to enhance the media’s proper reflection of occurrence within the society it operates in.
Muslims are terrorists and all terrorists are Muslims: Media driven Perception?

The negative representation of Muslims in the media demonstrates the lack of acceptance of differences and diversity. The media creates public panic around terror. It has been reported that the war on terrorism is also a war of images, and the most effective images are those of terrorists’ victims. The media unconsciously becomes the purveyor of such images.

On the other hand and in other parts of the world, however, discrimination is associated with ‘Islamophobia’. This phenomenon tries to show that Muslims are a threat to security and thus the focus on terrorism unifies (Mizra, 2006).

Mizra further argues that TV coverage of Islam tends to connect the religion with ‘terrorism’. This fallacy leads to the production of anti-Islamic films like “Fitna” by Dutch parliamentarian Geert Wilders. What is clear is that after the September 11 attacks, most experts talked about security matters, while the social and political causes of the attacks were forgotten. This stream continues in the Iraq war. Here too, the economic and political causes of the invasion were forgotten. It is obvious that the West has to review the idea of its own ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’. The representation of Muslims in the western media has to change and inter-culturalism has to replace Islamophobia.

Lessons on media reaction to extremism from 9/11

The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the US soil presents classical examples of extremist reaction and impact of media coverage. The media through its definitions of news elements defines its audience perspectives of the war on terror and can immensely fuel extremism in its coverage.

After the 9/11 attacks, television in the US allowed dangerous and extremist zealots to vent and circulate aggressive, fanatic, and sometimes invective views, creating a consensus around the need for immediate military action and all-out war. Television networks themselves featured logos such as “War on America,” “America’s New War,” and other inflammatory slogans that assumed that the U.S. was at war and that only a military response was appropriate (Kellner, 2001).

Radio was even more frightening. Not surprisingly, talk radio oozed hatred and hysteria, calling for violence against Arabs and Muslims, nuclear retaliation, and global war. As the days went by, even mainstream radio news became hyper dramatic, replete with music, patriotic gore, and wall-to-wall terror hysteria and war propaganda. National Public Radio, Pacifica, and some programs, attempted rational discussion and debate, but on the whole talk radio was all propaganda, all the time (Kellner, 2001).

Portrayal of violence in the media: Does it breed further radicalisation?

According to Hempton’s *The Fog of Religious Conflict*, violence is often triggered by the crossing of symbolic or real boundaries. When one side has access to state instruments of power and mechanism then the other resorts to terrorism.

Hempton further argues that deaths and funeral occurrences stoke the emotional intensity of some of the individuals and this creates the desire for revenge. This indicates that the media can definitely have an effect of inflaming the passions of people towards radicalisation.
Chapter Two

Media frames on the war on terror

Whereas the whole content analysis was done based on the entire code of conduct, the following sections of the code of conduct were critically analysed and examined during the content analysis.

- Article 1 on accuracy and fairness with a consideration of balanced, unbiased and accurate stories, distinction between comment, conjecture and fact, justification of headlines, fair and impartial presentation of news, bias and stereotypes among other variables based on the code of conduct.

- Article 4 on identification of sources, sensationalism and clear labelling of opinion and commentary.

- Article 6 on opportunity to reply to inaccuracies on those mentioned unfavourably.

- Article 7 on the use of unnamed sources.

- Article 8 on confidentiality to protect news sources.

- Article 10 on obscenity taste and tone of reporting with regards to the publication of mutilated bodies, bloody incidence and abhorrent scenes.

- Article 12 on covering ethnic, religious and sectarian conflict.

- Article 15 on intrusion into grief and shock.

- Article 23 on media presentation of acts of violence during terrorist coverage.

A sample of 273 news stories in print media and clips from TV stations were taken and analysed based on a code sheet developed from the code of conduct.
Volume of articles and clips analysed

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<th>Volume of clips analysed</th>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
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<td>Print</td>
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<td>TVs</td>
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Format of stories analysed

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<th>Format of stories analysed</th>
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<tr>
<td>TV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Features</td>
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<td>News</td>
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<td>Investigative story</td>
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<td>Print</td>
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<td>Commentary</td>
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<td>Op-Eds</td>
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<td>News</td>
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<td>Features</td>
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As seen in the table above, most of the texts reviewed were news in nature, 67% TV and 55% print. The rest were 23% investigative stories from TV stations, features in print media 15%. Ten percent of the TV material analysed were features.
Viewpoints presented in news stories

The Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism states that all sides of the story shall be represented whenever possible. It also indicates that comments shall be sought from anyone mentioned unfavourably in a news story.

As seen in the table above, 45% of the stories analysed had two viewpoints while 23% of articles had three viewpoints. 17% of the articles published only had one viewpoint. This indicates that journalists tried as much as they could to get more than one viewpoint in news stories. Nonetheless, some of the statements published did not clearly distinguish comment, conjecture and fact. This was in violation of Article 1(9) of the code of conduct.

Justification of headlines in print media articles

Two percent of the stories analysed did not clearly reflect the stories published. Seven percent were alarming and provocative while 4% contained baseless allegations. The code of conduct states that the headlines should reflect and justify the matters in the text.
Nature of photos used

Two percent of the articles analysed contained photographs that contained bloody and abhorrent scenes. This is in violation of article 10(2) of the code of conduct which states that the publications of photographs showing mutilated bodies, bloody incidence and abhorrent scenes shall be avoided unless it is done in public interest.

Opportunity to reply

As the table above shows, 4% of the articles and clips analysed contained adverse mentions of people. Regardless, they were not given an opportunity to reply. The code of conduct states that anyone who is adversely mentioned shall be accorded the chance to make any necessary clarification or response.

Identification of Sources

Three percent of the articles on print media and clips on TV station had sources that were not explicitly identified. Article 4 (2, a) of the code of conduct states that sources shall be identified whenever possible. It further states that confidential sources shall only be used in the interest of the public. Most of the stories that did not identify their sources were investigative stories.
Show of violence on TV news

Almost half the TV news stories analysed, or 48% show police either firing bullets to disperse rowdy crowds, ordering youths to crawl on the ground, kneel as they move, lie on their bellies or even being battered as they are forced to board police vehicles. Such clips were shown by the media with blatant disregard of the feelings and reaction of the victims’ family members.

News sources in news stories in print and TV

Most of the stories analysed, at 24%, were about security personnel. This covered them both as sources and subjects of the stories. Politicians came in second at 19%. Some of the stories analysed lacked analytical reporting based on professional requirements that stories have both sides of the story. This was largely in contravention of Article 1(15) of the code of conduct.

Tonality of coverage

In the study, positive articles/clipswere defined as texts presenting Islam, war on terror and religious intolerance in ways enhancing the consumer knowledge of Islam by explaining its teachings, its diversity, and revealing a degree of understanding of terrorism and religion as well as presenting a range of opinions, and feature stories on Islamic beliefs. Positive stories use non–inflammatory language. Negative articles/clips on the other hand are considered to be articles that present Islam, war on terror and religious intolerance with lack of understanding of Islam and diversity, as well as primarily or solely referring to social discord, conflict and immorality. Negative stories essentially reproduce the notion that Muslims and Somalis are alien and are responsible for terrorist activities. Negative articles also omit certain relevant details which should contextualise the story, thus giving an out-of-context account with negative connotations.

Neutral stories are those that are neither positive nor negative. They are non-inflammatory.
KTN had the highest percentage of negatively toned stories in the media at 11%. Ten percent were on NTV and 7% on CTV. Similarly, The Standard had the highest percentage of negative stories at 10% followed by The People 8% and The Star 7%.

The media houses that had highest level of negative stories had the highest diversity in voices on issues of war on terror, radicalisation and religious intolerance.
The narratives considered in this analysis include the following:

**Narrative A:** People of Somali origin are potential terrorists.

**Narrative B:** All Muslims are potential terrorists because most suspected terrorists arrested are Muslims.

**Narrative C:** Islam preaches and supports violent radicalisation and extremism.

### Tonality of coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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<td>People</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Star</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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### Presence of stereotypes in articles

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<td>KBC</td>
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<tr>
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<td>People</td>
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</table>
The narratives considered in this analysis include the following:

**Narrative A:** People of Somali origin are potential terrorists.

**Narrative B:** All Muslims are potential terrorists because most suspected terrorists arrested are Muslims.

**Narrative C:** Islam preaches and supports violent radicalisation and extremism.

**Narrative D:** The war on terror involves Muslims and Christians.

**Narrative E:** The security forces target of ethnic group is an inevitable process in the war against terror.

In the articles analysed, five of articles in *The Daily Nation* reinforced any of the narratives above, three were in *The Standard*, four in *The Star* and three in *The People*. Three of the stories were on KTN, two on NTV and two on CTV. In one programme on a TV station, one respondent wondered why all terrorists are Muslims while not all Muslims are terrorists. One opinion article, after the alleged bombing of Likoni Church, opined that Muslims should be treated as terrorists if they believe in the doctrine of “an eye for an eye”.

**Media focus on human rights violations during war on terror**

The media did not adequately highlight the violations of the human rights in the stories it covered. Only 12% of the articles at least touched on the human rights related issues during the war on terror campaigns, religious intolerance and radicalisation. Some of the human rights stories that needed media coverage were those related to the victims of terror attacks, plight of relatives and affected families as well as victims of security operations.

“In a live interview with the then newly appointed KNHCR chair Kagwiria Mbogori, the presenter at KTN Ben Kitili explores the human rights violations during the Eastleigh usalama watch operation. The guest underscores the importance of security as the basis of human rights enjoyment. She also indicates that the rights to human treatment as witnessed in Eastleigh were evident through the enforcement of anti-terror policies. The guest indicates that the warrant of arrest and searches are some of the violations witnessed during the operations. The focus was also on the shoot to kill order where the chair said that it was inappropriate”. *KTN News, 9pm, 21 June 2014.*
Deconstructing Terror

Media framing

**Responsibility frame:** This frame highlights the government’s, an individual’s or a group’s capacity and ability to solve a particular problem.

**Conflict frame:** As its name suggests, this frame pays close attention to conflict elements of a particular issue, for instance, argument between two parties.

**Morality frame:** Within this frame, issues are examined through the morality lens by relating it to moral values or religious teachings.

**Economic consequences frame:** This frame reports an event, problem, or issue in terms of the economic consequences it will have on an individual, group, institution, region, or country.

**Human interest frame:** This frame focuses on elements that could trigger an emotional impact on its readers with regards to terrorism.

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<th>Moral frame</th>
<th>Responsibility frame</th>
<th>Conflict Frame</th>
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Most of the articles, or 71% of those analysed, used different kinds of frames in their coverage of issues relating to war on terror. 29% did not have any clear frames. Human interest and morality frames were used extensively in the coverage of Likoni church attack. The focus was largely on victims’ families. The human rights frame was, for example, used to frame the story on Satrin Osinya, a child victim who was shot in the head.

**Language used in news stories**

Journalists often find it difficult to find the right words and images to help us understand the nature of terrorism and religious fanaticism without falling into the trap of negative media coverage of religious intolerance in the war on terror.

This study found out that some terms are frequently used to describe Muslims, Islam and Somalis in the coverage of the war on terror. Some of the common words included:
• extremist
• radical
• fundamentalist
• terrorist
• jihadist
• extremist Islamic group
• Muslim fanatics
• die hard Islamic fanatics

Some of the words and language used to describe Islam and Muslims by the media can unfortunately be taken to be representative of all Muslims and Islam. The stories portrayed men as Somali terrorists and extremists. Women were stereotyped as hijab wearers who veiled their malicious machinations using their clothes.

Some of the images reproduced by the media of Muslims, describing them as terrorists, fundamentalists, jihadists and extremists, have cemented the dominant narrative and perception on the war on terror.
Chapter Three

Key themes in the war on terror

Qualitative data collected revealed several overarching themes (see Table 1 below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Overarching focus group themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Safety and security of journalist</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Dynamics of brief briefings by religious leaders</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Heroisation and glorification of people in support radicalized standings</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Victimization and ostracisation of journalist due to their perceived reporting inclinations</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Use of specific phrases and words by journalist</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Journalist’s experience and background affects journalist coverage</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Increase of religious frequencies to promote inter-faith debates</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Diversity of voices on terrorism, religious and radicalisation issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Journalists’ allegiance; professionalism and patriotism</td>
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</table>

Safety and security of journalists due to perceived reporting biases

Some respondents working for a Coast-based radio station indicated that their media house was ‘hated’ and seen as siding with the government in the war on terror. The hostility was thus extended to the reporters and to anybody associated with the stations.

“One news reporter who had a t-shirt with the words Radio Salaam on it was beaten near the Masjid Musa mosque and seriously injured. So nowadays, we fear even wearing our own t-shirts due to such insecurity,” said one respondent.

“Our bus was stoned at the Mombasa agricultural show because of the way we reported the Masjid Musa issue … they thought that we support the security forces. So nowadays, we travel around in a non-branded van because of that incident,” said another respondent.

Accordingly, journalists working at the Coast express fears that they are targets because of their coverage of Islam, radicalisation and terrorism. They feel they are targets partly because of the perception that they are pro-government.

“Some of the ‘radicals’ in Mombasa consider the police enemy number one and journalists number two. How can journalists operate in such an environment?” wonders another respondent. “During the Masjid Musa raid, we could hear some people shouting at us that ‘ukipata mwandishi-mchinje’ (if your find a journalist, massacre them) … you cannot go to Majengo near Masjid Musa and expect not to be attacked. So it’s better not to go.” “I cannot go to Majengo on foot alone without security personnel or one of the veteran journalists who knows people around the area
very well. So I cannot risk my life for a story ... never!”

Press briefings by religious leaders: Panacea for religious intolerance

Respondents feel Christian and Muslim leaders have not condemned the killing of innocent people in the war on against terror. This, they argue, create the impression that there are two opposing sides in the war on terror. This leads to further religious intolerance.

“Religious leaders from both sides often issue similar statements but in different press conferences; doesn’t this show existing divisions in our society?”

“We blame the media sometimes yet religious leaders should have come out to address issues of unemployment and low literacy levels which contribute to idleness and radicalisation.”

While news sources can use the media on their own, forging a united religious front against radicalisation may help demonstrate religious tolerance in Kenya. This may also serve to restate facts, correct errors and build a cohesive society.

Conflict sensitive reporting: Practicality of journalist coverage

Some respondents thought conflict sensitive reporting involves reporting conflict from two perspectives; offering opposing sides space to articulate their issues. By using such terminologies as devastated, tragedy and terrorised to describe what is done to one group, may help reduce tensions and promote cohesion. Respondents thought some issues on conflict sensitive reporting had been violated. Some of the respondents also admitted that they were not conversant with conflict sensitive although relate to it.

“From my standpoint as an editor, I agree that there is some laxity when reporting on conflict issues because we have not really invested in training of journalist on conflict sensitive reporting... for example, how many journalists understand that the war on terror requires conflict sensitive reporting? Very few!” “Indeed we journalists have adhered to the code of conduct and by extension conflict sensitive reporting because, to me, they are familiar. You observe one and you take care of the other. For example, offering both sides a fair chance to be heard ... it is in the code and in the tenets of conflict sensitive reporting.”

Media served to heroise and glorify people supporting radicalisation

Citing the case of the late Abubakar Sharrif ‘Makaburi’ who was not even a Muslim Imam or leader, some respondents clearly indicated that the media had constructed heroes ‘radical villains’. This was evident in the manner the media chose its news sources.

“The late Makaburi was not a Muslim Imam but just a mosque caretaker ... but journalists often sought his comments in every matter relating to radicalisation and war on terror. Such people should not be given airtime ... or if they are given, then the media should seek alternative other authoritative sources.”

Professional and ethical journalism entails the selection of responsible, reliable and accurate news sources that have the potential to contribute to factual discussions through the media. High quality journalism brings high quality news media coverage of terror and religious issues. The importance of news sources cannot therefore be gainsaid.
Victimisation and ostracisation of journalists due to their perceived reporting inclinations

It was also evident in this study that journalists have been ostracised by their own families because of the radio stations they work for. This also includes the serious security threats that journalists now face.

“I always quarrel with my siblings because I work for my radio station. They think that it supports ‘kaffirs’. But we report all cases objectively and fairly. ...nowadays I just avoid talking about religion and my work especially when dealing with terrorism.”

Journalists face the risk of being victimised and ostracised by family members for their work, particularly when dealing with issues of radicalisation and the war on terror. Such risks make it difficult to be balanced. Some journalists in fact claim they are not comfortable with other journalists who are opposite to their ‘objective’ reporting.

Contextualised coverage with in-depth interrogation of issues by journalists

Respondents agree that the media has largely failed to critically interrogate issues underpinning the growth of extremism, radicalisation and terrorism. Respondents agree that hard news had become inadequate particularly because it mostly offers shallow reporting of even important matters. They claim the government’s failure to address social problems at the Coast was partly to blame for rising cases of extremist, radicalism and terrorism.

“We should partly blame the media for failing to highlight some of the challenges at the Coast including joblessness and marginalisation that make some people feel like aliens in their own country.”

Use of specific phrases and words by journalists in their reporting

Respondents indicated that the use of some words had served to further the negative perception towards the media and created further radicalisation. Some of the words include: ‘fiery cleric’, ‘jihadist’ and ‘islamist’ among others which respondents feel are offensive and capable of promoting hate.

“When we went to interview some of the news sources, we faced open hostility. We journalist have branded them and their leaders in a way that the government now thinks they are engaging in terrorist activities... We were chased away after one woman refused to talk to us.”

“One youth in Majengo told me,‘why should we speak to journalists only to end up being misquoted?’ He told me to go talk to the kaffirs I was used to.”

The choice of terminology by journalists is vital in journalistic work. Word choice is a key tool reporters use to subtly convey bias or create overtones. It is important to note that words are never neutral and may in fact generate various connotations. The use of specific words may arouse anger especially in those who feel targeted or oppressed. Such audiences may see the media as biased against them.

Elements of good journalistic reporting: Respondent’s perspective

Respondents identified some of ethical and professional considerations which journalists should adhere to. These include:

• In-depth reporting, providing background information, explaining legal contexts and considering the impact of security operations and general economic and social-political context of radicalisation and war on terror.
• Giving a voice to the voiceless by focusing more on human rights stories with particular attention to respect of victims and their families. Case in point being Abbubakar Sharif.

• Raising awareness about ethno-religious diversity in Kenya in a way that will help eliminate stereotypes. Taking a stand against ethnic discrimination and profiling.

• Clarification of issues that the war on terror is a global phenomenon that threatens society and the people irrespective of who they are. It is not a war between Muslims and Christians or Somalis and Kenyans as some would portray it.

**Media blamed for carrying misleading stories**

Respondents said the media often carry misleading articles. For example, some respondents said the Likoni church attack was not a terrorist attack but attacks arising out of church leadership rivalry. No shooting or bombings had taken place as reported, they claimed.

“We were surprised that some of the media stations reported that terrorists had attacked the Likoni church. I was among the first people to save baby Osinya after the attack because I arrived their first...so no one should say that was a terrorist attack. It was just church wrangles gone awry.”

The media has an obligation to tell the truth because journalism is mainly a professional discipline of assembling and verifying facts. Accuracy is the foundation upon which everything else is built including the context, interpretation, comment, criticism, analysis and debate. This is especially important when it comes to issues that have the potential to ignite religious intolerance and create ethnic profiling. In this case the media should be very meticulous in verification of facts.

**How journalists’ inclinations, experience and background affect coverage**

A journalist’s background, including their academic qualifications, experience, and beliefs and traditions can influence the way they report issues. For example, a Muslim respondent said her upbringing and hatred for radicalisation is reflected in the way she covers the issue.

“My father interacted more with the late Aboud Rogo when we were young and they were very close friends. Our father became radicalised and started indoctrinating us based on Rogo's advice. For example, we could not watch any other TV station except Al Jazeera because my father was advised against letting us watch anything else. Anything else belonged to ‘kaffirs’. As a resulted I came to hate radicalisation”

It’s a fact that journalists do not operate in a vacuum. Journalists work within a range of constraints and influences. Journalists therefore have to make decisions at the centre of a field of different constraints, demands or attempted uses of power or influence. Such forces may include gender, racial or class imbalance in the workforce. Further constraints include time, sources, subjectivity, audience, style and advertiser influences among other others.

**Can negative media stereotyping of Muslims lead to further radicalisation?**

Most of those interviewed agree there is a close link between Islam, radicalisation and terrorism. However, there was very broad consensus amongst respondents that the issues had been sensationalised, and that media reports were imbalanced or inaccurate.

“There has been a rise in fear, hostility, and discrimination against Islam and Muslims as whole. Moreover, the media is not properly addressing this fear, as they continue to paint Muslims in a negative and discriminatory light. Islamophobia has gripped African countries and paved the
way for an allowance of derogatory comments and attitudes towards Muslims.”

Increase of religious frequencies to promote inter-faith discussion

The reporting of some of the issues on radicalisation and war on terror and religious issues were seen as being the consequences of basic misunderstanding among journalists and even some news sources on the tenets and beliefs of Islam. From the discussion, it was clear that one of the remedies to the issue was to allow more religious frequencies that would promote inter-faith issues.

“Al-Shabaab means a youth. So someone can say that I am an al-Shabaab. But there are some words like mujahedeen and shuhadaa which are commonly used but out of context even by Muslim journalists. Such misinterpretation and misuse of words makes the public think negatively when such words are used out of context.”

Inter-faith and intercultural dialogues facilitated by the media can seek to develop a better mutual understanding and to engage in common activities. Doctrinal, communal, or religious exchanges through the media are of paramount importance. The misperceptions that result from ignorance and misinformation can only be corrected through mediated media efforts. Through provision of platform for dialogue and clarification, the media is absolutely instrumental in enhancing correct positions in terms of ideology.

Diversity of voices on terrorism, religious intolerance and radicalisation issues

As a solutions to the terrorist and radicalisation crisis, respondents feel the media should offer a platform to diverse of voices. Respondents reckon that such diversity of voices would allow for critical exchanges and ventilation on issues of radicalisation, religious intolerance and terrorism. It was, however, evident that some of the news sources had branded some media organisations ‘kaffirs’ and could consequently not work with them. This makes stories unbalanced.

“Sometimes when we want to do a balanced story, when we approach the radical youth … they do not want us to speak to them and only accept to be interviewed when doing stories on human rights and development. So at the end of the day, you only get one perspective … mostly perspectives on security operations. When you report it, they think that you are supporting the government… it’s really tough.”

Reporters and editors on the other hand agree that newsroom diversity is not a goal in itself. They feel that journalistic skill is the most important qualification. Besides, it takes good journalistic skills to make use of one’s specific ethnic or religious background.

Poor examples of coverage on radicalisation, war on terror and religious intolerance

Generally, respondents gave the following examples to illustrate widespread professional and ethical violations during the coverage of religious intolerance, radicalisation and terrorism:

- Generalising incidents as terrorist incidents without verifying facts and figures.
- Journalists shaping discussion on negative ethnic profiling of Somali communities.
- The media giving one side of the story and ignoring the other.
- Using inappropriate and derogatory words.
- Journalists sometimes mixing facts and views especially from their news sources.
Chapter Four

Focus Group Discussion findings

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<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Overarching focus group themes</th>
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<td>Patriotism and professionalism in coverage</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Christian and Muslim journalistic biases in coverage</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Showing violent and dramatic scenes and impact on radicalisation</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The “We” verses “They” discriminator</td>
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<td>Mainstream media as a driver of negative discussion in social media</td>
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Loyalty explored: Professionalism or patriotism?

Case Review: Likoni church & Pangani police station attacks

The coverage of war on terror and attendant radicalisation and religious intolerance are major dilemmas facing journalists today. This is particularly difficult when they are expected to be patriotic, objective and neutral. This is compounded by their beliefs, and ethnic and religious belonging. In fact, journalists are members of two communities simultaneously; the professional and the national community.

“Professionalism comes first. The media has an obligation to present the truth as it is… . If presenting the facts as they are will diminish the number of tourists that visit the country, then we who are journalists will have served our professional mandate. We should present accurate, factual and naked truth as it is.”

“I believe we should balance both professionalism and patriotism in coverage of war against terror and the undertones of religious intolerance and radicalisation because even the Constitution states that ... freedom of the media shall ... exclude anything that constitutes ethnic incitement, vilification of others or incitement to cause harm. This is very important in the coverage of radicalisation and the issue of religion.”

“Whether one will exhibit patriotism of professionalism in a specific story will depend on the objectives that a journalist will wish to achieve within a story. For example, if the journalist wants to create awareness about the vice of terrorism and radicalisation, then they are allowed to even portray the worst of images in order to bring out the reality.”

Professionalism calls upon journalist to do stories that are balanced, factual and objective. The national community demands that journalists be patriotic in their endeavors and avoid showing images that may result in socio-political and economic negatives. Zandberg and Neiger (2005) suggest that the key to this answer is to conceptualise journalists’ work as a constant dynamic movement between the two communities and loyalties, each carrying a
different set of norms and values. The journalists have to balance, constantly, between the two in relation to the external events and the political environment.

**Muslim and Christian journalists’ biases: Do they exist?**

**Case Review: Jicho Pevu investigative story by KTN**

Objectivity requires journalists to be fair to those concerned and to adhere to a professional process of information gathering that seeks fairness, completeness and accuracy. Sometimes journalists have inherently taken sides by virtue of their religious, ethnic and national identities during conflict reporting.

Respondents agree that most biases are reflective of religious and national affiliations.

“The latest jicho Pevu story that was aired on KTN was seemingly presenting the sides of the suspected terrorist. You could even see that most of the people interviewed were from suspected cleric radicals and their families. This tells you that this thing is real and we cannot escape from it.”

“Religion will always come first when journalists are reporting on issues involving terrorism, religion and radicalisation. There will always be unforeseen bias even when the editors who are supposed to edit make corrections. If you send a Muslim and a Christian to cover an event on terrorism or radicalisation, for example, the two will come up with different angles and areas of focus in the story. We cannot deny this fact.”

There are many expectations that influence news sources reporters seek and the types of questions a reporter may ask. But they also may influence journalists’ evaluation and selection of information in the stories. One pervasive bias is the audience’s decisions about what information is most relevant or credible is the tendency to regard information that is consistent with one’s a priority ideological belief, experience and socio-cultural inclinations as the worthiest pieces of information (Stocking and Gross, 2000).

The media plays an important role in society with the ability to influence behavior and practices. Similarly, journalists’ perception and understanding of Muslims and Islam are influenced by various social forces. It is common knowledge that the way a person perceives particular events is always influenced by factors including their background, education, and wider social and cultural environment. In addition, and perhaps more relevant to this report, is that editorial practices and writing styles also significantly shape the type of language and images that will form portrayals of Muslims and Islam, and the type of information provided.

**Showing violent and dramatic scenes on TV; are they drivers of radicalisation?**

**Case Review: Masjid Musa mosque raid coverage on TV**

Respondents agree that showing violent security operations content may have sired radicalisation and extremism. One respondent indicates that a group called ‘Doge la Mombasa Group’, making reference to the security operations shown in the media at the Masjid Musa mosque, provided a platform where people exchanged bitter and overly antagonistic views concerning the operation.

“When the media shows images of youth at the Masjid Musa mosque being beaten and rounded up during security operations, it creates a feeling of bitterness for Muslims. When they see their
children, brothers and sisters thrown into a lorry it makes them want to revenge”

“I think that the media were wrong to show the dramatic section where the police shoot in the air and eventually when they arrest youths and make them crawl out of the mosque. I think the media should have focused on the security operation and Muslim clerics as news sources rather than the dramatic events they covered. This creates a feeling that enhances further radicalisation” (2nd Respondent)

“I support the way the media covered the security operation at the Masjid Musa. Look at it this way, if we do not show the truth and reality of the security operation, we will lose the war on terror… . The media should however clarify the facts of the security operations so that it is not seen as war on a particular religion.”

Some of the values that journalists have long held dear can pose problems to victims, their families and friends. Reporters often look for the odd or unusual details to include in their stories, so that it stands out from the rest. Unfortunately, this can translate into reporting grisly, and gruesome clips that serves to incite further negative sentiments and passions (Bucqueroux and Seymour, 2012).

Has the media supported the “We” versus “They” discrimination?

Case Review: Interviews from Street Commentator on Citizen TV

Respondents generally agree that the use of words like “we” and “they” and “us” to express division between Muslims and non-Muslims was common even among their news sources. Many respondents also agree that further polarisation was achieved by using such words.

“When some of the clerics were interviewed you could hear them use words like ‘we are being targeted’ and you could especially hear such words after the murder of clerics associated with the Masjid Musa mosque. So, to me, the media should edit sections where people personify such attacks to an entire religion or ethnic community.”

“If the media wants to reduce further polarisation, they should avoid giving in to pressure of people who want to hear the ‘us’ side of their view, not the other side’s view. Such people want something that supports their existing biases and ideas especially when reporting on matters that can cause radicalisation”

“I have realised that following the Operation Usalama, Muslims feel they have been left out in that their suffering and the violation of their rights has been ignored even by the media … yet it should help them bring out their suffering…the media has been seen to be on ‘their’ side.”

The implications of media coverage and representation of war on terror and religion are significant not only because they emphasise the difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’ but also because they fuel ethnic profiling, spreading fear and tension instead of promoting tolerance and compassion. Such may be driven by the passion and perspectives of news sources.
Mainstream media as a driver of negative discussion in social media and other forums

Case Review: The Star’s front page photograph of the late Abubakar Sharrif, 2 April 2014

Many respondents agree that The Star’s front-page photograph was likely to cause anger among Muslims. The question of whether the publication of the picture could be justified or whether it was done public interest elicited great debate.

“The late Makaburi had many sympathisers at the Coast because he commanded authority when he spoke and was able to convince many people especially the youth who attended the Musa Masjid mosque. So showing his body that way was going to generate anger, bitterness and even support for his views.”

“I report from Mombasa and I was there when the killing and news reports of Makaburi’s death were announced. There was tension and such anger ... a lot of it was expressed on social media... it became an bitter exchange between Muslims and the Christians, those for and against Makaburi.”

Mainstream media content is the lifeblood of the social media content and conversations today and provide a link of news that is shared by the audience. Mainstream news organisations may not be the first to publish stories but will push conversations around particular news stories in the media. News correspondents and columnists are now getting a lot of important feedback through social media based on their stories (Newman, 2011)

Satire or pointed attacks: Do our audience appreciate the difference?

Case Review: Article by Kwamchetsi Makokha

The satirical articles written by Kwamchetsi Makokha appear in The Saturday Nation. That Kenyans appreciate satire was clear during the FGDs. There was very broad consensus amongst respondents about the ways in which sensationalised, unbalanced or inaccurate reporting on perceived blanket links between Islam and terrorism could actually lead to radicalisation.

“Somalis have made scant efforts to convert to the religion of the majority in Kenya. They have continued to wear their suspicious billowing robes and cover their women in inscrutable burqas. Any reasonable person must conclude that they must be hiding something under those loose fitting clothes... Instead of complaining to flush out the terrorist and their sympathisers from the midst of Kenyan society, the leadership of the Somali community should encourage its people to convert to Christianity, wear fewer clothes and line up at the border to be processed for re-entry into Kenya.” Kwamchetsi Makokha, Saturday Nation, 12 April, 2014.

The excerpt above was seen as an oversimplification and negative stereotyping in relation of Islam and terrorism. Respondents agreed that some of the mainstream media publications had inevitably contributed to negative ethnic and religious profiling which aggravated the situation even further.

“Yes, I work in Eastleigh as a news correspondent, so I get to interact with many Somalis on a
The choice of news sources by journalist in the coverage of war on terror, radicalisation and religious intolerance was also an issue brought about during focus group discussions.

Case review: Short news stories from KTN, NTV and CTV

Choice of news sources: is it an adopted bias factor?

Station OCPD. There is a reporter based in Eastleigh who is believed to be related to OCPD and “I don’t understand why all the news stories about Eastleigh have statements from the Pangani Police that the Muslims needed to prove that it was a religious issue and not a terrorism one.

including doing investigative stories on the same, the media created a critical sense of importance attention at all. By making the change of name of the mosque an important aspect of reporting, the intense media focus on the mosque set the agenda. When the media and the public think and talk of worship. So changing the name without the consent of imams and worshipers of that mosque lends credence to religious intolerance. But I believe the media should cover the change of name. Its not something to ignore.”

It is good for the media to carry stories about Masjid Musa and why it deserves to be closed. Some parents may not be aware that the mosque is a hub for radicalisation and may thinking the action is unjustified. Such reporting will reveal the activities taking place there and thereby reduce accusations of the religious intolerance.”

The intense media focus on the mosque set the agenda. When the media and the public think
and talk about an object, some attributes are emphasised, others are given less attention, and many receive no attention at all. By making the change of name of the mosque an important aspect of reporting, including doing investigative stories on the same, the media created a critical sense of importance that the Muslims needed to prove that it was a religious issue and not a terrorism one.

Choice of news sources: Is it an adopted bias factor?

*Case Review: Short news stories from KTN, NTV and CTV*

The choice of news sources by journalist in the coverage of war on terror, radicalisation and religious intolerance was also an issue brought about during focus group discussions.

“I don’t understand why all the news stories about Eastleigh have statements from the Pangani Police Station OCPD. There is a reporter based in Eastleigh who is believed to be related to the OCPD and therefore all stories about terrorism are biased. There is no inclusion of opinion from other security personnel for diversity.”

“As a Muslim and a journalist, I know that some of the journalists carry stories attributed to only one source. I think this has made all the stories about Muslims and Islam negative. We have religious leaders, we have wazee wa mta[elders] who are not consulted or interviewed. Such things make them think that they are being targeted especially when their side of the story is ignored.”

In a clip broadcast on KISS TV after the killing of Aboud Rogo, one interviewee was expressing murderous threats. KISS TV broadcast the threats regardless. “*Tutamalizana na nyinyi. Yeyote amevaa uniform tutamaliza ...na wewe ni mmoja wao.* (This loosely translates to: We will kill everybody ... everybody in uniform. ... and you are one of them!)

Editorial policies: Are they inhibitive?

*Case Review: Mutuma Mathiu’s article “Are we just going to sit around and wait to be blown up by terrorists?”*

Influence-peddling, editorial policy biases by editors and journalists, and sloppy management of the media coverage of issues related to war on terrorism, religion and radicalisation are some of the major risks to watch out for.

Editors are supposed to be gatekeepers of media content with regards to ethics and professionalism. They should ensure their articles do not lead to ethnic profiling or blanket religious demonisation. Considering that the author of this article is *The Daily Nation’s* Group Managing Editor, the publication aroused divergent comments from respondents.

Consider an excerpt from Mathiu’s article”

“... Every little, two-bit Somali has a big dream – to blow us up, knock down our buildings and slaughter our children. .... we are at war. Let’s start shooting... are we just going to sit around and wait to be blown to bits by terrorists?”

“Such writings by a senior editor of a leading daily paper show you that the media has failed in terms of the editorial content. If the editors cannot sit together and consider the implications of the article before publishing then the media cannot assist in the fight against radicalisation
and terrorism."

“I work in the newsroom and I know that sometimes you come up with the story and then you are told that it can’t work like this...change this story and make it juicy. The selection of news sources also affects the story angle. For example, you might be told to do a story that affects the Muslims and then you are told to interview Christians only.”

The responsibility of an editor includes the vetting and reviewing of articles submitted by reporters. Such editing should be guided by the media house editorial policy which provides a working framework where ethical issues may emerge either during the vetting and reviewing process. When lapses occur during the gatekeeping process then objectivity and fairness slump. However, it is important to note that editors are sometimes allowed the use of words and phrases which in their opinion adequately reveals the grim nature of situation involved.

Sensitivity in audience interaction: Interaction or altercations?

Case Review: Poll question on Citizen TV by Swalleh Mdoe

In one of the poll questions after the raid of the Masjid Musa Mosque, the news reader asked whether it was right for the police to enter the mosque without removing their shoes. Extreme views of anger and bitterness were received, revealing the sensitivity of the matter.

“Such questions should never be asked during prime time programs like news. Some of the comments were outrageous and can lead to further radicalisation and religious tensions.”

“You heard one of the comments ... that it was akin to defiling the mosque. A mosque is a very important symbol of Islam just like the church is to Christians. When we see such action as defiling ... we are driving our audience towards radicalisation.”

“If we the journalists do not ask critical questions, then who will? My view is that we should ask the hard questions but ensure that we filter extreme views that may cause offence and lead to religious intolerance and further radicalisation.”

Polls have become an inseparable part of news coverage and presentation. For all their potential flaws, there is no more accurate way to gauge the sentiments of the public than through carefully designed and executed opinion polls. This makes polls one of the best available sources of new and newsworthy information. Because well-done polls are reliable sources of information about the public, journalists have little choice but to pay attention to them. But because not all polls are well done, journalists must also understand how to recognise which polls are valid and which are meaningless (Media Studies Centre, 2000)

Has the media become a biased court of public opinion?

Case Review: Short news stories from Likoni church and Pangani Police Station attacks

The media often offers a platform for public discussions of issues and may sometimes be considered the court of public opinion. At its very best, the media’s opinion is a form of alternative system of retribution, bashing and castigation by those who feel aggrieved. Notably, the onslaught is not always led by journalists who might just be involved in sparking debate.
“When you send Christian journalists to do a story where several Christians have been murdered like the Likoni church incident, do you expect to balanced and fair and not to vilify some of the terrorists using religious undertones?”

“Yes, the media has somehow created impressions that the suspected individuals arrested are arraigned in court. Why is it that the some journalists have sided with the police in reporting on such issues?”

The media court of public opinion is an alternative system of justice. It’s very difficult from the traditional court system. This court is often times – Unfortunately – based on reputation, revenge, public shaming, non-factual statements and misconceptions that are exercised at the whims of the audience. Facts matter but there are no standards of accuracy especially when people give their heartfelt opinions and observations. It is Indeed upon the media to seek and control the discussions and opinions in this court due to its wider influence.

Has the media focused on constitutional and human rights violations associated with security operations?

Following numerous security operations, the police were accused of beating people, including children, stealing money and valuables, and raping women and girls. Several organisations, including Amnesty International, the state-funded Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, Transparency International-Kenya and the Kenya branch of the International Commission of Jurists, said the security operation “constitutes discrimination contrary to the provisions” of the country’s constitution.

“The media has failed to focus on human rights violations during the operation. Last week a pregnant woman whose house was being searched by the police jumped from third floor building of her apartment and got badly hurt but did not die yet the media did not say anything about it.”

“I think some media houses do not want to see the bad side of the security operation because they don’t want to be seen to be opposing the government.”

“I think that the media should push security forces to open up on the security operations it is carrying out. One religious leader in Eastleigh said that he believes that religion is the root of this security operations and targeting … I heard one person say that people should not raid my house just because there are a few Somali terrorist on the loose.”

“Our local media should emulate some foreign media like Al Jazeera when it carried some of the stories that the local media did not. For example, the story of Zeynab Mohamed Muse “Bulhan”, a refugee who was detained in the security operation, was hospitalised for suffocation and died two days later…and Mohamed Kadiye Robe, a 67-year-old diabetic with high blood pressure, reportedly died of shock after his whole family was arrested. All these were not covered by the local media.”

Has the media participated in correcting religious misconception about jihad?

Respondents generally agree that the media had failed to provide a platform for comprehensive discussions of Islamic issues.

“Personally, I have not seen any form of discussion facilitated by the media which has explained in detail the meaning and origin of Jihad. All I have seen is dramatic stories which glorified the
making of tough pronouncement on jihadism and how Muslims should take up their role of avenging for wrong doing.”

The biggest misconception about Islam, no doubt resulting from the constant stereotyping and bashing the media gives Islam has been made more prominent with the global terrorist threats that have been witnessed in the recent past. The media should not just be purveyors of the information but should assist in correcting some of the fallacies related to the war on terror and religious intolerance.

**Competition for story exclusivity: Dangerous hastiness?**

**Care Review: Westgate Mall attack, 21 September 2013**

The culture of scoop journalism birthed by media and newsroom competition for scoops has become a major problem for media houses. It is something that has negatively impacted journalistic tenets of accuracy and truth.

“This is where we the journalists fail because we just want to be the stations that was the first to break the news ... I think reporting on sensitive issues like war on terror which directly affects religion and radicalisation as mentioned should be done carefully so that facts can be verified before they are aired. The Pangani police car explosion was reported by some media houses you would think that the whole police station had exploded.”

Journalistic reporting should always contain verified facts. It should also be fair, acknowledging the existence of other arguments or viewpoints. Journalists should not be politically or ideologically partisan. Nor should they be invective. The story's argument should be such that if challenged it can be defended robustly and sensibly by the author (Reuters Handbook for Journalist, 2008).

**Media dragging Christians into the war on terror: Religious undertones**

**Case Review: KTN interview with Hassan Omar and other news reports and interviews with clerics**

It is evidently clear that the issue of terrorism has drawn a wedge between Christians and Muslims. And security operations have only worsened the situation. Many Muslims and rights activists side with the Somalis, while many Christians reportedly support the crackdown.

“When the Likoni blasts occurred, the media looked for Christian pastors for interviews. This is like dragging Christians into the picture largely involving the Kenya government, security forces and the terrorists ...avoiding such news sources will help reduce religious intolerance.”

“In one of the street interviews, one man said that terrorism cannot be defeated until all Somalis are deported back to their country. He continued to say that Muslim leaders should stop protecting criminals staying in mosques.”

Among Kenya’s Somalis, the operation has increased the fear of inter-communal violence. Many in Somali neighbourhoods said they were worried that any future attack will cause non-Somali Kenyans to turn on them. In 2012, after a blast killed several people in Eastleigh, mobs shouted, “Somalis must go!” They attacked Somali-owned businesses and homes. This was followed by days of skirmishes.
Radical or moderate perspective: Media preferences

Case study of ‘waves of extremism’ on K24 and Jicho Pevu

Most respondents agree that the media ignores the voices of even moderate Muslim in favor of radicals or extremists. As indicated above, the late Abubakar Sharrif “Makaburi” became a news source despite his reputation as an extreme voice. This is despite the fact that there are more authoritative Muslim clerics who could offer balanced and accurate perspectives on the issues of terrorism and radicalisation. Such can be attributed to the fact such radical clerics make inordinate statements and proclamation when interviewed.

“Muslim clerics who have been given the a lot of coverage by the media proclaim support for terrorist activity. They hold extreme views. This is partly because of the success of the ideology put out by Islamists who have themselves made that connection through claiming jihadist ideology– that what they are doing is what all good Muslims should do, which gets reported and repeated in the media.”

“Compare the time and opportunity even investigative reporters offer clerics with the extreme views with those with moderate views … you will clearly see the difference. This makes the audience think that all Muslims are pro-jihad and are extremists.”

Media manipulation of people and stories for sensationalism

Respondents feel that journalists sometimes solicit manipulate or misrepresent both people and events in order to shape news or feature stories concerning violence or extremism. They opine that such practices create doubts on the professionalism of media practitioners and general media trustworthiness and reinforce their belief that the media manipulates and distorts facts for profit, audience advantage or ideology.

“Sometimes, we journalists want stories so much that we sometimes blow things out of proportion. Just like what happened in Banglapesa incident, the media has manipulated stories through sensationalism yet in many of the instances, there is no real story to follow up and publish.”

Media role in resolving the intricacies of religious undertones and radicalisation in the war on terror

Respondents gave the following as solutions to problems highlighted:

• The media should encourage diverse opinions and provide a channel where all people can express their opinions. This makes it easier for people to get information and knowledge to make informed choices on what is factual concerning the issue of war on terror, radicalisation and religious extremism.

• The media should be a platform for education and information for people who may be offended by comments made by some individuals in the media.

• The media should provide a platform for inter-religious exchange of opinion to facilitate and encourage tolerance.

• Professionalism and adherence to the code of conduct should be the driving forces for media practitioners as they report on such matters.
Respondents rating matrix

After the focus group discussions, respondents were required to give a rating score on their perception of how the media performed on various issues relating to professionalism and ethicality of coverage of religious extremism and intolerance, radicalisation and terrorism. The first focus group consisted of only reporters and the second of selected media consumers, practitioners and scholars. Each of the key informants interviewed was also given a chance to give their rating on various issues.

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<tr>
<th>Grading point</th>
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<th>Aggregate Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating on the way the media has covered and reported on human rights issues with reference to radicalisation, religious intolerance and the war on terror with a major focus on victims of security operations and terrorist attacks.</td>
<td>3 6 6 12 12 9 3 6</td>
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<td>Rating of the media adherence to the code of conduct on covering ethnic, religious and sectarian conflict as per article 12 of the second schedule of the Media Act, 2013 stating that journalist will verify facts and present them with caution and constraints in a manner that will ensure national harmony, amity and peace.</td>
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<td>Rating on the media’s level of professionalism, responsibility and patriotism when reporting on the issues of war on terror, radicalisation and religious extremism considering reporting that will enhance public good and avoid the inflammation of passions or accentuate strained relations between communities.</td>
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<td>Rating on how media has handled conflict sensitive reporting with reference to radicalisation, war on terror and religious extremism like using emotional and imprecise words, making opinion sound like fact and using words like devastated, tragedy and terrorised to describe effects on other side.</td>
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<td>Rating on the credibility of the government machinery/security forces with reference providing accurate, impartial and fair comments and information for the media.</td>
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<td>Rating on the media’s investigative stories considering the dramatic, most violent, and conflicting accounts and efforts to undertake historical analysis and interrogation of the cultural and social explanations for terrorism, radicalisation and religious extremism.</td>
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<td>Rating on the media in the exercise of freedom of expressions with reference to allowing diverse news sources, opinions and discussion to be expressed on issues of radicalisation, religious extremism and the war on terror.</td>
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<td>Rating on the media’s attention to peaceful co-existence and cohesion in its reporting on the issues of war against terror, radicalisation and religious extremism especially through offering both sides an opportunity to give their views and observations that created impression of fairness in the media in the resolution of the underlying challenges.</td>
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Interpretation and discussion

Based on respondents rating, the media scored average (approximately a 7) in the manner it reported on various issues. Some of the reporting which scored average includes how the media covered human rights, how it balanced professionalism, responsibility and patriotism, whether it allowed diverse voices and opinions to be expressed, and whether the government machinery/security forces could offer accurate, impartial and fair views to the media. The lowest aggregate score was in reference to media promoting peaceful co-existence and cohesion in its reporting.

The scores represent what journalist respondents think about media coverage of radicalisation, war on terror and religious intolerance.

Key aspects that promote professionalism like adherence to the code of conduct should ideally have obtained better scores given its importance to the practice of ethical journalism.
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<td>Rating on the media's attention to peaceful co-existence and cohesion in its reporting on the issues of war against terror, radicalisation and religious extremism especially through offering both sides an opportunity to give their views and observations that created impression of fairness in the media in the resolution of the underlying challenges.</td>
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<td>4.875</td>
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Deconstructing Terror

Compared to the self-assessment rating of the journalist respondents, the non-journalist respondents grading were much lower in many of the aspects examined. For example, the rating on the media’s level of professionalism, responsibility and patriotism when reporting on the issue of war on terror, the journalists’ aggregate score was 7.125 compared to non-journalists’ 4.875.

However, on the rating of media’s investigative stories considering the dramatic, most violent, and conflicting accounts and efforts to undertake historical analysis and interrogation of the cultural and social explanations for terrorism, the journalists’ aggregate score was 9.75 while that of non-journalists was 7.875. This shows that both groups appreciate investigative stories on the war on terror and radicalisation.

While journalist respondents seemed to have high levels of trust on the government machinery/security forces with reference to the provision of accurate, impartial and fair information to the media, most non-journalist respondents were doubtful on whether the government was a credible source of information on matters of war on terror and radicalisation.
Chapter Five

Case Reviews: Critical examination of articles and clips

Christian leader’s back state terror swoops

By Henry Wanyama, The Star newspaper, 15 April 2014

Addressing the media at the All Saints Cathedral, Cardinal John Njue of the Catholic Church said they cannot stand aside when many people are killed. “We urge the President and all relevant government agencies to intensify their ongoing efforts and ensure a safe country for us and future generations,” Njue said. The churches, however, asked security agencies to handle the ongoing operation in a humane manner as “the dignity of life should at all times remain a priority”.

Terrorist attacks have in the recent past targeted Christians in churches with pointers that Muslim fundamentalists are the alleged architects.

However, Njue warned that the operation must not be seen to target any religion, tribe or nationality. He said laxity and lack of vigilance has led to the increase of illegal arms with criminals allowed to operate freely. “Armed robbery, cattle rustling, wildlife poaching, rape and other petty crimes should also be dealt with,” Njue said.

Religion is a very emotive issue. The discussions and discourses around the subjects should be approached with absolute caution. While every author/commentator has the freedom and the right to express their own opinions in whatever form, manner and medium, the impact on the audience is very critical to consider. Expression of views on religious and matters by journalist should be done cautiously and professionally.

When the author of this article expressed his personal sentiments that carried religious undertones, some audiences may have misconstrued them as an attack on their religion. The author used stereotypes to form an inaccurate judgment about Muslims and their link to the attacks on Christians. Stereotypes constitutes an oversimplified, pejorative attitude towards those outside one’s own experience and result from incomplete, distorted information accepted as facts without questions.

It is evident that the article violated article 12 of the code of conduct which demands the exercise of due caution and restrain in covering such an issue in a manner that will ensure conducive atmosphere congenial to national harmony, amity and peace.

The author also performs an act of dangerous generalisation by stating that terrorist in the recent past have targeted churches. While this may be partly true, markets, bus stations and also eating joints have also been targeted. Such a statement creates impressions that terrorist attacks have been perpetrated by Muslims and directed specifically at Christians in churches.
Are we just going to sit around and wait to be blown to bits by terrorists?

By Mutuma Mathiu, The Daily Nation, 20 March 2014

I fear that soon I will begin to sound like a broken, right wing record. But I am a man with fears which I believe to be real and I am frustrated that no one seems to share them.

It would appear that every little, two-bit Somali has a big dream – to blow us up, knock down our buildings and slaughter our children. They declared war on us and we thought it was a small matter that some guy in government was going to take care of. We were wrong. This week, police have tracked down two bomb wagons and recovered a cache of weapons. My colleague who is more conversant with arms than myself has regaled me with the horrors that this kind of arsenal can cause. He says these are weapons Al-Shabaab has been employing to devastating effect in Mogadishu.

The article contained unbridled ethnic and sectarian views that could potentially lead to further radicalisation and tension. Influence-peddling based on editorial policy biases by editors and journalists, and sloppy management of the media coverage of issues related to war on terrorism, religion and radicalisation are some of the key issues to look out for.

Article 12 of the code of conduct states that news, views or comments on ethnic, religious or sectarian dispute shall be published or broadcast after proper verification of facts and presented with due caution and restraint in a manner conducive to the creation of an atmosphere congenial to national harmony, amity and peace. It further states that news reports or commentaries shall not be written or broadcast in a manner likely to inflame the passions, aggravate the tension or accentuate strained relations between the communities concerned.

Editors are supposed to be gatekeepers of media content with regards to ethics and professionalism. They should also ensure their articles do not lead to ethnic profiling or blanket religious demonisation. No amount of anger or sense of righteous indignation against terrorism should allow any communicator to disregard important professional and ethical principles.

Whereas expressions of frustration are common place in Kenyan and reflect the general mood and attitude towards the issue of terrorism and religious extremism, some of the statements clearly contain generalised statements that amount to stereotyping of the Somali community.
Radical preacher Makaburi shot dead

Published in the front page of The Star Newspaper on 2 February 2014

The determinant of what a public interest story is is at the root of the dilemma editors face when deciding whether to publish or not. This relates directly as to whether the bloodied body of the late Abubakar Shariff being loaded onto a police vehicle constitutes public interest and if it can satisfy the definition of news values.

Considering that the late Makaburi was neither a Muslim cleric nor a holder of any leadership position, the publication of his photo was not absolutely necessary even though as a human being he deserved media access and attention like any other. Owing to its prominence, it is clear the photo could embolden his followers and arouse emotions. By splashing the picture on its front page, The Star seemed to have celebrated the death of Makaburi who, according to the justice system in the country, had not been convicted of any crime.

The Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya states that the publication of photographs showing mutilated bodies, bloody incidents and abhorrent scenes should be avoided unless the publication of broadcast of such photographs will serve the public interests. When the sanctity of human life is eroded by publishing such a spectacle of blood, and indecency then the focus of the story is completely lost.
*Mr President, you are right on right path on terror war ignore detractors*

*By Barrack Muluka, The Standard, 12 April 2014*

So how will the Government tell who is al-Shabaab and who is not? It must begin from the known and move on to the unknown. That is what the Kenya Government is doing. The mop up began in the place where terrorist attacks have mostly been happening, Eastleigh. The population there is, of course, heavily Somali and Islamic. It is true that not all Muslims are terrorists.

Equally true is that not all Somalis are terrorists. But it is also true that all the terrorist attacks against our civilian populations have been Somali Muslims. When the Government acts, therefore, where is it supposed to begin, if not in the intersection of the Islamic, Somali population in Eastleigh? What would be the logic in beginning the manhunt in Kilgoris in Trans Mara, for example? Practical logic would guide you to begin from the known and move on to the unknown.

While the article is a personal opinion, the media should weigh its impact on consumers. It is important to note that although the writer makes the statement that not all Muslims are terrorists, he makes the contradictory statement that all terrorist attacks against civilian populations have been carried out by Somali Muslims. The statement is inaccurate since, according to some police records, some of the people suspected of terrorism are of Kenyan origin.

According to the Kenya Police Service, some of the suspects arrested are Kenyans. For example, Otuko and one Elgiva Bwire Oliach who were arrested in Kayole, were allegedly responsible for the killing of 11 people at Machakos Country bus station. They were also responsible for the OTC Stage and Mwaura’s bar attack in 2011.

Article 1(9) states that a journalist shall differentiate between comment, conjecture and fact in stories. In addition, objectivity demands that journalists develop a consistent method of testing information for accuracy. This is especially critical when reporting or commenting on sensitive issues like war on terror and radicalisation.
In an investigative story christened “foul winds” by Dennis Okari on NTV, the story begins with the raid on Masjid Musa mosque and how the security forces were able to recover several items believed to have been used in indoctrination. The following are some excerpts of interviews in the story.

“Ku-revenge iko katika Quran na kwa dini yetu ukiwa pushed ama ukiona mwenzako akinyanyasa, you have to stand up for yourself, sio kwa kislamu peke yake ata dini zote”. (the Quran supports revenge and Islam says that if you are pushed ... or if see your colleague being harmed, you must defend ... this is not only in Islam ... other religions support that too) (Unidentified man, NTV, April 2014)

“They support revenge in the Quran and our religion says if you are pushed or see your colleague being harmed, you must defend...this is not only in Islam...other religions support that too” (Unidentified man, NTV, April 2014)

“Sasa hivi kuna vita kati ya waislamu na makafiri, serikali ya Kenya na al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab niwa islamu, wanajeshi wa Kenya ni makafiri, hati yule Mohamed aliye kwenyew jeshi la Kenya ni sawasawa na John. (Right now there is war between Muslims and non-Muslims, government of Kenya and al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaabs are Muslims, and to them the Kenyan forces are non-Muslims. Even that soldier called Mohamed in the Kenya Defence Force is like John).

“In an investigative story christened “foul winds” by Dennis Okari on NTV, the story begins with the raid on Masjid Musa mosque and how the security forces were able to recover several items believed to have been used in indoctrination. The following are some excerpts of interviews in the story.

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From the arguments above, it is clear that the focus on difference in treatment received by different suspects serves to exacerbate religious intolerance and animosity.

During the show, Abubakar Sharrif or Makaburi, who was interviewed at some point, said he is not scared of death. Giving space to such extremists, however, can generate anger among audiences. In the same program, Aboud Rogo’s son claims the government is not interested in fighting extremism and terrorism but Muslims. Undoubtedly then, religious biases are sometimes a consequence of media choices. Nonetheless, it is sometimes difficult to avoid extreme religious views. However, the media can temper them with positive stories that demonstrate inter-religious understanding. Tolerant and diversity-based religious education can generate compelling stories, improve media standards and advocate socially responsible journalism.
Chapter Six

Conclusions and Recommendations

Media coverage is a crucial social need in times of crisis including covering war on terror and radicalisation. The media provides the public with accurate, timely and comprehensive information. To this end, journalists should uphold high levels of professionalism in the coverage of emotive issues like terrorism intertwined with religious undertones.

That the media has the potential to deepen divides by offending or confronting another’s culture or identity is a painful fact. The example of cartoons published in the Danish Press in 2005 that depicted the Prophet Mohammed, for instance, set off protests throughout the Muslim world, with critics calling the cartoons racist and blasphemous and insensitive is a good example which Kenyan journalist can learn from.

The media also plays an important social role in our community with the ability to influence people. This means that journalists’ perceptions are also shaped by various forces which contribute to their understanding of Muslims and Islam. It is clear that how one perceives particular events is always influenced by factors including background, education, and the wider social and cultural environment. The adherence to the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism is a very important factor in avoiding biases that result from such social forces.

The importance of social cohesion and intercultural and religious tolerance and understanding as a key element in reducing drivers for radicalisation and extremism cannot be wished away. The extent to which the media sensationalises issues and the unbalanced stories around Islam and terrorism are considered part of the radicalising agents in Kenya.

Journalists in the course of their work should ensure that they also observe professionalism and patriotism. Granted, they should guard against manipulation and distortion. A good journalist, privileging truth and adhering to ethical and professional standards, will always be a good citizen. A patriotic journalist neither engages in subterfuge, deceit, propaganda nor twist truth.

Mainstream media provides many examples of subtle and indirect prejudice which may reinforce ethnic and religious intolerance. Stereotypes based on ethnic and religious origin may have little impact on the consciousness of multicultural communities, where people’s own experiences are a counterweight to simplistic and often ill-informed media coverage. Stereotypes are not necessarily the product of ethical failings, but often arise due to neglect of the conditions in which journalists work and the way media are managed. Evidently, journalism training often fails to tackle issues of discrimination and intolerance. There is too often a profound lack of awareness and ignorance among news gatherers and production staff about the societies which they serve. This lack of awareness is reinforced by a failure to use representative and authoritative sources of information from different ethnic and religious groups when dealing with news items about the war on terror and radicalisation. It is a common criticism that media too often rely on “official” and establishment sources of information without seeking out the opinions of other expert sources.
Portrayal of violence, deaths and funeral resulting from terrorism through the media stoke the emotional intensity of some of the individuals. This creates the desire for revenge. This indicates that the media can definitely have an effect of inflaming passions and turning people towards radicalisation.

**Recommendations**

- The media should continuously promote healthy dialogue on critical issues of the war on terror, radicalisation and religious tolerance. Such media forums will promote healthy exchanges and interrogation. They should provide a platform for different religious, ethnic groups, government agencies, civil society groups and members of the public to raise issues of concern and seek resolutions.

- Journalists should avoid biases in reporting issues on war on terror and radicalisation. Maintaining high level of professionalism and adhering to the code of conduct ensures that journalist avoid such biases.

- The media should generally avoid the propagation of the dominant narratives that stereotype people, and promote the idea that it’s a war against Muslims. Such narratives can be avoided by employing effective gatekeeping mechanisms before publication of such stories.

- The mainstream media should control comments and feedback bordering on negative discussions of extremism, radicalisation and religious intolerance on several platforms including their social media and online sites. This can be done by having social media and online editors.

- The media should continue investigating war on terror, radicalisation and religious intolerance. However, investigative stories should be done professionally with fair representation of both sides of news sources and rigorous verification of facts and comments.

- Journalists should avoid emphasising the dramatic, most violent, and conflicting accounts on war against terror, radicalisation and religious intolerance. They should instead focus on historical, cultural, and social explanations for terrorism and the war against it.

- Religious intolerance has been exacerbated by the media with regards to how it covers radicalisation and the war on terror. It is evidently clear that the issue of terrorism has drawn wedges between Christians and Muslims. Security operations have also driven a wedge between Christians and Muslims.

- The Media should generally avoid giving space or airtime to people with extremist views with regards to terrorism and jihadism. Such radicalised statements made during interviews and documentaries with the news sources should be discouraged and edited. Allowing such radicalised interviews breaches article 12(2,3) of the code of conduct which states that articles or broadcasts with the potential to exacerbate religious, communal or ethnic tensions should be avoided. For example, the NTV documentary called “foul winds” and “wave of extremism” by K24 where some of radical Muslim preachers were allowed to make jihadist statements was not appropriate.

- TV stations should think carefully about the opinion questions they ask in their news
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segments. The news anchors should also sift through comments before reading them out. For example, CTV in one of the news programs by anchor Swalleh Mdoe asked whether it was sensitive for security forces to enter mosques with shoes. From the reactions generated, it was evident that respondents held antagonistic religious views. The comments received were uncivil and irresponsible and demonstrated the need to moderate comments before reading them on air.

- Journalists, in framing stories related to issues of war against terror, radicalisation and even religious extremism, should ensure that they do not aggravate or fuel tensions. Frames like conflict and morality, although weighty in terms of news values, should be used carefully especially with regards to choice of news sources and choice of viewpoints and story angles.

- Journalists should distinguish commentary and conjecture from fact. This is in accordance with Article 1(9) of the code of conduct.

- The media should assist in identifying errors in ethnic and religious profiling which are compounded when security forces rely on shortcuts and unfair procedures to identify suspected terrorists.

- Journalists should seek multiple and different sources of news stories on the fight against terror and radicalisation. This may serve to eliminate bias and ensure all sides of the story are heard and represented.

**Media Coverage of Religious Radicalisation in Mombasa leading to the 2014 Crisis**

Whenever there is conflict in any way, shape or form journalists fill their news pages, radio and TV bulletins with the very latest of that conflict regardless of the unpleasant nature of the exercise. The very calling of the profession regard almost all conflicts as great human interest stories that may have other news values including timeliness, proximity, prominence, impact and consequences.

The conflict in Mombasa early this year which led to a serious crisis that saw the attacks of Mosques and Churches following the assassinations of prominent religious leaders, could rightly or wrongly be assumed to be the result of radicalisation of criminal elements among the unemployed youths in that sad city of Mvita, Mombasa’s original name signifying a place of war.

While examining the manner in which the media covered the entire complicated process of religious radicalisation, it is important to pose some vital questions: Is there religious animosity in Kenya? If the answer is yes, what is the origin of the animosity? Are there some individuals who can be accurately described as being responsible or instrumental for the animosity? What are the manifestations of that animosity? What are the aftermaths of religious animosity in Kenya? How are the events of religious animosity covered? What does the law say about it? What are the journalistic ethical principles involved?

To answer these questions adequately, it is vital to examine what the Constitution of Kenya 2010 says about freedom of Conscience. In Article 32 (1), the Constitution says every person has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. It adds that every person has the right, either individually or in community with others, in public or in private, to worship, practice, teaching or observance, including observance of a day of worship.
The Constitution further states that a person may not be denied access to any institution, employment or facility, or the enjoyment of any right, because of the person’s belief or religion; and that a person shall not be compelled to act, or engage in any act, that is contrary to the person’s belief or religion through worship, practice, teaching or observance, including observance of a day of worship.

Though the Constitution also clearly says a person may not be denied access to any institution, employment or facility, or the enjoyment of any right, because of the person's belief or religion; it also says a person shall not be compelled to act, or engage in any act, that is contrary to the person's belief or religion.

**Taking advantage of the Constitution**

There is ample evidence in Kenya that those actively engaged in radicalisation of society through religious teaching such as Islamic fundamentalism took advantage of the provision of the country’s constitution which, when all is said and done, is among the most democratic in the protection of fundamental freedoms such as freedom of conscience. Arguably among the first people to take full advantage of that protection was Aboud Rogo Mohammed who was unique in his ability to elicit radical thought and violent behaviour from his followers.

According to Al Jazeera, Rogo, who had been facing charges of possessing weapons, was shot in his car by unknown attackers on 27 August 2012. His supporters fought running street battles with security forces in the hours after his death, and sporadic violence continued over the following days. As the riots spread in the city of Mombasa, churches were torched and two grenades were thrown at police vehicles.

When all these activities were taking place in the country’s second largest city, journalists were engaging in simple conveyor-belt presentation of news based entirely on what they saw and heard. Very little effort was made by the journalists to dig a little bit deeper into their archives to unearth some unpleasant facts that led to the sudden outbreak of violence in Mombasa. These facts include the manner in which the idle and unemployed youth were subjected to radicalisation and turned from ordinary Islamic believers into potential terrorists.

Stories published and broadcast at this time concerning the violence in Mombasa were ethically deficient as they did not obey the ethical principle of accuracy and fairness which clearly says the fundamental objective of a journalist is to write a fair, accurate and an unbiased story on matters of public interest. The ethical principle which demands that both sides of the story be reported whenever possible, was not respected as the stories did not give detailed reasons why young people were ready to confront the police with stones notwithstanding the threats to their own lives.

At that time Government said the violence was organised by Kenya’s ‘enemies’ and blamed Muslim radicals - including the slain cleric - for supporting Al-Shabaab. This explanation by the Government should have been food for thought for the reporters covering the events by trying to authenticate its veracity by engaging in investigative journalism. Throughout this period both the national and local newspapers, TV and radio station splashed all sorts of views expressed by the Rogo supporters and his opponents. Taking advantage of Timeliness as the news value of the entire episode the media engaged in cutthroat competition in covering the confrontations between Government officials and radicalised Islamic leadership in Mombasa. Inadvertently the radicalised views of Islam obtained the wide and far-reaching publicity across the country.
To the more sober minded observers of events in Mombasa at that time the violence stoked fears that the unrest could become more sectarian in the city, a tourist hub and major Indian Ocean port, where grenade attacks blamed on radicalised young Somali fighters and their sympathisers had already strained Muslim-Christian relations. Behind the radicalisation was Aboud Rogo Mohammed who was unique in his ability to elicit drastic thought and violent behaviour from his followers. Apart from getting free publicity every time he talked to local journalists, his views were saturated in the social media where any interested party could obtain them.

According to Al Jazeera, Rogo, who had been facing charges of possessing weapons, was under a UN Security Council placed travel ban and had also suffered an asset freeze in July 2012, as he had engaged in acts that directly or indirectly threatened peace, security or stability of Somalia. This unpleasant but truthful information about Rogo should have been highlighted all the time journalists mentioned his name as a matter of ethics which demand journalists to be accurate. Portraying him as an Islamic hero who was only promoting the principles of his religion as it was protected by the Constitution was only giving half-truths.

Radicalisation is now a crime

Radicalisation and extremism which leads to terrorism is now accepted as an international problem. According to the Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force’s First Report of the Working Group on Radicalisation and Extremism that Lead to Terrorism, the United Nations’ General Assembly unanimously adopted the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy on 8 September 2006. The Strategy, which united all 192 Member States for the first time behind a common vision, reflected the international community’s inventory of State Programmes resolve to combat the scourge of terrorism.

The report says that even prior to the Strategy, the Secretary General established the Counterterrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) in 2005 to ensure overall coordination and coherence in the counterterrorism efforts of the United Nations system. It further explains that in light of the Strategy, the Task Force created nine Working Groups to carry forward key initiatives highlighted in the strategy, in which the Task Force had specific expertise and could provide added value.

According to the report, the creation of the Working Group on “Addressing Radicalisation and Extremism that Lead to Terrorism”, was a response to member states’ demand for help in furthering their understanding of what makes a terrorist a terrorist and in identifying effective policies and practices to prevent this from happening.

According to the International Crisis Group (ICG) Policy Briefing number 84 on Africa, Somalia’s growing Islamist radicalism is spilling into Kenya. The report, published on 25 January 2012, says the militant al-Shabaab movement has built a cross-border presence and a clandestine support network among Muslim populations in the north-east, Nairobi and in the Coast, and is trying to radicalise and recruit youth from these communities, often capitalising on long standing grievances against the central state. This vital information should have been used by journalists, and particularly editors, to expose the radicalisation in Nairobi and reveal Islamic institutions engaging in such criminal activity.

The report suggests that this could have informed the decision by the Kenyan government to send military forces to Somalia. Maintaining that radicalisation was a grave threat to Kenya’s security and stability, the report suggests that formulating and executing sound counter-
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radicalisation and de-radicalisation policies before it is too late must be a priority. It would be a profound mistake, however, to view the challenge solely through a counterterrorism lens.

According to the ICG, the Islamic radicalisation observable in many Muslim societies has its roots in revivalist movements that emerged in the 1950s. Kenyan Muslims are no exception. They have become more observant, and a small portion has become radicalised. The respected think-tank says the Kenyan Muslim community made up of 4.3 million people out of the country's 41 million people (2011) has been exposed to various strains of radical Islamism in the last four decades.

The one institution that has successfully assessed the vulnerability of Kenyan youth to radicalisation and extremism is the Institute for Security Studies. Based in Pretoria with regional offices in Nairobi, Dakar and Addis Ababa, the Institute published a paper in April 2013 by Anneli Botha, a respected senior researcher on terrorism. In the paper, Botha reveals very interesting information to interested journalists such as the fact that al-Shabaab managed to recruit Kenyan, Ugandan and Tanzanian nationals into its ranks in Somalia.

The central question the South African scholar examines in her paper is what makes people—mostly young people—susceptible to extremists’ jihadi ideology? Instead of presenting Somalia as the root cause of all regional problems, she focused her study on the domestic conditions that those behind radicalisation exploit to recruit their followers. According to her, this approach of discussion is especially relevant in light of the growing pressure al-Shabaab faces in Somalia following the recent successes of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and other forces.

The scholar argues that if Somalia was effectively no longer a terrorist haven, then the countries in the region from which many of these foreign fighters come (e.g. Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) might experience growing threats to their own security. The ability of Kenyan journalists to understand this theoretical framework while covering stories emanating from either acts of terrorism or what is manifestly a result of religious or sectarian conflict is important for the stories they write to be more professional.

This calls for their understanding of the ethical principle of covering ethnic, religious and sectarian conflict which demands that they realise that news, views or comments on ethnic, religious or sectarian dispute should be published or broadcast after proper verification of facts and presented with due caution and restraint in a manner which is conducive to the creation of an atmosphere congenial to national harmony, amity and peace. These are facts that journalists in Kenya need to highlight while covering religious conflict and radicalisation.

Domestic breed of terrorism

One of the most authoritative think tanks concerned with the radicalisation of Kenyan youth is Life and Peace Institute (LPI), an international and ecumenical centre that supports and promotes nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution. Based in Uppsala, Sweden, the LPI has a regional office in Nairobi headed by Jody Henderson.

Among other things, the LPI produces the Horn of Africa Bulletin which discusses issues of radicalisation of Kenyan Muslims. In its July-August 2012 issue, for example, it says that since the entry of the Kenyan defence forces (KDF) into Somalia, it was expected that Kenya would suffer blows of reprisal attacks from her neighbour. According to the issue, since late 2011, Kenya has succumbed to a sequence of grenade attacks notably in Nairobi, Mombasa, Wajir
and Garissa, marking the resurgence of terrorism in the country.

Interestingly, notes the Bulletin, these terror attacks, blamed on radical Muslims sympathetic to the al-Shabaab, have targeted Christian churches, revealing thinly veiled religious pockets of violence in the country. It adds that the trend is worrying as experts warn of Nigeria-style violence where the Boko Haram sends shrills of terror targeting Christians.

The Bulletin states that there are growing concerns as increasing radicalisation and pro-terrorist attitudes among the Kenyan Muslim population become more evident. This tendency, it says, has been attributed to the infiltration of Somalis through the porous Kenya-Somalia border. It further explains that the al-Shabaab is said to have established cells in Kenya especially at the Coast and the Northern Frontier District (NFD) region where it is recruiting and training Kenyans, some of whom are known to be engaged in the war in Somalia.

The Bulletin concludes that to Kenya, this recent developments present yet a new security puzzle. It means dealing not only with international terrorism that has ever been so imminent but also taming a budding domestic breed of terrorism. The LPI believes that resolving this new twist to the security question in the country will require a multifaceted approach ranging from eliminating the threat that Somalia; and addressing the grievances the Kenyan Muslim community who are often a neglected lot; while adapting a comprehensive anti-terrorism policy aimed at both thwarting the global terror threats and pulling the plug on the growth of home-grown terrorism.

Examining these facts about Islamic radicalisation makes it inevitable for journalists covering terrorism and religious conflict to specialise in this vital areas, so that when they cover events based on these developments, they are able to professionally present every aspect of the changing circumstances including the al-Shabaab’s strategy of radicalisation.

In an article in the October 2012 issue of the CTC Sentinel, a magazine published by the Combating Terrorism Centre at West Point which, a US military academy in New York, Christopher Anzalone, a PhD student in the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, says since 2007, the Somali militant group al-Shabaab has recruited hundreds of foreign fighters.

Titled ‘Kenya’s Muslim Youth Centre and al-Shabaab’s East African Recruitment’, the article is published in Volume 5, Issue 10 of the magazine which is a monthly, independent publication that leverages the Centre’s global network of scholars and practitioners to understand and confront contemporary threats posed by terrorism and other forms of political violence.

According to Anzalone, al-Shabaab has monopolised media attention despite the likelihood that the group’s heaviest foreign fighter recruitment has been in East Africa. The scholar argues that the bulk of non-Somali foreign fighters probably come from East African countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Sudan and were recruited by al-Shabaab’s regional allies such as Kenya’s Muslim Youth Centre (MYC). To him, encouraging East African Muslims to join al-Shabaab has become a priority for the movement’s media department, the Al-Kataib Media Foundation.

Anzalone, who is also an adjunct research fellow at the Ali Vural Ak Centre for Global Islamic Studies at George Mason University, believes the focus on regional foreign fighter recruitment makes logistical sense since it is easier to facilitate recruits’ travel regionally compared to the requirements of recruitment in places further afield such as North America and Western
Europe. He also observes that the large East African Muslim communities, particularly the growing number of alienated and disaffected youth, also provide al-Shabaab with promising recruitment pools.

**Al-Shabaab’s use of Kiswahili**

Maybe one of the most useful finding of Anzalone’s research is the discovery that al-Shabaab’s use of Swahili and the featuring of Swahili-speakers in its media productions are indicative of the insurgent movement’s desire to attract more recruits from East Africa, where Swahili, the language of an estimated 70 million people, is widely spoken. Realising that Swahili, a Bantu language, is a lingua franca in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and parts of Somalia the scholar believes that al-Shabaab, which has long recruited from among a wide array of Somali clans, particularly the less politically powerful, has also reportedly recruited from among Somalia’s minority Bantu communities.

To Anzalone, the al-Shabaab’s recruitment drives in East African countries such as Kenya have been greatly aided by the presence of both sympathisers, such as influential religious preachers, and allied organisations, chief among them Kenya’s MYC (Muslim Youth Centre). Explaining the origin of MYC, the scholar reveals that the organisation was first known as the Pumwani Muslim Youth. The MYC was formally founded in 2008 in the Majengo district of Nairobi as an informal advocacy group for Kenyan Muslims.

His research has shown that it was initially dedicated to highlighting the social and economic grievances of lower class Kenyan Muslim youth who became disillusioned with what they perceived as anti-Muslim discrimination in the country. He explains that the MYC later established branches in other Kenyan cities including the southern port city of Mombasa and Garissa, a city in the country’s North Eastern Province bordering Somalia.

Anzalone is credited with being among the first scholars to unearth the fact that the MYC’s ideology was heavily influenced by Aboud Rogo who, according to the finding of his research, was not only an open supporter of al-Shabaab but was also hosted by the terrorist organisation for six months in Somalia prior to 2010. This is extremely important information which journalists in Mombasa writing about Rogo missed. Exposing this fact about Rogo would have contextualised the reality about the terrorist who was revered as a great Islamic leader by his supporters.

Another scholar who has done very impressive studies of the radicalisation of Kenyans by the al-Shabaab terrorist organisation is Irit Back, a faculty member at Moshe Dayan Centre for Middle Eastern and African Studies at the Tel Aviv University. In an article published in Volume 7, Number 19 of 8 October 2013 issue of the Tel Aviv Notes which is the Centre’s bi-monthly analytical update on current affairs and regional developments in the Middle East, she says although Kenya’s Muslims constitute only about 10 percent of Kenya’s total population, their geographical distribution, combined with a rise in religious militancy, create a sense of alarm, and stoke inter-religious tensions, particularly in Garissa County in North-East Kenya and in Nairobi (such as the activities of the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC) that was identified by the UN Monitoring Group on Eritrea and Somalia as the recruiting, fundraising, and training arm of al-Shabaab in Kenya).

Yet another scholar who has done some research on radicalisation of the people by the al-Shabaab is Daniel Agbiboa, a DPhil Candidate and holder of the Queen Elizabeth House (QEH) Doctoral Scholarship in the Oxford Department of International Development, University of
Oxford, UK. In an article published in *The Journal of Terrorism Research* which is the official organ of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at the University of St. Andrews in the UK, he explores the evolution and transformation of Somalia’s al-Shabaab.

Titled ‘Terrorism without Borders: Somalia’s al-Shabaab and the global jihad network’, the article is to be found in the Journal’s Volume 5, Special Issue Number which was published in February 2014 where Agbiboa argues that al-Shabaab’s Westgate attack should be understood in the light of the group’s deepening ties with al-Qaeda which has radically altered the group’s ideology and operational strategy.

According to him it is clear that al-Shabaab’s continued terrorist activity is not detached from that of other jihadist groups in Africa – including Boko Haram, Ansaru, and Al-Qaeda’s North African wing – and beyond. Recalling that in 2012 the US military officials warned that these jihadist outfits were increasingly joining forces to coordinate and make more sophisticated their violent attacks the scholar concluded that the military crackdowns on these groups in recent years – the Nigerian military on Boko Haram; the French attack on al-Qaeda affiliates in Mali; the Ethiopian and AU routing of Al-Shabaab from Somalia – have been incendiary and counterproductive, failing to stamp out Islamist terrorism.

Agbiboa maintains that the processes of globalisation have facilitated the spread of terrorism that extends across and beyond national borders – as the recent Westgate attack demonstrates – blurring the distinction between domestic and transnational terrorism. This, according to him, holds at least two significant implications for how we think about and prepare responses to terrorist groups like al-Shabaab. One implication is the urgent need to better understand their power, command and control relationships with the global jihad network. He concludes that another implication is the need for countries fighting terror, like Somalia, to be assisted in strengthening their intelligence and civilian institutions, promoting the rule of law, and addressing the underlying existential and ideological conditions that radicalises Islamist groups and fuel terrorism without borders. Nothing could actualise Agbiboa’s suggestion more than proper training of journalists on how to cover terrorism and especially the aspect of investigative journalism that goes with it.

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