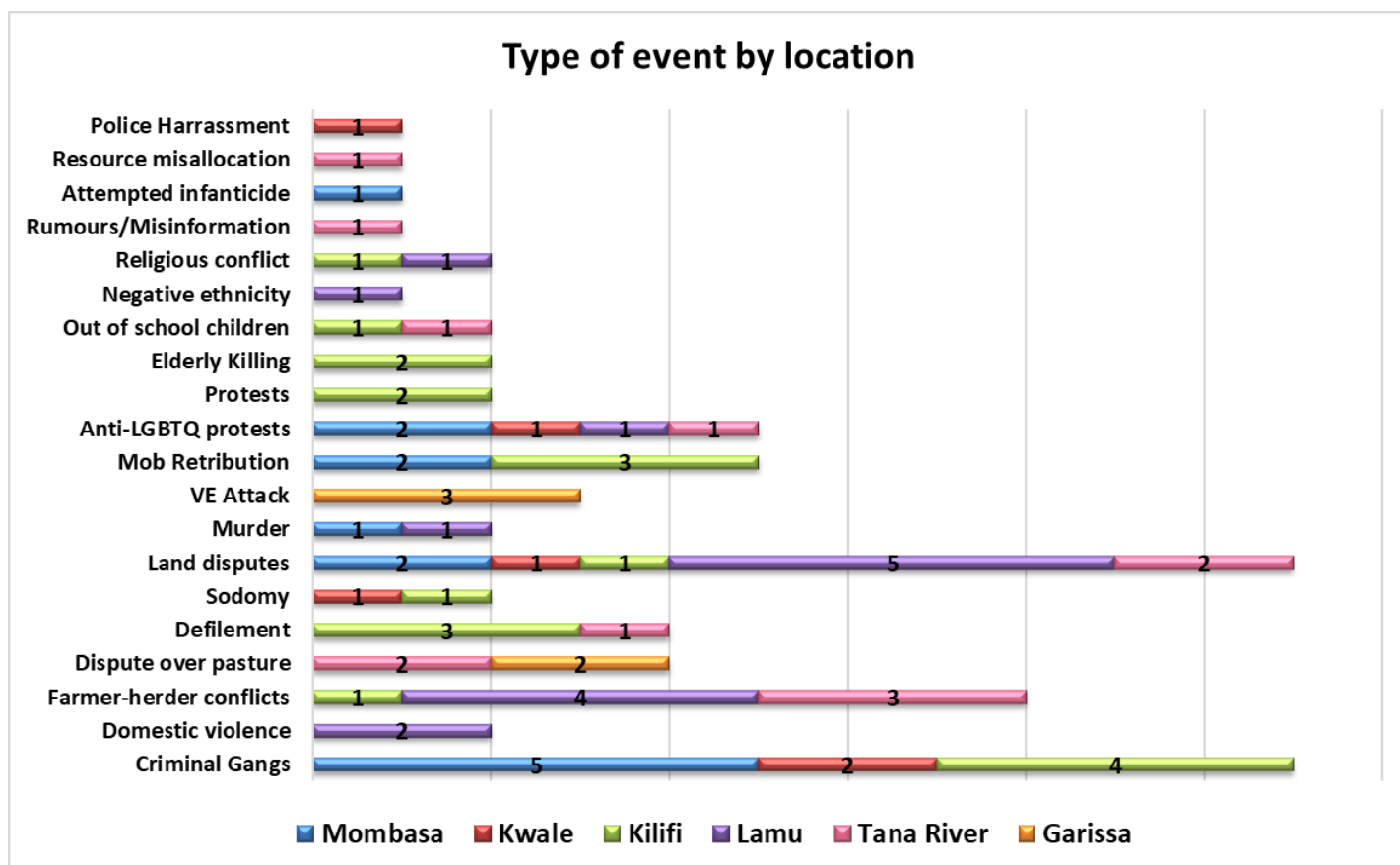


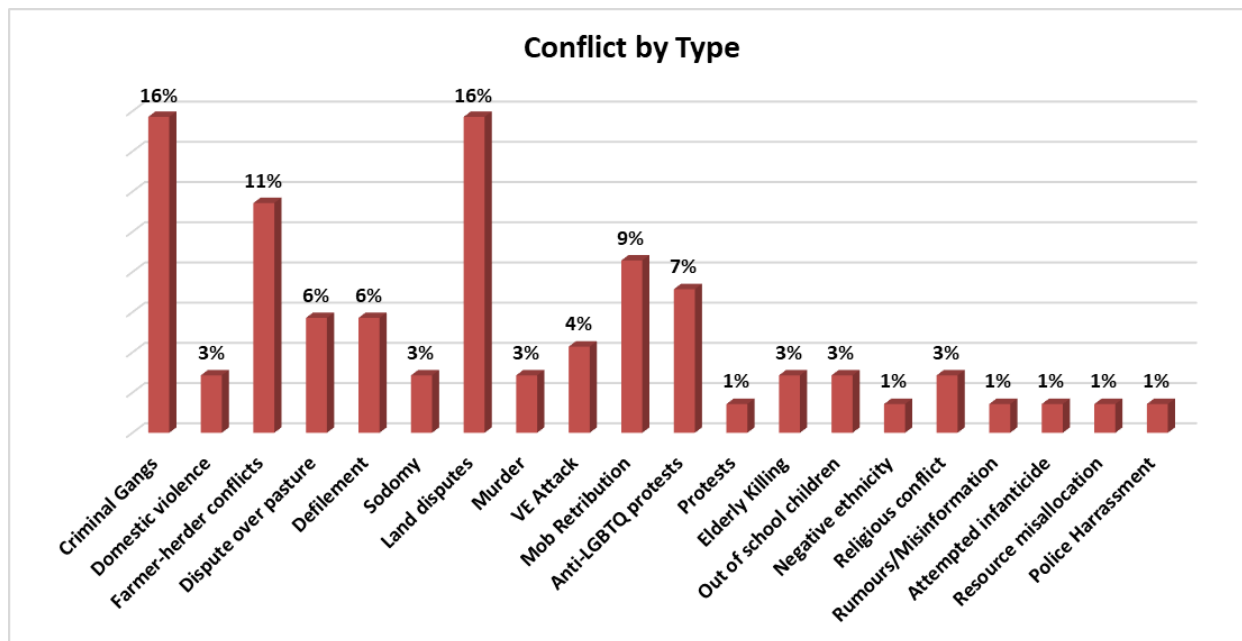
CONFLICT SNAPSHOT

APRIL 5, 2023

Conflict Evolution

Search for Common Ground (Search) in collaboration with the Human Rights Agenda (HURIA), Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI), Kiunga Youth Bunge Initiative (KYBI), Tana River Peace, Reconciliation and Development (TRPRD) and Ijara Women for Peace has established an Early Warning and Early Response (EWER) system through embedded community observation and social media listening, with the aim to harness the shared information between communities, civil society organisations, and government authorities to identify and address imminent threats in the post-election phase, particularly looking at conflict trends, drivers and locations that could potentially trigger or experience violence. Social media listening monitors online conversations, with a focus on Facebook and TikTok, to track hate speech and misinformation trends and how these could potentially affect conflicts offline.





Between January 16th 2023 and March 30th 2023, Kenya’s electoral context at the Coast and Garissa recorded **70 conflict incidents**, marked by **heightened Land disputes (11)** in Lamu, Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi and Tana River counties, **criminal gang activities (11)** in urban counties of Mombasa, Kilifi and Kwale counties, **Farmer-herder conflicts (8)** in Lamu, Kilifi and Tana River counties, **escalated mob retribution (5)** in Kilifi and Mombasa counties, **Anti-LGBTQ protests and targeting (5)** in Mombasa, Kwale, Lamu and Tana River counties, **disputes over pasture (4)** in Garissa and Tana River counties, **child defilements (4)** in Kilifi and Tana River counties including child **sodomy (2)** in Kwale and Kilifi counties, **domestic disputes (2)** in Lamu county, **Murder (2)** in Lamu and Mombasa counties, **Violent Extremeism attacks (3)** in Garissa county, increase in **Out of School children** in Tana River and Kilifi counties, **Religious conflicts (2)** in Kilifi and Lamu counties, **General protests** in Kilifi, **Elderly killing (2)** in Kilifi county, **Negative ethnicity** in Lamu, **Rumours/Misinformation** in Tana River, **Attempted infanticide** in Mombasa county, **Resource misallocation** in Tana River county and **Police harrassment** in Kwale county.

Nationally, the remarks by the Deputy President that government appointments are a preserve of those who campaigned and voted for Kenya Kwanza coalition¹ has sparked a public online uproar, with the opposition heavily criticising the remarks as polarising and alluding to exclusion based on political affiliation.

¹ Citizen Digital, Gachagua: [Gov’t Is A Company: Some Kenyans Are Majority Shareholders. Others Have None](#), 19th February 2023

"This government is a company that has shares. There are owners who have the majority of shares, and those with just a few, while others do not have any. You invested in this government and you must reap. You sowed, tilled, put manure and irrigated, and now it is time to reap...You invested in this company owned by William Ruto and Rigathi Gachagua you must harvest. You invested and your time to harvest is now... Even they (the opposition) will harvest, but they have to wait for you to finish harvesting." **The Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, Kericho, 19th February 2023**

What started as major national peaceful rallies, dubbed 'public consultations with the people to brainstorm on the direction the country is taking', have since turned to weekly protests dubbed "date with destiny", happening every Monday and Thursday from 20th March in Nairobi and Kisumu manifesting as running and stone throwing battles between the protesters and police. The opposition has been calling on President William Ruto to step down and hand over power to Raila Odinga, who they claim is the rightful winner of the August 2022 presidential poll despite the Supreme Court ruling and IEBC tally that declared President William Ruto the president. The Azimio parties made changes on social media pages as well, with conspicuous hashtag of #RutoMustGo².

In addition to rejecting President Ruto's government, the Azimio leaders listed 7 other main areas of contention with President William Ruto's Kenya Kwanza administration³, being **High cost of Living** on petrol, electricity, unga and school fees, **Discrimination in state appointments** in which critical appointments to public offices go only to members of one ethnic group, **Privatisation of Kenya** taking issue with selling state owned entities and corporations, **Audit of IEBC servers** used in the 2022 General Election, terming it "a step towards electoral justice and ensuring the integrity of elections in future", **Assembling the new IEBC** without consulting other stakeholders and interested parties, **Assault on multiparty democracy** through efforts to make Kenya a one-party state by buying legislators and **Regime incompetence**.

These anti-government protests have resulted in loss of lives, with at least 3 people reported dead from injuries sustained from the protest, some shot by police while others succumbing to attacks by protestors by stabbing and stone throwing and destruction of property and businesses through looting, stoning and arson where a church and mosque were torched in Kibera⁴. Retaliatory attacks were recorded as well on 27th March, where a

² The Star, [Azimio parties make changes on social media pages ahead of protest](#), 20th March 2023

³ Citizen Digital, [Azimio MPs: 7 Reasons Why We Are Holding A Mass Protest On Monday](#), 16th March 2023

⁴ Citizen Tv Kenya, [Church, Mosque, kindergarten and houses burnt in Kibera](#), 28th March 2023

gas factory linked to opposition leader Raila Odinga was vandalised⁵ while nearly at the same time hundreds stormed the farm of ex-President Uhuru Kenyatta setting it on fire, felling trees as well as stealing over 1000 sheep⁶. Some looters at the Kenyatta family farm claimed they were getting even for business losses caused by protests organised by Mr Odinga and allegedly sponsored by Mr Kenyatta, seemingly echoing words uttered by the Majority leader in parliament as below:

"If property of any Kenyan is attacked, we will also invade your farms and those who have no land will also be able to own land... You will pay the price if you continue to instigate violence and bloodshed in this country and that is my message to none other than Uhuru Kenyatta, the sponsor, sole sponsor, singular financier of Azimio and mercenary that is Raila Odinga." **Hon. Kimani Ichung'wah, Majority Leader in Parliament, 20th March 2023**

The government estimated an economic decline of Ksh. 2 billion when the first protest was held on 20th March 2023⁷.

Further to this violence, Raila Odinga has alleged an assassination attempt⁸ on his life during Thursday's 30th March anti-government protests in Nairobi, claiming his car was shot at seven times with live bullets.

The Communication Authority of Kenya (CA) castigated six TV stations namely, Citizen TV, NTV, K24, KBC, TV47 and Ebru TV, for violating the regulator's set standards in their live coverage of the Azimio-led protests by airing images likely to cause either panic or incitement.

"The coverage depicted scenes that could cause panic or incitement to the public, threatening peace and cohesion in the country...Failure to adhere to the outlined obligations shall be acting in breach of licence conditions, which shall attract liability under relevant provisions of revocation of broadcast licence and broadcast frequencies," **CA's Director-General Ezra Chiloba, 23rd March 2023**

The Department of Criminal Investigation (DCI) crackdown of violent protestors captured on media resulted in heightened hostility against media persons as protesters and state

⁵ Standard Digital, [Vandals destroy property at Raila Odinga's East Africa Spectre Limited](#), 27th March 2023

⁶ BBC News, [Kenya's Azimio protests: Hundreds storm farm of ex-President Uhuru Kenyatta](#), 27th March 2023

⁷ Citizen Tv Kenya, [DP Gachagua says Azimio's protests caused the economy Ksh. 2 billion on Monday morning alone](#), 20th March 2023

⁸ Citizen Digital, [Raila Alleges Assassination Attempt, Says Car Shot At 7 Times With Live Bullets](#), 30th March, 2023

agents targeted media persons covering the demonstrations in which more than 20 journalists were injured⁹.

In the coastal counties and Garissa, an **upsurge of land disputes** were witnessed in the reporting period, majorly concentrated in Lamu county, particularly Mavuno area where a boundary dispute was reported on 30th January resulting on denied access to road amenity, land grabbing was reported on 15th February and ownership wrangle on 28th February. In Manyatta area, Lamu county, a boundary dispute exists pitting the local school and residents as part of the school has been used for cemetery, a road erected to the RDU and some part occupied by squatters. In Witu area, a land dispute between families turned violent resulting in grievous assault on one person on 26th February. Land management challenges in Lamu emanating from land grabbing, landlessness and squatters sparked a political conflict between the elected leaders on March 4th during the President's visit to the area, linking it to violent extremism incidences in the county¹⁰, further polarising the communities.

On 27th February displaced residents of Dongo Kundu **protested** complaining of low compensation for land affected by the Dongo Kundu Special Economic Zone project in Likoni, Mombasa county. In Kwale county, land ownership disputes have been observed between the Prison department and a family at Tsimba Golini ward, Matuga sub-county on 5th February. Similarly, land ownership disputes are **fuelling rumours** in Kombani area, Kwale that there may be chaos after Ramadhan should they not be addressed. In Kilifi county, a land dispute between brothers turned fatal on 11th February after one of them was **killed** in the dispute. In Tana River, a land dispute in Madogo resulted in destruction of property on 5th February.

Criminal activities by juvenile gangs persisted in the observation period, with cases of attacks now concentrated in the urban counties of Mombasa, Kwale and Kilifi counties, machete and knife attacks being the mode of operation. In Mombasa county, machete wielding juveniles attacked on 21st January in Misikiti Miwili, 23rd January in Kikambala, 27th January in Bamburi, 19th February in Majengo and 22nd February in Munas' Cafe resulting in injuries to 3 people. In Kwale county, aggravated assault was meted to the public on 8th February in Ngombeni area and 18th February in Diani-Gombato area resulting in injuries to two people. In Kilifi county, gang attacks were recorded on 23rd January in Kikambala, on 27th January in Casanova Shella attributed to team mbavu gang, on 12th March where Senior village elder was targeted and brutally beaten by a youth gang at his home in Malindi Migingo over perceived selling out (revealing) of their identities, in

⁹ VOA, [Journalists Attacked as Anti-Government Protests Continue in Kenya](#), 31st March 2023

¹⁰ Uzalendo News, [Lamu Ranch Owners Condemn Marubu 'hate speech' on Lamu Land owners](#), 9th March 2023

Jilore Malindi where team tiger gang beat up a young man on 6th March. On 18th March 2023, a 24 years old youth was arrested in connection with Wakali Kwanza gang after he was caught with police uniforms at his house, whose owner was a police officer in Mtwapa murdered some months ago. Kilifi county has been observed as a hideout for illegal gangs from Mombasa county, particularly Wakali kwanza gang who escape to Kilifi to hide whenever there is a security operation in Mombasa. Kaloleni town centre, Kwakidunga village was particularly observed as a hideout due to the congestion of houses, as well as Kasufuni, Ngala, Takaye and Sabasaba locations.

A conflict between bodabodas and traffic officers in Mrima village, Kwale county was reported on 10th March where the officers were accused of **harassment** when carrying out their mandate.

Mob retribution cases involving suspects of crime have escalated during the reporting period, with a new shift to Kilifi county observed. A boda boda rider suspected of luring and preying on school girls was beaten by unknown youths in Vithunguni, Jilore Ward, Kilifi county on 4th February. On 23rd February in Ganda area, Malindi in Kilifi county, a boy was murdered by irate public for stealing goats. On 28th February in Ganze, Kilifi county, two men were killed by a mob by burning on allegations of stealing cows. On 9th February in Mtopanga, Mombasa county, a man was beaten by a mob almost to death after being accused of stealing clothes. On 26th February in Mombasa county, Junda ward Kadzonzo ground, a man was beaten to death by boda boda riders and later set on fire on allegations of being part of a criminal gang that had caused tension over the week after a series of criminal activities.

Elderly killings were observed in Mavueni area where an old man was accused of witchcraft after his son committed suicide. An attempt was made on the old man's life on 21st January but luckily he survived the ordeal. A 82 year old man and his two wives were lynched on accusation of practising witchcraft¹¹ in Kibarani Ward in Kilifi North Sub County following the death of their 28-year-old grandson.

Farmer-herder conflicts manifesting as trespass to farms and destruction of crops have been observed in Lamu county on 29th January in Mpeketoni, 2nd February at Juhudi area, on 6th February at Mkunumbi and on 26th March at Witu which resulted to the death of the farmer and critical injuries to the herder. In Kilifi county, Jilore area, herders were denied from grazing and accessing Lake Jilore by farmers whose farms are around the lake. In Tana River county, Majengo area, herders from Masalani crossed the Majengo bridge, dominantly habited by farmers, in search of pasture and water for their animals resulting in

¹¹ The Nation, [Kilifi man and his two wives lynched for 'bewitching, killing' grandson](#), 29th January 2023

an all night chase and injuries to herders who refused to vacate on 23rd January. In retaliation, on 24th January, bodaboda riders transporting milk from Majengo to Masalani were attacked and injured. On 12th March at Wenje, a farmer was attacked by herders and sustained severe machete injuries on allegations of stealing goats.

Dispute over pasture and water between the Ormas and Garre pastoral communities turned violent in Waldena location, Tana River county on 22nd January where more than 9 people sustained machete injuries. In Gafuru area near Wenje, a dispute over grazing land was recorded on 23rd January resulting in injuries where several people were beaten. In Garissa township, an influx of animals and migrating herders was observed during the period resulting in water and pasture stress as the ongoing drought has already diminished the resources. On 13th February in Waberi ward, Kunaso, one person lost his life after violence arose over water for animals at a well. This conflict has the potential of retaliatory attacks as in the Somali culture when one person is killed by another's, they demand for someone from the attackers families' death as revenge.

Terror attacks were recorded in Garissa county on 17th January at Bodhai where a convoy of Chinese and LAPSET workers were attacked by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) along Algis-Malhadhon Adam road resulting in serious injuries to two KDF officers and four civilians. On 6th February, a multiagency team ambushed three suspected Al-shabaab militants planting improvised explosive devices (IED) along Sedahgose-Amuma road, killing one one of them, capturing one terror suspect alive while the third suspect escaped with injuries. One IED, one AK-47 rifle and assorted materials were recovered in the process. On 14th February, a police vehicle ran over an IED along Dadaab Garissa road between Hagarbul and Saretho resulting in several fatalities.

The President's visit to Lamu county on March 4th sparked a **religious conflict** as well, manifesting as a perception of exclusion expressed by the majority muslim community during the prayer meeting held in Mpeketoni which was dominated by christian faith leaders. In Kilifi county, a christian faith leader was arrested on 23rd March for directing congregants including children to fast for 40 days resulting in the death of two children.

The Supreme court landmark decision on freedom of association for the LGBTQ community has sparked backlash and protests from communities across the country, with **anti-LGBTQ protests** held on 27th February in Mombasa county, in Kwale county and on 17th March in Lamu county. Resulting from this backlash, members of the LGBTQ community faced hostility with many escaping from the coastal counties¹². A Popular actor/content creator violently attacked by three armed men on allegation of him being gay

¹² The Star, [Gay people fear for their lives, escape Mombasa over planned demos](#), 16th March 2023

on 16th March, in Bamburi, Mombasa county. In Tana River county, a gay couple faced online shaming and bullying after uncensored photos of them were leaked online on February 16th.

Sexual gender based violence against minors was observed in Kwale, Kilifi and Tana River counties manifesting as defilements and sodomy. In Kilifi county, Kisumu Ndogo area in Malindi, an 8 year old girl was defiled on 8th February. The suspect was reported as a multiple sex offender well known in the area, whose traditional belief that his business will boom after such acts was reported as the root cause. Sodomy cases were reported in Malindi area on 24th January young boys of age between 11 and 15 were reported as being sodomised. On 7th February at Sokoni ward, Kilifi, a teenage girl was reported impregnated after defilement. On 16th March, a 13 year old girl reported being sexually harassed by her uncle. In Tana River county, Wenje location, a rape case was reported on a young somali girl on 8th March. As of today 5th April, there has been no report of response to these cases yet. The culture of silence as well as Maslaha (traditional dispute resolution mechanism) has been noted as an impediment to formal justice processes.

Domestic violence manifesting as intimate partner violence was reported in Lamu county on 23rd January in Mpeketoni area and on 28th January in Mavuno area, both cases fuelled by drug abuse, resulting in injuries. On 23rd February in Mombasa, a mother **attempted infanticide** to her new born baby by throwing in toilet attributing the cause to an unwanted pregnancy.

The nullification of Magarini ward Member of Parliament elections on 3rd March resulted in **protests** by ODM supporters who felt uncontended with the court verdict. Violent protests marked by arson and street demonstrations were recorded on March 30th by students from Pwani University in Kilifi county following a fatal road traffic accident involving their school bus that resulted in the deaths of 18 people.

The roll out of junior secondary school (JSS) resulted in a temporary increase in **out of school children** in the late January and early February period in Kilifi and Tana River counties. This was attributed to teething challenges¹³ in implementing the new Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), mainly the additional levies burdening parents. In Tana River county, **resources allocated** for bursaries resulted in online uproar after it emerged 'non-locals' students were awarded significantly higher amounts to the tune of hundred thousands against the natives allocation of thousands¹⁴.

¹³ The Standard, [The hot mess that is Junior Secondary](#), 13th March 2023

¹⁴ Opera News, [Uproar in Tana River County After a Student is Allocated 180k Bursary](#), 6th February 2023

Risks and Opportunity Analysis

In the current context, the Azimio protests have produced two forms of violence, the violence of protesters and retaliatory attacks.¹⁵ While post-election violence is nothing new in Kenya, attacks on the property of political leaders signals a big shift to a class war, pitting the hustlers v/s the dynasties. The youth resistance movement¹⁶ unveiled by Raila Odinga could potentially further mobilise youth to violence if unchecked.

Land disputes in Lamu county stemming from ownership threaten to metamorphosize into a religious conflict between christians, largely settlers in the mainland, and majority muslims locals fuelled by political leaders. While these disputes have historically plagued all the coastal counties, and at one point were at the core of calls for secession of Kenya's coast region, they are seemingly more violent in Lamu and sometimes linked to incidents of violent extremism. Given the historical nature of this grievance and adverse outcomes associated, it requires escalation to relevant authorities and representatives with the mandates and capacity to address them as they may not be resolved by local community actors alone.

Mob retribution has recorded a new shift where Kilifi county recorded significantly higher incidences of mob lynching in the observation period. Coupled with the community perception that Kilifi county has become a hideout of criminal gang members from Mombasa further heightens the risk of escalated killings to suspects of crime. Further to this, local gangs have been identified in various localities, such as team tandika from Migingo location, team Cosovo from Cosovo location, team Jeneza from Furunzi location and team chrome from Ndugu Mnani location.

Recommendations

Based on the trends observed, there is a need to focus on community led, multi-actor and networked security mechanisms to address crimes related to criminal gangs and mob retribution.

Further to this, escalation of land disputes through the referral consultation meetings with national stakeholders will provide a platform to effectively include authorities and representatives with the mandates and capacity to address land matters as they are beyond the scope of the local community.

While the coastal counties and Garissa have not recorded violent demonstrations arising from this heightened post-election stalemate, the opposition has a massive support base in

¹⁵ The Nation Column, Peter Kagwanja, [Save Kenya's democracy from the new class war](#), April 02, 2023

¹⁶ The Nation, [Raila Odinga unveils youth resistance movement](#), February 06, 2023

all the coastal counties and Garissa. While political leaders may be castigated for fuelling community violence, they remain a crucial mass influential voice to engage with in post election peace processes. The 'baba amesema' slogan is gaining momentum in online communities, alluding to the influence of the opposing leader, Hon. Raila Odinga, has on the masses.



This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Search for Common Ground and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.