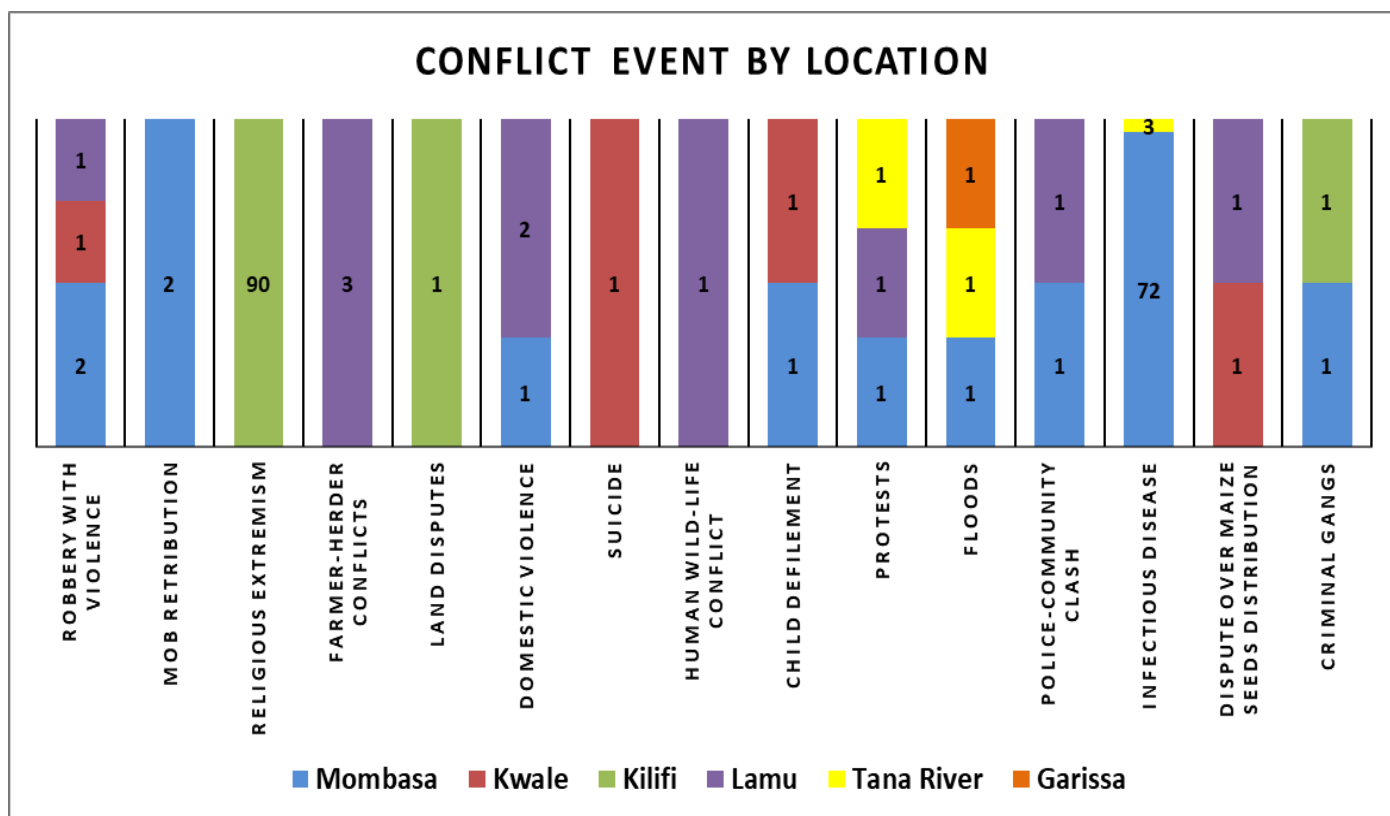


## CONFLICT SNAPSHOT

APRIL 25, 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 April 1st 2023 and April 25th 2023, Kenya's electoral context at the Coast and Garissa recorded **32 conflict incidents**, marked by **massacre deaths resulting from religious extremism (90)** in Kilifi county, **Infectious disease (75)** in Mombasa and Tana River counties, **Robbery with violence (4)** in Mombasa, Kwale and Lamu counties, **Farmer-herder conflicts (3)** in Lamu county, **Flooding crisis (3)** in Mombasa, Tana River and Garissa counties, **domestic violence (3)** in Lamu and Mombasa counties, **Protests (3)** in Lamu, Mombasa and Tana River, **Mob retribution (2)** in Mombasa county, counties, **criminal gang activities (2)** in Mombasa and Kilifi counties, **child defilements (2)** in Mombasa and Kwale counties, **Police v/s community clashes (2)** in Mombasa and Lamu counties, **Dispute over distribution of maize seeds (2)** in Lamu and Kwale counties, **Land disputes (1)** in Kwale county, **Suicide (1)** in Kwale county, and **Human-wildlife conflict (1)** in Lamu county.

Nationally, the Azimio la Umoja leader Raila Odinga called off the fourth round of anti-government protests on 2nd April to allow for dialogue with the government<sup>1</sup>, moments after President William Ruto's address to the nation appealing for reconciliation<sup>2</sup>, but warned of a resumption to the demonstrations should the government renege on the deal to immediately form the bi-partisan parliamentary committee.

*"We acknowledge Mr Ruto's olive branch for a dialogue on key issues raised by Azimio la Umoja. To us this is a positive development[...]. We agree that a balanced parliamentary process co-chaired by both sides and backed by experts from both sides should proceed[...]"*  
**Hon. Raila Odinga, April 2 2023.**

However, two days later, on 4th April 2023, the opposition leader presented a new demand for parties outside parliament to be involved in the talks as well as consider other issues such as the cost of living and the opening of the IEBC servers among others, at odds with President William Ruto's plan for negotiations to be held only within parliament<sup>3</sup>. The bipartisan parliamentary talks gained further opposition when veteran soldiers objected to the talks saying the parliament was compromised<sup>4</sup>. The Deputy President would further resist the talks, laying a condition that the Azimio La Umoja One Kenya coalition leader

<sup>1</sup> The Standard, [Raila Odinga calls off Monday's Azimio protests](#), 2nd April 2023

<sup>2</sup> Citizen TV Kenya, [President William Ruto's State of the nation address \(Full Speech\)](#), 2nd April 2023

<sup>3</sup> Reuters, [Kenyan opposition leader presents new demand for electoral reform talks](#), 4th April 2023

<sup>4</sup> NTV Kenya, [Veteran military officers oppose bipartisan talks, say parliament is compromised](#), 6th April 2023

Raila Odinga must publicly recognize William Ruto as Kenya's President before any dialogue between the government and the opposition<sup>5</sup>.

*"Before we can even agree to talk to him, he must first acknowledge in public that William Ruto is the president of Kenya[...] How do you talk to somebody who doesn't recognize your legitimacy? Tell your MPs, because they are elected, to talk to ours[...] But us, we cannot talk to Raila. On what grounds? Who is he in Kenya? He is just an ordinary citizen. But if he has his own personal issues, let him come and we listen to him. But we cannot have an engagement with Raila Odinga because who is he in Kenya? He is not elected by anybody."* **The Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua speaking during a church service in Mathira, Nyeri County, 9th April 2023**

Both teams would later unveil the composition of their bi-parisan teams and hold the first seating on 18th April, amidst concerns over youth exclusion<sup>6</sup>, but limiting the scope of engagement to only IEBC recruitment contrary to Azimio demands.

*"It's just purely oligarchs who do not necessarily take a front door when they are going to the streets, [...] It's the young people who are holding pangas saying we want the cost of living to go down. So how will they express their concerns when they are not in that team? [...]"* **Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association CEO Anthony Bumula, 14th April 2023**

Currently, the fate of the bi-partisan talks hangs in the balance as the two teams differed on the composition of the teams among other issues. While the Kenya Kwanza team argues that the talks have been adjourned, the Azimio side says the talks now stand suspended<sup>7</sup>. The Azimio National Executive Council chairman Wycliffe Oparanya would later announce the resumption of nationwide mass protests on May 2<sup>8</sup>.

In response to the violent anti-government protests witnessed in the country, the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya coalition party wrote to the International Criminal Court (ICC) calling for the pre-trial chamber to authorise investigations into Kenya's political situation, particularly against the Police Inspector General Japhet Koome over what the coalition described as "his express orders to police" to kill and maim opposition protestors<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Citizen Digital, [Gachagua: We Won't Engage Raila Until He First Recognizes Ruto As President](#), April 09, 2023

<sup>6</sup> The Star, [Revise bi-partisan list to include youths - KYPA CEO tells Azimio](#), 14th April 2023

<sup>7</sup> The Nation, [Fate of bi-partisan talks hangs in the balance as team fails to agree on membership](#), April 25, 2023

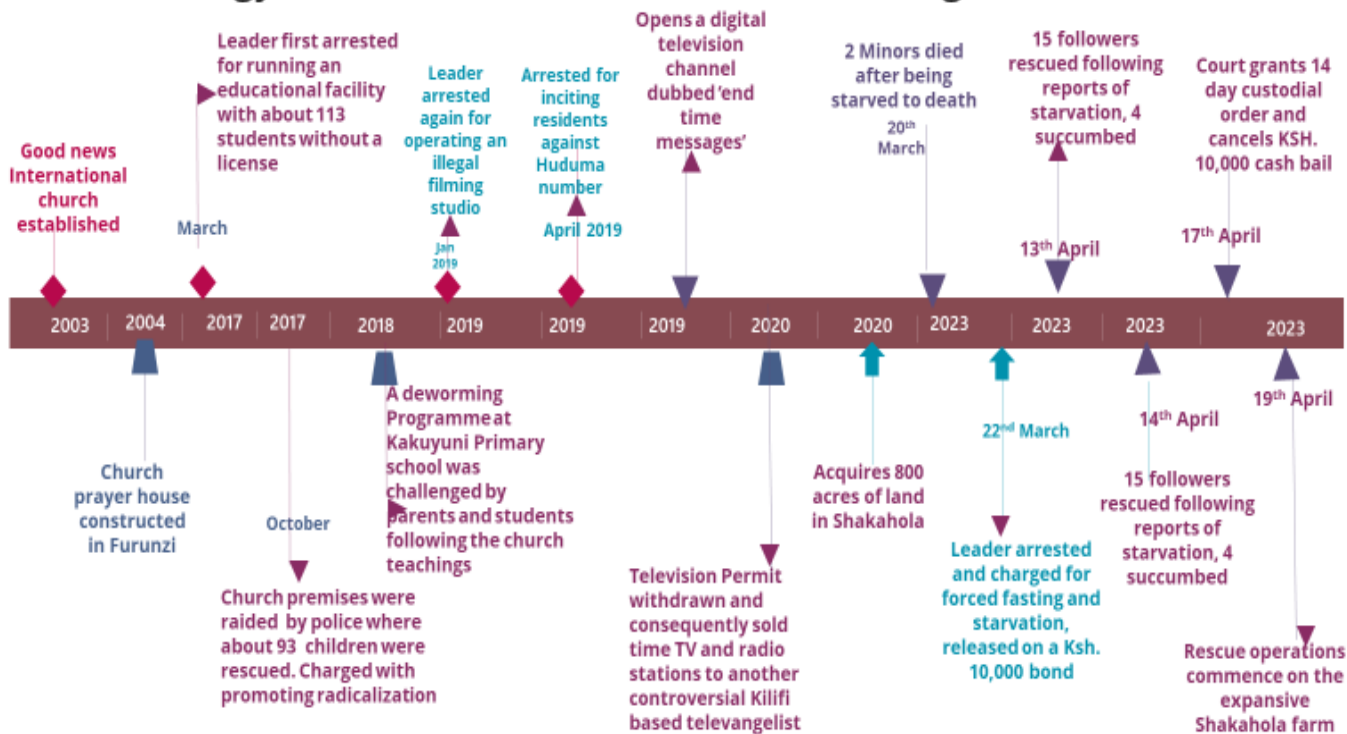
<sup>8</sup> The Nation, [Azimio to resume anti-govt protests on Tuesday May 2](#), April 24, 2023

<sup>9</sup> Citizen Digital, [Azimio Petitions ICC To Probe IG Koome Over Police Excesses During Protests](#), April 14, 2023

In addition, through his lawyer, Raila Odinga filed a complaint at Kware Police Station in Embakasi following an alleged attempt on his life during the anti-government protests held on 30th March. The complaint notes police officers allegedly made their way to Odinga's vehicle and fired approximately 10 rounds of live ammunition at it<sup>10</sup>.

In the coastal counties and Garissa, in what is unfolding as the worst case of **religious extremism** tragedy recorded in the history of the nation, the death toll resulting from fasting to death doctrine by the Malindi based christian faith leader, 'in a bid to meet with Jesus', has risen to 90 with 34 people rescued barely alive as of 25th April<sup>11</sup>. The dead bodies were dug out of 28 shallow graves in the expansive 800 acre Shakahola farm in Malindi, Kilifi county. Established in 2003, the extreme doctrine revolves around end times, forsaking all private ownership, surrendering earthly possessions, including gainful quitting employment and school for children, and relocating to a communal place.

## Chronology of events of the Malindi Based religious extremism



<sup>10</sup> Citizen Digital, [Raila Files Complaint Over Alleged Attempt On His Life, Wants 2 Police Officers Probed](#), April 04, 2023

<sup>11</sup> Citizen Digital, [Shakahola Massacre: Two People Arrested As Police Exhume 17 More Bodies, Tally Rises To 90](#), April 25, 2023

According to the Kenya Red Cross in Kilifi county, the number of missing persons currently stands at 212 (99males, 113 females)<sup>12</sup>.

Mombasa county is on high alert following an **infectious outbreak** of rotavirus on 11th April that has claimed the lives of 10 children and infected several others<sup>13</sup>. In Tana River county, Hola location, 2 persons succumbed to cholera on 13th April. Coupled with the ongoing long rains that have resulted in **flash floods** in parts of Mombasa, Tana River and Garissa county, the risk of escalated cases of the diarrhoeal diseases significantly increases. In Mombasa county, the Disaster Management Committee has reported over 1,671 persons directly affected by the floods, 22 houses in Miritini Madukani, Mburukenge, Kipevu, and Chaani area completely damaged and 35 partially damaged. The most affected areas by the flash floods are Miritini, Jomvu, Mikindani, Kazonzo, Bakarani, Magogoni, Tudor, Buxton, Ziwani, Majengo, Msikiti Ridhwa, Dolphin, Mlolongo, Migadini, Mwembeni, Shonda and Timbwani<sup>14</sup>.

**Robberies and gang related violence** has persisted in Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi and Lamu counties. On 7th April, a robbery case was observed in Ngombeni, Kwale county involving youths. On 8th April in Juhudi Kibaoni area, Lamu county, a confrontation ensued between the police and an armed robber resisting arrest. On 10th April, one man sustained machete injuries after an attack by a youth gang in Vittek area, Chaani location. There was tension in saba saba area, Malindi in Kilifi county on 10th April, after two youths clashed over bodaboda parking space and one called for backup from an armed gang in Maweni. The angry gang moved in saba saba area armed with knives and wanting revenge on behalf of the youth. On 17th April, robbery suspects killed one security guard and stole an unknown amount of money from a shop in Ujamaa Likoni, Mombasa County. On 24th April in Mavuno area, Lamu county, a young boy sustained injuries after attempting to rob a household of electricals. On 17th April, Police rescued two suspected motorbike thieves from **mob retribution** opposite Ralli house, Nyerere avenue in Mombasa county.

The string of robberies and violence that have persisted in Mombasa over five months resulted in a **protest** on 18th April held by Somali business community living in Likoni in Mombasa county citing targeting of their shops resulting in loss of millions of money<sup>15</sup>. Protests rocked Lamu county on 4th April after **youths clashed with police officers** following the death of a suspected drug peddler. The rioting youths, while armed with clubs

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<sup>12</sup> Capital News, [Number Of Missing People In Pastor Mackenzie's Shakahola Forest Cult Rises To 212](#), April 25, 2023

<sup>13</sup> Daily Nation, [Rotavirus claims lives of 14 children in two weeks in Mombasa](#), April 24, 2023

<sup>14</sup> Kenya News Agency, [Mombasa Appeals For Humanitarian Aid For Flood Victims](#), April 24, 2023

<sup>15</sup> Alshifaa Media Kenya, [JAMII YA WASOMALI YALALAMIKIA HALI YA USALAMA LIKONI - MOMBASA](#) April 18, 2023

and stones, barricaded the Lamu Old Town-King Fahad Hospital route, burning tyres to protest the killing of 42-year-old Miji Aboud alias Zambavu shortly after he was arrested by a group of police officers. One police officer was critically injured after the mob pelted him with stones and descended on him with clubs before he was rescued by colleagues<sup>16</sup>. In Tana River county, a peaceful demonstration was held on 16th April in Kuriti Bisanhargesa sublocation in Bangale over the boundary dispute between Kitui and Tana River counties.

**Sexual gender based violence against minors** was observed in Mombasa and Kwale counties manifesting as defilements. In Mombasa county, Mwandoni area in Kisauni, an elderly man escaped a mob beating on 4th April after defiling two teenagers and impregnating one of them after luring them with ksh. 400 . In Bumbuna village, Vanga ward Kwale county, a man has been reportedly defiling his 16 year old daughter since the minor was 13 years old and is now pregnant.

**Domestic violence** manifesting as intimate partner violence was reported in Lamu county on 5th April in Kibaoni and Mpeketoni locations in Lamu county. On 5th April, a man committed **suicide** by hanging after his siblings denied him an inheritance of their fathers' land in Vanga, Kwale county.

**Farmer-herder conflicts** manifesting as trespass to farms have persisted in Lamu county, Mavuno location, with three incidents reported on 4th, 10th and 18th April involving quarrelling and machete attacks. A **human-wildlife conflict** was observed in Mavuno, Lamu county on 11th April after a hippopotamus wandered to a public primary school in the area disrupting learning.

A **land dispute** in Kaloleni, Kilifi county pitting the St.luke's hospital management against the Kaloleni community over land holding the facility has persisted after the lease to the missionaries under ACK church for a period of 99 years ended. A majority of the community members desired the hospital to be handed over to the County government and not the ACK church due to dissatisfaction over its management thus denying the renewal of the land lease.

Distribution of maize seeds in Lamu west in Lamu county resulted in chaos and an online uproar after some sections of the community discredited the exercise over concerns of exclusion, inadequacy and biases in identification of beneficiaries and farmers trainings. In Kwale county, Dzombo location, farmers decried distribution of fake seeds on 21st April.

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<sup>16</sup> The Nation, '[Police strangled my brother for swallowing drugs](#)'. April 04, 2023

Post 1: *“Elimu gani ya Lamu West na mbegu zilienda East? Anonymous* [Loosely translated in English: *“What’s the purpose of the trainings in Lamu West yet the seeds have been distributed in Lamu East?”*], Whatsapp post, Lamu county group, 4th April 2023

Post 2: [*“This is taking farmers for granted honestly. They should have used that money to buy more seeds instead of raining already skilled farmers..”*], Whatsapp post, Lamu county group, 4th April 2023

Post 3: [*“ Kwa wale ambao wamekosa mbegu za mahindi na fertiliser, (hidden) amejiyakulia mbegu za mahindi bundles 50 na mifuko 50 ya fertiliser. Endeni kwake saa hii anawagawanyia rafiki zake..”*] [Loosely translated in English, *“ for those that missed on the maize seeds distribution, (hidden) has received 50 bags of maize seeds and 50 bags of fertiliser, go to his place right now, he is distributing to his friends..”*] Facebook post, Lamu county, 4th April 2023

## Risks and Opportunity Analysis

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The religious violence witnessed that has resulted in massacre in Kilifi county has snowballed to criminal investigations on other controversial faith leaders In Kilifi county with reports that some people might have been victims of murder as a punishment for trying to escape. The role of local security actors and intelligence systems as well as community reporting has been questioned in the matter as to how such horrific deaths thrived undetected, pointing to a need to enhance local security investigative and response structures. Further to this, the tragedy has brought about blanket condemnation of the church in online spaces, targeting evangelical and protestants groups.

The ongoing heavy rains and resulting flash floods pre-disposes communities on Mombasa, Tana River and Garissa counties to an escalated risk of spiking cases of Rotavirus and Cholera diseases respectively. A humanitarian crisis is imminent from the flash floods causing structural damage as the weatherman has warned residents to brace for heavy rain accompanied by strong winds<sup>17</sup>.

## Recommendations

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Based on the trends observed, while the advancement of religious freedoms is enshrined in the Kenyan constitution, the apparent misuse by religious fundamentalists needs to be limited by advocating for clear policies and laws. While identification of the bodies in the

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<sup>17</sup>Kenya Broadcasting Station, [MET Advisory: Brace for heavy rains and strong winds this week](#), Apr. 18, 2023

Kilifi massacre continues, psychosocial support remains necessary to the families of those affected by the unravelling deaths, suffering and injuries.

Humanitarian aid and support to WASH interventions is necessary in the face of ongoing flash floods and diarrhoeal diseases outbreak to avert an imminent health crisis in the flooded zones of Mombasa and Tana River counties.



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