

EVOLUTION OF TERROR ATTACKS AND RESPONSE BY KENYA SECURITY FORCES FROM 1998 TO 2020

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Accepted: March 1, 2024

ABSTRACT

Over the last two decades, the manner in which terrorists have carried attacks in Kenya and beyond has evidently evolved. However, response by our security forces seems to have not evolved to match the ever-changing modus operandi of the terrorists. The attacks have evolved from simple bomb attacks, use of heavy mass bombs, missiles, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attacks (MTFAs), and many other forms. The main objective of the study was to examine evolution of terrorism attacks and response by the Kenyan Security Forces. The specific objectives were to investigate changes in the nature of terror attacks in Kenya from 1998 to the present, to evaluate the responses by Kenya security forces from 1998 to the present and to establish alternative methods of response during terror attacks. The study employs a descriptive, quantitative and qualitative research design. The goal was to collect data from various sources in order to gain a deeper understanding of their opinions, perspectives and attitudes in regard to the terror attacks in Kenya and how they have been responded to. The study's target population was the Kenyan security agents. Structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to acquire qualitative data, while questionnaires were used to obtain numerical data. The study found that there were indeed tremendous changes in the nature of terror attacks since 1998. These changes ranged from the weapons used to the effectiveness of measures put in place after terror attacks. The study also found that various actions had been taken by the Kenya security forces in response to terror attacks since the 1998 US embassy bombing. These included enhanced communication and coordination during terror attacks, efficiency in responding to attacks, intelligence gathering and various counter terrorism strategies. The study further found alternative methods of response including the Introduction of anti-terror unit on standby in high-risk areas, improving multi-agency communication and coordination and the incorporation of technology in terror attacks. The study thus concluded that the Kenyan government can work towards a peaceful future by learning from the past and building on the successes and failures of previous efforts. The study recommended that the Kenyan security forces should set up counter-terrorism policies which would help to curb terrorism. Other recommendations from the study included; enhancing international cooperation, improving multi-agency communication and coordination, and community engagement.

Key Words: Terror Attacks, Security Strategies, Kenya Security Forces, Counter Terrorism Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, terrorism has claimed an average of 21000 lives annually (Wilson, 2021). Terrorism started way before the 9/11 attacks in the USA. It is an old-age phenomenon, but it now has new sociological and technological elements (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2020). Across all regions of the world, the terrorists are inventing new methods of attacks each time they want to strike.

The September 11 Attacks: Al-Qaeda, an extremist Islamic organization, launched four coordinated assaults on the United States on September 11, 2001. The attack claimed 2996 lives. The United States was caught unawares and this can be attributed to intelligence failure. Maas (2019) reiterates that in the aftermath of 9/11, everyone from the elected officials to security experts and even ordinarily citizens had one question in mind; how did this happen to a country with such an enormous, modern and expensive military and intelligence resources. The “9/11 Commission Report”, 2004, largely hipped the blame on the intelligence community which the report said failed to “Connect the Dots”. What this meant, according to Maas (2019) was that in the years and month towards the 9/11 attacks, there were several indicators of a possible attacks, (pieces of a puzzle) no one in the U.S. government was able to predict the attack by making the necessary connections quickly enough. So, the failure by the intelligence community to foresee the attack was the largest undoing of the security response to the 9/11 attacks.

7th July 2005 London bombings: In a coordinated series of four suicide bombs on July 7, 2005, Islamic terrorists struck London's public transportation system, primarily targeting morning rush-hour commuters. The targets were 3 London underground trains and a bus in central London, out of which 56 were killed including the suicide bombers. In the aftermath of bombings massive shakeup of the security services followed. According to Ewen MacAskill et al of the Guardian, 2015, the London bombings came as a shock to security services pointing again to intelligence failure. But what was more evident in the investigations that followed was lack of cooperation between the police and the intelligence agencies such as the mI5, MI6 and the GCHQ. It there followed that one of the biggest reforms undertaken was to breakdown the long-standing barriers between the security agents. Cooperation and sharing of intelligence information ensued. As a result, and as Chris Mack Murdo (who served as the Foreign Office senior counter-terrorism specialist from 2005 to 2014) remarked when asked why security agencies were successful in battling terrorism in the UK, “...this was largely due to changes in working practices between the police, security and intelligence agencies...”. It is thus evident that the security forces in England realized their mistakes and acted upon them and that’s why there have very few cases of terrorist attacks after the London bombings.

May 2014 Urumqi Attack – China: In Urumqi, the capital of China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous province, two Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) containing five attackers drove into a bustling street market early on May 22, 2014. Up to a dozen explosives were thrown at consumers from the SUVs' windows by the on-board attackers. The SUVs then plowed with the shoppers, exploded, and 43 people were killed, including 4 of the attackers, and more than 90 were injured. Prior to the bombs in May, the area had a more turbulent year. Uyghurs' concerns about the Han Chinese population growth in the area and the restrictions placed on their religion and culture, which they believed were being interfered with, served as the inspiration for the attacks.

2010 Kampala Bombings: Al-Shabaab carried out suicide bombings on July 11, 2010, targeting spectators of the 2010 FIFA World Cup finals at two places in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, in retaliation for Ugandan support of Amisom, which resulted in 74 fatalities and 85 injuries. This again points to intelligence failure by the Ugandan security agencies. Having pledged to support the fight against terrorism in the horn of Africa, and actually sending its troops to Somalia, they security agents knew that retaliatory attacks back at home were very likely and should have put in measures to prevent such attacks. Even after that, more attacks have happened in the country, pointing to a serious lapse in security that lets terror cells thrive in Uganda (Chasteen, 2021). For instance, the police failed to stop 3 terror attacks in between October and November 2021 that killed four people in Kampala.

Kenya has also not been spared from terror attacks and has experienced its fair share of attacks. The major notable ones are;

- The 1998 US Embassy Bombing
- 2002 Kikambala Hotel bombing and Arkia Airlines missile attack, Mombasa
- 2012 series of al-Shabaab attacks following Operation Linda Nchi
- 2013 Westgate Mall shooting
- 2014 Mpeketoni Attacks
- 2015 Garissa University college attack
- 2019 Nairobi Dusitd2 complex attack
- 2020 Camp Simba attack

The attacks in Kenya can be attributed to intelligence failures, lack of enough training, lack of coordination and cooperation among the responders and lack of sophisticated weapons to match those of terrorists. Some of these failures are similar to those observed during 9/11 attacks, 2004 Madrid bombing, 2005 London Bombings and other attacks around the world. In particular failure to heed intelligence warnings greatly contributed to the failure to effectively respond to various attacks in Kenya. Mohammed Yussuf recounted that there was a leaked intelligence file which indicated that top leadership had been warned of an impending attack (Aljazeera, 2013). One intelligence report dated September 21, 2012 even named Westgate mall as a likely target, along with the Holy Family Basilica (Church). Mohammed Yussuf continued to reiterate that even the then senator of Nairobi County had received information from two women about a plot to attack the mall among other buildings. However, all these leaders who were briefed on the threat never acted on it to try and pre-empt the attack.

During Garissa university attack rescue operation an improvement coordination and cooperation between security agencies. However, the cooperation we see is coupled with indecisiveness. During this attack on 2nd April 2015, the authorities remained indecisive as who to respond first, and as a result, it was almost an hour later when the Kenya Defense Forces troops were deployed at the University. Intelligence failures were also a factor ineffective response by the Kenya Security agents. According to a report by a committee of UNSC, S/2015/801, multiple intelligence sources had warned Kenyan authorities that Al-Shabaab had been noted in Garissa town almost two weeks before the attack. Further, the principle of the college had written severally to local government security agencies about the inadequate security arrangements at the college but his concerns were never taken seriously (Stephen et al., 2018).

The choice of targets by the terrorists, the level of planning involved, the sophistication of weapons used and even the execution of the terror attacks is different from yester-years. This is to say terrorism is evolving as each subsequent attack portrays improvement in the methods of attack and weapons used. On the contrary, east the security agents seem not to be alive to this ever-changing threat. Their response does not seem evolve at the same pace with evolution of the threat. Perhaps the most remembered terror event in Kenya (save for 1998 US Embassy bombing), was the Westgate mall attack in Nairobi on Saturday, 21 September 2013, by four masked gunmen. The attack claimed 71 lives and approximately 200 were wounded. The attack was of a kind commonly referred to as Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack (MTFA). But the security agents' response to the attack was very ineffective and poor to say the least. They arrived late, without proper gear and equipment to tackle the situation, there was no cooperation and coordination which resulted to a lot of confusion. This delayed the response resulting to further loss of lives and more injuries. Subsequent attacks saw similar poor response patterns which has raised a lot of questions on the capability of our security agents to respond to live terror situations. This will be the focus of this study, aiming to interrogate the government's response to the ever-evolving terror attacks over the years, its failures and successes and how the failures can be mitigated, and successes emulated in preventing and responding to future attacks.

Statement of the Problem

Terror attacks in Kenya have evolved from simple bomb attacks, use of heavy mass bombs, missiles, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attacks (MTFAs), and many other forms of attacks. The manner in which these acts of terror have been carried out, since the earlier ones to the latest, shows an evolution of modus operandi. Unfortunately, the same evolution has not been evident on the response by the Kenyan security forces. In most (if not all) of these attacks, the response by the Kenyan security forces has always left a lot to be desired. While we have witnessed the terrorist act with improved methods and weaponry in each subsequent attack, a clear and concise response to match the magnitude of each attack has not been seen on the side of the security forces. This has elicited questions in the minds of both leaders and citizens as to the effectiveness of our response to live terror attack strategies. A progressive society continually learns from mistakes done in the past until it develops a strategy that, even if not 100% effective, can to a greater extent be relied upon to ensure the safety of a country. However, not many Kenyans have confidence in security force's ability to protect them in the event of a terror attack. In every major terror incidence in Kenya, there is a pattern of poor response that has been observed. The response team always arrives late, giving terrorists enough time to unleash maximum damage on their targets. For instance, in the Westgate attack on 21 September 2013, the recce team arrived a whole three and a half hours after the first explosion. By then many people had been killed and the terrorist had taken control of the most of the mall. There was also no clear chain of command between the security forces which led to a kind of power struggle between the police and the military. This also gave the terrorists ample time to continue exerting their terror on whoever was on their target list.

The Guardian recounts, the biggest let down in all these attacks perhaps is in intelligence. At almost all incidences, the security forces have been caught unawares, and that's why even the response is always full of confusion. Even in instances where there has been warning by other external intelligence organs, these warnings are not usually heeded. Prior to Garissa University Attack which claimed 148 lives and hundreds injured, Kenya had been warned by the British government about an impending major attack, and event went ahead to issue travel advisories to its citizens on Kenya not being safe. These warnings were however not heeded. Another challenge observed with security forces is the response itself. The manner in which the security forces, especially initial responders came poised could clearly tell that more training needs to be conducted on the actual response. Some police could also be seen in the scene without proper protective gears such helmets and body armors thus exposing themselves to more harm. Again, the concept of fighting in Built Up Areas, commonly referred to as FIBUA seems to have not been inculcated well in the security personnel. Mind you more than half of terror acts today are happening in urban areas hence the need to familiarize the security forces with FIBUA concepts. The study therefore seeks to find out why our security forces are not evolving and improving well enough to match the threat and even surpass it. In doing so, the study identifies mistakes being repeated by our response teams in each terror incident and the contributing factors such as intelligence failures, lack of coordination between response teams, lack of quality training on antiterrorism, lack of modern, sophisticated weapons or even lack of key trained personnel be the causal factors.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to examine evolution of terrorism attacks and response by the Kenyan Security Forces. The specific objectives were;

- To investigate changes in the nature of terror attacks in Kenya from 1998 to the present.
- To evaluate the responses by Kenya security forces from 1998 to the present.
- To establish alternative methods of response during terror attacks.

The research premises were;

- The nature of terror attacks in Kenya has been evolving since 1998

- Kenyan security forces response to terror attacks have not been evolving to effectively match the terror threats
- There exist current and effective methods of responding to terror attacks in the world today

LITERATURE REVIEW

Changes in the nature of terror activities

The following chronology of terror attacks in Kenya paints a picture of the evolution of terrorist's modus operandi. On 1 March 1975, 3 bombs exploded on a crowded bus at OTC bus-stop in Nairobi in Kenya, killing at least 27 and injuring nearly a hundred (New York Times, 1975). No one claimed responsibility for these attacks police were left to speculate on the identities and motives behind the attack. On 17 January 1980, an incendiary bomb was detonated by Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) aboard a Dunmurry passenger train bound for Belfast. The bomb set the train on fire killed 3 and injured 5. On 31 December 1980, a bomb exploded in the Fairmont the Norfolk Hotel in Nairobi, killing 20 people, injuring 87 and partially destroyed the Hotel, (Laing, 2013). The owner of the hotel at the time was a prominent member of the local Jewish community and the bombing was in retaliation for Kenya providing support to Israel during Operation Entebbe. The above presents terror by use simple bombs left in buildings or cars. It suffices to term this as "small scale terror attacks".

On the evening of 11th July 1988, at the City of Poros, Greece, the Cycladic cruise ship was attacked by a Libyan-born Palestinian gunman killing eight tourists before killing himself in a subsequent explosion. At the time of the attack, there were 471 people on board the ship. Four hours before the attack, a car laden with explosives had exploded prematurely on pier, killing two Arab terrorists. This is a shooting kind of terror attack combined with a car bomb.

On 7th March 1988, three Arab militants hijacked a civilian bus carrying workers to the Negev Nuclear Research center, took 11 passengers hostage and executed two passengers. Israel elite counter-terrorism unit stormed the bus and killed the 3 hijackers. On 24th Dec 1994, At Houari Boumediene Airport in Algiers, air France Flight 8969 was abducted by the Armed Islamic Group of Algeria. Three passengers were killed by the terrorists, who planned to either blow up the Eiffel tower in Paris or crash the plane into it. The National Gendarmerie Intervention group (GIGN), a counter-terrorist squad of the French National Gendarmerie, boarded the jet when it arrived in Marseille and murdered all four hijackers.

Ethiopian Airlines Flight 961 crashed into the Indian ocean after the hijackers refused to let the plane land and refuel. 125 passengers died and the remaining 50 passengers survived with minor injuries.

This is another one of terrorists' methods of hijacking planes and taking passengers hostage or using the plane as a weapon as was the case in the September 11 attacks in the US.

1998 US Embassy: Almost simultaneously, suicide bombers detonated their explosive-filled trucks outside the embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi on August 7, 1998, between 10:30 and 10:40 a.m. local time. The Nairobi bombing claimed the lives of 213 people, while 11 people died in Dar es Salaam (Bennett et al., 2011). The explosives entailed TNT, ammonium nitrates and stun grenades. Seismological readings analysed after the bombs indicated energy of between 3–17 tons of high explosive material.

In Kenya, most of these attacks have been recorded in the aftermath of Kenya Defence Forces incursion into Somalia in **Operation Linda Nchi** in 2011 that was meant to weaken the Islamic terror group Al-Shabaab that had threatened territorial integrity of the nation. The terror groups vowed to retaliate by attacking Kenyans and their institutions back at home, and sure they did attack. In each of these attacks, the militants devised methods that caught the country's security apparatus. They moved from their traditional targets such security agents and government workers, to attacking congregation in churches detonating grenades at public gatherings and public transport system, attacking college students, and conducting major assaults on shopping

malls (2013 Westgate Mall shooting and 2019 Nairobi DusitD2 complex attack). Such attacks include; 2011 grenade attack in the Mwauras disco in Nairobi, 30th Sept 2012 grenade attack on the Sunday school of St Polycarp's church, 2013 Nairobi bus attack, 2014 Gikomba bombings, 2014 Lamu attacks This again presents a graduation or change of modus operandi from use of high explosives to combining them with Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack (MTFA). Every time the terrorists managed to change tact, keeping the police and other anti-terror agents on a goose chase, with no clue as to where they would attack next. Today they could attack a bus, tomorrow a college and the next day a church. In as much the KDF was prepared for what lay ahead of them in Somalia, the security agents responsible for homeland security, mainly the police were not prepared for the inevitable retaliation by the terror group al-Shabaab.

Response to terror attacks

After the Kenyan troops launched operations inside Somalia to weed out al-Shabaab Militants in Juba land, the terrorists vowed to retaliate. With statistics from all over the world showing that chances of retaliatory attacks are high, the Kenyan internal security agents failed to take precaution. That's why the many attacks that followed caught them unawares. Even after the initial attacks, not much precaution was taken to safeguard the country and citizens against future attacks. That's why al-Shabaab succeeded in each successive attack. On July 1, 2012, two such assaults took place simultaneously in Garissa, Kenya, and targeted churches. There were 17 fatalities and about 50 injuries in this attack. The head of the local police force said that on July 1, 2012, two simultaneous attacks on churches in Garissa were carried out by men wearing balaclavas. There were 17 fatalities and about 50 injuries in this attack.

Perhaps the most remembered terror event in Kenya (save for 1998 US Embassy bombing), was the **Westgate mall attack** in Nairobi on Saturday, 21 September 2013, by four masked gunmen. The attack claimed 71 lives and approximately 200 were wounded. The attack was of a kind commonly referred to as Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attack (MTFA). According to Center for the Protection of National Infrastructure, MTFAs entails; attacking the physical barrier using bladed weapons in order to pass through it. It also involves the use of firearms and detonating explosive devices (improvised or plastic explosive) to attack the physical barrier followed by a forcible entrance attempt using manually driven tools.

Then came Garissa university college attack on the morning of 2nd April 2015. On this fateful morning masked gunmen, heavily armed and strapped with explosives stormed the university firing indiscriminately on students and staff (BBC, 2015). The attack, the deadliest yet by al-Shabaab, claimed 147 lives. As students recounted the horrible incident, it emerged that the university was only guarded by 2 police officers (Honan, 2015). This contributed to the easy access the terrorists had to the university.

Another major attack was **The DusitD-2 mall attack** which occurred on 15 Jan 2019 at the 14 Riverside Drive complex in Westland, Nairobi. The attack style was almost similar to that previously witnessed in Westgate in 2015, only this time, the response seemed a little bit coordinated. To battle the extremists, the Kenyan police force's General Service Unit brought in the Recce Company, its anti-terrorism unit. But the response was critiqued as having taken too long. While it had been thought that the attack had been neutralized after a few hours, gunfire and explosions were again heard early on 16 January. It seemed the attackers had fooled the security forces; they had hidden somewhere within the hotel to deceive them and laid low for hours. This cast doubt again on the responder's ability to fully search and clear a building in such a scenario. Again, just like in Westgate mall attack, the terrorists managed to escape, as none was captured or killed at the scene.

Alternative methods of response to terror attacks

According to University Police; Active Shooter Response and Procedures, security officers responding to live/active terror incidents should be well trained and especially be well versed with a procedure called 'Rapid Deployment', The procedure is anchored on proceeding immediately to the area in which the shots were last heard; their purpose is to stop the shooting as quickly as possible. The officer to be in teams of 4 to 5, and

armed with modern automatic rifles, shotguns and handguns. They should also have pepper sprays and tear gas to control the situation. They should be dressed in normal patrol uniforms with helmets, bullet proof vests or body armours and other tactical equipment.

International Association of Chiefs of Police has a model policy which stipulates the following procedure for responding to an active shooter situation;

- **Situational Assessment;** this entails confirmation by dispatched responders that an active shooter situation exists, through communication with persons confined or exiting the target location, sounds or reports of gunfire, screams, etc. The responders should also have crucial information such the number of terrorists involved, kind of weapons they are using, which part of the target location they are in at any particular minute, no of injured persons, estimates of persons still held hostage or confined. This information can be obtained through persons who have managed to escape the target location, those still inside but in a safe location where they can communicate, or through CCTV cameras.
- **Individual officer intervention;** An officer might occasionally be nearby when a terror attack takes place, for example, next to a mall or a school. In such a situation, whether on duty or off, in a uniform or not, he or she may decide that prompt action is required to neutralize the danger. Whatever choice is made is dependent on the officer's ability to intervene effectively in light of his or her training. Thus, such modules must be included in anti-terror training.
- **Contact Officer or Response Team;** The task of the contact officer or team is to identify or neutralize the threat, make the area secure, aid in screening and orderly evacuation, and find anyone who are still hiding. Additionally, they find any suspects still hiding among the people who were rescued.
- **Rescue task Force (RTFs);** The In Charge (IC) should make sure that RTFs are created as soon as a contact officer or team is deployed and as additional officers and resources are brought in to assist with victim evacuation and questioning.
- **Unified command;** This should be established as soon as possible, among other things, by setting up a chain of command for all the participating agencies, organizing and establishing an uniform interagency communication, and setting up an inner and outer cordon to prevent entrance to and egress from the area of risk.
- **Community Notification;** Public Information Officer or other designated officer/individual shall be responsible for ensuring appropriate and vetted information is disseminated to the public and in a timely manner. There should never be two centers of communication to the public as this will create room for misinformation and rumours.
- **Debriefing;** The concerned agency shall undertake a debriefing of the incident's victims and key personnel as soon as possible after the incident. The debriefing will highlight areas that could use improvement and determine whether adjustments to operational procedures, rules, or training are necessary.
- **Training;** All security and civilian staff members should get active shooter training, which should include simulation exercises held in educational institutions and other settings as well as, where necessary, partnerships with first aid organizations.

Theoretical Framework

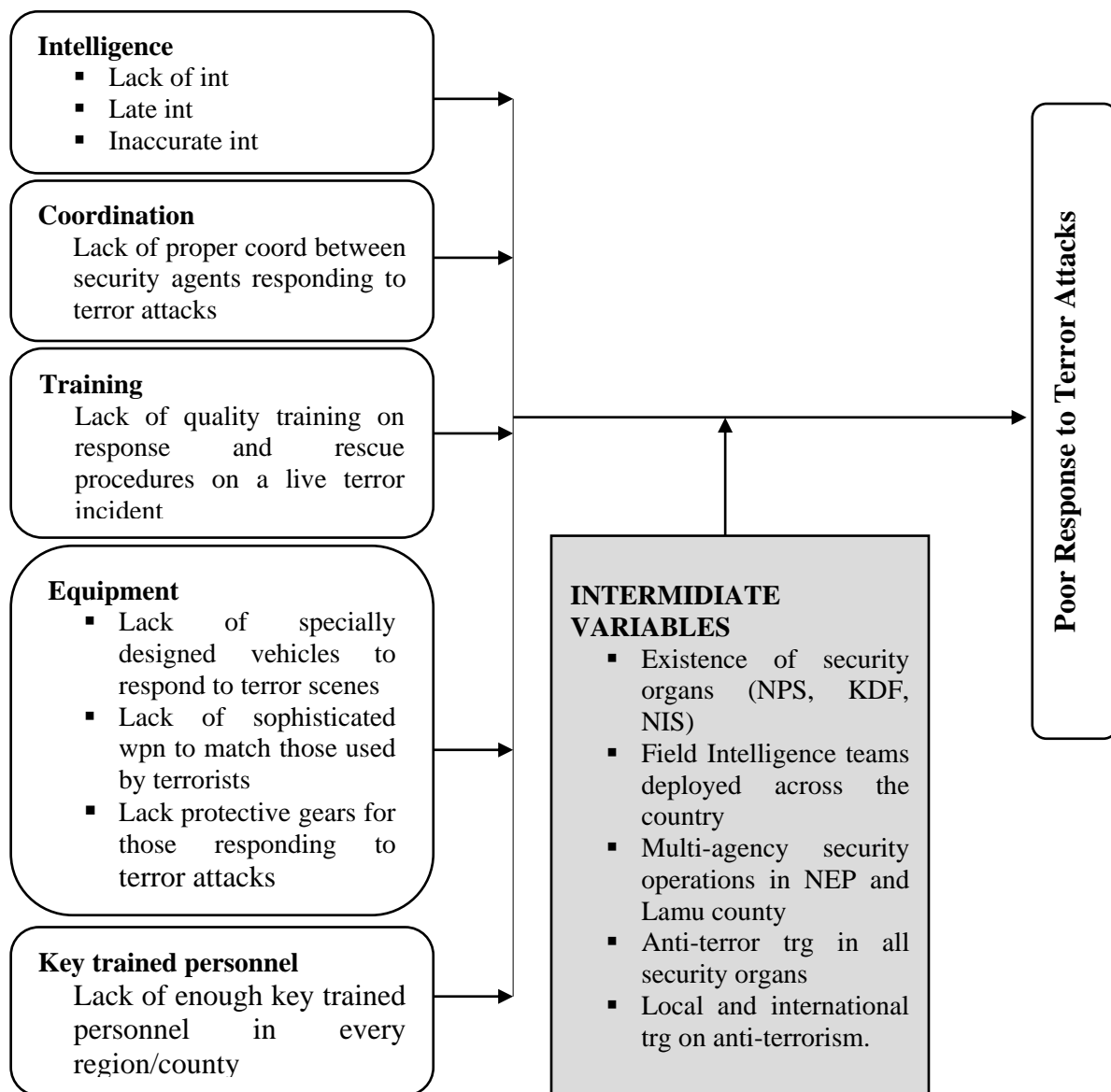
Behaviorism learning theory

Advanced by J.B. Watson and B.F. Skinner, the central tenet of behaviorism theory is that all actions are taught through interactions with the outside world. In contrast to intrinsic or hereditary elements, which have little effect on behavior, it claims that behaviors are learnt from the environment. As people interact with the environment, as they go about their day-to-day activities, they are bound to make mistakes. These errors provide an opportunity for learning (Müller et al., 2020). Its thus obvious that errors are part of life, and we as humans are bound to make mistakes. The challenge comes in whether we seize the opportunity presented by

errors we make to learn. In other words, are we learning from our mistakes? In furtherance of the concepts of learning from errors, Goldberg et al., (2017), reiterates that, when individuals are tested, they are likely to generate mediational retrieval cues, that is, they are likely to remember the challenge they faced, the mistakes they did in tackling it, and to tackle such challenge differently in future.

It is on the above concepts that this study is grounded on. Prior to the incursion of KDF into Somalia, our homeland security agents had not encountered major terror incidents like the one experienced in Westgate mall shooting. There were thus bound to be mistakes in response and rescue operation that ensued. These mistakes should have been taken as an opportunity to learn and be more prepared in future. But as this study will reveal, based on how the attacks that followed were responded to, very little seemed to have been learnt. The theory contributes to the study by providing a platform for analyzing the responses by security forces in the past attacks and comparing them with recent ones.

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study employed both descriptive and qualitative research design. The goal was to collect data from various sources in order to gain a deeper understanding of their opinions, perspectives and attitudes in regard to the terror attacks in Kenya and how they had been responded to. The study mainly concentrated on Nairobi region. The study's target population was 200,000 Kenyan security personnel from the KDF, NPS, NIS and the private security agents. This study employed a combination of clustered sampling and purposive sampling. The population being studied was that of persons employed in the Kenyan security industry, mainly the KDF, national police service, the National Intelligence Service, the anti-terror police units and also private security officers. The sample size was 399 respondents. The study used questionnaires to obtain and collect numerical data and structured interviews and open-ended questions to collect qualitative data. Other instruments that were used include; observation and document review. *Test-retest* type of reliability will be used. The study employed the following techniques for data collection; interviews, questionnaires, documents and records and focus groups. In this study, the collected raw data underwent the following data analysis process; data processing, data cleansing and exploratory data analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response rate

The calculated sample size was 399. Factors such as illness, being off duty or on leave resulted in a non-response rate of 20% . A total of 319 (80%) participated in the study. A response rate of 50% and above is considered adequate by Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). From this number, a total of 19 key informants were interviewed and the breakdown was 5 senior officials from the KDF, 5 from the NPS, 4 from the NIS, 3 from anti-terror police units and 2 from private security firms, all of whom have previously dealt with terror scenes.

Changes in the nature of terror attacks

One of the objectives of the study was to investigate the changes in the nature of terror attacks in Kenya from 1998 to the present. The participants were asked to compare terror attacks of yester years and those of today in a series of questions in a Likert scale. Participants were asked to tick to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement; 'There have been tremendous changes in the nature of terror attacks in Kenya since 1998 to the present'. 50% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement. 29% agreed, 15% were neutral, 3% disagreed and another 3% strongly disagreed. A total of 79% agreed, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Changes in the nature of terror attacks

	N=319				
Organization	SA	A	N	D	SD
KDF	70	20	10	0	0
NPS	15	25	15	5	10
NIS	33	17	10	0	0
ATPU	20	20	10	0	0
PRIVATE SECTOR	20	10	3	6	0
TOTAL	158	92	48	11	10
%	50	29	15	3	3

Kenya has experienced various terror attacks over the years as shown in Table 1. The table by Agwanda et.al, (2021) elaborates the nature of these attacks over the years since 1998. While most participants agree that that the nature of terror attacks has changed over the years, the table tends to disagree with this. The only deferring aspect is their wide range of weapons ranging from guns, suicide vests, hand grenades, light bombs, IEDs and other explosives.

Table 2: Nature of terror attacks since 1998

When	Where	What	Why	How	Who
7 Aug 1998	US Embassy	250 killed & 5000 injured; nearby buildings destroyed	Attack on US Interests	Truck Bomb	Al-Qaeda
28 Nov 2002	Paradise hotel & Israel passenger plane, Mombasa	13 people killed, 80 injured; Attack on plane missed	Attack on Israel interests	2 Missiles targeted the plane	Al-Qaeda affiliated; 'the Army of Palestine'
Sept 2011	Kiwaiyu Safari Village	Attack on British Couple, killing man and abducting woman	Targeted foreigners for money	Guns	Armed Somali men
24 Oct 2011	Mwaura's Night Club Nairobi	14 people injured	Deployment of Kenyan forces in Somalia	Hand grenade	Al-Shaabab
27 Oct 2011	Mandera	Ministry of Education Officials attacked; 4 died	Deployment of Kenyan forces in Somalia	Guns and explosives	Al-Shaabab
5 Nov 2011	Pentecostal Church Garissa	2 people killed	Deployment of Kenyan forces in Somalia	Grenade attack	Al-Shaabab
21 Sept 2013	Westgate Mall Nairobi	67 people killed, 175 injured	AMISOM retaliation	Guns and grenades	Al-Shaabab
15 – 16 June 2014	Mpeketoni	At least 65 people in multiple attacks	Alleged execution of Muslim clerics	Explosives, machetes and guns	Al-Shaabab
22 Nov 2014	Mandera	Nairobi bound bus attacked, 28 people killed	Religious Intolerance	Guns and explosives	Al-Shaabab
2 Dec 2014	Mandera	36 Quarry workers killed	Retaliation of Kenya Military in Somalia		Al-Shaabab
2 Apr 2015	Garissa University College	148 killed, 79 injured	Revenge attack against Kenya	Guns and explosives	Al-Shaabab
15-16 Jan 2019	Dusit D2 Hotel, Nairobi	21 killed and 28 injured	Retaliation against KDF in Somalia	Guns, suicide vests and grenades	Al-Shaabab
16 Feb 2019	Primary school, Wajir	3 Christian teachers killed	Religious fundamentalism	Guns	Al-Shaabab
15 Apr 2019	Mandera town	1 police officer killed; 2 Cuban doctors abducted	Scuttle government operations	Firearms	Al-Shaabab
15 Jun 2019	Wajir	11 police officers killed; 1 injured and 3 police reservists abducted	Undercut security operations	IED	Al-Shaabab
26 Oct 2019	Garissa	11 GSU officers killed	Hamper security operations in the region	IED	Al-Shaabab
6 Dec 2019	Wajir	6 police officers and 4 civilians killed	Instill civilian fear	Guns	Al-Shaabab
5 Jan 2020	Manda bay	3 Americans killed; 2 contractors injured	Response to US moving embassy in Israel to Jerusalem	Indirect and small-arms fire	Al-Shaabab
7 Jan 2020	Saretho village in Garissa	4 children killed; 3 wounded	Target telecommunication infrastructure	Firearm attack/light bombs	Al-Shaabab

Agwanda et.al, (2021)

Comparison of the 2013 Westgate attack and other terror attacks

On comparing the 2013 Westgate attack and other terror attacks, 85 (27%) participants strongly agreed to the statement ‘The 2013 Westgate attack was different as compared to other attacks in the past’. 14% agreed, 11% were neutral, 21% disagreed and 27% strongly disagreed.

Table 3: Comparison of the 2013 Westgate attack and other terror attacks

Organization	N=319				
	SA	A	N	D	SD
KDF	15	15	15	25	30
NPS	20	10	5	20	15
NIS	15	10	5	15	15
ATPU	25	5	2	3	15
PRIVATE SECTOR	10	5	9	5	10
TOTAL	85	45	36	68	85
%	27	14	11	21	27

The 2013 Westgate attack was a mass shooting and hostage crisis that lasted four days, starting from September 21st. The attackers, believed to be from the Somali-based Islamist extremist group Al-Shabaab, targeted the Westgate Mall, killing 67 people and injuring more than 175 others. One key informant was quoted, ‘Compared to other terrorist attacks in Kenya, the Westgate attack was one of the deadliest in the country’s history’. In recent years, Kenya has also faced a number of smaller-scale attacks and bombings carried out by Al-Shabaab or its affiliates. Overall, the Westgate attack and other terrorist attacks in Kenya highlight the threat posed by extremist groups and the need for continued efforts to combat terrorism.

There were real differences between the Westgate attack and other terror attacks in the country. The attack was pulled by a mixture of international and local terrorists, which is not the case for most of the other attacks in the Kenya. The 2019 Dusit D2 attack for instance, was undertaken by mainly non-Somali native Kenyans. There is also a huge difference in terms of response between the Westgate attack and other recent attacks in the country. Maluki (2019) argued that security agencies learnt major lessons from the 2013 Westgate attack. This can be attested by the success made in the Dusit D2 attack. The speed at which security personnel responded to the attack prevented what could have been one of the most severe attacks in the country.

Response by Kenya Security Forces from 1998 to the Present

Response effectiveness by Kenya Security Forces

Key informants were asked whether response by Kenya security personnel during terror attacks had improved over the years. Most of the key informants suggested that indeed response during terror attacks had improved. One of the key informants mentioned how the 2019 terror attack at Dusit D2 hotel was well handled as compared to previous attacks in the country. The informant was quoted, ‘*The attack could have turned out to be one of the worst in Africa’s modern history were it not for the fact that the country’s security team sprung into action fast*’. Respondents of the questionnaires were also asked the same question, 49% strongly agreed that response to terror attacks had improved over the years, 36% agreed, 9% were not sure, 5% disagreed and only 1% strongly disagreed. This is presented on Table 4.

Table 4: Response effectiveness by Kenya Security Forces

Organization	N=319				
	SA	A	N	D	SD
KDF	53	30	10	5	2
NPS	30	27	12	1	0
NIS	27	33	0	0	0
ATPU	20	15	5	10	0
PRIVATE SECTOR	25	11	3	0	0
TOTAL	155	116	30	16	2
%	49	36	9	5	1

The response by Kenyan security forces during terrorist attacks has varied in effectiveness. In some cases, security forces have successfully contained and neutralized threats, resulting in minimal casualties and damage. For instance, during the 2013 Westgate mall attack in Nairobi, nearby regular police responded quickly and managed to secure the building and rescue some hostages. However, the operation was criticized for its heavy-handedness and lack of coordination. According to Daniel Howden of the Guardian, 4th Oct 2013 there was no proper police cordon and no screening process for survivors coming out of the mall. He also added that intelligence officials believed that at least two attackers were able to escape in the confusion. Hundreds of people remained trapped inside the building. It was three and a half hours later when what seemed like a properly organized response team – the recce team - arrived.

A study on ‘Kenya security forces performed better but still, there are gaps’ by Patrick Maluki compared the recent Dusit D2 Hotel attack with past attacks in the country. The study showed that the fast response by security agencies prevented what could have been one of the worst attacks in Africa. The quick response by security personnel implied that Kenya had significantly improved her counter terrorism strategies. At the time, the country had set up an anti-terrorism police unit whose role was to detect and neutralize terror threats. Moreover, after previous attacks like the Westgate terror attack, there was an increase in civilian knowledge on how to respond during such attacks which made the rescue operation relatively seamless. Precise and quick response, as well as proper inter-agency cooperation contributed to the operation being a success. The fact that there were casualties however, shows that gaps still existed.

Preparedness of security personnel during terror attacks

Participants were asked whether Kenya’s security forces have always been prepared to respond to terror attacks. Majority of the respondents disagreed (59%), 20% were not sure, 13% agreed, and 8% strongly agreed (Table 5.). Key informants were also asked this question and most of them disagreed, implying that security agencies in the country are never prepared during terror attacks. One informant was quoted, ‘*For most of the terror attacks I have responded to, security agencies have never been fully prepared, except for the recent Dusit D2 attack which was contained fast*’.

Table 5: Preparedness of security personnel during terror attacks

Organization	N=319				
	SA	A	N	D	SD
KDF	5	10	20	40	25
NPS	6	8	12	20	24
NIS	7	8	10	15	20
ATPU	5	7	13	15	10
PRIVATE SECTOR	4	8	8	9	10
TOTAL	27	41	63	99	89
%	8	13	20	31	28

After the Westgate attack, Kenya put in place various strategies to enhance international cooperation in communication and information exchange in an effort to curb terrorism. For instance, the ratification of the Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement (CMAA) with the US government created a legal framework to enable exchange of evidence and information on terrorism. This improved cooperation in the prevention, detection and investigation of terror related offences between the two countries. Extra funding was also available under this agreement. It was under this context that Dusit D2 took place, finding Kenya well prepared to respond to terror attacks in the country.

The preparedness of security personnel during terror attacks in Kenya is a conflicting issue. On one hand, security personnel in Kenya have received specialized training in counterterrorism and emergency response, and they have demonstrated bravery and competence in some instances. On the other hand, there have been instances where security personnel have been criticized for their lack of preparedness, including poor

coordination and a slow response time like during the 2013 Westgate attack. One key informant was quoted, ‘The military wasn’t really prepared to handle an attack like the Westgate one, they even brought an armored vehicle, which is not suited for such an attack’. Moreover, there have been reports of corruption and human rights violations by security forces during counterterrorism operations particularly during the 2013 Westgate attack, which have raised concerns about the preparedness and accountability of security personnel.

Alternative methods of response during terror attacks

Modern automatic rifles and medium guns for future terror attacks

Participants were asked whether modern automatic rifles and medium guns would be suitable for responding to terror attacks today. 65% of the participants said yes, 23% said no while 12% were not sure as shown in Table 6. One key informant from the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) was quoted, ‘Terrorists today are equipped with modern weapons unlike in the past when they relied on improvised ones. It would not make sense responding to attacks with inferior weapons, when the terrorists have modern and sophisticated ones.’ Another key informant was quoted, ‘To enhance our abilities to respond to major security incidents or terrorism attacks, we are currently scoping the potential use of a limited allocation of long-arm firearms to better support frontline police’.

Some of the benefits of using modern automatic rifles and medium guns for responding to future terror attacks according to Caves & Carus (2021) include;

- Quick response time: Automatic rifles and medium guns allow for a rapid response to an attack, as they are designed to fire quickly and accurately
- Increased firepower: Modern automatic rifles and medium guns have higher firepower compared to traditional firearms, allowing security forces to effectively neutralize multiple targets
- Enhanced accuracy: With advanced technology and improved design, modern automatic rifles and medium guns can be more accurate in high-stress situations.
- Improved mobility: Modern automatic rifles and medium guns are often lighter and easier to handle, making them more suitable for mobility during operations.
- Greater versatility: Many modern automatic rifles and medium guns come equipped with various attachments, such as scopes or silencers, allowing them to be used in a wider range of scenarios.

Table 6: Use of modern automatic rifles and medium guns for future terror attacks

Organization	Yes	No	Not sure
KDF	63	28	9
NPS	41	18	11
NIS	37	16	7
ATPU	41	7	2
PRIVATE SECTOR	27	4	8
TOTAL	209	73	37
%	65	23	12

These findings are in line with a study on the use of modern technology to counter terrorism by Kumar (2019). The study argues, that with increased technological advancements, there is need for security personnel to advance in the kind of weapons they use as terrorists keep improving too. While modern automatic rifles and medium guns would be deemed suitable for responding to terror attacks today, there is need to keep up with technological trends to ensure that security personnel are equipped with weapons that are in the market. Terrorists have in the past employed low end technology in terror attacks. It is however forecasted that terrorists will sooner or later advance to high end technology for huge acts of terrorism such as nuclear, biological and chemical terror attacks. 3 D printing is already in use to print workable weapons. This makes

the task of security personnel even more complex since they are required to deal with conventional and unconventional terror attacks. While Kenya never experienced such attacks, it is important that security agencies stay on top of such matters, since future terror attacks might not only need modern automatic rifles and medium guns, but also Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered weapons.

Introduction of anti-terror unit on standby in high-risk areas

Participants were asked whether they thought there should be an anti-terror unit on standby in high-risk areas. 98% of the participants said yes, 1% said no and 1% were not sure as shown in Table 7. Key informants who were asked this question agreed that there ought to be anti-terror units on standby to ensure fast response to terror attacks.

Table 7: Introduction of anti-terror unit on standby in high risk areas

Organization	Yes	No	Not sure
KDF	97	3	0
NPS	67	0	3
NIS	60	0	0
ATPU	50	0	0
PRIVATE SECTOR	39	0	0
TOTAL	313	3	3
%	98	1	1

Follow up questions with key informants, revealed that Kenya has anti-terror units in different areas around the country. For instance, the KDF have a team known as Special Forces who are based in Gilgil, Ngong and Kabete, ready for any response. The National Police also have a team called Recce, who are based in Ruiru, Kiambu county and are also always on standby. The Administration Police Service has a Special Operation Group (SOG) who are in charge of pursuing militants at border points. One key informant from the Anti-Terror Police Unit (ATPU) mentioned how the unit had been instrumental in managing relatively recent attacks like the 2013 Westgate and the 2019 DusitD2 terror attacks. While this is the case, there is need for these units in other major towns like Mombasa, Nakuru, Kisumu, Garissa, Eldoret, among others.

These findings are in line with Lusiola (2021) who argues advocates for countries to have an anti-terror unit on standby. Some of the benefits Lusiola (2021) highlights include quick response to threats and attacks, deterrent effect on potential attackers, improved safety and security for citizens, enhanced ability to gather intelligence and prevent attacks, and improved coordination and cooperation between security agencies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From objective one, the study found out that there were indeed tremendous changes in the nature of terror attacks since 1998 as reiterated by most participants (79%), yet in some instances the response by the Government forces to match these changes has not been seen to change. This can be seen in the way the security forces poorly handled the Westgate mall and the Garrissa university college attacks. However, improvements can be seen on the response to 2019 Dusit D2 Complex attack which saw a relatively quick arrival at the scene, and improved communication and coordination between the responders. However, the fact that 22 civilians died and the operation took a whole 20hours to be completed means there is much more that needs to be done especially on the response procedures

From the second objective, the study found out that response by Kenya's security forces had improved over the years, as 85% of the participants affirmed. Even though response and rescue operations in past attacks had been marred by ineffectiveness characterized by poor/lack of intelligence, late arrival to the scene, ineffective communication and coordination amongst others, with time the response improved and this can be seen during the Dusit D2 complex attack.

The third objective was to establish alternative methods of response during terror attacks. On whether modern automatic rifles and medium guns would be suitable for responding to terror attacks today, 65% agreed that indeed modern automatic rifles and medium guns would be effective in responding to terror attacks. The study established that some of the benefits of these weapons include; quick response time, increased firepower, enhanced accuracy, improved mobility and greater versatility.

Based on the findings from the study, the study makes a number of recommendations. These recommendations are in two sets,

- Measures to prevent terror attacks
- Measures so ensure effective response in the event of a terror attack

To begin with, the study recommended enhanced intelligence gathering. To prevent occurrence of terror attacks in Kenya, the government should prioritize the collection and analysis of intelligence on terrorist groups operating within the country. This will help to identify potential threats and enable preemptive measures to be taken to prevent attacks.

The study also recommends capacity building, in that, the government should invest in building the capacity of its security forces to respond to terrorist threats. This might include training in counter-terrorism tactics and fighting in built up areas (FIBUA), equipping security forces with appropriate technology, and improving coordination between different security agencies. Moreover, the study recommends community engagement where the government works with local communities to build trust and cooperation in the fight against terrorism. This might involve creating forums for dialogue, involving community leaders in decision-making processes, and addressing the root causes of radicalization.

The study further recommends international cooperation where the government ought to seek to strengthen its relationships with international partners in the fight against terrorism. This might include sharing intelligence, coordinating efforts to disrupt terrorist financing, and engaging in joint training exercises. Another recommendation from the study is the evaluation of counterterrorism policies that will ensure the government regularly evaluating its counterterrorism policies and initiatives to determine their effectiveness. This will help to identify areas where improvements can be made and ensure that resources are being used in the most efficient and effective way possible.

The government should also address socio-economic challenges, such as poverty and inequality, which can contribute to radicalization and the growth of extremist groups. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that a comprehensive approach to countering terrorism is necessary, one that involves not only security measures but also efforts to address the root causes of extremism. The recommendations put forth in this study are intended to serve as a starting point for further research and policy interventions in this area.

In the event an attack occurs, the study recommends that the security forces should be able to mount a timely, well-coordinated and effective response and rescue operation to ensure minimal loss of lives or destruction of property and also to avoid prolonged standoff between the terrorists and the security forces. In this regard, the response should be able to arrive at the scene within minutes and contain the situation. This will be possible if response teams are deployed permanently in all regions of the country, and especially the most vulnerable.

The study also recommends that the security forces should have clear guidelines on how to respond; for instance, in case of an attack in a building, what should the first responders do, which team to mount the outer cordon, which team to form the inner cordon, who will scale the building and neutralize the terrorists, where will the rescued hostages be screened and secured. All these calls for proper coordination and clear communication between the responding security forces. The security forces in each region should continuously conduct multi agency response drills simulating real terror attack scenarios.

The response teams should also move to the scene, properly equipped with the right weapons and protective gear. Immediately an attack is reported, there should be live intelligence on aspects such as the number of terrorists and the kind of weapons they are using, and the response team should be briefed on this before they head out.

Suggested Areas for Further Studies

Despite the study accomplishing its set objectives, there are several areas for further research that can expand on this study. These include;

- The study suggests that a comparative analysis to be conducted in other countries in the region or globally as this can provide insights into the factors that contribute to the rise of terrorism and the effectiveness of different counter-terrorism strategies.
- The study also suggests further research on the role of technology in counter-terrorism efforts. Further research can explore in more details the effectiveness of technology in countering terrorism, including the use of drones, surveillance systems, and other technologies.

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