Religion in Violence and Peace
Exploring inter-religious peacebuilding efforts in Kenya
August 2016
About the World Faiths Development Dialogue

The World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) is a not-for-profit organization working at the intersection of religion and global development. Housed within the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., WFDD documents the work of faith inspired organizations and explores the importance of religious ideas and actors in development contexts. WFDD supports dialogue between religious and development communities and promotes innovative partnerships, at national and international levels, with the goal of contributing to positive and inclusive development outcomes.

Acknowledgments

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Cover photo: A minute of silence during an inter-faith service following the attack at Garissa University in April 2015. Centre for Christian–Muslim Relations, St Paul’s University.

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AACC</strong></td>
<td>All Africa Conference of Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACLED</strong></td>
<td>Armed Conflict Location &amp; Event Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AKDN</strong></td>
<td>Aga Khan Development Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AIC</strong></td>
<td>African Independent and Instituted Churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ATPU</strong></td>
<td>Anti-Terrorist Policy United</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BRAVE</strong></td>
<td>Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CC Cooperation Circles</strong></td>
<td>Centre for Muslim-Christian Relations in Eastleigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCMRE</strong></td>
<td>Coast Inter-Faith Council of Clerics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CIPEV</strong></td>
<td>Commission of Inquiry on Post Election Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CIPK</strong></td>
<td>Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCKRC</strong></td>
<td>Constitution of Kenya Review Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CRS</strong></td>
<td>Catholic Relief Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CYU</strong></td>
<td>Chemchemi Ya Ukweli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EAK</strong></td>
<td>Evangelical Alliance of Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECEP</strong></td>
<td>Ecumenical Civic Education Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FECCLAHA</strong></td>
<td>Fellowship of Christian Council and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIO</strong></td>
<td>Faith-Inspired Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HCK</strong></td>
<td>Hindu Council of Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIPSIR</strong></td>
<td>Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ICC</strong></td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IEBC</strong></td>
<td>Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IoFC</strong></td>
<td>Initiatives of Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IPK</strong></td>
<td>Islamic Party of Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IRCK</strong></td>
<td>Inter-Religious Council of Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ISS</strong></td>
<td>Institute for Security Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KANU</strong></td>
<td>Kenya African National Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KCCB</strong></td>
<td>Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KDF</strong></td>
<td>Kenyan Defense Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KNBS</strong></td>
<td>Kenya National Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LRPG</strong></td>
<td>Least Reached People Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LTLT</strong></td>
<td>Learning to Live Together Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MRA</strong></td>
<td>Moral Re-Armament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MRC</strong></td>
<td>Mombasa Republican Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NARC</strong></td>
<td>National Alliance Rainbow Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NAMLEF</strong></td>
<td>National Muslim Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NCC</strong></td>
<td>National Constitutional Conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NCCK</strong></td>
<td>National Council of Churches in Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NGO</strong></td>
<td>Non-governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NSC</strong></td>
<td>National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OAIC-Kenya</strong></td>
<td>Organization of African Instituted Churches Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ODM</strong></td>
<td>Orange Democratic Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PCEA</strong></td>
<td>Presbyterian Church of East Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PNU</strong></td>
<td>Party of National Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROCMURA</strong></td>
<td>Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PTC</strong></td>
<td>Pre-Trial Chamber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RfP</strong></td>
<td>Religions for Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SDA</strong></td>
<td>Seventh Day Adventists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SHIA</strong></td>
<td>Shia Inthna-Asheri Muslim Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SID</strong></td>
<td>Society for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUPKEM</strong></td>
<td>Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TJRC</strong></td>
<td>Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UMA</strong></td>
<td>United Muslims of Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNDP</strong></td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNSC</strong></td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URI</strong></td>
<td>the United Religious Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WCRP-Kenya</strong></td>
<td>World Conference on Religions for Peace Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WFDD</strong></td>
<td>World Faiths Development Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>YEDF</strong></td>
<td>Youth Enterprise Development Fund</td>
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</table>
Kenya has won recognition for relative stability, set against the conflicts in neighboring countries. This stability has been threatened in the past decades by recurring intercommunal violence (especially around elections), terrorist attacks, high rates of sexual and gender-based violence, mistrust of police, significant and visible inequalities, and reactions to high levels of corruption and a culture of impunity. Regional spillover of conflict affects Kenya, which now hosts over 600,000 refugees. Somalia-based Al-Shabaab has expanded into Kenya with attacks increasing in frequency and scale. The intensity and gravity of violent incidents in Kenya challenge stability and reveal deep social and economic fault lines. Grievances and tensions are thus deep and complex, with long historical roots.

In response, a large number of initiatives reflecting awareness of tensions and efforts to build peace have emerged, and many engage development practitioners and agendas. Conflict and violence affect social and economic development, eroding positive gains, interrupting progress, and causing harm and suffering. Development actors have begun to adapt strategies in fragile and conflict-affected situations in an effort to mitigate these risks or manage conflict dynamics. In Kenya, many religious institutions, faith leaders, and faith-inspired organizations (FIOs) engaged in development activities are among those who have responded creatively, at times urgently, to increasing violence.

The World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), with financial support from the GHR Foundation, selected Kenya for a case study to identify and better understand the roles religion plays in building peace and stability at the country-level, with particular attention to inter-religious relations and collaboration. Kenya offers a unique case given its dynamic peace and development sectors, complex religious landscape, and the longstanding engagement of religious actors in peace work. WFDD analyzed existing literature; interviewed 40 peace practitioners, secular and faith-inspired, working in Kenya; and hosted a workshop in Nairobi in August 2015 with many of these practitioners, as well as their partners and colleagues.

This report aims to support the work of secular and faith actors interested in peacebuilding, as well as inter-religious relations, in Kenya and beyond. Coming shortly before the 2017 general elections, its timing is propitious. It is also a resource for those engaged explicitly in countering violence extremism in the region. The report provides an overview of the various types of violence in Kenya and reviews the religious landscape, pointing to the complex overlapping of ethnicity and religious affiliation. The multiple types and drivers of conflict are explored, highlighting religious roles and actors. The study focuses on inter-religious relations in multi-religious Kenya; thus peacebuilding examples where inter-religious cooperation emerged are highlighted, notably the Ufungamano Initiative. Various inter-religious organizations operating in Kenya are introduced, including analysis of a growing awareness of the potential for collaboration for mutual benefit. Christian–Muslim relations as well as historic and contemporary tensions, are also explored. Two appendices feature examples of faith actors, using various approaches and focal areas, merging development and peace in Kenya.

Key findings

It is impossible to understand the complexity of the drivers of conflict and multiple efforts to address them without taking into account Kenya’s many religious actors and beliefs. Grievances and perceptions of marginalization often fall along religious identity lines. For example, the Coast and North Eastern regions, with majority Muslim populations, have not received equal development investments historically; the result is significant inequalities in levels of development across many sectors. Al-Shabaab has used this to their advantage when seeking recruits. Some Kenyan Muslims have responded with prominent leaders working to counter extremist narratives, engage with vulnerable youth, and deal with broader tensions between Christians and Muslims. Religious adherence often aligns with ethnic identity in
Kenya due to historic missionary focus in different regions. In this complex social milieu religious institutions and leaders were on the front lines when ethnic clashes erupted in the 1990s, providing safe haven and relief to those displaced. National and international faith-inspired institutions (FIOs) responded and many shifted their focus beyond development and emergency approaches, endeavoring to understand and address underlying grievances. Religious approaches and beliefs was also a prime motivation for individuals and organizations to mobilize for community dialogue with, for example, active non-violence training.

Faith-inspired actors are prominent in Kenya’s crowded and growing peace sector. They are engaged at the national level in advocacy and participate actively in high-level meetings with government officials. Perhaps more significant is their involvement at the grassroots level in myriad localized peace programs. Many have roots in development and therefore bring a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the roles that development work plays in fostering stability and sustainable peace (or, in some instances, exacerbating conflict). Within this dynamic space, however, there is little purposeful or systematic coordination and at times competition for resources. Efforts tend to be coordinated only within highly structured religious traditions, under national or regional umbrella organizations, or within a given geographic area around a specific agenda.

With so many actors engaged in differing ways, judging impact and effectiveness is exceptionally difficult. Evaluation strategies are only now emerging within the peace field, so there is little robust information as to the extent to which the large number of peace clubs and community dialogue programs achieve their objectives; to foster resilience and social cohesion that can withstand future tension. Priorities also shift based on funding opportunities and the most pressing threat. Various faith actors work deliberately to counter violent extremism, but poor coordination across agencies or bilateral
partners and distrust of the government and security tactics challenge efforts. Some Muslims exhibit remarkable creativity in a difficult environment, working discreetly to ensure neutrality and access. However, as general elections, which so often foreshadow violence, approach in 2017, there are fears that too little has been done to address long unresolved underlying grievances.

Religious leaders have keen interest in and capacity for reconciliation, healing, and justice. However, their credibility was severely impaired by failure to respond collectively and effectively during the widespread violence that followed the 2007 elections. Seen then as partisan and even exacerbating ethnic divides, it is unclear whether they have regained public trust and thus the capacity to respond effectively.

**Recommendations for those working on development and peace agendas**

- Ethnicity is still the primary identity of most Kenyans, and religious communities are often delineated along ethnic lines. This needs to be appreciated and taken into account.

- Development approaches that purposefully and sensitively address grievances of marginalization, especially those that fall along ethno-religious lines, can have important benefits.

- Conflict-sensitive development demands an understanding of the religious landscape. Such an approach could bring traditional development and peacebuilding approaches and practitioners closer together, in part because they pursue common goals and face similar obstacles.

- Radicalization of youth adds new urgency. It tests the ability of religious institutions to counter extremist narratives and advocate effectively for action by public and private actors. Religiously-inspired youth programs aimed at preventing violence and improving education and livelihood opportunities show significant promise but need support and more ambitious scale.

**Recommendations for religious actors engaged in development and peace work**

- Healing and reconciliation, notably to deal with unresolved historical pain and trauma, need more attention. Faith communities can play distinctive and important roles.

- Countering violent extremism is not only an issue for Muslims to address. They can lead many efforts but deserve both support and active collaboration.

- Women have been key players in strengthening Kenya, but few religious institutions explicitly foster women’s peace participation beyond the grassroots level. This is an area that deserves attention and action.

- Dialogue programs are popular but too often lack clear action objectives. Many are viewed as too concerned with talk, too little with action. Connector projects or exchange trips seem to have lasting impact, though evaluation is needed to bolster confidence in such approaches and point to practical entry points.

- Religious leaders—and some religious organizations—have yet to regain trust and credibility in the wake of scandals, corruption, or collusion with political interests. Recognition of the challenge and purposeful efforts to move forward are needed.
Conflict, violence, and instability are increasingly a focus in both the development and humanitarian fields. Costly damage and destruction, both materially and in human lives, threaten communal and state stability. Especially in so-called “fragile states” or contexts, development actors are struggling to understand how development initiatives can support post-conflict reconstruction and affect complex contexts, so that they can avoid triggering violence and, when possible, reinforce social stability. Kenya offers countless examples of both the complexities involved in conflicts and underlying tensions (including those with religious dimensions) and the wide range of efforts, public and private, to address them.

The complex challenges involved in building trust or social cohesion and seeking justice in the wake of violence involve widely varied stakeholders. Religious leaders and institutions often play central roles. Religious beliefs and communities can motivate or mobilize participants to support or enact violence; they can also be involved in calls to halt violence. In many conflicts religion is seen most clearly as an identity marker, simultaneously grouping those who affiliate and differentiating those perceived to be outsiders or “others.” Religious identities used in this way can encourage social cleavages and enclaves, weakening social cohesion by fostering suspicion of other groups. Whatever the cause of conflict or the parties involved, it is important to analyze the roles religious factors played in the conflict and its potential roles in the peace process and reconstruction of society, including social cohesion.

In contexts where multiple religious groups or traditions are involved, inter-religious engagement can offer a strategy for peace across divisions. Inter-religious engagement looks to each faith tradition to represent its own principles and values, while providing a space to hear and understand the perspective of other traditions involved. Better knowledge and social relations is one aim. Inter-religious engagement focused on a common goal of ending violence or recovering from it looks to the interested parties to collaborate in designing a way forward. This is not an easy task and has risks. However, such efforts are seen at all levels of society from global inter-religious peace efforts to community-level initiatives.

The World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) has focused on Kenya for a country-level analysis within a larger project that seeks to identify and describe the history and current state of affairs for inter-religious institutions and movements around the world. The in-depth country-level analysis aims at better understanding contextual dynamics, key actors and their networks, collaborative strategies, and other information valuable to both faith-inspired and secular actors interested in peace and stability in the country and region. This report is the result of desk research, elaborated through interviews conducted in Nairobi between November 2014 and August 2015 with 40 faith leaders, peace practitioners, and staff from organizations, many of whom work through inter-religious efforts to build peace and prevent violence in Kenya. A workshop in Nairobi with many of these practitioners on August 4, 2015 expanded on this research and provided a space for dialogue and networking. This report provides an overview of the types of conflicts involved in Kenya and corresponding root causes, describes Kenya’s religious landscape, and profiles various faith-inspired organizations (FIOs) working for peace. It focuses on explicit inter-religious organizations, projects, and awareness in peacebuilding.

Notes
Overview of Conflict in Kenya

Kenya's longstanding reputation as one of East Africa's most stable countries is seriously challenged today. Many overlapping causes of conflict and grievances, as described below, have deep historical roots. Ethnic intolerance has been stoked for political gain, notably resulting in recurring violence during election seasons. Related violence has displaced many thousands of Kenyans. Inequality, notably in land ownership and access, with roots in colonial practices, fuels widespread grievances. Rates of crime and violence are high, especially in urban centers, alongside low levels of policing and trust of police. Weak security and high levels of corruption are systematic problems exacerbated by the proliferation of small arms and drug trafficking. Impunity and lack of justice at various levels are seen to legitimize violence or retaliation. Regional instability has spilled over Kenya's borders, resulting in an estimated 615,000 refugees in Kenya. Violent attacks by Al-Shabaab, based in Somalia, have killed many in Kenya. The terrorist group plays off grievances related to discrimination and marginalization, often targeting disenfranchised youth. Kenya's youth—those aged 18 to 34 years make up more than a third of the population—are challenged by limited employment opportunities.

Various global statistical measures highlight the prevalence and types of violence that contribute to instability in Kenya. The 2015 Fragility Index, one of the various summary indices of fragility, ranked Kenya in the ‘alert’ category, between Ethiopia and Liberia, in large part due to the 'very high alert' status of Kenya's neighbors. Political instability in neighboring South Sudan and Somalia affects regional security. Al-Shabaab, based in Somalia, has become increasingly active in Kenya. The group's September 2013 attack on Westgate Mall—with 67 deaths and 175 injuries—contributed to Kenya's ranking of twelfth on the 2014 Global Terrorism Index (Kenya's 2015 ranking dropped to eighteenth, though its score increased from 6.58 to 6.66). Political and communal violence has increased since the 1990s, as shown by Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) Project data from 1997 to 2013 (see figure). ACLED reports that militia groups have the highest absolute and proportional rate of violence against civilians in Kenya. These tend to be short-lived militant units created for particular purposes, as was the case for the largest spike of militia activity following the 2007–08 election.

Alongside major incidence of violence, illicit trafficking of drugs and small arms add to Kenya's fragility. A survey conducted in 2011 by Small Arms Survey and Kenya National Focus Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons reported that 21.1 percent of household respondents were victims of crime or an act of violence over the preceding year, and among those

Figure 1: Conflict events and reported fatalities, Kenya, January 1997–September 2013 (by quarter-year).

who were victimized, more than one-third were confronted with a firearm.7

Deeply rooted corruption in Kenya diminishes public trust in many institutions, including police and the judicial system. Corruption also foils accountability mechanisms reinforcing a norm of impunity for those with power and means. Kenya’s Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission released survey findings in March 2016 reporting that 74 percent of Kenyans believe corruption is rife in their country.8 PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) found Kenya to be the world’s third-most corrupt country in terms of the prevalence of economic crimes.9 Kenya earned a score of 25 out of 100 (with 0 being highly corrupt) in Transparency International 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index; its rank was 139 out of 168 countries. Perception by institution ranked police as most corrupt in Kenya (75 percent), significantly ahead of the second ranking institution, government officials (46 percent). Judges and magistrates were viewed as corrupt by 33 percent of respondents; religious leaders (13 percent) and traditional leaders (12 percent) earned the lowest rankings.10 Perceptions of the judiciary have fluctuated, in part boosted by hope for reforms institutionalized in the 2010 constitution. Ipsos polls reported a decline from November 2013 to April 2015 when the number of Kenyans expressing “a lot of confidence” in the Supreme Court fell from 28 percent to 21 percent, and 21 percent to 12 percent for other courts.11

Understanding drivers of violence and conflict is vital for designing peacebuilding or violence prevention strategies. The National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (NSC), with support from UNDP Kenya, commissioned a national conflict mapping and analysis process in 2010 that included 38 focus groups and 1725 questionnaires. This survey reported the main causes of conflict to be related to politics, economics, socio-cultural elements, security, and environmental degradation.12 Politically motivated violence was reported as most prevalent and includes one or more of the following: ethnicity, patronage, citizenship, and political instrumentaion of gangs. Following this, security triggers of conflict were cited as the most worrisome including terrorism, cross-border raids, proliferation of illicit small arms, ineffectiveness of security agencies, and cattle rustling.

Notes
5. ACLED defines the category of militia violence to include private armies for elites and politicians, militant groups whose aims are localized, and do not seek to overthrow, replace or secede from the state; in addition to actions by unidentified armed groups which are not claimed by named militant organizations.
Religious or spiritual language, rituals, places of worship, and prayers can be seen and heard almost anywhere in Kenya. Scholar Fr. Laurenti Magesa emphasizes that for most Africans, spirituality is foundational for life’s rhythm and interactions; “it is there as you grow up; you are socialized in it.”

A survey of 1,500 Christians and Muslims in Kenya, conducted in December 2008, reported that 95 percent of Muslims and 86 percent of Christians claim religion is very important in their lives. The same survey reported that 81 percent of all surveyed attended religious services at least once a week.

Religiosity is high in Kenya but it is somewhat fluid, making it difficult to measure members by denomination or institution. Kenya is a Christian-majority country and according to the 2009 Census approximately 80 percent of the population identify as Protestant (48 percent), Catholic (23 percent), or other Christian (11 percent) (see table 1). The Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches are the most established within the country, and other influential denominations include the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA), African Inland Church, and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). It is difficult to count the emerging and dynamic Pentecostal and evangelical churches in Kenya, but the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya estimates numbers as high as 11 million members in 38,000 congregations. African Independent and Instituted Churches (AICs)—homegrown churches with indigenous worship, theology, and social organization—are also an important part of Christianity in Kenya. Muslims, at about 11 percent of the population, lead minority religious groups in Kenya. The majority are Sunni Muslims of the Shafi’i school of jurisprudence, but Shi’a and Ahmadi Muslims also reside in Kenya. Though Muslims live in all regions of Kenya, the majority live in the Coast and North Eastern regions. Other quite small religious communities include Hindus, Sikhs, Baha’is, and Jews. About ten percent of Kenyans are thought to adhere to traditional or indigenous beliefs; these are often mixed with mainstream Christianity or Islam.

Religious Landscape of Kenya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tradition</th>
<th>Percent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>&lt;1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditionalist</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Religion</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Religion</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>&lt;1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2009 Kenya Census, Volume 2 Table 12
Religion, ethnicity, and geography

Early Christian missions targeted particular geographic areas or tribes in Kenya, but as the colonial administration encouraged expansion to the interior, competition for location resulted in delineation of geographic boundaries. By the 1910s, Christian missions established an agreement to respect spheres of work (or spheres of influence) to manage competition, confusion, and denominationalism. For example, the Anglican Church of Kenya and the Presbyterian Church concentrated missionary and education efforts in Central Kenya, attracting many Kikuyu. The African Inland Church is historically strongest in the Kalenjin area of the Rift Valley. Quakers are most concentrated in Western Kenya with many Luhyas. Mennonite missionaries came via Tanzania in the 1940s, gaining many Luo and Suba converts in south-western Kenya. The Kisii are predominantly Seventh Day Adventist. The Catholic Church, in contrast, has adherents throughout the country and is therefore less identified with one particular ethnic group. Ethnic links to religious affiliation are evident today in the language used by particular congregations in worship services or Bibles.

The propagation of Islam in Kenya has also led to concentrations of religious communities in particular regions. Along the Coast, the largest population of Muslims consists of Swahilis with a large number of Digo Mijikenda converting as well. The Swahilis, a unique community located on the Coast with historic intermarriages with Arab traders, are not a homogeneous group but identify as Muslims whose first language is Kiswahili (see Figure 2: Kenya’s ethnic map).

Ethnicity in Kenya

Kenya’s population, estimated at 43 million, is composed of 42 African ethnic groups and significant minorities of Arab, South Asian, and European descent. The largest groups include the Kikuyu at 17 percent of the total population, the Luhyas (14 percent), the Kalenjin (13 percent), and the Luo (12 percent). The Kikuyu traditional homeland is in the former Central Province (see map), but they lost significant landholdings to British colonists in the early twentieth century and many migrated to other regions, including the Rift Valley. The Luhyas are located mainly in the Western region, the Kalenjin mostly in the Rift Valley, and the Luo predominantly in Nyanza. Other groups include the Kamba (10 percent), Kenyan Somali (6.2), Kisii (5.7), Mijikenda (5), Meru (4), Turkana (2.5), Maasai (2.1), Teso, and Embu among others.
Race and status for Swahili Muslims

Muslim solidarity in Eastern Africa has historically been splintered between Arab Muslims and African tribespeople who converted to Islam. Swahilis, with a mix of Arab and African ancestry, have long had difficulty defining themselves between these groups. During the nineteenth century, under Omani rule in Zanzibar, Arabs held sole administrative power and viewed the Swahilis to be below them. Competition among the Germans and British for the coastal area from the 1880s through 1897 preserved the special status of the Arabs and Swahilis. Within the newly created British protectorate, a double administration was created with Arabs alongside Europeans.

In an effort to improve their status, Swahilis sought to be viewed as Arabs. They also differentiated themselves from African Muslims, calling themselves Wazaliwa (those who were born Muslim). Swahilis and African Muslims had separate mosques and celebrated Maulidi separately. The British also treated the Swahilis as superior to Africans converts; the latter were not given land rights in the region from which they came.

On the eve of independence, Swahilis faced a dilemma as the fate of the coastal strip became the primary concern for its residents. In 1952 Swahilis in Mombasa were officially recognized as Arabs and were registered as such in elections in 1957 and 1961. As the end of colonialism seemed imminent, would Swahilis side with black Africans or with Arabs? Swahilis did not have the full support of Arabs and many African leaders, especially Christians, distrusted Swahilis. Some Swahilis and Arabs supported separation of the coastal strip from Kenya (mwamba), and they created the Coastal Peoples Party with hopes to preserve the inhabitants’ special rights. Black Africans, including Christians, Muslims, and animists, wanted the province to integrate with Kenya. In 1963 the British government and Sultan of Zanzibar signed an agreement to annex the coast to Kenya, compensate the Sultan, and guarantee human rights and freedom of religion for residents. Ethnic-political divisions between Arabs and African Muslim converts persist today, with Swahilis found affiliating on one side or the other. Claims of discrimination among Muslims along racial lines have been made for access to religious leadership posts as well as access to jobs.

Religious institutions and international ties

In addition to religious institutions, a large number of faith-inspired organizations (FIOs) are active in Kenya. International FIOs engaged in development and peacebuilding include Catholic Relief Services (CRS), World Vision, American Jewish World Service (AJWS), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Church World Service (CWS), Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), Islamic Relief, and International Justice Mission (IJM), to name a few. Kenya’s reputation of stability and location has promoted many of these, as well as pan-African and East African FIOs, to locate headquarters in Nairobi. Examples include the All African Council of Churches (AACC), the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECLAHANA), and the Programme for Christian–Muslim
Relations in Africa (PROCMURA). Many national and grassroots FIOs also operate in Kenya, with estimates that FIOs outnumber secular civil society organizations. Some national religious institutions have established development departments, such as the Anglican Development Services and the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. Several FIOs are profiled in this report and appendices, especially those engaged in peacebuilding.

Kenya’s religious landscape includes many international links. Historical religious ties—for example with the United Kingdom, South Asia, and the Arab world—continue, notably through resources and opportunities for training or exchanges. International partnerships commonly provide funds for religiously linked activities, including development. Foreign missionary activities also bring various actors to Kenya, often linking with Kenyan FIOs or religious institutions. Christian missionary visitors and resources largely come from America, European countries, Nigeria, and South Korea. The Aga Khan has historical ties to Kenya; both the Aga Khan Foundation and AKDN are active and well-respected development partners in Kenya. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iran, for example, have provided philanthropic and development support for Muslim communities. After the bombing of the U. S. Embassy in 1998, however, the government of Kenya began to monitor funding sources of Islamic NGOs more closely and has shut down several suspected of links with extremist groups.

Notes
1. Interview by author. April 17, 2015.
Drivers of Conflict and the Intersection of Religion

Ethnicity, politics, and violence

Communal violence along ethnic lines, especially linked to politics and patronage, is a recurrent theme in Kenya’s history and a significant factor today. Ethnic tensions are complicated by religious identities in various situations; ethnic delineation is found in many religious traditions in Kenya, as mentioned previously.

The Mau Mau movement serves as one of the earliest examples of blending religion—or spirituality—with a political agenda. The movement, which started within the Kikuyu ethnic group, developed in the 1940s as a nationalist political movement that escalated to violence in the 1950s. A state of emergency was declared in 1952. Colonial authorities initially labeled the movement as a religious cult that used spiritual rituals and oaths to ensure commitment of supporters and warriors. In reaction, European settlers viewed all Kikuyus suspiciously and thousands were displaced or detained for “rehabilitation.” Attempts to convert individuals away from Mau Mau influence in detention camps included, among other strategies, encouraging confession of sin and Christian teaching (the Anglican and Presbyterian churches in Kenya were largely Kikuyu and were supportive of this approach). The Mau Mau rebellion was crushed in 1959 with a political solution emerging shortly after. The first elections in Kenya were held in 1961, followed by independence in 1963.

Politicians began to use ethnic identity explicitly to reinforce social divisions in the later years of Daniel arap Moi’s presidency (1978–2002). Local pressure, largely led by church leaders (explained below), and international pressure led Moi to agree to multiparty elections that were held in 1992. Various politicians also began to call for a return to majimbo, a Kiswahili term loosely translated as federalism but also narrowly used to promote ethnic purity and exclusivity. Political violence structured along ethnic lines was a direct tool used

Returning to cultural roots: the Mungiki movement

Ethnic identity, blended with spirituality, reemerged as a political flash point in the 1990s during another important transition as the state changed from single party to multiparty. The Mungiki (multitude in Kikuyu) combined religio-cultural identity with a political agenda. The movement drew from the Kikuyu tradition, religion, and culture much like the Mau Mau movement. The group organized around a spiritual leader who claimed that the Kikuyu deity Ngai commanded him to unite the Kikuyu and promote abandonment of Western and Christian lifestyles; the group also advocated for female circumcision (which the colonial administration had tried to halt). Originally formed in the Rift Valley, the sect drew its support from those displaced by ethnic clashes, especially young men, and in Nairobi’s informal settlements. Mungiki transformed into a highly organized and feared group known for extorting taxes for protection. Following a wave of matatu (taxi-bus) hijackings and murders, the Kenyan government outlawed the sect in 2002. Reports of Mungiki activity occasionally appear in the media. The group was implicated for collusion with politicians in the post-election violence of 2007–08 specifically in Nairobi and the Rift Valley. In 2016, suspicious activity, which many attribute to Mungiki, has been reported in Nyeri and also Nakuru. The association of Mungiki with violence has influenced public perception of Kikuyu youth who are consequently accused of engaging in criminal activities.
to stay in power; Moi foiled opposition leader efforts to form a coalition by stoking ethnic tensions. He, a Kalenjin, and his supporters used “Kalenjin warriors” to displace opposition voters, mostly Kikuyu, Luo, and Luhya, from the Rift Valley, Moi’s heartland. This happened before and during elections, with an estimated 300,000 people displaced and 1,500 killed by 1993 and again around the 1997 elections with 180,000 estimated displaced.

A multiethnic reform coalition, the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC), won the 2002 election. However, while NARC was built upon the promise of a power-sharing agreement, newly-elected President Mwai Kibaki’s advisors warned that this would divide Kenyans along ethnic lines. He failed to honor the agreement and later dissolved the coalition, preferring instead one strong party to oppose Moi’s Kenya African National Union (KANU). Reports of unequal public spending of tax revenues also emerged in 2004, highlighting superior economic and social indicators in urban areas and Kikuyu districts. These discrepancies were seen as the results of political patronage established under Kenyatta’s presidency.

Ethnicity thus played a significant role leading up to the 2007 election. The opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) used the perception of Kikuyu favoritism to turn the election into a contest of “forty-one tribes against one” with claims of “Kenya against the Kikuyu.” Kikuyu success was blamed for the marginalization suffered by the other groups. ODM’s ethnic constituencies were Luo, Luhya, and Kalenjin, who originate from the then Nyanza and Western Provinces and the Rift Valley and are found in major towns. ODM also had a significant following among the coastal Muslims and in North Eastern Province. Kibaki’s new coalition, the Party of National Unity (PNU), was comprised predominantly of Kikuyu, Embu, and Meru who originate from the Central and Eastern Provinces and are strongly represented in the Nairobi area, Coast Province, and the Rift Valley as a result of migration.

The election results of December 27, 2007 were viewed as fraudulent by national and international observers alike. What followed were widespread protests that escalated into riots, repression by security forces, and revenge killings by supporters of both camps. The violence lasted from December 28 until February 28, 2008, and approximately 650,000 people were displaced, with up to 1,300 dead. Protests and confrontations with the police in the slums of Nairobi, Kisumu, Eldoret, and Mombasa led to revenge killings that targeted representatives of the political opponent’s ethnic base. Kikuyu, Embu and Meru were violently evicted from Luo and Luhya dominated areas, while Luo, Luhya and Kalenjin were chased from Kikuyu-dominated settlements or sought refuge at police stations. Kalenjin vigilante attacks in the Rift Valley were reminiscent of the state-supported ethnic clashes of the mid-1990s, targeting Kikuyu settlements.

Serious peace negotiations began in early January 2008, led initially by African Union Chair John Kufuor and later by a Panel of Eminent African Personalities. Former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan led this effort, along with Mozambique’s Graça Machel and Tanzania’s Benjamin Mkapa, eventually brokering a peace accord signed on February 28, 2008. It involved a power-sharing arrangement between the two main political coalitions that opened space for constitutional reform.

Concurrent peacebuilding efforts addressed long-term grievances and sought justice for the violence. Following decades of calls for reforms, a constitutional referendum was held on August 4, 2010. The revised constitution reduced power of the president and the executive, devolved authority to counties, and formally guaranteed social and economic rights for women, minorities, and marginalized communities. Meanwhile criminal justice work in the wake of the violence included recommendations for a special tribunal and charges brought by the International Criminal Court (ICC) against alleged leaders of the violence, both of which had limited success (see box). The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) was created in September 2009 to promote national unity and eliminate all forms of ethnic discrimination (see more in appendix II). A Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) was also established with a mandate to investigate politically motivated violence, assassinations, displacement, and economic crimes such as corruption and irregular acquisition of land. Various factors diminished the legitimacy and credibility of the TJRC, including the delayed presentation of its Final Report to the Kenyan Parliament until after the 2013 elections. Critics also suggest that the narrow focus on human rights violations directly linked to the 2007–2008 violence deflected public attention from violations committed between 1963 and 2002.
Fearful for repeated violence during the 2013 national elections, considerable resources and initiatives were employed to prevent violence in the lead up to the elections. While major violence was avoided, it is widely agreed that inadequate time and attention were given to addressing underlying grievances (chiefly land disputes, corruption, and lack of accountability)

**Seeking justice for 2007–08 electoral violence**

The Government of Kenya established an international Commission of Inquiry on Post Election Violence (CIPEV) in February 2008, which became known as the Waki Commission. The Commission recommended that the government establish a special tribunal of national and international judges to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of the post-election violence. A bill to establish the special tribunal failed to pass in the Kenyan parliament in February 2009.

In November 2009 the ICC prosecutor sought authorization from Pre-Trial Chamber (PTC) II to open an investigation in relation to the crimes allegedly committed during the 2007–2008 post-election violence in Kenya. This was the first time that the prosecutor used his *proprie motu* powers to initiate an investigation without first having received a referral from a state party or the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). In March 2010, PTC II authorized the ICC prosecutor to open an investigation. Following confirmation hearings, two cases moved forward in January 2012: William Samoei Ruto and Joshua arap Sang, members of the ODM, the opposition party at the time of the elections, were charged with crimes against humanity of murder, forcible transfer, and persecution, allegedly committed against supporters of the PNU. The second case involved Francis Muthaura and Uhuru Kenyatta, members of the PNU at the time of the violence, for the crimes against humanity of murder, forcible transfer, rape, persecution, and other inhumane acts allegedly committed against ODM supporters, partly in retaliation against attacks against the PNU supporters. Charges brought against Henry Kosgey, a prominent ODM politician, and Muhammad Ali, a former police commissioner, were dropped on January 23, 2012 due to insufficient evidence.

Popular support for the ICC prosecutions dipped as suspects were named and summoned, especially in Central Province (73 percent in October 2010 to 42 percent in February 2012) and the Rift Valley (61 percent to 50 percent), and was used by politicians to gain political support as the 2013 elections neared. Kenyatta and Ruto put aside the historical Kalenjin and Kikuyu rivalry to form the Jubilee Alliance, which framed the ICC trials as unjust, neo-colonial, and a threat to Kenya’s sovereignty and stability. Religious imagery and language was often used by the Jubilee coalition, with some likening Kenyatta to the Moses of the Kikuyu nation or the leader anointed or chosen by God. The two men described their reconciliation as God-given, which fueled discourse of repentance, forgiveness, and peace that would lead to God’s favor. With the highest voter turnout in Kenya’s history, the Uhuruto team was announced winners with the narrowest of margins at 50.07 percent of the vote on March 9. Though rivals reacted with allegations of tampering and irregularities, intense and coordinated efforts to prevent violence contained frustration. Religion played a role during the inauguration ceremony on April 9, 2013 when the two men breached security protocol by kneeling during the Christian prayer.

Kenyatta and Ruto worked to delay the trials until after the election, and eventually Ruto and Sang’s trial was moved to September 2013 and Kenyatta’s to February 2014. Alleged intimidation or bribery of witnesses required the court to find new witnesses and ultimately led to the termination of the cases: charges against Muthaura were withdrawn in March 2013, those against Kenyatta’s in December 2014, and those of both Ruto and Sang in April 2016.
for past crimes). Numerous international actors provided logistical, financial, security, and political support in forms ranging from training peace monitors in each district to creating digital tools for early warning systems. However, Kenyans described it as a tense calm or unstable peace, noting that tensions remained high with widespread suspicions among parties and ethnic communities. Citizen dialogues conducted in late 2013 in ten counties reported that eight months after the election, Kenyans held strong feelings of discontent; “claims of rigging, botched party nominations, and numerous institutional failures, which contributed to overall heightened levels of fear and anxiety during the electoral period, left communities polarized.” Former opposition communities (Kikuyu and Kalenjin) came together as the Jubilee Alliance, but deep distrust between it and the CORD coalition reflect tensions between Luo and Kikuyu. For these reasons, concern for potential violence surrounding the 2017 elections is high.

**Religious leaders engaged in politics**

The role of Christian churches, especially in politics, is woven in complex ways through Kenya’s pre- and post-independence history. Churches were identified with the independence movement as well as with colonial rule, with the struggle for democracy as well as authoritarian tendencies. Agbonkhianmeghe J. Orobator, a Jesuit priest and scholar, identifies three distinct phases of church-state relations following the end of the colonial era. Under Jomo Kenyatta, the churches assumed a cooperative role, with ecclesiastical bodies such as the Kenya Episcopal Conference (now known as the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, KCCB) acting as the “conscience of society.” This came in the form of pastoral letters and exhortations to public office holders. With the descent into authoritarianism under Moi, various individual church leaders moved to an oppositional role, publicly denouncing specific political figures and encouraging emerging civil society and alternative politics. Leaders gave political sermons and called for Christian social ethics as a guide to political action. The third phase, beginning as the 2007 post-election crisis unfolded, saw church leaders as part of the problem, supporting political candidates based on ethnicity, and thus playing contradictory roles concerning matters of governance. The current context, in important respects, represents a reaction to that turbulent
period and a response to the ever-present specter of regional terrorism that has shone a spotlight on religious extremism and put wedges between Christian and Muslim communities.

**The oppositional role of religious leaders.** Religious leaders reacted during Moi’s presidency by taking a largely oppositional role in politics. As it became clear that Moi sought to replace Kikuyu leadership, put in place by Kenyatta, with his own Kalenjin supporters, Kikuyu-dominated church leaders responded in defense. This eventually drove a wedge between the Anglican Church and the Africa Inland Church, of which Moi was a member. Before this degree of tension was reached, religious leaders acted strongly against Moi’s replacing secret ballots with queue voting in 1986. The clergy were concerned that their political preferences would be public, so Moi offered them an exemption. Still, Anglican Bishops Henry Okullu, Alexander Muge, and David Gitari, as well as Presbyterian Timothy Njoya remained vocal opponents. Leading up to the 1988 general elections, the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK) under the leadership of Methodist Samuel Kobia, coordinated the involvement of churches. In response, Moi convinced the Africa Inland Church and others to leave—and oppose—the NCCK. In 1989, Okullu, Gitari, and Njoya pressed for the repeal of the 1982 clause mandating a one-party state, as well as wider constitutional reform. They were joined by the Law Society of Kenya and politicians Kenneth Matiba and Charles Rubia. Other religious leaders opposed multi-partyism. Archbishop Arthur Kitonga of the Redeemed Gospel Church of Kenya used theological rhetoric in support of Moi’s Presidency, while Lawi Imathiu, the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Kenya, claimed that a return to multi-partyism would simply fragment Kenya along ethnic lines.

Catholic leaders, notably Bishop of Nakuru Rafael Ndingi Mwama a’Nzeke, hesitantly became involved. A pastoral letter in 1992 indicated that the entire Church was involved, stating “If the Catholic Bishops mean business as is now apparent, the Moi government will be hard hit. The bishops speak in one voice and unlike some church denominations, they cannot be ‘bought.”

Religious leaders played a major role and were joined by others, bringing pressure that led to the legalization of multi-party politics in December 1991. Some churchmen, NCCK, and the Catholic hierarchy were prominent in the lead up to the 1992 general elections (Protestant churches were largely divided along ethnic lines). NCCK and the Catholic Church offered information on democracy and trained election monitors to oversee polling stations. Disappearances and repression were common at that time, and following ethnic clashes that began in 1991, the churches challenged Moi and accused him of orchestrating the violence. Catholics assumed a higher profile as church leaders, notably Bishop Ndingi, responded to violence in Nakuru, including providing relief to internally displaced people. Protestants were weakened by various internal scandals. While leaders were fragmented within and across traditions, this political activism set the stage for eventual constitutional reform and participation of religious actors through the Ufungamano Initiative (detailed on page 32 and 33).

The ability and willingness of various church leaders and ecumenical bodies to oppose the government stemmed from their popular credibility, institutional strength, and the financial autonomy that afforded them immunity from government control. Theology as the main support for Moi’s Presidency, while Lawi Imathiu, the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Kenya, claimed that a return to multi-partyism would simply fragment Kenya along ethnic lines. Catholic leaders, notably Bishop of Nakuru Rafael Ndingi Mwana a’Nzeke, hesitantly became involved. A pastoral letter in 1992 indicated that the entire Church was involved, stating “If the Catholic Bishops mean business as is now apparent, the Moi government will be hard hit. The bishops speak in one voice and unlike some church denominations, they cannot be ‘bought.”

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The ability and willingness of various church leaders and ecumenical bodies to oppose the government stemmed from their popular credibility, institutional strength, and the financial autonomy that afforded them immunity from government control. Churches that were most active in political debate during the early 1990s—particularly the Anglicans, the Roman Catholics, and PCEA—were largely financially independent of the state, received most funding from outside donors, and had strong ties with international organizations. African Independent Churches (AICs) were severely hindered in this regard, in part due to their personalism, lack of formal organizational ties or structures, and relative vulnerability. In the absence of space for alternative political expression, by the 1980s, only a few church leaders were able to criticize the government without fear of reprisal. Broadly, the right of the churches to engage in political debate was challenged by politicians.

**Contradictory roles of religious leaders.** The situation changed with the 2007–08 violence when religious actors lost credibility and neutrality, at times aligning with ethnic political interests. One consequence, as Orabator notes, was that faith-based organizations and religious institutions were heavily criticized in the wake of post-election violence. When the violence broke out, religious groups were already compromised and divided; their reaction to the violence was delayed and tempered. In its report on the post-election violence, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights found that the failure of faith-based organizations further compounded a “situation where no single national institution appeared
neutral enough to offer moral leadership when the country descended into chaos.” Religious leaders, divided as they were and often highly partisan, lacked the credibility and cohesion to be seen as impartial arbiters. As the situation evolved, earlier polarization of churches along ethnic and regional lines played important roles. Muslim leader roles were also complex. The Muslim imams were divided over a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the ODM and the National Muslim Leaders Forum. The perceived partisanship of religious leadership before the election was intensified when some FIOs openly sided with a particular ethnic community. There were instances of religious leaders exploiting their positions to fuel violence against non-Kikuyu communities.

The result of these divisions and different loyalties was a very mixed response from religious actors to the violence. Imams in the Coast province and traditional religious leaders preached peace and coexistence, and many religious institutions provided aid and shelter to those displaced by the violence. Tragically, on January 1, 2008 a group of Kikuyus seeking refuge in the Assemblies of God church outside Eldoret were killed when vigilantes set the building on fire. Many religious leaders hesitated to call for peace and justice in part because calls for “peace” were seen as an endorsement of the status quo and Kibaki’s administration. Calls for “justice” were cast as sympathetic to the claims of the Kalenjin and Luo fighters. In March 2008, the NCCK formally apologized for


As minorities, Muslims generally did not criticize the government as openly as Christian leaders in the 1990s. Those who did voice grievances tended to moderate their criticism. This changed with agitation from Muslims for inclusion in democratic spaces when in January 1992, following the announcement of a multiparty system, the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) was established. The government denied registration of the party on the grounds that it was discriminatory and required specific religious beliefs of its members. The religious affiliation of the party was clear from the methods of mobilizing support and spreading political views and the role of its main activist, Khalid Balala, a conspicuously charismatic Islamic preacher. Tensions boiled over in May 1992 with the arrest of seven imams and several activists of IPK inciting mass demonstrations in Mombasa that deteriorated into attacks and violence. Those arrested were accused of incitement against the government.

One goal in forming IPK was to focus on the needs of Muslims in Kenya. IPK’s leaders claimed that all political parties in Kenya were led by Christians and did not concern themselves with Muslim welfare. The initial popularity of IPK reflected long-standing concerns of the Muslim minority and provided an avenue for expressing frustration. In a public letter to leaders sent July 6, 1993, IPK asserted that the Christian regime had been oppressing Muslims since independence. One grievance was proportional representation and the small number of Muslims in political office. The only Muslim minister in Moi’s government, Hussein Maalim Mohamed, spoke out on February 17, 1993 by calling for Muslims to unite and demand their rights. Muslim academics also spoke out, claiming that the separation of church and state was one-sided in Kenya and suppressed the freedom of expression for Muslims. IPK was also a reaction against the traditional ulama, many of whom were involved in the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), for lack of neutrality toward the government.

Moi’s regime and others in positions of power worked to foil IPK. The United Muslims of Africa (UMA) emerged shortly after IPK, bringing allegations that Moi’s government was backing the group in an attempt to divide Muslims. UMA worked to draw support from Muslims of African background and rally against IPK, who drew support primarily from Arab and Asian descent. Incumbent Muslim politicians of KANU also feared that the success of IPK would threaten their positions.
having sacrificed their neutrality before, during, and after the election period. In an interview with the BBC, activist John Githongo commented that “not just the political leadership but also the cultural and religious leaders” were responsible for the violence.40

**Inequality and marginalization**

Unequal distribution of resources—both natural and monetary—contribute to structural violence and marginalization; this is especially focused in several regions of Kenya. Patterns of inequality have deep historical roots. As a colonial settler economy was established, white settlers took over land with the highest potential—in Eastern province, Central, and the Rift Valley—which were thus known as the White Highlands. A 1915 ordinance further unbalanced land tenure, creating native reserves divided by ethnic groups. Many were displaced. In parallel, settlers required farm labor, drawing squatters to work in the White Highlands. Many Kikuyu in Central province became tenant farmers; as wages declined in the 1940s, the Mau Mau movement emerged among Kikuyu labor tenants on settler farms. Competition and control over this productive land has been at the heart of debates and conflict ever since, with significant economic and political implications.41

The independence political settlements involved land reforms, including resettlement plans for landless Kikuyu and others. Implementation results were mixed. Reforms were particularly complicated in the coast where the Sultan of Zanzibar had been given control of the ten-mile coastal strip (**Mwambao**); post-colonial grants of land to politicians exacerbated landlessness and squatters.42 Controversy surrounds the use of the discretionary power of the state (by the President’s office or Ministry of Land) to allocate large farms, estates, and forests to those in power or for patronage. Land issues remain an underlying factor in tensions in Kenya, with efforts to address them in the 2010 constitution and recommendations from Kenya’s TJRC.

The first national development agenda of independent Kenya, articulated in Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, directed state resources to so-called “high potential” areas of crop production, “overlooking the wealth of lowland livestock-based economies and creating the deep inequalities in human development that characterize contemporary Kenya.”43 Very little development investment has gone into Kenya’s dryland areas, which comprise more than 80 percent of the country (see figure 3) and are home to approximately four million people, many of them pastoralists.44 Under-development and lack of access to resources and opportunities there strains relations between herders and farmers, as do practices such as cattle rustling. The discovery of oil in Turkana County in 2012 and the re-drawing of administrative boundaries, as part of devolution, complicate conflicts over access to key water and grazing resources between Turkana and Pokot. Serious inter-clan violence erupted in 2012 in Isiolo and Moyale, both starting with disputes over grazing land and cattle rustling that transformed into a fight over county politics.

Economic inequality also fuels grievances and perceptions of marginalization. Various measures point to critical issues of inequality and county-level analysis illustrates underdevelopment trends (see figure 4). Kenya’s Gini coefficient is 47.7, the second highest in East Africa following Rwanda at 50.8 and above South Sudan (45.5) and Uganda (44.3).45 At the
county level, Tana River, Kwale, Kilifi, Lamu, Migori and Busia counties reported the most income inequality measured by Gini coefficient. In Kenya, agriculture is the leading occupation type (32 percent), however 44 percent of this group works on family agricultural holdings without pay. People working in urban areas are 2.4 times more likely to get paid than their rural counterparts, however urban areas have more people without work than in rural areas. A subnational analysis shows a poverty gap 1.75 times higher in rural areas compared to urban, with the highest percentage found in Tana River County (46 percent) compared to the lowest in Nairobi at 4.1 percent. In this same study, Mandera, Wajir, Turkana, and Marsabit counties consistently had poor indicators across nine variables, indicating the lowest access to essential services. On a more positive note, Kenya has been lauded as one of the fast growing economies in Africa (in part due to low oil prices), with a growth rate of 5.6 percent in 2015 and 5.9 percent in 2016. As the economy has created jobs, they have largely been low productivity in the informal sector; with an estimated nine million youth joining the labor market in the next ten years, rapid growth in the formal wage sector will not be able to absorb this population. A majority of youth will continue to find jobs in small household enterprises or working in the informal sector.

Challenges for youth
Youth in Kenya are particularly challenged by unequal opportunities, economic and otherwise. Nearly 80 percent of Kenyans are under 35 years old and more than a third of the entire population is between the ages of 18 and 34. Economic growth in Kenya has not been matched with appropriate education or the creation of decent jobs, leaving youth with unemployment rates much higher than the overall national average. Social problems such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, drug and substance abuse, and crime and violence further complicate the lives of youth. In Kenya, youth are largely perceived to be perpetrators (though not necessarily orchestrators or instigators) of crime and violence, most notably during the 2007–08 post-election violence.

The government has responded to the challenges and needs of youth with policy and programs, including featuring youth as a priority within the national development strategy, Vision 2030. Strategies target the needs of youth for education, jobs, health care, information, and participation in politics and leadership. Recent government mechanisms designed to empower youth include the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) (launched in 2006), which provides loans and other support to youth enterprises, and the Uwezo Fund (launched in 2013), which provides grants and interest-free loans to women, youth, and persons with disabilities. The YEDF has come under criticism for disbursing the majority of funds (more than 80 percent) through financial intermediaries (FIs); therefore funding youth who could normally qualify for a bank loan. Success rates for applicants are also at 50 percent, revealing challenges accessing the program. Analysis of 2009 disbursements found the more women received funds disbursed through FIs (33,094 compared to 23,981 men). It
also found regional disparities with North Eastern receiving less than 1,000 loans beneficiaries. In late 2015, an audit revealed YEDF lost Sh180 million; by August 2016 YEDF boss Catherine Namuye and former board chairman Bruce Adhiambo were charged with 12 counts of corruption.

Despite these opportunities, youth remain concerned about unemployment and are vulnerable to political manipulation, concerns highlighted by a national survey of 1,854 youth conducted by the Aga Khan University. The education rates of participants were a sign of improved access to education (78 percent had attained post-primary education and 39 percent had post-secondary education). Youth reported unemployment as their top concern (63 percent). Unemployment among youth overall was 55 percent and 32 percent for those with post-secondary education. Unemployment was highest among women (62 percent). As for government-initiated youth programs, 52 percent had some knowledge of them and 76 percent reported that they have not benefited from them. The study also found that youth are vulnerable to bribery with 35 percent reporting they would readily take a bribe in general and 40 percent reporting they would only vote for a candidate who bribes them. Interestingly, when asked what they value most, youth placed faith first (85 percent) and religion was reported as the second most trusted institution (86 percent), following family. Only 12 percent identified by their faith first; 40 percent identify as Kenyans first.

**Religious intersections of marginalization and ethnicity**

Ethnic identity tends to be divisive, with tensions focused on competition for political power, land rights, and access to other socio-economic resources. Given the historical geographic distribution of religious communities—complicated somewhat today by urbanization and migration—memories of past injustices and perceptions of unequally distributed resources often coincide with religious affiliation.

Ethnic and religious affiliation overlaps in many ways with historic and geographic interests, political and economic. Central Kenya, for example, was preferred by colonial powers due to the pleasant climate and fertile land of the highlands.

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**Somali Kenyans and marginalization**

Ethnic Somali Kenyans have a long history of tensions and marginalization. Most live in North Eastern region and are pastoralists. Somali Kenyans long engaged in commercial activities are found primarily in Nairobi’s Eastleigh neighborhood and in Mombasa. As Kenyan independence neared, a movement grew among Somalis who sought secession and union with Somalia. A referendum was eventually passed in 1959 in the North Eastern Province calling for secession. When this was ignored, groups of armed Somali Kenyans called *shiffas* clashed with Kenyan security forces; beginning in December 1963, the Shiffa war ended in 1968. The secessionist movement disintegrated but the actions of Kenyan security forces at Wagalla airstrip near Wajir in 1984 further isolated the Kenyan Somali community; the army moved up to 5000 male Degodia (a Kenyan Somali sub-clan of the Hawiye) to the airstrip for interrogation, allegedly holding them for five days without food or water and executing more than 300. The government declared a state of emergency, silencing witnesses and banning writings about the event, which were not formally acknowledged until after 2002.

Conflict in Somalia has brought closer scrutiny of ethnic Somalis by the government of Kenya. By 1989, rising security risks from the conflict and a growing number of refugees from Somalia led the Kenyan government to require Somalis (both Kenyan citizens and resident Somali nationals) to carry a special identification card. Screenings of Somalis lasted until 2002. Following the 2001 terrorist attack in the United States, Kenya sided closely with the U.S. global war on terror, which included a renewed focus on Somalia. Somali Kenyans and Somali refugees continue to be viewed as potential security threats in part due to their religious affiliations and the tactics of Al-Shabaab.
Nairobi was established as the colonial capital in 1905. Given the Anglican and Presbyterian ties to colonial powers, Central Kenya’s religious landscape is strongly Anglican with various other Christian denominations. Preferential development policies and investment helped make the area Kenya’s agricultural heartland, with coffee, tea, and tobacco plantations. Beyond Central Kenya, Protestant missions distinguished territory according to spheres of work resulting in a large number of Quakers concentrated among Luhyas in Western Kenya, Mennonites among the Luo and Suba near Lake Victoria, Seventh Day Adventists among Kisii, and African Inland Church strongest among the Kalenjin area of the Rift Valley. The Catholic Church, AICs, and Evangelicals were more widely dispersed across the country, resulting in greater ethnic diversity.

Other regions were relatively neglected during the colonial and post-colonial eras; the Coast, North Eastern, and the Rift Valley provinces lag behind in many ways, notably in poorly developed education, infrastructure, and agricultural production. It is worth noting that two of these regions have majority Muslim populations. Much of this geographic area is arid and semi-arid land with persistent patterns of drought. Historically, these areas were not a focus of development agendas and this neglect lives on in various challenges today. The religious demographics of the Rift Valley are fairly heterogeneous with a significant number of Muslims in Nakuru, many Christian denominations (including Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, and African Inland Church), as well as traditional religions. Various religious institutions and faith-inspired organizations are engaged in development activities throughout Kenya, as mentioned in the religious landscape section, and several have responded specifically to underdevelopment in the Coast, North Eastern, and the Rift Valley. Motivations for involvement range from existing presence in the area to the ability to gain access to responding to the greatest need. Appendix I highlights examples of FIOs engaged in various development activities specifically in the Coast and North Eastern province.
The Aga Khan Foundation is a notable FIO engaged in the region with a long history of engagement in education, health, and rural development in Kenya. Its first hospital in Kenya was Aga Khan Hospital Mombasa, established in 1944. The Aga Khan responded to education requests from Muslim leaders in the Coast by launching madrasa pre-schools in 1986; the program expanded to 203 pre-schools owned and operated by communities in Kenya, Zanzibar, and Uganda by 2008.64 The Catholic Church, in partnership with international Catholic FIOs, also leads initiatives on topics relating to child protection, education, and food security and drought. Seeing the need to blend development and peacebuilding, several FIOs have also focused on conflict-sensitive development, as is detailed in Appendix II.

**Violent extremism and separatist groups**

Kenya's stability has been threatened by terrorist attacks and strengthening networks linked to extremist movements. The bombing of the U.S. embassy in Nairobi on August 7, 1998 killed 11 Americans and nearly 250 Kenyans and injured some 5,000. The attack did not target Kenyans, yet trauma from the event has had a lasting impact on survivors and Kenya's security forces and approach. This attack by Al-Qaeda, coordinated with a simultaneous bombing in Tanzania, marked an important shift in U.S. counter-terrorism policy. It also marked a new awareness in Kenya of the reach and violence of global terrorism. Since the attack, the United States and others have increased counterterrorism investment in East Africa and the Horn. From fiscal year 2010 to FY 2014, U.S. counterterrorism aid to Kenya totaled US$141 million with US$100 million promised for FY2015.65 In parallel, a “soft power” approach since 2003 has focused on providing humanitarian and development assistance especially in the Coast and North East provinces.66

Al-Shabaab, which means “the youth,” emerged as the radical youth wing of Somalia’s now-defunct Union of Islamic Courts, which controlled Mogadishu in 2006, before being forced out by Ethiopian forces. Today the group is allied to Al-Qaeda. Its targets have expanded to neighboring countries, including Kenya. Kenya's porous borders, significant ethnic Somali minority population, high levels of corruption, and the presence of some who benefit from the conflict between Somalia and Kenya cumulatively create various openings for Al-Shabaab in Kenya.67 Al-Shabaab has recruited in Kenya, and suspicion of support or recruitment within Dadaab refugee camp, with its high proportion of Somali refugees, adds fuel to the situation (see box on Dadaab, next page). Attacks in Kenya spanning 2011 to 2012 primarily used grenades to target churches, bars, and restaurants in Nairobi, Garissa, and Mombasa. The attacks became more severe over time, with rising numbers of causalities. Most notably in September 2013 an attack at Westgate Mall in Nairobi killed at least 69 and injured more than 175. Al-Shabaab also claimed credit for killing 64 persons in two attacks in Mandera County in late 2014 (28 persons traveling by bus for December holidays and 36 quarry workers) and again an attack at Garissa University in April 2015, targeting Christians and killing 147 students.

National, regional, and international security concerns aggravate Kenya’s internal conflicts, notably accentuating interreligious tensions. Kenya's 2011 incursion into Somalia marked a change in tactics toward Al-Shabaab. In October 2011, following a kidnapping in Lamu of foreign tourists and two aid workers in Dadaab refugee camp, the Kenyan government launched Operation Linda Nchi against Al-Shabaab in Somalia.68 In February 2012, Kenyan Defense Force (KDF) troops joined the larger African Union Mission in Somalia and in March helped secure Al-Shabaab’s largest port. The U.S., U.K., and Danish governments have supported the Kenyan government’s internal security in forms such as hard security assistance (hardware and training), legal advice on anti-terrorism legislation, and targeting populations considered to be at risk with development aid.69

The combination of security concerns in Kenya has tested and in many ways revealed the weaknesses of its security forces. The weakness of these systems became apparent during the 2013 attack at Westgate mall, with cross-fire among forces and allegations that KDF forces looted the mall after the situation was brought under control.70 The 2015 attack at Garissa University again highlighted Kenyan security weaknesses, notably the inability of the KDF to mobilize forces and equipment to Garissa quickly (the counterterrorist Recce company of the paramilitary General Service Unit were stuck at the airport with no plane available, while their equipment travelled by road).71 The KDF’s immediate reaction to the Garissa massacre was to target Al-Shabaab camps in Somalia. The Kenyan Anti-Terrorist Police Unit has targeted Muslims, including clerics,
suspected as sympathizers with raids on mosques and other Muslim gathering places in Nairobi, Mombasa, and other places. Extrajudicial killings or lack of due process for several of these suspects have caused fear and anxiety for Muslims of all ideologies in Kenya.

Separatist groups exacerbate long-lasting undercurrents of instability in Kenya. The Shifta War, mentioned above, and the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), draw from historical disagreements regarding national boundaries. MRC, founded in 1999, seeks autonomy for areas along the coast formerly ruled by the Sultan of Zanzibar. Rallying wapwani (coast people) in 2010 during the constitutional referendum, MRC launched a campaign based on the claim that the current Kenyan government’s 50-year “lease” on the land of interest would expire in 2012; MRC also called for a boycott of the 2013 elections. Pointing to decades of marginalization, they have gained sympathizers. The Kenyan government attributed the 2014 attacks on Army Barracks in Nyali and another on the Administration Police Camp in Malindi to MRC.

**Religious rhetoric of violent extremists**

Muslim communities are involved in various ways with Kenya’s efforts to counter Al-Shabaab and other militant Islamic groups. Al-Shabaab’s agenda blends religion into its political aims. It portrays its jihad as a legitimate act of self-defense by a Muslim people militarily occupied by Christian invaders, who were backed by the “great enemy of the Muslim people,” the United States. Largely using social media, Al-Shabaab has exploited the sense of alienation, identity crisis, and lack of purpose among Somali diaspora in Kenya, encouraging not only jihad but also hijrah (religious migration).

Al-Shabaab has recruited Kenyan members, and a 2014 study describes Kenyans as playing a leading role in the organization’s intelligence operations and planning. Recruitment efforts have capitalized on a strong sense of historical grievance and marginalization of Kenyan Muslims (described above) that some describe as feeding a victimization narrative with a sense of subordination and subjugation. In an attempt to better understand why Kenyans would join Al-Shabaab, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS)—with assistance from

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### Dadaab refugee complex and security concerns

The Dabaab complex, established in 1992, is the largest refugee camp in the world today, hosting almost 350,000 people. At this size, Dadaab can be viewed unofficially as the fourth-largest city in Kenya. Continuing conflict and instability in Somalia and other neighboring countries has made for a protracted refugee situation, with third and even fourth generations born and living in Dadaab. Nearly 96 percent of Dadaab’s population comes from Somalia while others come primarily from Ethiopia and South Sudan.

Various authorities allege that Dadaab is fertile ground for Al-Shabaab recruitment in part due to under-education for a majority of the refugees, legal obstacles that prevent refugees from working or living elsewhere in Kenya, and very limited job opportunities within the camp. Kenyan officials have called for the camp’s immediate closure in response to major Al-Shabaab attacks, namely Westgate (2013) and Garissa University (2015). International pressure tempered the demands until recently; in May 2016, the Kenyan Government announced that it would be closing Dadaab. Kenya’s Vice President, William Ruto argued that the camp “was a security threat, a haven for terrorism and a conduit of contraband goods as well as a danger to the environment.” Many analysts, however, argue that returning refugees to unstable areas could increase the risk of recruitment and thus regional terrorism. To complicate matters, rumors have also circulated suggesting that the Kenyan Government has recruited Somali refugees from Dadaab to fight Al-Shabaab on behalf of the Transitional Federal Government in Somalia. This highlights the complex role that the camp plays in Kenya’s security situation as well as the large humanitarian threat posed by the prospect of abrupt closure of the camp.
Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance—conducted interviews with 95 individuals associated with Al-Shabaab. Religion was cited by 87 percent of respondents as a reason for joining Al-Shabaab. The study also reports that 34 percent of respondents indicated they were recruited by a religious figure, the second largest group after friends, and 79 percent indicated that religious diversity is not a good thing.

New ideologies promoted by Al-Shabaab and other Salafists complicate existing divisions and tensions within Kenya’s Muslim communities. Between 2008 and 2011, the Muslim Youth Centre (later emerging as Al-Hijra), Al-Shabaab’s most active partner in Kenya, published a jihadi newsletter with articles and speeches by leading Salafi-jihadi clerics in Swahili and English, encouraging Kenyan Muslims to provide recruits and financial support to Al-Shabaab in Somalia. Disagreements between established clerics and the new Al-Shabaab sheikhs became publicly apparent in early 2009 and continue to elicit threats or violence such as the June 2014 shooting of Sheikh Mohammed Idris, chairman of the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK) and a Muslim leader who condemned radical interpretations of Islam. Kenya’s Anti-Terrorist Police Unit (ATPU) has targeted Al-Hijra since 2012 and raided mosques of alleged Al-Shabaab supporters. Foreign funding has also supported the entry of Salafist ideology to Kenya, for example through a growing funding stream from Arab countries supporting Islamic education and scholarships for tertiary study in the Arab world. New media and expanded religious television programming from the Arab world is also increasingly accessible to Muslims in Kenya.

Urban crime and violence

The combination of marginalization, urbanization, poor governance, and weak police systems has contributed to high incidence of crime and violence especially in the growing urban centers. In Nairobi, a metropolis of approximately six million people, about half living in informal settlements. Violence is a chronic problem there and takes multiple forms; it has
increased over the decades. The 2014 Annual Crime Report indicates that Nairobi County has the highest number (6732 or 9.7 percent) of all crimes reported nationally, even with underreporting due to low levels of public confidence in the police service. Levels of violence in informal settlements, which are characterized by very poor environmental and health conditions, inadequate shelter, unemployment, and insufficient services, are particularly high. This fragility may have contributed to the fact that the bulk of violence during the 2007–08 post election violence in Nairobi occurred in the slums where ethnically homogenous zones had developed.

In a World Bank study conducted in two Nairobi settlements, 44 percent of respondents in Nairobi reported victimization in the past 12 months, with robbery and assault the most common forms, and 52 percent said they did not feel safe. Additionally, all but one in-depth interviews with females reported incidents of domestic violence of which 15 percent had suffered sexual assault twice in the prior 12 months.

Weak policing linked to endemic corruption and access to small arms exacerbate urban insecurity. Police are perceived to be the most corrupt institution in Kenya, preventing reporting of crimes. A survey conducted by Ipsos in April 2015 found 54 percent of crime victims did not report the crimes. Of those who did report, 68 percent were disappointed by police response, citing lack of investigations (43 percent) and corruption (40 percent).

In the absence of strong policing, gangs, vigilante groups, and other organized crime can be found in Nairobi and small arms are readily accessible, especially in the Eastleigh neighborhood. Most Kenyans killed by gunshot, however, are victims of police shootings: 67 percent of the 1,868 Kenyans who died from gunshot wounds between 2009 and 2013 were killed by a police officer. Following the 2007–08 election violence, the Commission of Inquiry into the CIPEV and the UN special rapporteur report on extra judicial killings both recommended extensive reforms of the police system, prompting the establishment of the National Taskforce on Police Reforms in 2009.

Notes
53. According to the International Labour Organization ILO, decent work involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.
55. See Margaret Wanuyu Muthee, “Hitting the Target, Missing the Point: Youth Policies and Programmes in Kenya,” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.
78. Mwakimako and Willis, “Islam, Politics, and Violence on the Kenya Coast.”
31.


84. “Kenya: Registered Refugees and Asylum-Seekers as of 01 October 2015.”


88. Kitimbo, “Is Closing Dadaab the Solution to Kenya’s Security Problems?”


102. Mike Pflanz, “Kenyans five times more likely to be shot dead by police than by criminals,” The Telegraph, July 3, 2014.

Religious individuals and institutions have worked together in different forms and in response to specific needs in Kenya. Many faith-inspired actors, institutions, and organizations engaged in development work have adapted their approaches and programs to address increasing fragility or following violent incidents. For example, those providing humanitarian relief following ethnic clashes saw the need for healing and reintegration. Appendix II provides examples of FIOs engaged in peacebuilding, mapping their leadership in the emerging peace field and illustrating the diversity of approaches, partnerships, and level of intervention. Many of these peace approaches are purposefully tied to development needs, seeking to address underlying grievances while building social cohesion. The scope of involvement, though not mapped fully, also highlights the multiple entry points for faith actors as they work to address various drivers of conflict. The following section introduces key historical movements and inter-religious organizations active at various levels, including international FIOs. New initiatives have also developed as faith actors have seen the value of improved inter-religious understanding (as well as the challenges around religion-based tensions) and therefore seek to use interreligious approaches to foster social cohesion.

Religion, to varying degrees, has long been entwined with politics and power in Kenya, and it is thus important to understand how historical interactions between different religious traditions shape the current context. Negotiations and conflicts between religious communities for territory, followers, social influence, and political or economic power have lasting legacies. The religious landscape of Kenya is dynamic and ever changing, with emerging religious leaders and groups challenging mainstream leaders and institutions, at times with political implications. Historically, Arab traders brought Islam to the coast and later the work of European missionaries brought widespread conversions to Christianity. Christian missionaries also established basic (if far from universal) social services, especially along the path of the railway to Uganda. South Asians came to East Africa through trade routes and the British later brought many as laborers to build the railway, thus introducing Hinduism and Sikhism to Kenya. Alongside the economic and political interests of these parties, Christian missionaries established mission stations in most areas of Kenya, at times taking up residence in rural areas before district officers arrived. The history and challenges faced by evangelists and local communities is beyond the scope of this report, but sets the stage for the position of the present-day Christian-majority Kenya, with its diversity and indigenous movements.

Faith leaders mobilize for constitutional reform
One of the first—and most notable—inter-religious actions in Kenya began in the wake of Moi’s announcement in June 1999 of a constitutional review process that was, however, to be undertaken solely by Parliament. Following protests from civil society and political groups, religious leaders established their own review process called the Ufungamano Initiative (named after a building jointly owned by National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK) and the Kenya Episcopal Conference—now known as the Kenyan Council of Catholic Bishops (KCCB)—where the group met). Ufungamano ultimately came to encompass 54 different human rights organizations, religious groups, women’s rights organizations, youth groups, and opposition parties that represented various conflicting interests. The movement sought to create a wider base of consultation with civil society and stressed the principles of openness, transparency, inclusivity, accessibility, and accountability as key principles of the constitutional review process. In June 2000 the Ufungamano Initiative announced the formation of the People’s Commission, which would draw up its own proposals for a constitution. This pressured the government to pass the Constitution of Kenya Amendment Bill in July. By June 2001, ten members of the People’s Commission had been added to the official Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC).
In addition to challenges from politicians seeking to retain power, divisions over several issues with specific religious aspects challenged (and divided) those involved in drafting the new constitution. The Commission held public hearings from December 2001 through August 2002 in every constituency, receiving 35,015 submissions from individuals and groups. CKRC received several submissions, primarily from Muslim communities, requesting the expansion and reform of the jurisdiction and structures of the Kadhi courts. These courts, which reviewed cases of family law for Muslims, were first formally recognized when the coast became a protectorate. The 1967 Kadhi Courts Act extended the courts to all provinces, making eight courts presided over by the Chief Kadhi. Muslim communities now asked the review commission to ensure that there were enough courts and also to extend their remit to civil and commercial matters. During this process, it became clear that there was ignorance and lack of information on the part of Christians regarding the Kadhi courts. Some Christians were surprised to learn that the existing constitution included paragraphs on the Kadhi courts, and many did not understand the limits or scope of its jurisdiction.

The draft constitution included and raised the standards of the Kadhi courts, but their inclusion at all became a point of contention leading up to and during the National Constitutional Conferences (NCC) held at Bomas beginning in April 2003. A coalition of evangelical/Pentecostal churches reacted by registering as ‘Kenya Church’ and mobilizing to block these courts as well as other clauses in the draft relating to abortion and homosexuality. Kenya Church argued that Kadhi courts were the first step to transforming Kenya into an Islamic State. This opposition, supported by NCCK and Catholics, resulted in members of SUPKEM resigning from Ufungamano’s steering committee and withdrawing from the initiative in April 2003.

On September 23, 2003 a motion was brought before the NCC to delete sections concerning the Kadhi courts. Opponents insisted on Kenya’s secular nature—the draft clearly stated that there is no state religion—and saw public funding for the Kadhi courts and their entrenchment in the constitution as preferential treatment of Islam by the state. Some religious leaders decried the unbalanced representation, citing 60 references to Islam, one of Hinduism, and no references...
to Christians, Buddhists, Jews, or Sikhs. The constitutional draft eventually approved by the NCC, known as the Bomas Draft, failed to pass the referendum, though not only for this reason. It was followed by the Wako Draft (named for the attorney general who drafted it). This version retained the Kadhi courts but attempted to address the concerns of other religious traditions by adding Christian courts, Hindu courts, and room for other religious courts. This was seen as a largely empty gesture. The Wako Draft was rejected in a referendum on November 22, 2005. The issue of the Kadhi courts was renewed in May 2010 when the Kenya High Court announced its decision on a suit, filed by 24 clergy in 2004, declaring the courts unconstitutional. The Attorney General responded by arguing that the case was inadmissible as the court lacked jurisdiction. The timing of the decision, just two weeks after the 2010 draft had been publicly released for popular review, is significant but did not prevent approval of the constitution with 67 percent of the vote on August 4, 2010. The Kadhi courts continue to operate in Kenya today.

The Ufungamano Initiative illustrated the potential of religious leaders to create a movement for social change, but various factors led to its decline by 2005: among them were ethnic tensions, leadership failures, disagreement over content of drafts, mistrust among the different actors, and dearth of financial resources. The process itself pinpointed areas of sensitivity and exposed latent suspicions among religious leaders and traditions. Division among Christians turned largely on the willingness of some to work with Muslims on issues of national concern whereas other Christians view inter-faith collaboration as a betrayal of their task of Christian evangelism.

**Inter-religious organizations active in Kenya**

Cooperation or coordination of religious leaders, institutions, and communities across denominational and tradition lines has changed and developed over time. Early efforts were largely intra-religious. Formal inter-religious collaboration largely emerged after 2000 in response to pressing social issues related to good governance, the HIV/AIDS crisis, or security concerns. A growing focus on Christian Muslim relations (and tensions between the communities) has also spurred interreligious initiatives. The following section reviews this history and highlights key actors who have shaped and continue to contribute to the current inter-religious landscape in Kenya.

**Members of Inter-Religious Council of Kenya**

- Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK)
- Kenya Council of Catholic Bishops (KCCB)
- National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK)
- Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA)
- Organization of Africa Instituted Churches (OAIC-Kenya)
- Supreme Council for Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM)
- National Muslim Leaders (NAMLEF)
- Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Association (SHIA)
- Hindu Council of Kenya (HCK)

Intra-religious, as compared to inter-religious, cooperation has a much longer history in Kenya. Christians, Muslims, and Hindus collaborated within their respective religious traditions long before working together. Formal collaboration among Christians first began as early as 1907 when Protestant missions committed to ecumenism, despite denominational differences, and formed a federation of missions that would eventually become the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK). Today Protestant Christians have multiple organizations working at different levels in Kenya, many of which are members of the World Council of Churches. The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) is a fellowship of over 120 million Christian churches across Africa with its headquarters located in Nairobi. AACC is the largest association of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, and indigenous churches in Africa. Its programs include a focus on peace and development, including high-level ecumenical diplomacy. The Fellowship of Christian Council and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCCLAHA) is a regional ecumenical organization, with headquarters in Nairobi, formed in March 1999 and consisting of 11 member churches in the region. The platform creates a space for church leaders to share perspectives on common concerns, especially regarding peacebuilding and conflict transformation. NCCK and FECCCLAHA are members of ACT Alliance, a Geneva-based coalition of 140 churches and FIOs working around the world. ACT Alliance works with or supports 25 churches and FIOs in Kenya.

The first national level inter-religious organization took form in anticipation of the fourth world conference
on religion and peace that was held in Nairobi in August 1984. The World Conference on Religions for Peace Kenya (WCRP-Kenya) was formed in 1983 and from that point until 2001 it engaged through ad hoc dialogue, action, and conference participation. In response to the AIDS crisis and the growing number of orphans, WCRP-Kenya formalized a Secretariat in 2002 to engage programmatically. During strategic planning for 2003–04, the organization saw a need to act more deliberately on peace and conflict transformation. WCRP-Kenya became an independent inter-religious network in 2004 with a new name, the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK). This national level interfaith mechanism is based on institutional representation of all of Kenya’s major religious institutions (see box) working together to deepen interfaith dialogue and collaboration among members. It has links with the African Council of Religious Leaders and is affiliated with Religions for Peace (formerly WCRP), the international interreligious body.

Through its Peace and National Cohesion Program IRCK promotes peace, reconciliation, and cohesion through dialogue and shared values. Appreciating the various drivers of violence in Kenya, IRCK has engaged at the local level in about 23 counties. In Marsabit and Isiolo, for example, IRCK worked locally to identify drivers of conflict and then create mechanisms to address those problems. IRCK’s steering committee engages on national issues via consultations with each member’s constituent communities, bringing this input to the table to determine national advocacy messaging. IRCK also responds to incidents of violence, showing solidarity across religious communities, especially following violence that has targeted religious communities or property. As an example, IRCK responded in July 2012 after two churches were attacked in Garissa:

“We want to tell the cowards... and perpetrators of these beastly and fiendish acts: You will fail. Kenyans will not fight a religious war, and Christians will not leave Garissa or any other part of Kenya since we are all one. We shall continue to integrate and live as brothers and sisters in all parts of the country and we believe the forces of evil shall be defeated,” said Adan Wachu council chair and secretary general for SUPKEM.

The head of the Anglican Church of Kenya Archbishop Eliud Wabukala on his part said the attacks should not be used to pit Christian against Muslims. “Kenya isn’t facing a religious conflict and this is what we are demonstrating today, and we will continue to work together as faith groups to strengthen our institutions so that they can work together in harmony to overcome these challenges,” Wabukala said.

IRCK has responded to rising tensions around the forthcoming 2017 general election. Faith leaders responded after weekly protests calling for personnel changes in Kenya’s Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), began in April 2016. KCCB, NCCK, and elders from 13 major tribes called for urgent strengthening of the IEBC and other key government agencies and offered to organize county forums and a national dialogue conference to take stock before the 2017 general election. IRCK met with the IEBC on May 26, 2016 and has worked at the center of negotiations with the Jubilee and CORD coalitions on this issue. IRCK joined the Uwiano Platform for Peace, first organized in May 2010, as it relaunched in anticipation of the 2017 elections. The Platform is a joint initiative of the IEBC, NCIC, and PeaceNet Kenya designed to enhance coordination for conflict prevention through strengthening early warning and early response mechanisms prior to national elections among a wide range of partners both at the County and National level.

Other Kenya-grown organizations or initiatives that emphasize an interfaith approach have emerged in response to increasing violence and instability. NGOs in the coast of Kenya came together as the Coast Peace Initiative and approached religious leaders to identify causes of violence in the area following the Likoni clashes of 1997. Through this participation, religious leaders became more aware of the potential for inter-religious approaches and by 2001 agreed to work together as the Coast Inter-Faith Council of Clerics (CICC) Trust. After five years of developing trust with clerics from all religious traditions represented in the coast, CICC formalized as an organization. Chemchemi Ya Ukweli (CYU) was formed in Kenya in 1997 when a group of Catholic Kenyans, concerned about rising ethnic violence, sought nonviolence training from Filipino activists who were successful in that context. Since July 2000, CYU has engaged at the
community level, often facilitating inter-religious dialogue and offering active non-violence training.

The Eastleigh neighborhood in Nairobi, an area populated largely by Somalis, has also produced local inter-faith initiatives. Mennonites formed the **Eastleigh Fellowship Center** in 1978 as a place for Christians and Muslims to come together for dialogue. Today the center hosts sports programming for youth, with basketball teams consisting of Muslims and Christians, and offers peace training for youth. The center is a popular community venue, especially for Somali weddings.\(^{21}\) St. Paul’s University in Limuru established the **Centre for Christian–Muslim Relations in Eastleigh (CCMRE)** in 2010 as a platform for its students and academics to learn about and evaluate inter-religious approaches. This effort has produced, for example, the book “Mapping Eastleigh for Christian–Muslim Relations” (Zapf Chancery Publishers Africa Ltd, 2013); the work involved 12 teams, comprising one Christian and one Muslim each, spatially mapping inter-religious relations.

Global and Pan-African interfaith organizations or movements are also active in Kenya. Founded in 1959, the **Programme for Christian–Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCURA)** is a Christian organization dedicated to fostering constructive Christian and Muslim relations, with headquarters in Nairobi. Its vision is a continent where Christian and Muslim communities, in spite of their differences, work together “for justice, peace, and reconciliation towards the holistic development of the human family and environment”. PROCURA works with church leaders, women, and youth to raise awareness and capacity for Christian–Muslim relations. In Kenya, this includes working with NCCK and KCCB, as well as Muslims. The Global Network of Religions for Children secretariat of **Arigatou International** (a global, Tokyo-based, FIO) is in Nairobi. In 2008, it launched an interfaith and intercultural program called the Learning To live Together Programme (LTLT). This global curriculum for ethics education\(^ {22}\) promotes intercultural and interfaith understanding.\(^ {23}\) Arigatou International is partnering with the Ministry of Education to pilot LTLT in Tana River County, an area particularly affected by interethnic violence that has disrupted the lives of many schoolchildren.\(^ {24}\) **The United Religions Initiative (URI)**, a global grassroots interfaith
network, has its Africa Region headquarters in Nairobi and has helped foster numerous cooperation circles (CC) in Nairobi, the Coast, and Western Kenya. Each CC chooses its own action area of focus but must be composed of people from at least three different religious traditions. **Initiatives of Change (IoFC)**, formerly Moral Re-Armament (MRA), is a worldwide movement of people of diverse cultures that seeks to foster healing and reconciliation by strengthening moral and spiritual foundations. MRA played an active (albeit controversial) role in seeking to transform racial tensions during the Mau Mau rebellion in the 1950s, notably at the Athi River rehabilitation camp. Decades later, IoFC activists launched Clean Kenya Campaigns prior to elections in 1997 and 2002 to mobilize citizens, through Christian and Muslim leaders, to sign pledges to avoid bribery and not react to results with violence. Drawing inspiration from the reconciliation story of an imam and pastor in Nigeria, IoFC invited the two men to engage with local communities in Burnt Forest and Eldoret after the 2007–08 election violence. The peace and reconciliation work of the two Nigerians was the subject of a documentary film, _An African Answer_ (2010).

### Fostering inter-religious relations

Organizations that are not inter-religious in nature have recognized the value of engaging across religious traditions in Kenya. Many faith institutions see a need to foster religious literacy for a plural society. Several faith-based institutions for higher education include inter-religious relations as part of their curriculum or through student life activities. In 2004 St. Paul’s University in Limuru established a department of Islam & Christian Muslim Relations. Tangaza University College’s Institute for Social Ministry offers degrees in peace and justice and fosters inter-religious relations within its student body, including a student peace club. The Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR), part of Hekima College and founded in 2004, integrates inter-religious relations into its curriculum, programming, and student outreach. These programs have begun to equip students and produce alumni, many of whom go on to work in peacebuilding and national cohesion in Kenya and throughout Africa.

Various international FIOs operating in Kenya recognize the need to integrate inter-religious awareness and sensitivity into their development and peace programming. An example is measures to increase the capacity of staff and partners to work in multi-religious settings. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is developing the capacity of staff and partners to engage in inter-religious community action in six African countries, including Kenya, through connector projects that build social cohesion. FIOs engaged in protective services for orphans and vulnerable youth or refugees in Kenya, such as World Vision, Church World Service, CRS, HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), and American Jewish World Service, engage with people from any faith tradition. An official of World Vision Kenya cited “do no harm” as motivation for devising programs to train staff to identify and better respond to the religious dynamics within project settings, including incorporating religious factors into conflict-sensitive project design. Inter-religious relations also provide strategic partnership opportunities for FIOs. Finn Church Aid and the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers engaged with local Muslim and Christian FIOs in the coast to host dialogues for youth, exploring the pull and push factors of radicalization.

### Christian–Muslim relations

Competition between Christians and Muslims has played roles in East Africa since Christianity arrived (Islam established a strong presence first, in the twelfth century). Both world religions were ambitious as they propagated themselves (at the expense of traditional African religions), and eventually came to compete against one another. Disputes took on political and economic tones. Under British colonialism in the twentieth century, Muslims lost their political power in the region and eventually their economic privileges. With support from colonial authorities, Christian missionaries came to monopolize general education, which was infused with Western culture and Christian values. Muslims began to voice concern that colonial authorities were discriminating against them and complained that Muslim values were being compromised. For example, in 1931 African Muslims from the interior sent a memorandum stating as much to the Joint Select Committee on Closer Union. In February 1935, Indian Muslims began raising funds to initiate a Muslim Missionary Movement to counter Christian missionary activities.

The colonial legacy and the preferences it allowed Christian missions are the foundation for many grievances named by Muslims today. Political and socio-economic issues such
as land ownership often fall along ethnic and religious lines; Muslims in the coast, for example, face obstacles when “up-country” business people are given preference. Muslim-majority areas such as the Coast and North Eastern were overlooked for economic development and have far too few schools. Political leaders, since the time of President Moi, have touted their Christian identity in public, accentuating the perception that political power supports Christian interests. Muslims face closer scrutiny in public spaces and in the media. They have also faced discriminatory policies, based on name, when applying for government posts, secondary school, identification cards, and passports. When Somalis were required to carry a second form of identification, some Muslims claimed that immigration policies and practices were more favorable to Christians.

Despite many sources of tension over Kenya’s history, until quite recently the general perception was that interreligious relationships and especially Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya were mostly harmonious. However, this situation has changed and tensions are now a central concern. Several events have brought latent Muslim-Christian suspicions to the fore. Following the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in 1998, the government shut down five Muslim NGOs for suspected links with terrorist networks. The Muslim community reacted strongly against targeting only Muslim NGOs, making claims that this fed into the narrative that Islam is a global threat. Muslim leaders and SUPKEM united in defending the NGOs for their valuable charity work and planned for a mass demonstration in October 1998. The Muslims leadership split, however, with the chairman of CIPK, Shaikh Ali Shee, offering anti-government and anti-American resolutions to the fore. Following the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in 1998, the government shut down five Muslim NGOs for suspected links with terrorist networks. The Muslim community reacted strongly against targeting only Muslim NGOs, making claims that this fed into the narrative that Islam is a global threat. Muslim leaders and SUPKEM united in defending the NGOs for their valuable charity work and planned for a mass demonstration in October 1998. The Muslims leadership split, however, with the chairman of CIPK, Shaikh Ali Shee, offering anti-government and anti-American resolutions in Mombasa before a crowd of 10,000. SUPKEM met with Moi to discuss Muslim grievances. The government used this tactic again following the attacks on Garissa University in 2014 as the bank accounts of three Muslim NGOs were frozen. Muslims also united against the Anti-Terrorism Bill (2003). Muslim leaders, lawyers, and human rights activists opposed the bill as draconian. Muslims feared that the police would arbitrarily arrest them based on attire. A leader from CIPK spoke out against targeting and detaining over 30 Muslims on allegations of terrorism. Around this same time, the issue of the Kadhi’s courts, discussed above, splintered the inter-religious Ufungamano Initiative. Distrust linked to this debate lingers for many involved at the time with wide repercussions for how Christians, as the majority, view Muslims as Kenyan citizens.

The conflict in Somalia and Al-Shabaab’s activity across borders further exacerbate Muslim-Christian tensions and also stoke ethnic tension. In reaction to attacks and threats, Kenyan security tactics have targeted Somali Muslims, both Kenyan citizens and non-citizens. Profiling and security checks for Somali Kenyans and Somali refugees have resulted in frustration and resentment. State threats regarding the Dadaab refugee camp are another source of suspicion and anger from all sides.

Suspicion has extended to all Muslims in Kenya, regardless of ethnicity, due to increasing violent extremism, foreign and homegrown, using religious rhetoric and targeting religious groups or leaders. Distrust between communities has resulted in violent attacks on churches or mosques, though these have been sporadic and localized. As an example, a Muslim cleric, Sheikh Ibrahim Omar, and three others suspected of supporting Al-Shabaab, were shot on the outskirts of Mombasa following the Westgate mall attack in 2013. In retaliation for the extrajudicial killing, rioters burned a Salvation Army church in Majengo district in October 2013. Growing insecurity has caused most places of worship to require security checks at all entrances.

Attacks by Al-Shabaab explicitly dividing Christians from Muslims have further caused suspicion and protectionist rhetoric along sectarian lines. Following the Garissa University attack in April 2015, church leaders issued a statement: “The systematic profiling, isolation and massacre of Christians in different parts of Kenya must stop. While urging our Christians to be peace makers, we will not remain silent as they continue to be massacred.” They also accused Muslim scholars and clerics of not doing enough to condemn the attack or counter radicalization. SUPKEM responded with a statement urging the government to address drivers of radicalization and assured the public that “Contrary to the impression that has been created, we as Muslim scholars have been tirelessly working through various religious institutions and forums to address radicalisation, the threat of terrorism and other crimes.” Months later a group of Muslim bus riders showed solidarity by refusing attackers’ demands to separate from Christian passengers during a bus attack in December 2015.

Proselytism is a dividing force within and between religious traditions. Kenya’s constitution provides for freedom
of religion and belief, including the freedom to manifest any religion through worship, practice, teaching, or observance. Christians have expressed fear of spreading Islam in Kenya, illustrated for example in the response to IPK and the inclusion of the Kadhi courts in the constitution. Christians have also targeted proselytism activities at Muslims. Focused evangelism of Least Reached People Groups (LRPG) has become popular for African Inland Church and others churches in Kenya. The global movement is supported by Western mission agencies such as the Southern Baptist Convention and Wycliffe Bible Translators. In Kenya, 25 groups have been labeled LRPG, of which the vast majority are Muslim. Competition for followers is strongest from Pentecostal and Evangelical church leaders, who seek converts as well as their financial donations. South Korean missionaries first came to Kenya in 1981 and now more Korean missionaries come to Kenya than any other African country. Groups such as the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Church of Scientology are also active in evangelizing work in Kenya. Within Islam, Muslims can be found propagating their tradition and promoting a deeper piety. Muslims may seek to win Muslims (from other sects) or counter radical ideology. In the 1980s, funding from Saudi Arabia and Iran established visible networks of Islamization in Kenya. This activity has brought closer scrutiny of foreign funds provided to build new schools, mosques, and madrasas for possible ties with supposed Wahhabi groups or militant Islamic organizations. Islamic education may also emphasize da'wa, or proselytism. Propagation of exclusionary interpretation of Islam, including definitive ideas about what is and what is not Islamic and who is and who is not a Muslim, is a growing concern for Kenyan Muslims leaders, as well as security forces.

Notes

4. Chesworth “The Church and Islam: Vyama Vingi (Multipartyism) and the Ufungamano Talks.”
5. See Gifford, Christianity, Politics, and Public Life in Kenya.
12. “A Discussion with Francis Kuria, Executive Director of Inter-Religious Council of Kenya.”


24. “Teachers from Tana River County attended Learning to Live Together training workshop.”


27. Interview with the national coordinator for peace and conflict-sensitive programming at World Vision Kenya, November 14, 2014.


Kenya was long viewed as one of the most stable countries in East Africa. Internal conflicts and the spillover affects of regional instability, however, have changed the situation. One result is a wide range of programs and institutions—public, private, and civil society—that focus explicitly on working to build peace. The peace sector expanded rapidly in the wake of the 2007–08 election violence and peace practitioners continue to adapt to drivers of conflict and funding opportunities. There is increasing awareness that weaknesses in development outcomes, notably weak governance and large inequalities, also contribute to instability. Religious actors are a vital part of the peace sector in Kenya with deep roots and experience merging relief, development, and peacebuilding. They were among the first responders during the ethnic clashes 1990s, adapting from immediate needs to long-term solutions. As other drivers of conflict have emerged, religious actors of various types continue to be involved, including collaborating across religious traditions and addressing inter-religious tension.

Focusing attention at the country-level, this study was designed to identify and better understand the roles religion plays in building peace and stability, with particular attention to inter-religious relations and collaboration. Kenya provides a unique case given its dynamic peace and development sectors, complex religious landscape, and the longstanding engagement of religious actors in peace work. Its development history and priorities points to the importance of understanding the roles development actions can play in exacerbating tension and fostering stability. Analysis of existing literature, interviews with peace practitioners, and a workshop held in Nairobi have helped to paint a picture of how the peace sector has developed and religious roles within it.

Kenya’s religious leaders, institutions, and organizations are active within the peace field and many exhibit a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the roles that development work plays in fostering stability and sustainable peace (or, in some instances, exacerbating conflict). Activities can be found at the national level, including advocacy and high-level meetings with government officials, and at the grassroots level in myriad localized peace programs. Within this dynamic space, there is little coordination and rising concern from some that unqualified peace practitioners are emerging seeking financial gain but with little experience or training. This has inspired educational and training opportunities, yet the most skilled practitioners are often lured away with higher salaries to large international NGOs, sometimes FIOs.

As evaluation strategies develop within the peace field, little is known about the most effective approaches or possible unique advantages of faith actors. It is clear, however, that religious actors have a wide reach and long history in Kenya, often in providing services in remote areas. Religious actors also exist within a society that functions largely along ethnic lines and using client/patron systems. They are part and parcel of these social systems. The credibility of religious leaders was tarnished surrounding the 2007–08 elections and violence, when they were seen as partisan and even exacerbating ethnic divides. It is not yet clear they have regained credibility in the eyes of the public and thus capacity to engage effectively to heal unresolved underlying grievances, especially in advance of the 2017 general elections.

This study underscores the many challenges that persist, not only for peace objectives writ large, but also within and among religious communities. The following points highlight themes and challenges that emerged and that point to areas for future engagement.

From the angle of development and peace

Ethnicity is still the primary identity of most Kenyans, and religious communities are often delineated along ethnic lines. Several religious communities in Kenya largely comprise one ethnic group, while others span multiple ethnic groups. Within this context, it is wise to understand where and when religion is able to
span multiple ethnic groups and where it reinforces ethnic boundaries.

**Several drivers of conflict can be mitigated through development approaches that address grievances of marginalization that all too often fall along ethno-religious lines.** Many religious actors are keenly aware of historical grievances and the most pressing development needs, however in-group biases may exist. There is an increasing awareness and desire for religious actors to be a part of strategies that foster justice, restoration, dignity, and healing.

**Conflict-sensitive development includes understanding the religious landscape.** This is increasingly important when extremist tactics include targeting religious sites or leaders thus straining Christian-Muslim relations. Much work is needed to build (or rebuild) understanding and trust between these groups.

**Peace work and conflict prevention is very much focused on youth, as they are often the primary perpetrators of violence.** Increasing concern about radicalization of youth has added new urgency and continues to test the ability of religious institutions to counter extremist narratives and address pressing needs with necessary stakeholders. **Various religious actors are engaging youth** in programs designed to prevent violence and improve livelihood opportunities. Innovative approaches by Muslims actors are experimental and demand special care and tact.
From the angle of religious actors

Healing and reconciliation, notably to deal with unresolved historical pain and trauma, is a vital part of peacebuilding, perhaps particularly so in Kenya given the long and complex roots of today’s conflicts. Faith communities can play distinctive and important roles. Drawing from religious teachings, religious leaders can rebuild relationships, heal communities, and help transform a fragmented society. Religious leaders have embarked on efforts to reshape how Kenyans tell and teach history, drawing on values and ethics to change mindsets and foster a robust sense of patriotism. Faith actors can facilitate dialogue with central and county government to acknowledge past injustices and work toward transparency.

Countering violent extremism is not only an issue for Muslims to address. Some Christians view themselves as primarily victims and pass responsibility to Muslim leaders when Muslims are targeted. Religious ideology and recruiting rhetoric is seen as an internal debate within Muslim faith communities. Indeed, Muslims can lead many efforts but deserve support and collaboration in many ways. It is possible Christians do not feel comfortable or confident in how to engage with Muslim leaders on the issue. This calls for creative and determined approaches to interreligious dialogue.

Women have been key players in strengthening Kenya, however few religious institutions explicitly foster women’s peace participation beyond the grassroots level. Notable exceptions can be found, but lack of will and allocation of resources continues to exclude this segment of society and perpetuate inequality.

Action is needed beyond talk. Dialogue programs are popular but too often lack clear objectives that lead to sustainable peace. Connector projects or exchange trips seem to provide a more lasting impact, though evaluation is needed. Issues of evangelism, tribalism, and risk of losing perceived neutrality based on participation should be carefully approach but clearly addressed. Intra-faith dialogue to address divisions and challenges is cited by many as a priority, but it is not common; intra-Muslim work by the BRAVE initiative shows promise.

Much work is needed for religious leaders—and some religious organizations—to regain trust and credibility. Scandals, corruption, or collusion with political interests have damaged the reputation of many religious actors in Kenya. Beyond managing perceptions of such incidents, religious actors can learn from others’ mistakes; articulate clear strategies for unity, peace, and justice; and slowly rebuild community trust.

Notes
1. See a description of this FIO and its work in Appendix II.
### Appendix I. FIOs Working in Underdeveloped and Muslim-Majority Regions

Table 2: Examples of FIO activities in the Coast and North Eastern regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key areas of concern</th>
<th>FIO engagement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poverty</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2013 roughly eight out of every ten people in Turkana, Mandera and Wajir Counties were poor. The poverty gap is highest in Tana River (46 percent), Kwale (42 percent), Mandera (32 percent), Wajir (32 percent) and Kilifi (31 percent) Counties.</td>
<td>Aga Khan Development Network’s (AKDN) Coastal Rural Support Program aims to diversify livelihood options and to scale up subsistence farming and build resilience to erratic rain patterns. Islamic Relief Kenya is running a Sharia compliant micro credit project that targets vulnerable women, households with orphaned children’s guardians, and widows in Mandera, Wajir, and Garissa.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WASH</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Drought is a concern in these provinces. Low rainfall was reported for both in 2011 and 2012, straining agriculturalists.</td>
<td>Islamic Relief Kenya implements WASH programs in North Eastern, constructing wells and establishing community water resource committees. Caritas Italiana responded to the 2011 food crisis by targeting those affected by droughts. CRS led a Seed System Security Assessment in drought prone areas of the Coast in 2011.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The highest rates for proportion of the population with no education can be found in Turkana (82 percent), Wajir (76 percent), Garissa (74 percent), Mandera (70 percent), and Marsabit (68 percent).</td>
<td>AKDN works in both the Coast and North Eastern through the Education for Marginalized Children in Kenya program (2007–2014) that aims to improve access and retention rates for primary schools. The Catholic Church is very active in the education sector in this region. For example, 80 percent of the public primary schools in Marsabit district were started by the Church.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key areas of concern

#### Nutrition

A June 2015 survey of children under five in 23 drought-prone counties found a global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate of 24.7 percent in Mandera, with a high severe acute malnutrition of 3.7 percent. The percentage of children at risk of malnutrition in Isiolo was at 19.1 percent and in Wajir at 17.2 percent.4


#### Maternal mortality

Maternal mortality is high; North Eastern has the lowest percentage of women with antenatal care (66.5) or delivery by a skilled provider (32.4) or delivery in a health facility (29.2 percent).5

UNFPA and the Ministry of Health engaged with faith leaders, specifically partnering with IRCK to work with religious leaders in the 15 counties with the high rates of maternal mortality. In 2015 religious leaders signed a call to action and committed to increase resources.6

#### HIV/AIDS

HIV prevention knowledge is low; the 2014 DHS indicates that women in Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera counties are less knowledgeable of methods compared with women from other counties; men’s knowledge in Garissa and Mandera is also lower than in other counties.

Since policy consultations held in 2003/04, SUPKEM and KMYA have worked to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS through outreach and education among Muslims. The Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK), based in Mombasa, has also worked to raise awareness. Pathfinder International prioritized relations with religious leaders in its health systems improvement project, including supporting a workshop with Muslims scholars on Islam and health.7

### Notes

Appendix II. Religion at the Development and Peace Nexus in Kenya

Social conflicts in Kenya are, by many measures, on the rise, and they have exploded into violent incidents affecting hundreds of thousands of people. Thus the topic is a central policy issue for Kenya. In response, a wide range of faith-inspired actors, institutions, and organizations have responded, whether to immediate events or in a restricted area or more broadly to what they understand to be key drivers of conflict. Faith actors have often been among the first to respond to communities affected by conflict. FIOs and faith institutions engaged in development work have also adapted and acquired peacebuilding skills when faced with local conflict. The following section highlights roles of faith-inspired actors and organizations active in Kenya’s peacebuilding, which are often combined with development activities. The examples described in this appendix illustrate key actors or engagements at various levels. They do not purport to describe adequately the scale or scope of work across the country or all of the programmatic areas of operation for a given organization.

**From humanitarian relief to post-conflict reconstruction**

Faith-inspired organizations engaged in development or humanitarian assistance were well positioned to respond swiftly when ethnic violence broke out in the Rift Valley and Western province following the first multi-party elections in 1992. Hundreds of displaced people sought refuge, often in churches. Notable responders included Christ the King Cathedral (Catholic) in Nakuru and Lamdiac Catholic church in Njoro. The National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK), a national ecumenical body of Protestant organizations, was among the first organizations to act. NCCK provided humanitarian assistance in the immediate aftermath, later reported at the scale of approximately 40,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in 136 camps. NCCK partnered with the Catholic diocese of Nakuru, and agreed in 1992 that the Catholic diocese had established the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) in April 1991 with a goal of justice education. Partnering with NCCK, CJPC and other departments of the Catholic Church, such as the Order of the Franciscan Brothers, provided emergency relief and later resettlement.

Today, the church is still called to be a protector of the displaced, a minister to the victims of violence, a provider of relief to those threatened with harm. On multiple occasions since 1992, the churches in our Diocese have had to provide safe haven and aid to people fleeing the periodic outbreaks of violence. At one point in 2008, even a group of suspected Mungiki militiamen in retreat ran to the Cathedral to seek sanctuary. We let them in, met with them and called the police to escort them away. — Bishop Cornelius Korir, Catholic Diocese of Eldoret

From January 1994 the NCCK program, with financial support from Dutch Interchurch Aid, adapted as IDPs sought to return home; efforts then were focused on reintegration and healing. Given persistent ethnic tensions, NCCK partnered with Nairobi Peace Initiative–Africa (NPI–Africa) to host Good Neighborliness Seminars with the guiding philosophy that reconciliation would be achieved through constructive dialogue, mutual cooperation, and respect for the rights of individuals and communities. This peace committee approach—strategically targeting community leaders, women, and youth—reached 166 village committees and 24 area committees in nine districts and included monitoring of violent incidents and joint social activities and income generating projects. NCCK also worked with the government administration, from local chiefs and sub-chiefs, chairmen of county councils, and district officers, as well as parliamentarians.
Building the infrastructure for peace from the grassroots

Mounting conflict between clans over water and livestock in the early 1990s, as well as spillover from the failed government in Somalia, prompted Muslim women in Wajir district to organize locally for peace. In late 1993, when safety was an issue throughout the district, Dekha Ibrahim Abdi mobilized other concerned women from different clans to prevent violence at the market. Encouraged by their success, the women shifted attention to work directly with the elders and chiefs of the three major clans involved in the conflict and worked toward a mediation process. They engaged with the district commissioner and a member of parliament to integrate the peace initiative in the District Development Committee. From this, the Wajir Peace and Development Committee was formed, with the district commissioner as chairperson and members including the heads of all government departments, representatives of the various peace groups, religious leaders, NGO representatives, chiefs, and security officers.

The bottom-up peace committee approach from Wajir served as a model that was initially replicated in North Eastern, Upper Eastern, Coast (Tana River district), and North Rift regions. World Vision Kenya (WVK) borrowed heavily from the peace committee model in the North Rift region where it engaged the Pokot, Turkana, and Marakwet communities in the Kerio valley. The POKATUSA Peace and Development Project was developed in the late 1990s in response to a surge in violence among pastoralist groups. Conflict, largely over cattle, scarce grazing pastures, and water sources, was marked by a trend of revenge and retaliation. POKATUSA was designed to improve livelihoods and foster co-existence among the four ethnic groups. In partnership with NCCK, the model combined community peacebuilding activities through community dialogue and rapid response to conflict events. The project employed peace caravans from 2007 to 2010 and religious leaders from 32 denominations collaborated for four “peace crusades” from 2011 to 2013. The project also organized youth and women’s forums and drew from traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

The approach of working through local peace committees was institutionalized into national policy as the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (NSC) was established in 2001. The NSC, located within the ministry of state, was designed to coordinate civil

Coordinating peace efforts

In 1992 Oxfam GB, the Mennonite Central Committee, and the Anglican Development Desk were collaborating on relief efforts in the Rift Valley and Western Kenya. Together, they saw a need for coordination and thus formed the Ethnic Clashes Network (ECN) in 1993. It grew quickly to include two dozen organizations, mostly Nairobi-based and many faith-inspired. The effort shifted to long-term concerns, namely rehabilitation, reconciliation, and human rights. Initial funding came from Oxfam, ActionAid, and Mennonite Central Committee. In its early years, ECN had limited capacity; however, it played a vital role in providing space for people from different parts of the country and from different bases to meet and learn from each other. “ECN meetings were probably the only time in which relief, development

Rift regions. World Vision Kenya (WVK) borrowed heavily from the peace committee model in the North Rift region where it engaged the Pokot, Turkana, and Marakwet communities in the Kerio valley. The POKATUSA Peace and Development Project was developed in the late 1990s in response to a surge in violence among pastoralist groups. Conflict, largely over cattle, scarce grazing pastures, and water sources, was marked by a trend of revenge and retaliation. POKATUSA was designed to improve livelihoods and foster co-existence among the four ethnic groups. In partnership with NCCK, the model combined community peacebuilding activities through community dialogue and rapid response to conflict events. The project employed peace caravans from 2007 to 2010 and religious leaders from 32 denominations collaborated for four “peace crusades” from 2011 to 2013. The project also organized youth and women’s forums and drew from traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

The approach of working through local peace committees was institutionalized into national policy as the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (NSC) was established in 2001. The NSC, located within the ministry of state, was designed to coordinate civil
society peacebuilders and institutions, drawing from key information and state resources. In 2006 the NSC drafted a national policy framework on peacebuilding drawing from lessons learned through local peace committees from the arid regions, particularly the Garissa Declaration, to emphasize sensitivity to cultural values and build on existing traditional conflict resolution methods.

Kenya's peace capacity was spotty, unable to manage the violence that erupted following the 2007–08 elections. As part of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation chaired by H.E. Kofi Annan, a key agenda item was to create a national commission to address "long-term issues with regard to poverty, inequitable distribution of resources, and perceptions of historical injustices and exclusion of segments of the Kenyan society." Parliament passed the National Cohesion and Integration Act in late 2008; among other things, it established laws on ethnic and religious discrimination and created penalties for hate speech. The government established the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) in September 2009 with a mandate to “facilitate and promote equality of opportunity, good relations, harmony and peaceful coexistence between persons of different ethnic and racial backgrounds.” Among its activities and reports, the NCIC has called on faith actors to engage in national cohesion efforts to:

1. Act as agents of social reconciliation by fostering reconciliation between individuals and communities in conflict. Reconciliation must be approached at all levels. Faith-based institutions should take concrete steps towards engaging their constituents in social reconciliation.

2. Foster inter-faith reconciliation, first among the different faith-based institutions, in order to ensure credibility as agents of social reconciliation, and then with the people, particularly in regions in the country where conflicts and tensions exist based on religious differences.

3. Undertake clear engagement with politicians, with the aim of ensuring non-politicisation of faith issues.

### Conflict-sensitive development and connector projects

Many religious institutions and FIOs engaged in development in Kenya have adapted to recurring violence and weakened stability by adding programs to foster peace or by building the peace capacity of their staff and partners. Practitioners and faith leaders have used their distinctive perspectives and access to address community needs, often learning through experimentation.

Catholic Church leaders realized that early initiatives offering peace seminars, often in hotels or at their pastoral centers, were drawing the same people repeatedly. Concerned that peace messages and skills were not being transferred back in the villages to the right people, the Diocese changed tactics to engage communities more directly. When the Catholic Diocese of Eldoret found itself in the middle of violence in 1997, it approached Pokot and Marawet elders who asked the church to help the two communities talk to each other. The resulting discussions led to the formation of a peace project that united people around common needs. The immediate need was a school; the groups decided to build it on the border of the two communities to serve children from both.

Bishop Korir used the same approach following the post election violence in 2007–08. He approached the villages of Yamumbi (primarily Kikuyu) and Kapteldon (primarily Kalenjin) to initiate discussions and rebuild relationships. During initial discussions, the group identified several key issues. One connector project, possible with funding from CRS and Caritas Australia (supported by AusAID), facilitated the building of an eight-kilometer road between the two villages with the intention to provide work and income for the youth. Communities took the leading role in project development and implementation, focusing their attention on working together on an external problem. Bishop Korir noted that praying, though powerful symbolically, is not always effective. "In addition to worship, God requires us actually to work for peace—to understand, love, and assist our neighbors. We cannot hide in our pews in the name of piety."

Dialogue is a well-known peacebuilding approach, at times further strengthened through collaborative action. The United Religions Initiative (URI) (an interreligious movement based in San Francisco) works at the grassroots to bridge differences through action. URI specifically works to bridge religious and cultural differences by bringing people together to work for the good of their communities. In Kenya, URI has helped to foster Cooperation Circles (CC) in Nairobi, the Coast, and Western Kenya. Each CC includes people from at least
three different religious traditions. The groups come together around a specific need or goal, making each group distinctive and unique. In Kibera, a large informal settlement in Nairobi, one CC gathers Christian and Muslim youth under the name of *udungu* (brotherhood) with a goal of neutralizing stereotypes between ethnic and religious groups. The group formed in 2014 around World Environment Day so its activities include community clean up as well as peace forums through dancing and football. Another CC in Kibera gathers young single mothers from different religious and ethnic groups around a common goal of economic development. The women engage in table banking and support each other in starting small businesses. They make handicrafts and clothes when they gather and also find partners to teach them about HIV and AIDS, reproductive health, and other pertinent issues.

*Catholic Relief Services* (CRS) also highlights that they work explicitly to integrate peacebuilding into existing development efforts. CRS launched efforts in six African countries (including Kenya) in 2013 to build the capacity of staff and partners to work in multi-religious contexts. The first phase focuses on peacebuilding and conflict analysis, followed by best practices and lessons learned from inter-faith action. Following training, Muslim and Christian partners jointly implement a ‘connector project’. Through the project, partners have learned that development efforts contribute to peace, justice, and social cohesion. In this way, the delivery of the development becomes more grounded in local realities.

**Peace education and peace clubs**

School children in Kenya can participate in a variety of clubs through their school, including peace clubs. Peace clubs teach children and youth—as well as teachers and administrators—peace skills that are meant to be taken home and spread throughout the community. The approach was institutionalized in 2008 through the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology’s Peace Education Programme. The program endeavors to
increase the capacity of the education sector to promote peace. Over 4,500 education officials and teachers have been directly trained on areas such as understanding peace, peace education, perception and bias, conflict management, and psychosocial intervention approaches. The Ministry has also developed materials to integrate peace education into the national school curriculum. While the program started with a focus on addressing inter-community conflict in Kenya, it has shifted to engaging and countering violent extremism.

Monitoring at schools in 2010 revealed that peace education was not being effectively taught in most schools mainly due to lack of adequate capacity among teachers. To address these challenges, the Ministry is partnering with Arigatou International and its pilot “Learning To Live Together Programme” (LTLT) in Tana River County. Arigatou International, a global FIO committed to building a better world for children, launched its interfaith and intercultural program called LTLT in 2008. The program developed a global curriculum for ethics education that includes promoting intercultural and interfaith understanding. Tana River County, where the pilot is run, is an area particularly affected by interethnic violence that has disrupted the lives of many schoolchildren. The community is home to a number of different ethnic groups, including the Pokomo, Orma, and Wardi, who come from different religious backgrounds and have longstanding tensions over access to land and water. In the future, the LTLT’s organizers hope to implement it on a national scale.

The Fellowship of Christian Council and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (FECCCLAHA), a regional ecumenical organization, provides a platform for justice, peace, healing, and conflict transformation and reconciliation in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa. With funding from the Development Agency Cooperation of the Catholic Church of Austria, and in conjunction with NCCK and Mukuru Slum Development Projects, FECCCLAHA implemented the Mukuru Peace Clubs project as part of its Regional Youth Peace Building Programme in 2013. The project fostered 14 peace clubs with 411 members in a number of area schools, such as the Secondary School Ignatious in Kayaba, Mukuru, Nairobi. In addition to providing a forum to preach peace to youth, peace clubs facilitate youth involvement in community service and create job and networking opportunities.

The Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) partners with Grassroots Development Initiative (GDI) to promote peace clubs in Kisumu. The partnership with GDI is part of MCC’s Global Family Education Program, which supports peace education. GDI runs peace clubs in 30 different schools in Kisumu, with organizational aspirations to create a comprehensive peace education program. The organization also trains teachers in restorative discipline, conflict resolution, and confronting gender discrimination.

NCCK supports peace education both in its work in refugee camps and through its member churches. NCCK launched the Refugees Services Project in Dadaab refugee camps in 1995. A key area of work there is peace education, which targets both in-school and out-of-school youth, as well as teachers and peace workers. A 2009 report describes peace training for 225 youth out of school, 75 religious leaders, 150 teachers, and 130 peer mediators; 58 peace workers also received refresher courses on peace building. With support from Tearfund, NCCK’s Church and Community Mobilization Process (CMMP) has helped 32 congregations in 8 member churches with community engagement since 2012. Phase two of CCMP will focus on peace education in the Western and North Rift regions.

Engaging and empowering youth
The Kenyan Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA) was formed after youth worked with SUPKEM in 2001 and 2002 on a survey to assess the impact of HIV and AIDS among Muslims. It highlighted the need for a youth organization for Muslims. KMYA’s mandate is to empower young Muslims through constructive engagement and participation in leadership, peace and security, gender issues, education, economic empowerment, and health. KMYA’s peace and security work spans advocacy, dialogue, and direct engagement with Muslim youth at the local level. The group has worked to enhance youth participation in civic engagement in the Coast, the North East province, and Nairobi. KMYA has also conducted listening circles for Muslim youth to better understand radicalization and youths’ grievances. For example, the Office of the President of Kenya worked with KMYA, Finn Church Aid, and the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers to hold dialogues with youth in six coastal counties in 2015 to open lines of communication and build
### Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism

In 2015 a group of Muslims in Kenya launched BRAVE (Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism) as a Muslim-led intra-faith movement designed to address the pull factors to extremism, which they define as ideology, narratives, and counter-narratives. It focuses on actions to prevent recruitment, legitimation of extremist ideologies, and intimidation by extremist groups. BRAVE addresses the misuse of religion for violent extremist ends through a strategy centered on ideological elements related to violent extremism and terrorism. It also focuses on returnees, young persons (including children and youth), and adults in areas considered a hotspot (Nairobi, Upper Eastern, North Eastern, Coast, and West Kenya). The organization launched a manual and resource guide in October 2015 that provides guidance for early warning signs for parents, teachers, religious leaders, and communities to identify youth that may be vulnerable or on the path to radicalization. The resource offers narratives to counter messages used by extremists, describing misinterpretations of the Qur’an and Hadith by violent extremist groups. This tool is aimed to address information asymmetries through a range of media platforms, including social media. The BRAVE program also has plans to prevent division between Christians and Muslims in Kenya, an objective of violent extremists, by working with Christian religious leaders and opinion shapers.

KMYA has also engaged with Muslim youth to empower them to stay in school, find employment, start a business, and participate in civic activities and decision making. KMYA has trained over 1,000 youth in leadership and business skills, as well as life skills. It leads a youth livelihood project in Kilifi focused on agro-economic ventures. In Mombasa, KMYA collaborates on a youth employment action research initiative to assess opportunities for growth in youth employment and enterprise, as well as barriers for youth. KMYA formed an NGO in Kibera (called Baraza La Waalim Kibera) that gathers teachers from mainstream schools and madrassas with an aim to raise standards of education in madrassas in Kibera specifically, and also across the country. In December 2013 KMYA held a national youth camp for Muslim girls aged 12 through 23 focused on motivation in school and aspirations for university; a similar, separate, camp for boys was held.

**Church World Service** (CWS) established its Kenya office in 1978, responding to humanitarian and development needs in the country and region. One project, Giving Hope, focuses on orphans and vulnerable children. It began in Rwanda in 2004, working with children whose parents were killed in the genocide, and came to Kenya in 2006, working with children whose parents had died from AIDS. Giving Hope supports economic development for child head of households and technical skills for youth who were unable to complete formal education. Over time, participants learn leadership skills and became mentors for others. CWS was working with youth in Mathare informal settlement in Nairobi prior to the violence in 2007–08. These youth were able to reach out directly to youth involved in perpetrating the violence in Mathare and convince them to come to the peace table to discuss their grievances, something no other group was able to do due to mistrust. The Giving Hope program also works with drug rehabilitation and provides youth small grants for income-generating activities. CWS has also trained youth in Kisumu, Mombasa, and Nairobi’s informal settlements on peacebuilding skills; this small project also researches drivers of conflict, training youth participants to design and conduct a survey. CWS works on various protection projects including safe school zones and since March 2014, safe spaces for LGBTI persons.

The **Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics (CICC)** is comprised of clerics from diverse faiths in the coast region, namely Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and African Traditionalists. Clerics concerned about violence in the region began to meet in the late 1990s and created a formal organization in 2001. It has worked specifically with youth in Kwale district in six locations with the goal of reducing vulnerability to religious radicalization. Supported by the British High
Commission, youth received training on peacebuilding, entrepreneurship, bookkeeping, inter-religious dialogue, and farming techniques such as bee keeping and goat rearing from 2006 to 2008. As a result of the project, the Kwale Interfaith Youth Association (KIYA) was formed and registered; KIYA disburses micro-credit to its members. Following deadly riots in Mombasa after the death of Sheikh Aboud Rogo in 2012, CICC gathered youth to assess drivers of tension and draft plans to mitigate future violence. With CRS support, CICC’s People to People Peace (3Ps) project has encouraged women to defend their rights and be recognized for their role in bridging ethnic and cultural divides in Likoni. The Peaceful Co-existence project gathered religious leaders, women, and youth for outreach in Mombasa, Kwale, and Kilifi prior to the 2013 elections; the project also encouraged youth to acquire national IDs and register to vote.

Women, peace, and security

The Inter-Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK) launched the Kenya Women of Faith Network (KWFN) in 2003 as a way to increase the involvement of women in IRCK activities, including peace and national cohesion. KWFN also focuses on gender-based violence and female genital mutilation, training over 150 women since 2007 with support from organizations such as the African Council of Religious Leaders and UNICEF. Following the election violence in 2007–08, KWFN trained eleven members on conflict mediation. From this beginning, the women trained over 30 women in the Isiolo chapter of KWFN in alternative dispute resolution skills. These skills were put to use following the destruction of a Muslim prayer structure at a secondary school in April 2014. Accusations and tensions grew as angry youth took to the street and social media. KWFN worked with the county commissioner and religious leaders to call for interfaith solidarity and peace.

Since 1999, the Association of Sisterhoods of KCCB’s Justice and Peace Commission has trained 340 Catholic women during summer-long intensive seminars. The women trainees come from throughout Kenya and include mostly laywomen as well as nuns. After learning tools for defusing small, local conflicts the women return to their communities and share their knowledge by creating “peacemaking circles.” The women train other women from the neighborhood to act as local mediators. One sister reported that the focus begins with building peace in the family; “If there is no peace in the family, there is no peace anywhere. Women are central in peacemaking, starting with their own children.” The peacemaking circles also provide a support structure for those who have suffered traumatic events or struggle with issues like HIV and AIDS. The groups also provide economic opportunities for the women. One circle in Kibera gathers 30 women weekly for seminars—on conflict resolution, empowerment, and health—and to learn beading techniques to make small crafts to sell at local markets.

Muslim women have a legacy of working for peace in Kenya, yet few formal programs or organizations currently focus on empowering Muslim women as peacebuilders. Dekha Ibrahim Abdi worked with other women, such as Nuria Abdullahi Abdi, to form Wajir Women for Peace in the late 1990s. The group later expanded to include community members, religious leaders, youth, and others, forming the Wajir Peace and Development Committee. More recently Muslim mothers have united, mostly informally, to discuss the risks of youth radicalization and strategies to protect their own children. In interviews with KMYA and other Muslim women working for peace, they have reported concerns from mothers and requests for more information and sharing. The sensitive nature of this work makes it difficult to identify the extent of this conversation and key actors. An example of a publicly known effort is Sisters Without Borders. After the attack on Westgate Mall in 2013, women from the Somali community gathered to create a consortium of 12 organizations working to counter radicalization. At the community level, Sisters Without Borders has worked with mothers of sons recruited by Al-Shabaab, persuading them to speak out, and training them on prevention and early warning signs. SUPKEM also hosts a new initiative, Engage Jamii Initiative, which will work with women at the community level on issues such as security, countering violent extremism, trauma counseling, and bridging the gap between law enforcers and security personnel. The young initiative will also use an interfaith approach.
Notes


10. See more at http://www.peacenetkenya.or.ke/.


12. The “Modogashe Declaration” peace agreement signed in April 2001 was revised and drafted under the auspices of the Office of the President and bilateral and multilateral donors making it a landmark event in the effort to craft law from the bottom-up rather than the top-down. The result was the new "Garissa Declaration," which was signed by the districts of Isiolo, Garissa, Marsabit, Moyale, Samburu, Meru North, Tana River, Mandera, Wajir, and Ijara.


27. "Teachers from Tana River County attended Learning to Live Together training workshop.


29. "Teachers from Tana River County attended Learning to Live Together training workshop."
32. “Youth Peace Clubs Initiatives in Mukuru, Nairobi, Kenya.”
34. Interview with William Kiptoo, November 11, 2014.
35. “Peace education in photos.”
41. For example, “Youth dialogue in Kenya on preventing violent extremism.”
44. Interview with KMYA, November 13, 2014.
45. Interview with CWs, November 2014.
52. Email with KWDF representatives.
55. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EH5uNP1ekr.