

**EFFECT OF FREQUENCY OF TERROR INCIDENTS ON NATIONAL UNITY AND  
GOVERNANCE IN LAMU COUNTY, KENYA**

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Accepted, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Abstract**

Terrorism poses a significant global concern, threatening the fabric of societies and governance structures. This research study aimed to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the effect of terror activities on national unity and governance within the unique of Lamu County. The study objective was to evaluate the effect of frequency of terror incidents on national unity and governance in Lamu County. The research employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. To achieve its objectives, the study randomly selected 100 participants from Lamu County, representing a diverse range of stakeholders including community members, government officials, and religious leaders. The data collection method involved structured questionnaires. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data. The findings are expected to inform policy formulation, resource allocation, and community engagement initiatives aimed at fostering resilience, promoting social cohesion, and safeguarding the integrity of governance institutions. Descriptive statistics revealed significant negative effects of terror incidents on various aspects of community life and governance, including diminished sense of unity, heightened fear and anxiety, erosion of trust in local governance structures, and challenges to maintaining law and order. Regression analysis further confirmed the influence of frequency on national unity and governance, explaining 84.3% of the variance in the dependent variable. The findings revealed the multifaceted effect of terrorism on social cohesion and governance effectiveness, highlighting the urgent need for cohesive responses and effective security measures to address these challenges and promote resilience within the community.

**Keywords:** *Frequency of Terror Incidents, National Unity and Governance, Lamu County*

**INTRODUCTION**

According to Ruteere & Kegoro, (2014) in their book titled Terrorism, Criminal Justice, and Politics, the rise of terrorism globally has presented significant challenges to governance structures and societal well-being, they further poses that Acts of violence and intimidation targeting civilians and governments demand effective strategies to address and mitigate their impact. They maintain that understanding the intricate relationship between terrorism and governance is crucial for developing comprehensive approaches to combat this threat. Based on policies Ruteere & Kegoro, (2014), scholarly research conducted globally has examined the impact of terrorism on governance systems, emphasizing the need for effective responses and. Studies have highlighted the vulnerabilities exposed by major terrorist incidents, such as the 9/11 attacks in the United States and the London bombings, emphasizing the crucial role

of governance in countering terrorism. The African continent has been significantly affected by terrorism, posing unique challenges to governance and societal stability. According to policies Ruteere & Kegoro, (2014), various countries, including Nigeria, Somalia, and Mali, have experienced the devastating effects of terrorism on governance structures and the well-being of their populations.

In Africa, terrorism has left a profound mark on various nations, presenting unique challenges to governance and societal stability. Countries such as Nigeria, Somalia, and Mali have experienced the devastating effects of terrorism on governance structures and the well-being of their populations. Boko Haram's activities in Nigeria, for example, have not only caused widespread violence but have also severely strained governance systems and disrupted social order as posed by Neumann, (2014). The presence of Al-Shabaab in Somalia has similarly challenged governance mechanisms and undermined efforts towards peace and stability as stated by Neumann, (2014).

Terrorism has emerged as a significant threat, affecting regional stability and governance structures within East Africa. The 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania highlighted the vulnerabilities of governance systems and led to a reevaluation of counterterrorism strategies according to the publication of National Counterterrorism Center, on annual report on terrorism (2019). Furthermore, the activities of Al-Shabaab have had far-reaching implications for governance in the region. Kenya, in particular, has faced numerous attacks, including the Westgate Mall attack in 2013 and the Garissa University attack in 2015, which exposed weaknesses in governance structures and emphasized the need for effective responses to terrorism as reported by National Counterterrorism Center, (2019). Kenya, as a country, has been confronted with persistent threats from terrorism due to its geographic location and strategic significance. The nation has experienced a series of attacks that have severely impacted governance structures and national unity. According National Counterterrorism Center, (2019) (NCTC), the Nairobi bombing in 1998, carried out by Al-Qaeda, shook the nation and resulted in a significant loss of life. The DusitD2 complex attack in 2019 further highlighted the challenges faced by governance systems in effectively responding to and preventing acts of terrorism as further explained by NCTC (2019) publications.

Lamu County, located on the coast of Kenya, has witnessed a surge in terrorist incidents in recent years. This unique region, with its rich cultural heritage and historical significance, serves as an intriguing case study for exploring the impact of terrorism on governance and national unity. The attacks in Lamu County have tested the effectiveness of local governance structures in ensuring the safety of residents and preserving social cohesion as reiterated by National Counterterrorism Center, (2019) publications.

### **Problem Statement**

Terrorism has emerged as a global threat, undermining governance structures and challenging societal well-being as stated in Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research by Smith published in 2018. While existing research has examined the impact of terrorism on governance, there is a lack of comprehensive studies focusing specifically on Lamu County, Kenya. Lamu County has experienced a surge in terrorist incidents, posing significant challenges to national unity and governance according to 2019 NCTC on annual reports on terrorism.

The unique dynamics and vulnerabilities of Lamu County make it a compelling case study for evaluating the impact of terrorism on governance and national unity based on NCTC reports of 2019. By understanding the specific effects of terror activities on Lamu County, policymakers can develop targeted strategies to address the vulnerabilities and enhance governance mechanisms. Despite the existing literature on terrorism and governance in Kenya, there are gaps that need to be addressed. Previous studies have explored governance

challenges in countering terrorism at the national level, but there is limited examination of the role of international cooperation and collaboration as posed by Ruteere and George Kegoro. Additionally, scholars Nzioki and Njoka have studied the involvement of civil society organizations in countering but there is a need to assess the effectiveness of coordination mechanisms between these organizations and government agencies. By addressing these gaps, the research can contribute to a deeper understanding of the governance challenges and opportunities in countering terrorism in Kenya as informed by the research done by Ruteere & Kegoro in 2014.

The problem statement aims to evaluate the impact of terrorism on national unity and governance in Lamu County, Kenya. The study will utilize a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. The research will examine the unique challenges and vulnerabilities faced by Lamu County, including the economic losses resulting from terror attacks, the effectiveness of community-based initiatives, the role of cultural beliefs, and the influence of media coverage on residents' attitudes towards terrorism as posed by Huddy & Feldman, in their book titled Annual Review of Political Science published in 2009.

By focusing on Lamu County, the study provides tailored recommendations and interventions to address the specific needs and challenges faced by the county in enhancing governance mechanisms, fostering national unity, and countering the threat of terrorism. The outcomes of this research will have practical implications for improving governance strategies, informing policy development, and promoting national unity in Lamu County as informed conducted by Ruteere and Kegoro. By understanding the dynamics between terrorism and governance in this specific context, policymakers can develop more effective counterterrorism measures and address the root causes of terrorism, ultimately contributing to long-term stability and security in Lamu County and Kenya as a whole.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effect of frequency of terror incidents on national unity and governance in Lamu County.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Empirical Review**

Terrorism is a complex issue that extends beyond its immediate impacts, affecting social, economic, and psychological aspects of society according to Johnson, 2018. The frequency of terror attacks in Lamu has significant implications for people's perception of national unity and trust in the government. Understanding the interconnectedness of these factors is crucial for effectively addressing the challenges posed by terrorism. According to Smith, (2019), frequent terror attacks create a climate of fear, insecurity, and uncertainty within the local community. The loss of lives, destruction of property, and disruption of daily life caused by these attacks have a profound psychological impact on individuals, heightening their fears and anxieties as posed by Johnson, (2018). The persistent threat of terrorism can create a sense of vulnerability and mistrust among the population, leading to changes in their behavior and attitudes.

Frequency of terror attacks has been established to have a significant impact on governance in Kenya. According to Kanyingi (2018), frequencies of terrorist attacks have led to increased militarization and securitization of the state, leading to the violation of human rights and civil liberties. Additionally, terrorism has led to increased corruption as security personnel engage in corrupt activities to counter terrorism. According to Kimenyi (2021), corruption creates an environment that can facilitate the growth of terrorist groups as corrupt officials may provide support and protection to terrorist groups.

Southers (2014) notes that the primary and direct consequences of terrorism are the psychological effects it inflicts on individuals. When a terrorist event occurs, people are

profoundly and either directly or indirectly impacted psychologically. Stress levels rise, and individuals become fearful for their safety. Waxman (2020) describes terrorism as a form of psychological warfare against society, emphasizing that the frequency and lethality of attacks directly correlate with the extent of psychological impact. Grieger (2016) observes that those affected by a terrorist attack may suffer from acute stress disorder (AST) or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He also highlights that depression and bereavement may be more common outcomes, particularly for individuals who have lost loved ones (Grieger, 2016). A prevalent symptom of PTSD and AST is the avoidance of people or situations reminiscent of the traumatic experiences (Waxman, 2020).

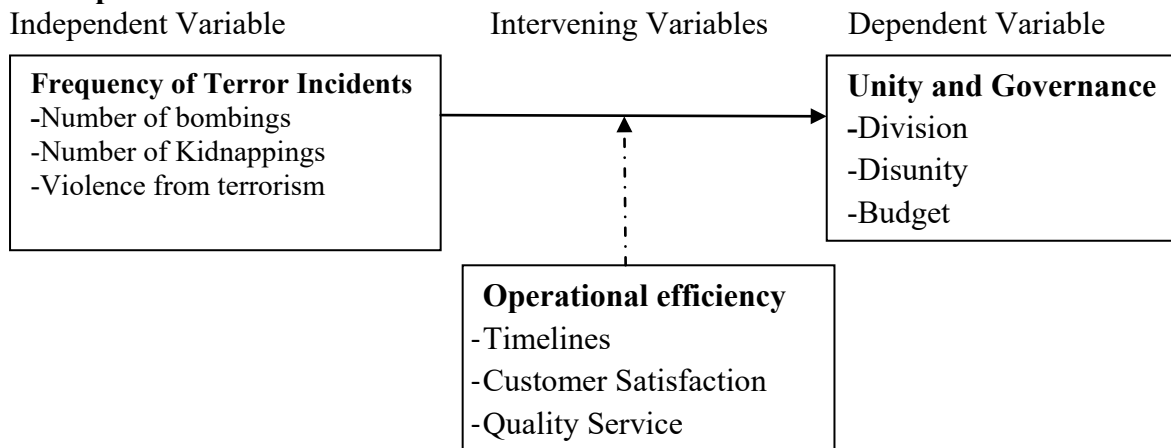
Studies on Israelis following multiple attacks indicate that terrorism has the potential to instill fear and concern for personal safety that extends beyond the physical damage caused by the attacks (Friedland & Merari, 1985). Terrorism seeks to cultivate an atmosphere of anxiety, worry, and fear for personal safety by employing unpredictable tactics, making it challenging to foresee where the next attack will occur. Research conducted after the September 11, 2001 attacks in the USA reveals that terrorism has a psychological impact even on those who were not directly exposed to the attacks (Philman, 2011). The extensive media coverage of terrorist attacks can further contribute to psychological trauma within a population. Waxman (2021) also underscores that terrorism affects people's daily lives, irrespective of whether they were directly affected by the events or not.

### Theoretical Review

#### Social Identity Theory

This theory can be used to understand the impact of terrorism on national unity. According to Social Identity Theory, people tend to identify with groups based on shared characteristics such as ethnicity, religion, or region (Tajfel, 1982). Tajfel, (1982) highlights that terrorist attacks can create fear and panic, leading people to retreat into their ethnic, religious, or regional enclaves, thereby creating a fragmentation of society. In Kenya's coastal region, terrorism has led to increased ethnic and religious tensions, particularly between Muslims and Christians as posed by Johnson, (2018). These tensions have been fueled by the perception that one group is being targeted by terrorists more than the other. For example, attacks on churches and hotels frequented by Christian tourists have increased tensions between the Muslim and Christian communities. Similarly, attacks on mosques and Muslim clerics have led to increased tensions among Muslims. According to Johnson, (2018), the resulting polarization and fragmentation of society have had a significant impact on national unity. The Kenyan government has struggled to address the underlying causes of these tensions and build a united and cohesive society.

#### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

Source: Author, (2023)

The conceptual framework highlighted shows the relationship of the variables. In the conceptual framework, the independent variable is frequency of terror incidents. The dependent variable is unity, and governance.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study employed a mixed method, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis. The research design followed a sequential explanatory approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The target population for this study was individuals living within Lamu County.

The target population was selected based on their proximity to areas that have been affected by terror activities, their involvement in community development initiatives, and their knowledge of the impact of terror activities on national unity and governance. The sample size for this research was 100 participants, randomly selected from the target population.

Data collection methods used in this research was structured questionnaires. Qualitative data analysis involved thematic analysis. Quantitative data analysis employed statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, summarized and present the data. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analyses, were used to examine relationships between variables of interest.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The respondents for this study were individuals living within Lamu County. A total of 100 questionnaires were administered to the respondents, however 83 successfully filled the questionnaire giving the study 83% response rate.

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

Results in this section describe the study variable in light of data collected. Descriptive statistics through both quantitative and qualitative data was presented.

#### **Frequency of Terror Incidents and National Unity and Governance**

The objective of the study sought to establish the effects of Frequency of terror incidents National Unity and Governance. To achieve this, a set of 5-point Likert questions were asked on frequency of terror incidents where 1 was No extent and 5 very great extent and the results were as shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Frequency of Terror Incidents**

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
The frequency of terror incidents in Lamu County has a negative impact on the sense of unity among its residents.	83	1	5	3.56	.905
The increased frequency of terror incidents in Lamu County contributes to heightened fear and anxiety among the population	83	2	5	4.43	.872
The frequent occurrence of terror incidents undermines trust in local governance structures in Lamu County	83	3	5	4.39	.723
Residents in Lamu County believe that the frequency of terror incidents negatively affects community cohesion.	83	2	5	4.22	.948
The continuous occurrence of terror incidents hinders the ability of local authorities in Lamu County to maintain law and order.	83	3	5	4.31	.724

The findings regarding the effect of terror incidents on national unity and governance in Lamu County paint a comprehensive picture of the significant challenges faced by the community in response to these security threats. Firstly, with a mean of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 0.905, it's evident that the frequency of terror incidents has a discernible negative impact on the sense of unity among residents, suggesting varying degrees of agreement among respondents. Additionally, the increased frequency of terror incidents contributes

significantly to heightened fear and anxiety among the population, as indicated by a higher mean of 4.43 and a standard deviation of 0.872, reflecting a more consistent perception among residents. Furthermore, the frequent occurrence of terror incidents undermines trust in local governance structures, with a mean of 4.39 and a relatively low standard deviation of 0.723, highlighting a strong consensus among respondents regarding this aspect. Moreover, residents believe that the frequency of terror incidents negatively affects community cohesion, as evidenced by a mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 0.948, indicating a notable degree of agreement among respondents. Finally, the continuous occurrence of terror incidents hinders the ability of local authorities to maintain law and order, with a mean of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 0.724, indicating a relatively consistent perception among residents regarding the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies. Overall, these findings underscore the multifaceted and far-reaching impacts of terror incidents on various aspects of community life and governance in Lamu County, emphasizing the urgent need for cohesive responses and effective security measures to address these challenges and promote resilience within the community. The findings are in agreement with Kanyingi (2018) who argued that frequencies of terrorist attacks have led to increased militarization and securitization of the state, leading to the violation of human rights and civil liberties. Additionally, terrorism has led to increased corruption as security personnel engage in corrupt activities to counter terrorism.

### National Unity and Governance of Lamu County

The respondents opinions are indicated in Table 2.

**Table 2: National Unity and Governance**

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.Dev
Terror incidents in Lamu County have contributed to a sense of division and polarization among different communities	83	1	5	4.75	.440
The frequency of terror attacks in Lamu County has affected my perception of the effectiveness of local governance structures.	83	1	5	3.18	1.352
The intensity of terror incidents in Lamu County has influenced social cohesion within the community	83	1	5	4.33	.663
The targeting of specific areas or communities in terror attacks has made it challenging for local authorities to maintain law and order	83	1	5	4.53	.579
Effective Counter-Terrorism Measures are essential for promoting unity and stability within Lamu County	83	1	5	3.94	1.103

### Source: Survey Data (2024)

The table above offer valuable insights into the perceptions of residents in Lamu County regarding the National Unity and Governance on various aspects of community life. Firstly, with a high mean of 4.75 and a low standard deviation of 0.440, it's evident that residents strongly believe that terror incidents have contributed to a sense of division and polarization among different communities. This suggests a widespread acknowledgment of the divisive nature of such incidents and their profound impact on societal cohesion. Moreover, the frequency of terror attacks has significantly affected respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of local governance structures, as indicated by a mean of 3.18 and a relatively high standard deviation of 1.352. This suggests a more varied response among residents, with some perceiving a direct link between terror attacks and governance effectiveness, while others may have differing views. Additionally, the intensity of terror incidents has notably influenced social cohesion within the community, with a mean of 4.33 and a standard

deviation of 0.663, indicating a moderate level of agreement among respondents regarding this aspect. Furthermore, the targeting of specific areas or communities in terror attacks has posed significant challenges for local authorities in maintaining law and order, with a mean of 4.53 and a low standard deviation of 0.579, suggesting a strong consensus among respondents regarding this issue. Lastly, respondents recognize the importance of effective Counter-Terrorism Measures in promoting unity and stability within Lamu County, as evidenced by a mean of 3.94 and a relatively high standard deviation of 1.103.

### Inferential Analysis

In this study the regression analysis was used to determine the effect of effect of terror activities on national unity and governance in Lamu County. A multivariate regression model was applied to determine the relative importance of each of the four variables with respect to the status of unity and governance in Lamu County.

### Regression Model Summary

The study carried out a regression analysis to test the significance of the influence of the independent variables namely frequency of terror incidents, intensity of terror incidents, target selection and effectiveness of Counter-Terrorism Measures on national unity and governance in Lamu County. The model summary is depicted in Table 3.

**Table 3: Regression Model Summary**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std Error of the Estimate
1	.918 <sup>a</sup>	.843	.805	.51038

Analysis in Table 3 shows that the coefficient of determination (the percentage variation in the dependent variable being explained by the changes in the independent variable) R<sup>2</sup> equals 0.843, that is, frequency of terror incidents explains 84.3% of national unity and governance leaving only 15.7 percent unexplained.

### Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The researcher sought to compare means using analysis of variance. ANOVA findings (P-value of 0.001) in Table 4 show that there is correlation between the predictor variable (frequency of terror incidents) and response variable (national unity and governance).

**Table 4: Analysis of Variance**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.213	1	.213	1.034	.001
Residual	16.686	81	.206		
Total	16.899	82			

a. Dependent Variable: National unity and governance in Lamu County

b. Predictors: (Constant), frequency of terror incidents

**Source: Survey Data (2024)**

**Table 5: Regression Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
		B	SE	B		
1	(Constant)	.260	.460		.565	.023
	Frequency of Incidents	.313	.137	.254	2.729	.001

The established multiple linear regression equation becomes:

$$Y = 0.260 + 0.313X_1 + e$$

Constant = 0.260, shows that frequency of terror incidents rated as zero, National unity and governance in Lamu County would be 0.260

X<sub>1</sub> = 0.313, shows that one unit change in frequency of terror incidents results in 0.313 units increase in National unity and governance.

## Conclusions

The frequency of terror incidents, the findings show a pervasive sense of unease and disruption within the community. The negative effect on the sense of unity among residents underscores not only the immediate effects of these incidents but also their long-term ramifications on social cohesion. It's notable that the frequency of terror incidents contributes to heightened fear and anxiety, creating a palpable atmosphere of insecurity. This, in turn, undermines trust in local governance structures, highlighting a fundamental challenge in maintaining effective governance amid security threats.

## Recommendations

Enhance community engagement and dialogue: Promote open discussions and forums where residents can express their concerns, share information, and collaborate with local authorities to address security challenges collaboratively.

Implement targeted security measures: Deploy targeted security measures in areas vulnerable to terrorist attacks, including increased surveillance, security checkpoints, and community policing initiatives, to deter potential perpetrators and enhance public safety.

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