



# REINVENT Violence Monitoring

Monthly Report,  
**May 2020**

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REINVENT’s violence monitoring tool is a database of security incidents recorded across Kenya, grouped into seven categories: crime, public disorder, violent extremism, sexual and gender-based violence, mob retribution and ethnically motivated violence. In addition, the tool monitors security force activity. Data is collected from a variety of sources including a private risk management firm, open source databases (including the Armed Conflict Location & Event Database (ACLED)) and REINVENT programme reporting. Depending on the availability of the data, the tool considers the target of the violence, the use of weapons, casualty figures, the actors involved and the motives. Emerging trends in both time and space are identified through the use of graphs and maps alongside analysis.

The tool provides several benefits across all of REINVENT’s workstreams. Most pertinently, an accurate understanding of the threat environment will ensure that interventions are tailored, proportionate and effective. The tool will also provide an M&E indicator in its own right, contribute to research and ensure that programme staff are not placed in high-risk situations.



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# Introduction

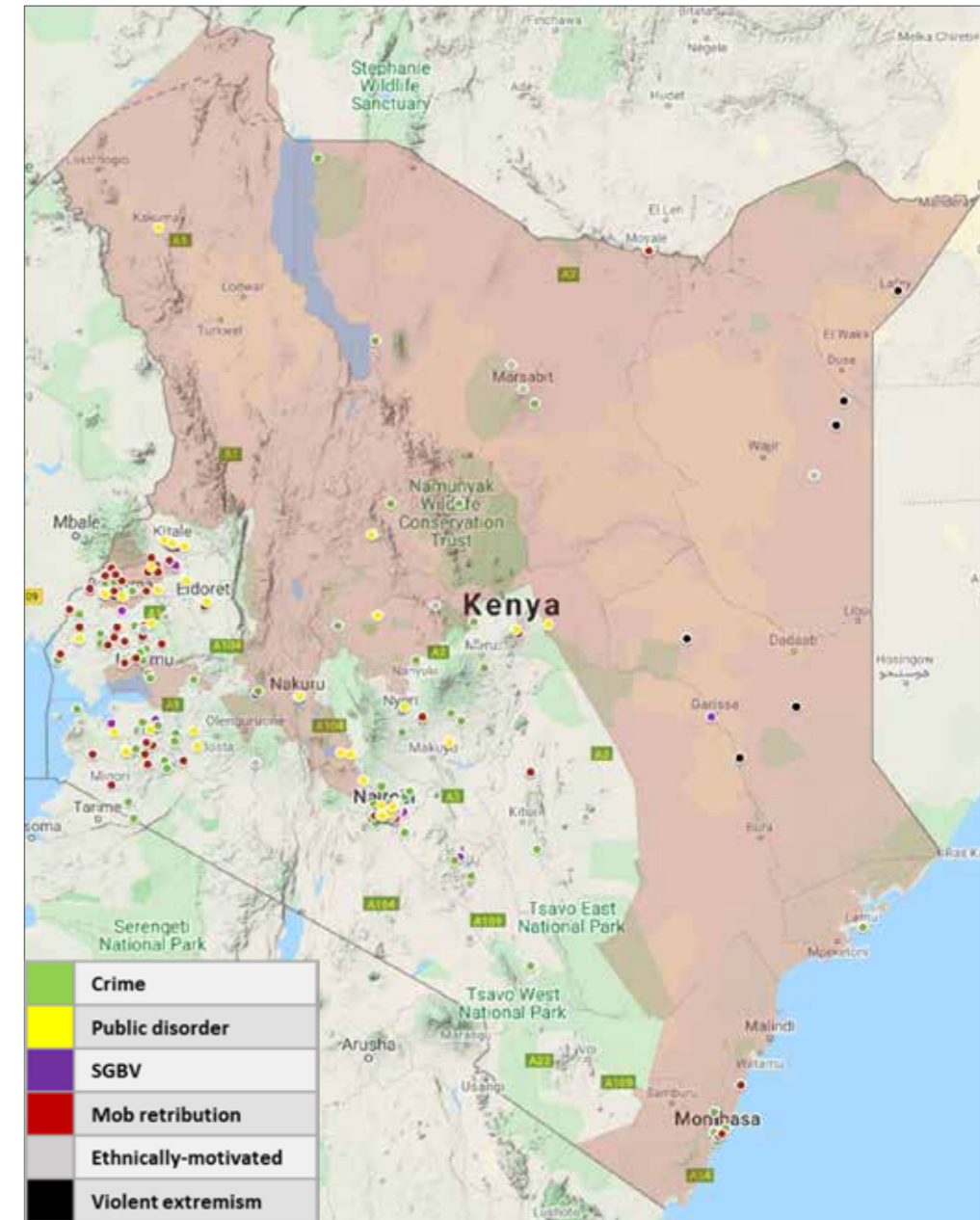
Police officers keep a crowd at a distance away from a car suspected of having explosives near the Eastleigh neighborhood, Nairobi, Kenya, April 24, 2014. A video has emerged appearing to showing the killing of a man by a purported plainclothes police officer.  
NOOR KHAMIS/REUTERS

This is the first Monthly Violence Monitoring Report for REINVENT. The format will follow a similar structure to previous quarterly reports submitted as part of REINVENT's regular submissions to DFID. Moving forward, the quarterly reporting on violence monitoring will adopt a broader 'context analysis' style and will be less dependent on the pure incident data. This will ensure that the two documents are not repetitive. The reports will be differentiated as follows:

- Weekly Incident Report** – A summary of statistics and major highlights from the previous week. This report will not contain any analysis.
- Monthly Violence Monitoring Report** – A discursive report, identifying emerging trends from the month and how they might be relevant to REINVENT. This report will contain some incident statistics, but the focus will be on analysis.
- Quarterly Context Update** – To be contained with REINVENT quarterly reporting, this report will not focus explicitly on statistics. Rather, the focus will be on developments in Kenya's political, economic, social and security spaces. Relevance to REINVENT will be highlighted.

The violence monitoring tool will be adapted over time as and when new sources become available within each work stream as part of broader REINVENT programming. During the present reporting period, the following incidents were included within the Violence Monitoring database:

		No. of incidents	Deaths	Injuries
General crime		215	41	>79
VAWG	Sexual violence	18	1	18
	Other (targeting women)	54	15	19
Mob retribution		85	49	68
Ethnically motivated		11	19	>25
Public disorder		48	2	>17
VE		6	0	6
TOTAL INCIDENTS RECORDED		383	112	>213
Security force activity		207	68	>27



Violent incidents (May 2020, REINVENT counties shaded in red)

# Crime

Trends in Kenya's urban areas vary over time depending on the movement of certain criminal groups and the response by law enforcement agencies.

Crime of various forms contributes the largest number of incidents to the database. All ethnically-motivated, SGBV, mob retribution and public disorder incidents are excluded. Incidents within this category include robberies, assaults, homicides and abductions. In most cases, the motive for these incidents is not known. The identity of the victim is also not always clear. However, where possible this information is included. The tool also tracks the use of firearms and the target of criminal activity.

Crime can be motivated by wide variety of factors, including social, economic and political factors. Whilst the tool will not address what motivates each individual perpetrator, the analysis will seek to explain how economic circumstances may affect broader rates of crime in certain areas. A section is included, for example, on the implications of COVID-19 on crime in Kenya.

Trends in Kenya's urban areas vary over time depending on the movement of certain criminal groups and the response by law enforcement agencies. A single group of three criminals, for example, operating in a specific neighbourhood can explain a spike in that area, until they move elsewhere or are 'eliminated' by security forces.

## COVID-19

Relying on historic raw data from the main contributor to the violence monitoring database (WS Insight), we note that there not not been a sustained increase in criminal activity since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya.<sup>1</sup> Whilst a spike in the number of robberies was recorded in March (188 compared to 133 in February), the statistics for April (172) and May (134) suggest a return to expected crime rates broadly commensurate with figures reported throughout 2019.

The type of crime, rather than the absolute figures (or frequency), appears to have changed during the COVID pandemic. Firstly, an



Criminal incidents (May 2020)

<sup>1</sup> REINVENT data is still being prepared for the first few months of 2020 and so we rely on raw data from WS Insight for comparison in several parts of this report.

increase in both domestic violence and SGBV has been widely reported (see SGBV section). Moreover, some media reports have suggested the gangs have increased their robbery operations during the night in an effort to take advantage of the police preoccupation with enforcing the curfew.<sup>2</sup> Our data does not actually support the assertion that there has been an increase in incidents during hours of darkness.

Indeed (considering only incidents for which the time is known), the data for May indicates that 45% of criminal incidents occurred at night (1900hrs to 0500hrs). Looking at WS Insight’s historic data for January and February this year (prior to the onset of the pandemic in Kenya), night-time criminal activity accounted for exactly the same proportion of criminal incidents. Regardless, this is a statistic worth monitoring moving forward.

Regardless, in May, several violent criminal incidents were recorded across the country which could be directly linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. In at least four cases, police were accused of direct involvement in crime while enforcing the curfew.

In other cases, the distribution of aid to the most vulnerable caused tensions with disagreements over who should receive the handouts. Low-level violence was reported in Meru, and in Langata, Nairobi, a youth leader was assaulted due to a dispute over the sharing of relief funds. In an incident in Changamwe, Mombasa, criminals reportedly masqueraded as police officers in order to rob pedestrians who believed them to be enforcing the curfew. On the whole, these incidents appeared isolated and were not part of a broader increase in crime as a result of the economic implications of COVID-19 and the Government’s response to the pandemic.

<sup>2</sup> Daily Nation. ‘Police, gangs unleash terror on Coast residents’, 30 March 2020. Kenya News Agency. ‘Nakuru Thugs Take Streets After Curfew’, 15 April 2020; People Daily. ‘Irony of rising criminal activities in time of dawn to dusk curfew’, 05 May 2020; The Standard. ‘Rising robbery incidents during curfew unwelcome’, 14 May 2020

“  
Data for May indicates that  
**45%**  
of criminal incidents occurred  
at night (1900hrs to 0500hrs)

## Type of incident

Robberies accounted for 60% of the total number of incidents in the crime section of the Violence Monitoring tool. In over one third (42%) of these incidents, the target was categorised as an individual (or indeed multiple individuals). Most of these incidents can broadly be interpreted as street muggings and the vast majority were recorded within Nairobi. Almost the same number of incidents again involved the targeting of businesses. In most cases, the targets were small enterprises such as M-Pesa outlets.

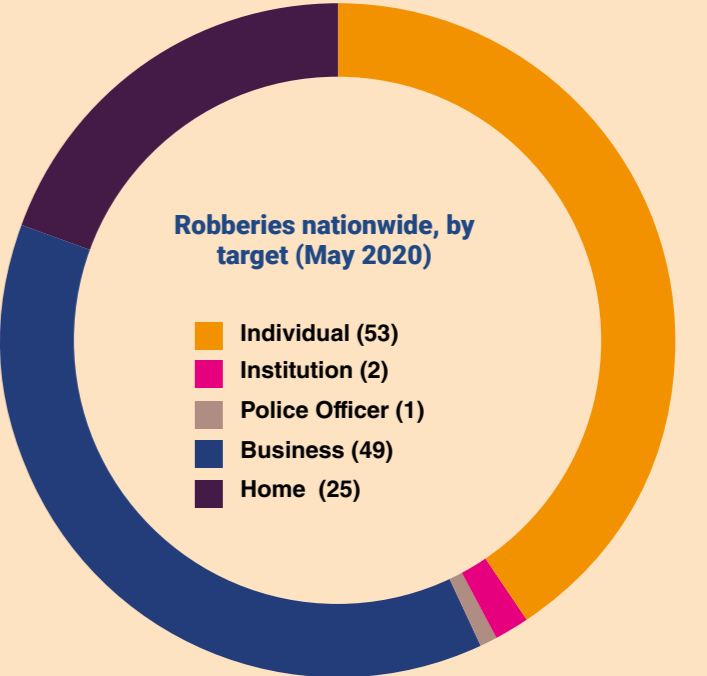
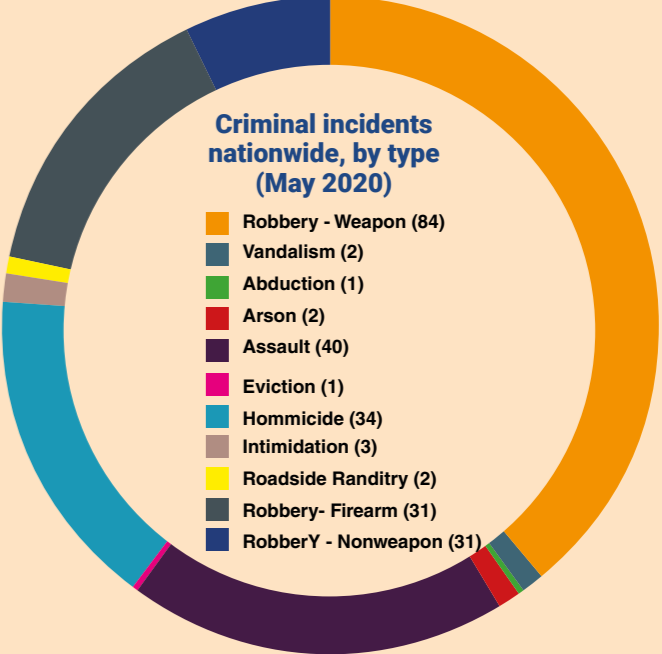
Forty assaults were recorded across the country in May. The motive was normally unclear in these cases, though it appears several were related to domestic disputes. In six incidents, bladed weapons were used, whilst blunt weapons were reported in 12. A further 31 incidents of assault were reported during incidents categorised as robberies.

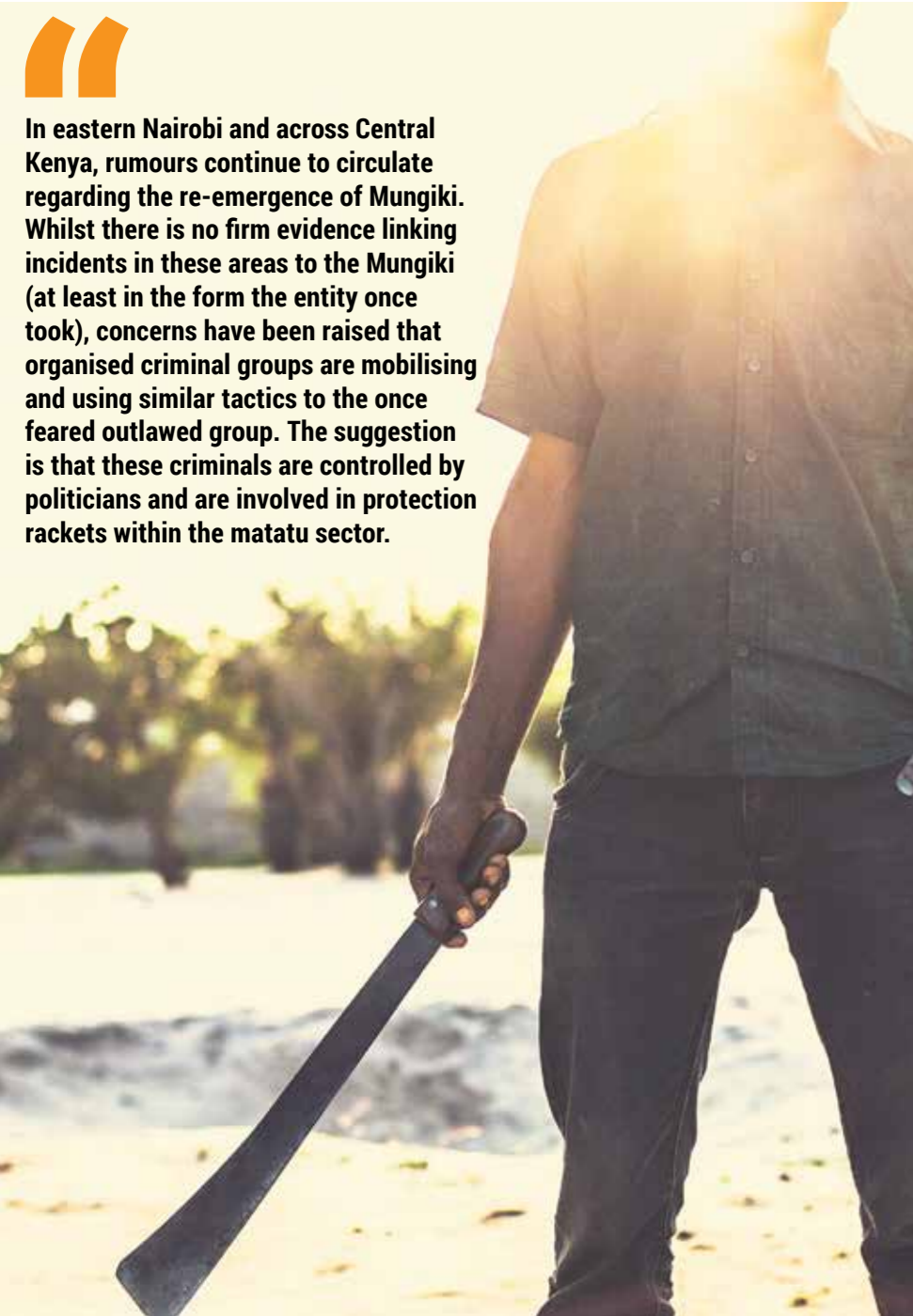
Thirty-four homicide incidents were reported in May, leading to a total of 37 deaths. Firearms were only used in four of these incidents, with crude weapons (usually bladed) reportedly carried by perpetrators in a further 16. In the remaining cases, the victim was either physically beaten to death or no details were provided as to the assault weapon. Over one third (12) of the homicides were reported in the capital. Western recorded six homicides. Four incidents were recorded in Nyanza, and another four in the North Rift. Three were reported in each of Coast and Central; and two in Eastern (both in Marsabit).

It should be noted that the 34 incidents do not include the cases of mob retribution covered elsewhere in the database. In an additional 29 incidents, police reportedly recovered bodies usually with injuries indicative of murder. In these cases, it is not always clear when or where the initial homicide took place.

Two cases of roadside banditry were recorded in May. In both incidents – one in Samburu and the other in Marsabit – the assailants opened fire at moving vehicles. Historically in Kenya, livestock rustlers are responsible for these attacks, with raiding parties opportunistically targeting vehicles along major roads as they travel to and from their operation.

Throughout May, gang activity remained a concern in Mombasa’s Kisauni area, Nakuru town, Nairobi’s Eastlands (especially throughout Embakasi), and across





**In eastern Nairobi and across Central Kenya, rumours continue to circulate regarding the re-emergence of Mungiki. Whilst there is no firm evidence linking incidents in these areas to the Mungiki (at least in the form the entity once took), concerns have been raised that organised criminal groups are mobilising and using similar tactics to the once feared outlawed group. The suggestion is that these criminals are controlled by politicians and are involved in protection rackets within the matatu sector.**

Lamu East. In all three areas, the groups are apparently armed with bladed weapons with little evidence of firearms being used. In Kisauni, a criminal group – likely connected to Wakali Kwanza – remain active, with residents attacked and valuables stolen. In Lamu East, a series of attacks have targeted chiefs and local leaders associated with the State. It is often unclear whether the incidents are related to extremism, are purely motivated by economic gain or are linked to local politics.

## Weapons

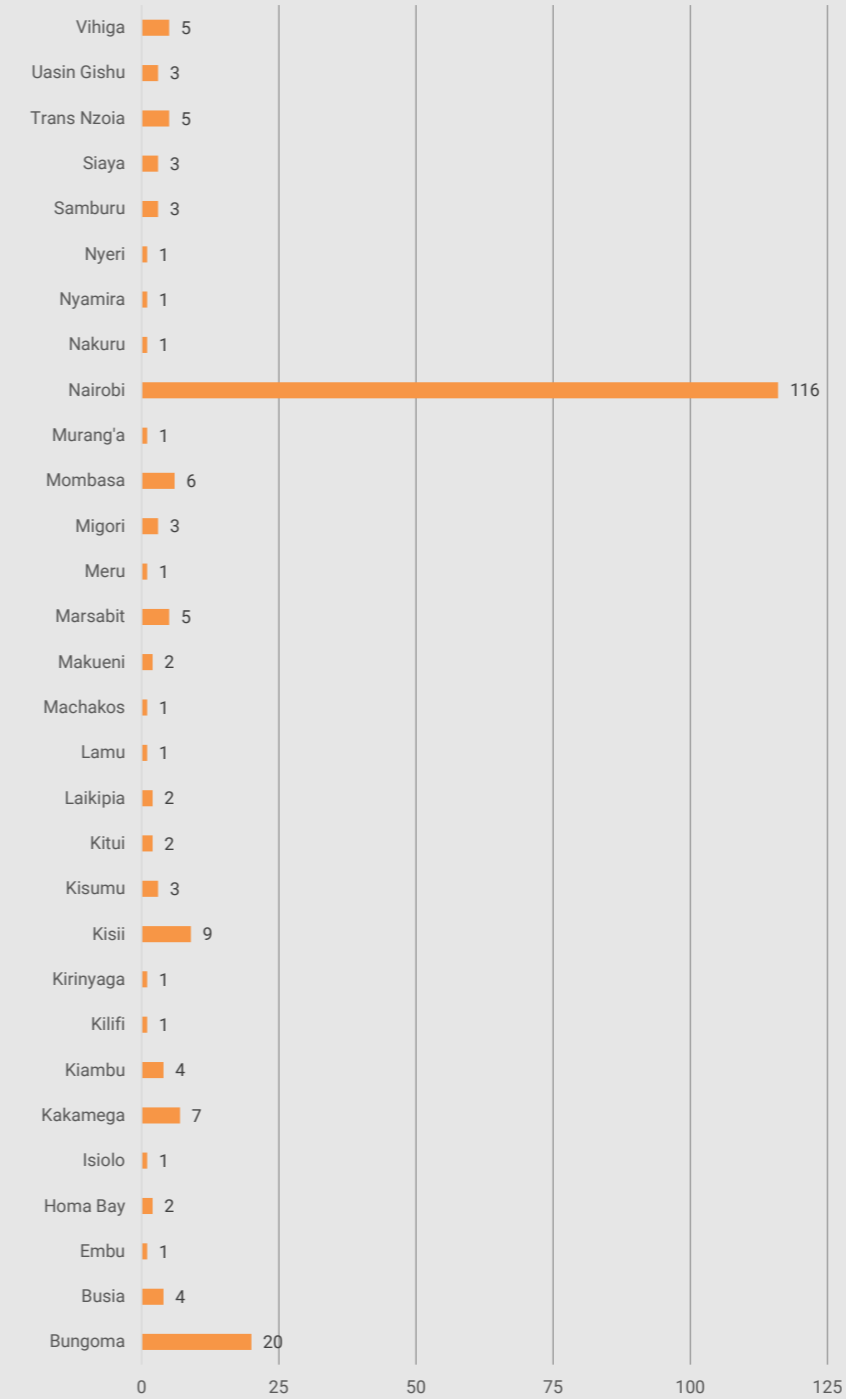
Of the 215 criminal incidents recorded in the REINVENT violence monitoring tool in May, 18% involved the use of a firearm.

In many cases it is not clear whether a weapon was used at all; in others the type of weapon is not specified. However, in the 135 cases in which information is available, a bladed weapon was used in 53% of incidents. In most cases, these criminals were armed with pangas (machetes). In other incidents, victims were reportedly stabbed. In a further 11% of cases, the weapon was a blunt object, usually presumed to be club. In other reports, the weapons are simply described as ‘crude’, which could include bladed or blunt weapons, or indeed anything other than a firearm. Of those cases in which it is known that a weapon was used, criminals were reportedly armed with a firearm in over a quarter (28%) of incidents nationwide. In the remaining 81 cases, either no weapon was reported or there were no details provided on the nature of the weapon.

Looking across the regions, the use of firearms was most prevalent in Eastern where criminals were reportedly carrying firearms in all cases recorded. In Western, firearms were present in 29% of incidents and in Western 24% of incidents. Nairobi was next with just 16% of criminal incidents involving a firearm in May.

## Casualties

In May, a total of 41 deaths and 77 injuries were recorded as a result of incidents in the crime section of the REINVENT database. No incident this month led to the death of more than two people. If one also considers casualties as a result of mob retribution incidents and SGBV, crime in May led to a total of 91 deaths and at least 165 injuries during the month.



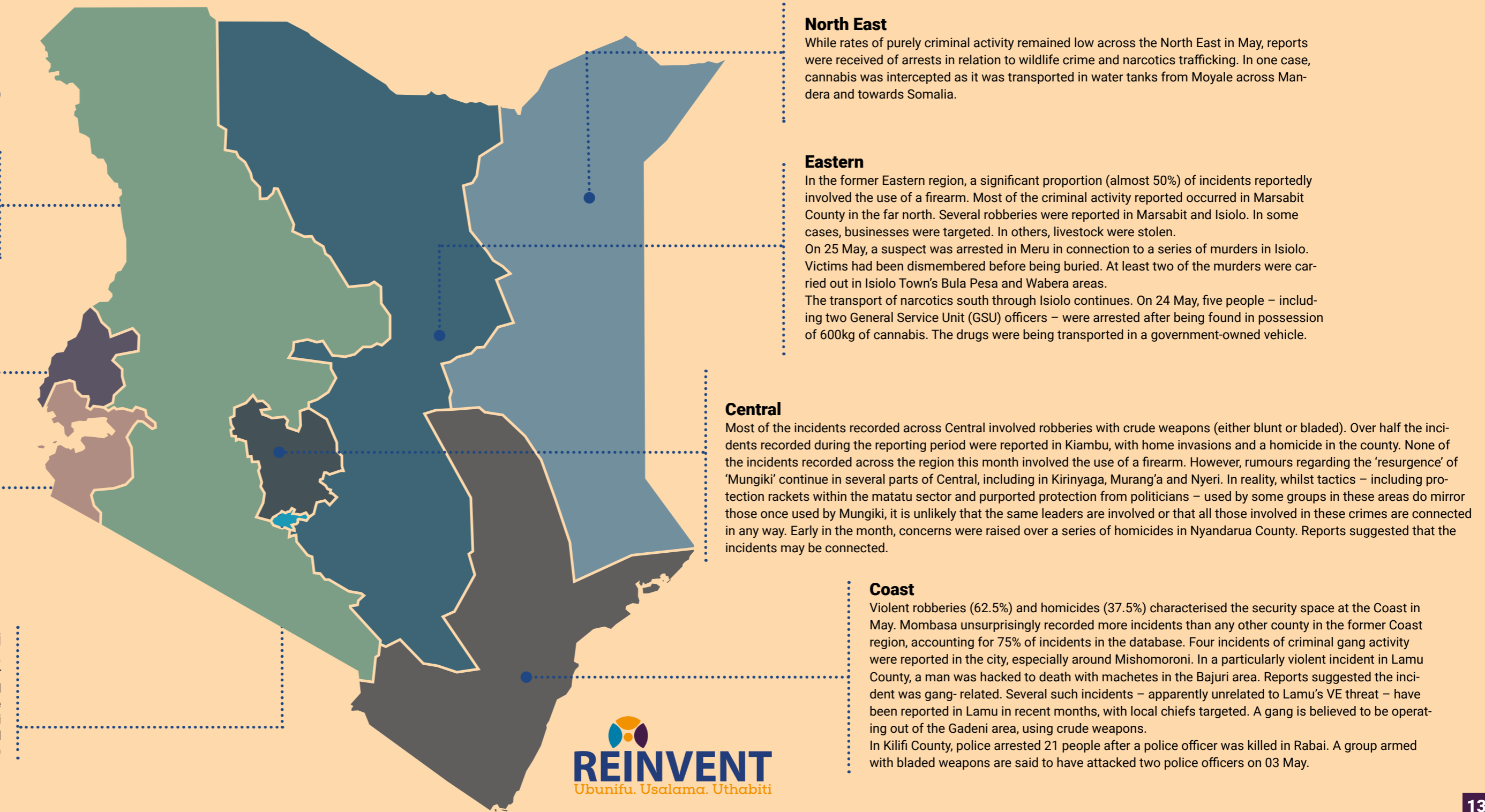
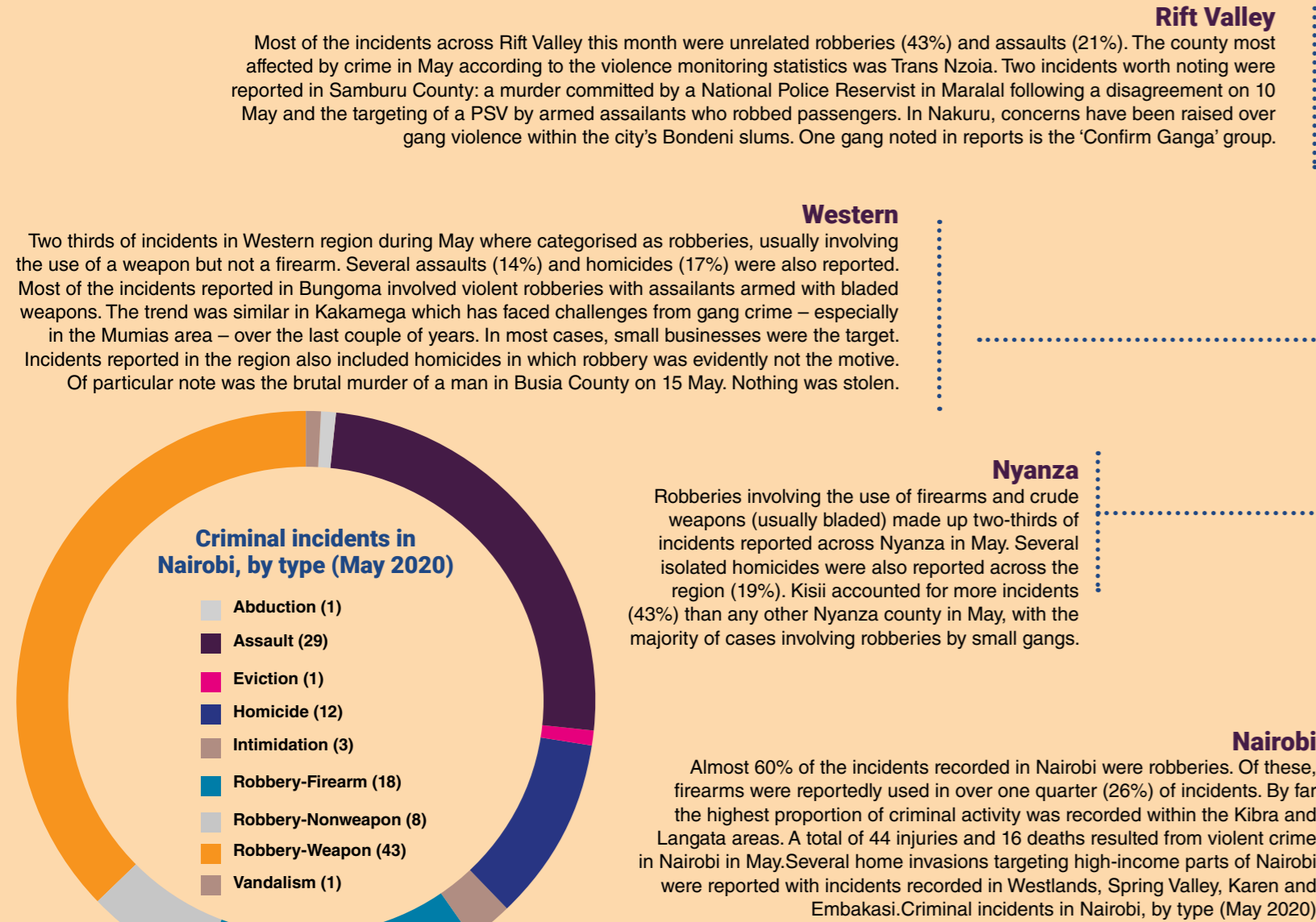
Criminal incidents, by county (May 2020)



**In other reports, the weapons are simply described as ‘crude’, which could include bladed or blunt weapons, or indeed anything other than a firearm.**

# Regional Overviews

**Nairobi accounted for a significant portion (53%) of the total number of incidents. Other counties to record high numbers of incidents this month included Bungoma, Kakamega, Kisii and Mombasa.**

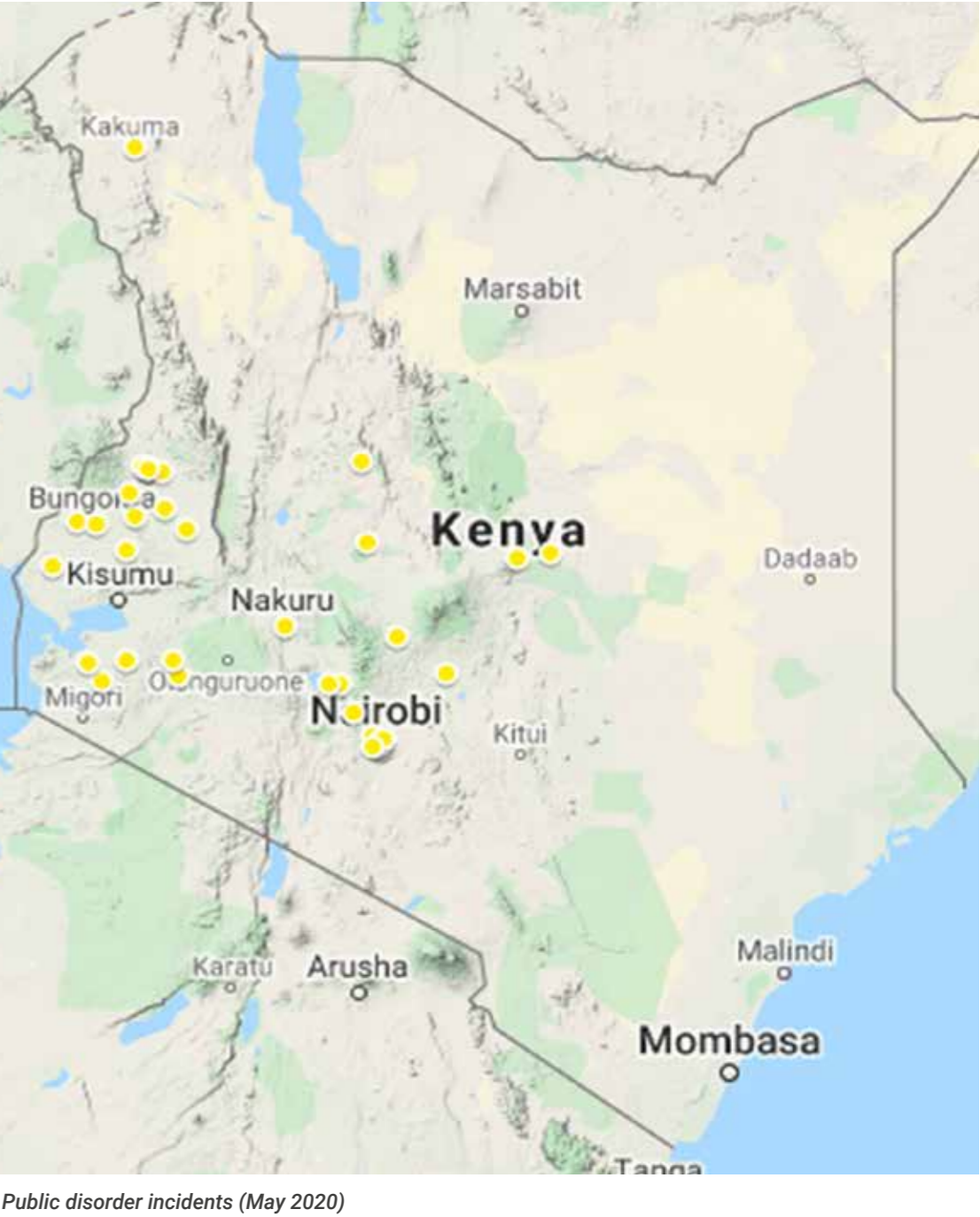
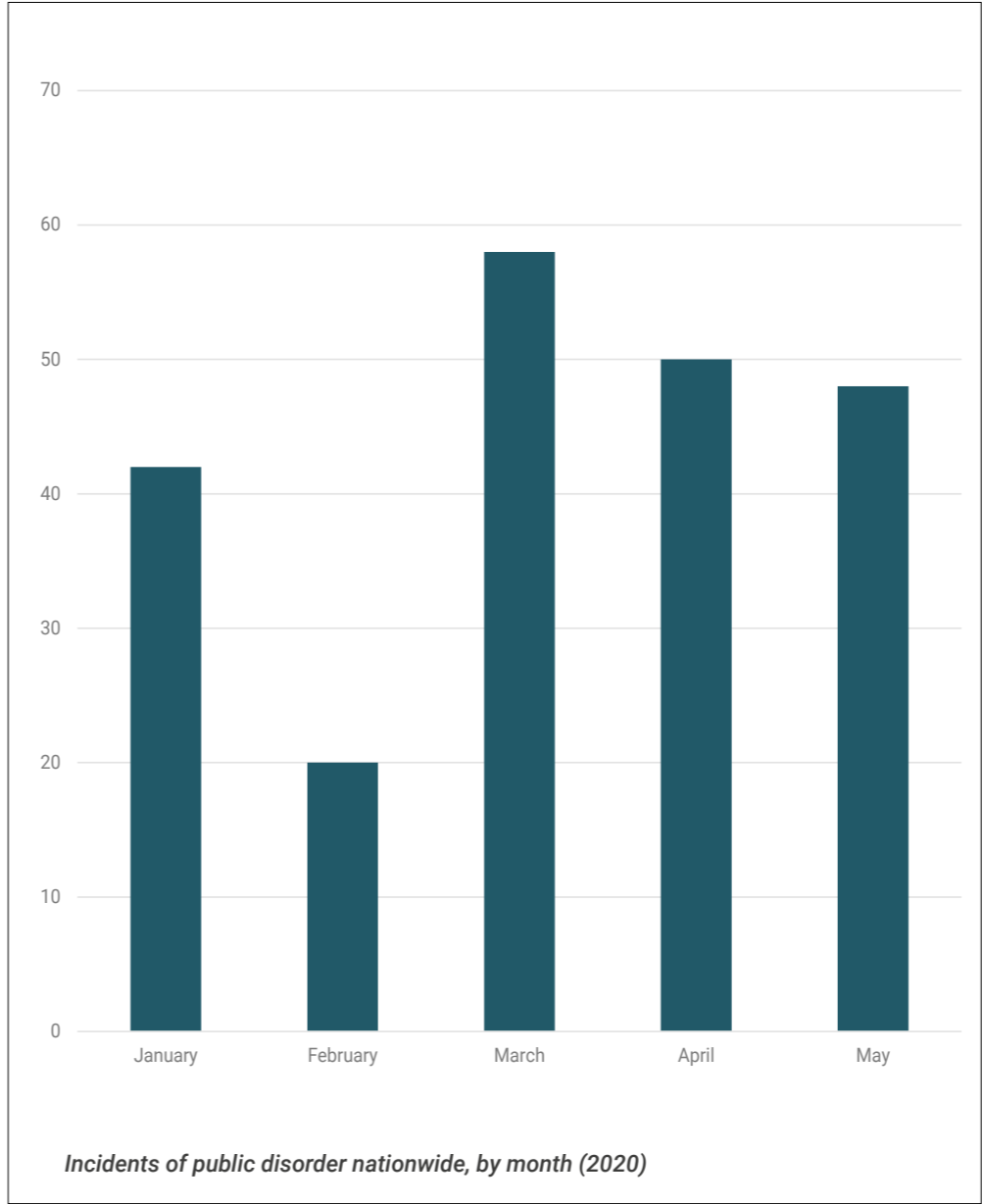


# Public Disorder

Security forces were directly responsible for the grievance leading to protests in nine cases, in addition to the COVID-19 related incidents which also often related to security force activity.



A marginal decrease on number of incidents recorded was noted in May, compared to March and April. A total of 48 incidents of public disorder were recorded, 40% of which could be directly linked to COVID-19.





## COVID-19

Several protests were held in Nairobi in relation to the curfew and alleged police brutality. At least two demonstrations were reported, for example, in Nairobi's Mathare slums. In other cases, across the country, police were attacked on multiple occasions as they sought to enforce Government directives regarding gatherings. Other examples of COVID-19 related civil unrest included:

- **29 May** – As many as 3,000 youths threw stones at Police in Mukuru, Nairobi, as they demanded payment for the work they had conducted as part of the National Hygiene Programme. Police used CS gas to disperse the crowd.
- **29 May** – Two groups clashed over the distribution of relief food in Trans Nzoia.
- **25 May** – A stampede was reported during the distribution of relief food provided to assist those suffering economically due to COVID-19 measures. Four people were injured.
- **22 May** – CS gas was used against youths trying to gain access to the Eastleigh containment area in order to resume work.
- **21 May** – Traders clashed with police trying to close-down their market in Shinyalu, Kakamega. Several injuries were reported.
- **21 May** – Truck drivers protests on the Bungoma-Malaba highway over alleged harassment by Ugandan authorities.
- **18 May** – Two police officers were attacked as they tried to arrest residents of Gorofani in Kibra, Nairobi, for not wearing masks.
- **13 May** – Residents demonstrated against a chief in Ingemi North, Meru. The leader was accused of bias in allocating the State Covid-19 stipend.
- **12 May** – Supporters of rival politicians in Saboti, Trans Nzoia, fought over the distribution of food donations.
- **11 May** – Residents of Eastleigh, Nairobi, demonstrated to demand food to soften the impact of the containment measures.
- **9 May** – A woman was killed in a stampede in Trans Nzoia's Saboti area during a food distribution exercise.
- **04 May** – Mathare residents demonstrated over the killing of a civilian by police officers enforcing the curfew.

## Geographic distribution

One third of public disorder incidents were recorded within the Rift Valley region with several protests in Trans Nzoia and Nakuru counties especially. In Nakuru, protests were recorded in relation to a COVID-19 roadblock, poor sanitation services at a bus stop in Nakuru town and the restriction of access to Lake Naivasha.

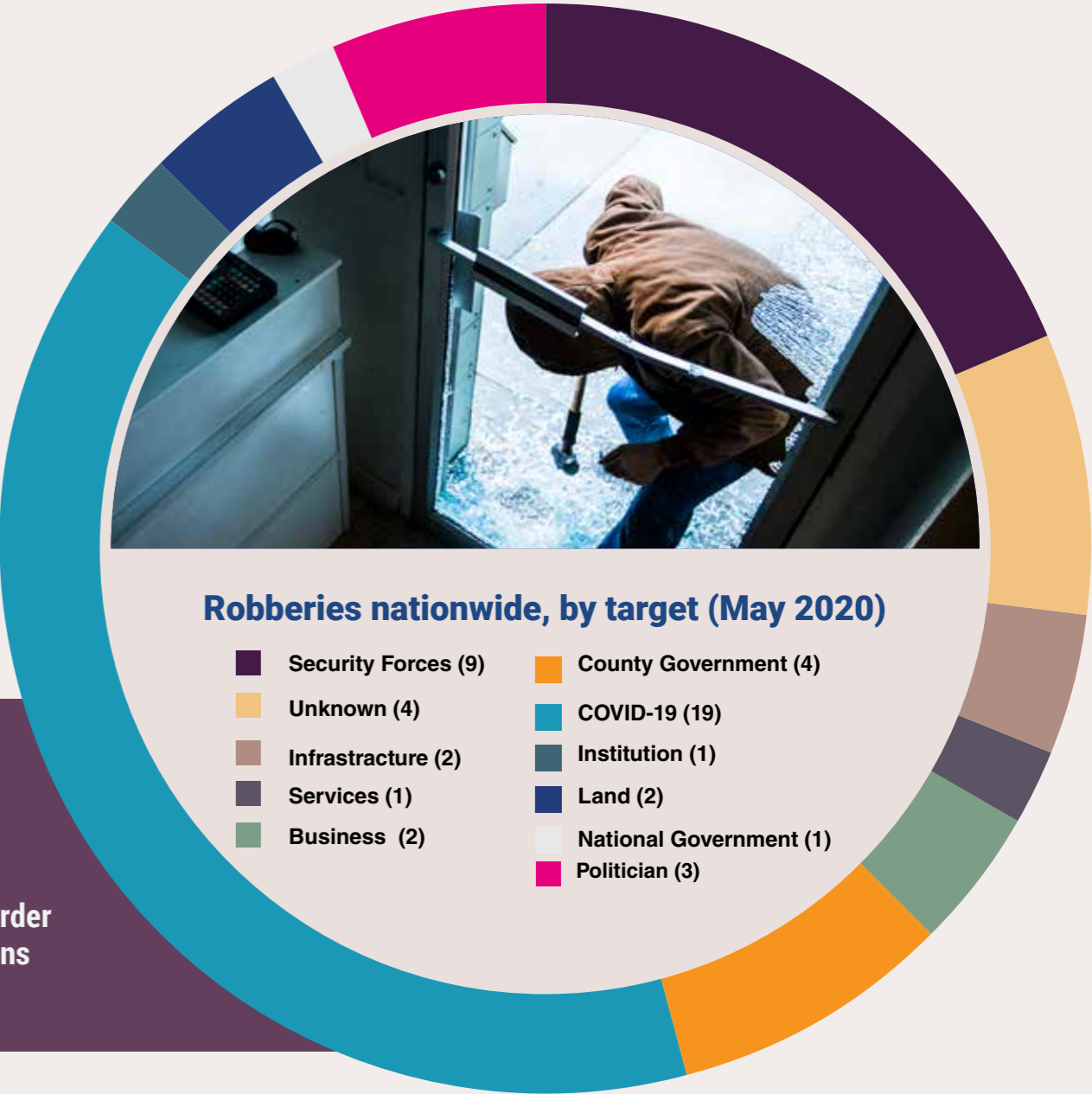
Almost another third of the incidents occurred in Nairobi where over half the demonstrations were related to COVID-19. Several protests were also recorded across Central and Western relating to a variety of unrelated issues, including political developments, local disputes over services, poor infrastructure, specific violent incidents and, of course, COVID-19 measures.

## Grievance

Security forces were directly responsible for the grievance leading to protests in nine cases, in addition to the COVID-19 related incidents which also often related to security force activity. In most other cases, unrest was caused by largely unrelated factors or localised issues involving specific politicians in disparate parts of the country.

## Casualties

The majority of incidents remained relatively peaceful, but a total of two people died and at least 17 others were injured during public disorder in May. Two of the deaths were recorded in Trans Nzoia and one in Nairobi.



# Violent Extremism

The use of a small arms team in the aftermath of a roadside IED is not unusual in Kenya's North East. Most devices are assessed to be command-wire detonated and require the presence of a militant team close by. Reports of small arms fire suggest this team will seek to open fire at the target after the initial detonation.

Police looks at a destroyed government cruiser by Al-Shabaab attack in Wajir. (Photo/reuters.com)

## Tactics

Of the six terrorist attacks recorded in May, half were small arms attacks. In one incident, militants exchanged fire with KDF and police officers in Dujis to the north of Garissa. Three members of the security forces were injured, but no evidence was provided that the assailants were indeed members of an extremist organization. It is likely that the interpretation of the incident as an al Shabaab attack was largely the result of the location of the incident.

In two of the small arms attacks, security force bases were targeted. On 16 May, gunmen attacked a police station in Khorof Harar in northern Wajir. The militants are said to have initially used rocket propelled grenades (RPGs). Police reportedly fled the scene. Rifles were stolen from the station's armoury. The militants then proceeded to destroy a nearby Safaricom mast. The third small arms attack took place the day previous when a General Service Unit (GSU) camp in Fafi, Garissa County, was targeted by a group of gunmen. The attack was successfully repelled.

Two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were used during May. Firstly, on 16 May, three KDF officers were injured when a device was detonated against their vehicle during a patrol between Konton and Qarsar in Wajir County. Two vehicles in the convoy were destroyed. Two days later on 18 May, a police vehicle was targeted by an IED on the LAPSSET road between Bura East and Garissa. The explosion missed the vehicle but gunmen followed-up with a small-arms attack, leading to an exchange of fire. The Regional Commissioner stated that there were no casualties. The use of a small arms team in the aftermath of a roadside IED is not unusual in Kenya's North East. Most devices are assessed to be command-wire detonated and require the presence of a militant team close by. Reports of small arms fire suggest this team will seek to open fire at the target after the initial detonation.

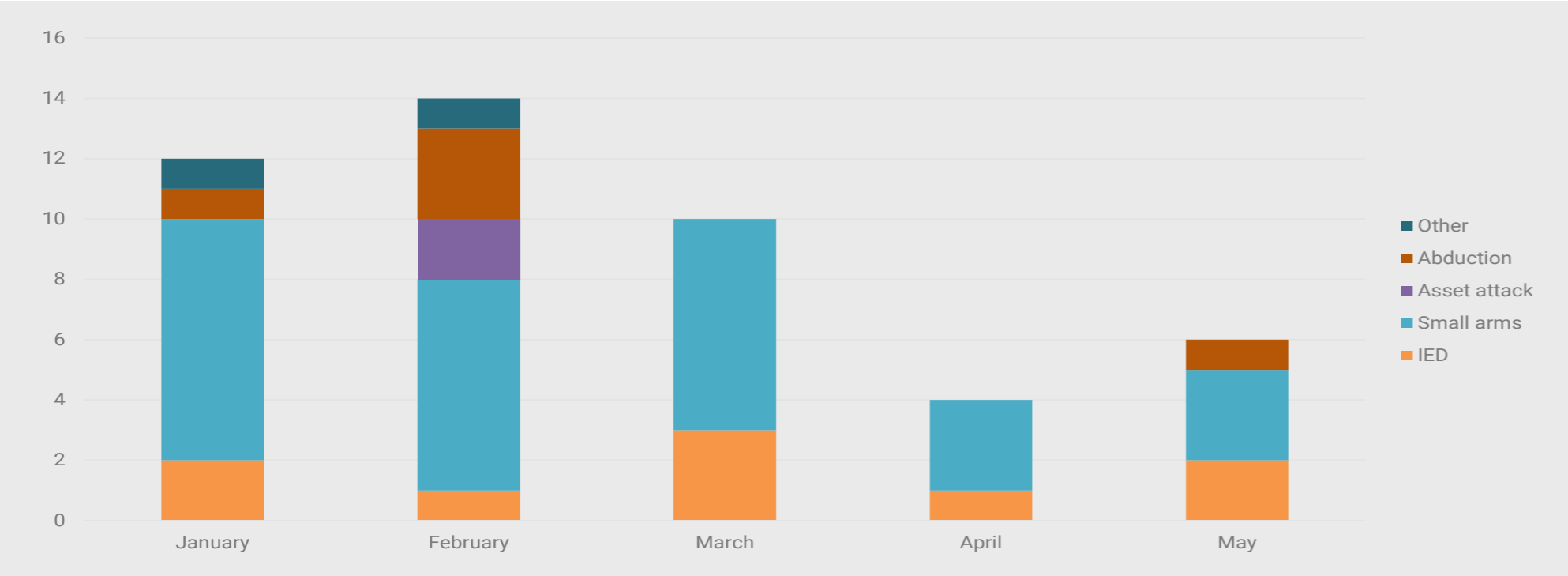
Finally, two boda boda operators are reported to have been abducted in Lafey, Mandera County, on 16 May. The two individuals were reported to be milk vendors. They are said to have been taken across the border into Somalia but were later released after two days.

## Fatalities

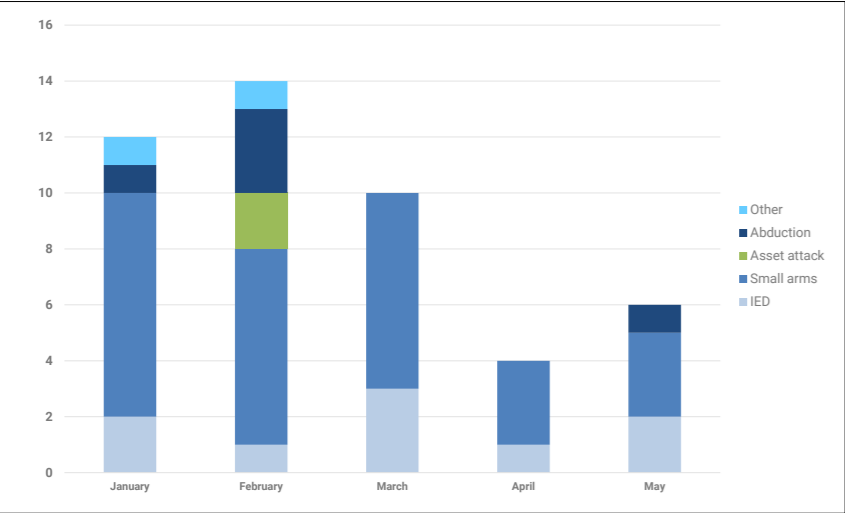
No fatalities were recorded as a result of terrorist attacks in May, the first month not to record a single death this year. Four of the six incidents over the month of May did not result in any injuries. Two resulted in three injuries each, all members of the security forces. On 29 May, three officers were injured in the exchange of fire in Dujis, Garissa County. Three others were injured in the IED attack on a police convoy in Wajir on 16 May.



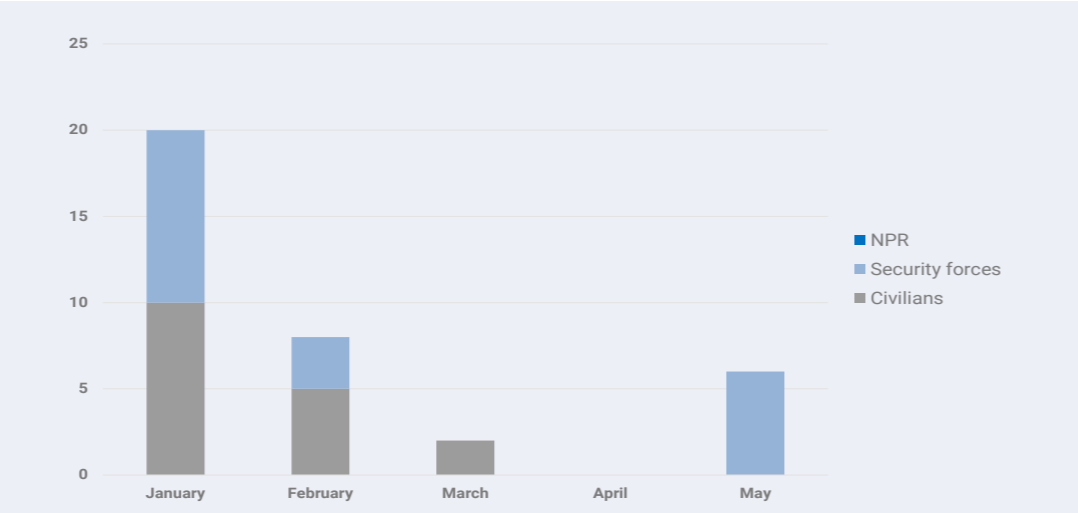
Locations of six al Shabaab-related attacks in May 2020



Frequency of terrorist attacks, by month (2020)



Deaths from terrorist attacks, by month (2020)



Injuries from terrorist attacks, by month (2020)

## Spatial distribution

Most of the reported incidents took place in areas typical for al Shabaab activity. Such areas included Fafi in Garissa; Lafey in Mandera; and Khorof Harar in northern Wajir County. However, the attack on the LAPSSET road close to Garissa County’s border with Tana River is more unusual, taking place well over 100km inside Kenya.

Militants have previously targeted other areas through which the LAPSSET corridor runs, including Nyangoro in Lamu West. However, an incident on the road further north has not been reported before. The use of an IED in this area is especially concerning.

## Targets

Five of the six attacks this month targeted security forces including the regular police, the GSU and the KDF.

The sixth incident involved the abduction of boda boda riders. There is certainly a sense that the abduction of civilians in the North East by Somali based militants has increased over the last twelve months. In many cases, police reservists (or their family members) are targeted. Historically, such incidents have sometimes been resolved by elders, but little information has yet been received on why the two were released after two days during the present reporting period.

Since late 2019, several al Shabaab attacks have targeted civilians, including small arms attacks on roads against ambulances and public service vehicles. No such attack has been recorded since 28 March.

## Comment

The holy period of Ramadan came to an end on 24

May. Across the entire period, only seven incidents were recorded within Kenya. All were relatively low-level attacks with two deaths and three injuries recorded in total. Ramadan normally witnesses a spike in cross-border al Shabaab activity. In recent years, the spike has also been seen in the weeks following the period and leading up to it. This year, however, that has not been the case.

The rate of terrorist activity in Kenya’s North East has decreased following a spike in recorded incidents between December 2019 and March 2020. Al Shabaab are



struggling internally with funding issues and leadership divisions. Moreover, movement has been severely limited by the threat of US airstrikes. These problems have been exacerbated by the onset of COVID-19. Social media rumours suggest that the virus is now present in al Shabaab controlled areas and the group has taken several pragmatic steps in response. However, with limited access to medical facilities, the leadership of the group will be concerned over the potential impact on their reputation amongst civilians under their control. The group is not necessarily in a position to take advantage of the preoccupation of the Federal Government of Somalia, or indeed the Government of Kenya, with COVID-19.

Perhaps the greatest incident of concern over the month of May took place on the night of 29 May when police killed an extremist suspect in Kwale’s Kibundani area, along with two of his children. Police allege the suspect threw a grenade at officers, but the incident has caused consternation across the county with the Governor himself accusing the Police of ‘brutality’. Repeated research over the last ten years suggests that extrajudicial activity on the part of the police and a poor relationship with local communities is a significant contributing driver to VE recruitment in the coast. Police linked the target of the latest operation to al Shabaab, but no evidence has been provided to support this.

Finally, on 09 May, Italian aid worker Sylvia Romano arrived in Italy after being released by her captives. Romano was kidnapped from Chakama in Kilifi County in November 2018. Little information was provided regarding the release, but she is understood to have been held close to Mogadishu, Somalia. Media reports have suggested a ransom of USD 1.6 million was paid, though this was not formally confirmed. Al Shabaab claimed responsibility and said that the group had indeed received a ransom. These claims may encourage others to conduct similar abductions in the hope of financial reward.

# Ethnically Motivated Violence

In other parts of the country, disarmament operations continue to cause tension. In May, operations were launched across Baringo County in efforts to stem cattle raiding. As in Narok, politics is playing a significant part with the Tugen and Pokot communities seeking local power.

The frequency of ethnically motivated violence in the country is dependent on several unrelated factors, including rains, cultural rites of passage, and political incitement over boundaries. Whereas it was once possible to predict broad trends in cattle raiding and resource-based conflict in semi-arid areas based largely on seasonal patterns, the increased involvement of local politics has made this much more difficult.

In May, 11 incidents were reported. For the purposes of comparison, WS Insight recorded slightly fewer incidents each month in February (8), March (9) and April (7). However, 14 incidents were registered in January.

Towards the end of May, ethnically-motivated clashes were reported on the Narok-Nakuru border, leaving at least six dead and 13 injured. Houses were also destroyed in the violence between Maasai and Kipsigis communities. It is understood the violence was triggered by a livestock theft incident which led to a series of retributory attacks. The dispute is also linked to land claims between the two communities and political incitement has undoubtedly come into play. Concerns were raised regarding 'hate speech' in Narok. The Senator, Ledama Ole Kina, was ordered to appear in court to explain comments he had made against non-Maasai communities in the county.

Clashes relating to border demarcations have also been reported between two Maasai clans (the Siria and Uasin Gishu) in Transmara

West. Police in Narok ordered an amnesty for those involved in clan clashes in Transmara West with the government encouraging all to hand in their illegal weapons. The period ended on 27 May with the police promising to launch an operation to recover additional weapons. By 21 May, reports suggested that 14 firearms had been surrendered.<sup>3</sup> Such operations have been conducted on several occasions in the past few years. It is unclear whether the weapons that are handed in are fully functional and whether such operations have proven successful.

On the Nandi-Kakamega county border, another incident of livestock theft led to wider-spread conflict between the Nandi and Luhya communities. Again, land is at the heart of the dispute. Police reportedly shot and killed two people in their response to the violence. In the North East, unrest was reported between the Masare and Degodia clans following a retaliatory attack in relation to conflict in February over a water source.

Localised ethnically-motivated violence was also reported in Laikipia, Marsabit, Kitui, Kajiado and Meru counties. In most cases, the violence was related to livestock raiding. In total, 19 deaths and at least 25 injuries were reported during ethnically-motivated violence in May. Pastoralists have not been exempt from the secondary impacts of COVID-19. With markets closed and restrictions on movement, pastoralists are unable to buy and sell livestock. Movement restrictions have also impacted livelihoods.<sup>4</sup>



*Ethnically-motivated violence (May 2020)*

<sup>3</sup> The Star. 'More guns surrendered by militia in Transmara West', 21 May 2020

<sup>4</sup> Reuters. 'After drought, Kenya's herders hammered by coronavirus curbs', 27 June 2020

# Violence Against Women and Girls

Most GBV cases reported to FIDA-Kenya are said to have been categorised as 'intimate partner violence, defilement and rape in Nairobi and Kisumu', but 'widow eviction and physical violence by in-laws' were also reported, especially in Western Kenya.

Each month, this section will do three things. Firstly, it will look specifically at all cases of sexual assault reported across Kenya over the reporting period. It will then highlight all other cases of violence in which women and girls are targeted. These incidents include those covered in other sections of the report. Finally, data obtained from alternative sources will be reviewed, including through REINVENT's work with Healthcare Assistance Kenya (HAK).

In this edition, a brief review is first provided of the impact of COVID-19.

## COVID-19

Some reports suggest that cases of SGBV increased by as much as 50% following the introduction of measures against COVID-19.<sup>5</sup> It has been said that domestic violence incidents provided the main contribution to this rise in cases.

The Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Kenya) expressed concern early in May that rates of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) had increased substantially since the start of the COVID-19 curfew. In particular, FIDA-Kenya noted Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa as the worst affected areas. This is not surprising as these are the largest urban centres in the country. The organisation calls for the establishment of accessible shelters for victims. Several organisations also raised concerns over rising cases in other areas, including Isiolo.

Broadly speaking, COVID-19 and the Government's response has adversely impacted women and girls in

the following ways:

- More time is being spent with abusive partners and victims face challenges in escaping to safe spaces at this time.<sup>6</sup> Victims are effectively being trapped with perpetrators.
- Women and girls are less able to contact family and friends due to social distancing and the curfew imposed by the State. They have thus lost their first points of contact in the event of violence.
- In some cases, women and girls have reportedly been kidnapped through curfew hours.
- The limits placed on movement has led to an inability of many to earn and thus provide for their families. The measures have led to heightened domestic stress and anxiety. These factors are said to have directly contributed to a rise in domestic violence. The burden for providing care for the family is usually placed on women.
- At least one case was reported to HAK in which a family utilised the closure of schools to arrange for female genital mutilation for their daughter.
- GBV survivors have struggled to access contraception with healthcare providers reducing their hours of operation or closing altogether.
- Family planning services have become more difficult to access with people increasingly concerned about attending health facilities where they might contract COVID-19.
- With the focus of healthcare providers on COVID-19, there is a risk that survivors of GBV will not receive adequate attention. Ambulance services are also delayed due to their preoccupation with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- There is limited judicial recourse for survivors with courts operating online or closing completely. With police also focused on enforcing Government

measures, GBV cases are not being prioritised.

- Victimization of GBV survivors continues with community support lacking, especially at this time. Survivors face stigma for violating curfew hours and Government measures in order to report incidents.
- There has been a reported rise in cases of defilement, with the perpetrators normally known to the victim. The increase has partially been attributed to the closure of schools and the fact that children are spending longer periods at home.
- Nairobi and Kisumu are reported to have experienced the highest numbers of intimate partner violence, defilement and rape.

Separately, results from a Kenya Health Information System survey released in June suggested that almost 4,000 teenage girls had become pregnant in Machakos County over a five-month period. The report was later disputed by the Ministry of Health, who suggested the figures were exaggerated and that they represented the number of ante-natal visits to clinics rather than individual cases. Regardless, the report triggered national debate and no authority figure has denied that there is indeed a problem. A report released in March by the National Council on Population and Development suggested that almost 380,000 teenage girls were impregnated in 2019, a figure which suggests that one in five between 15 and 19 years of age were pregnant or already had a child.<sup>7</sup>

A media report – quoting a county Children Coordinator – suggests that 15 girls between 13 and 17 have become pregnant since the start of the pandemic in Kisauni, Mombasa, alone.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Kujenga Amani. 'Violence against Women and Girls in the Shadow of Covid-19: Insights from Africa', 20 May 2020

<sup>6</sup> FIDA-Kenya. 'Statistics on sexual and gender based violence cases reported through FIDA-Kenya's toll-free number (0800 720 501) between 15th April to 3rd May 2020'

<sup>7</sup> Daily Nation. 'Crisis as nearly 380,000 Kenyan teenagers become mothers', 18 March 2020



Ethnically-motivated violence (May 2020)

## Sexual assault

The 18 cases covered here are included in the REINVENT Violence Monitoring database. These cases were reported for one of four reasons:

- The perpetrator was arrested
- The incident was particular harrowing (minors targeted, for example)
- The perpetrator was subsequently attacked in an act of mob retribution
- The incident was covered as a case study in the HAK report for May
- Examples of cases reported in May include the following:
- In Bungoma (where a total of two incidents were recorded over the reporting period), a teacher and a medical officer were arrested for carrying out an abortion on a minor who the teacher had impregnated.
- In Homa Bay (2), police arrested at least two people in different parts of the county on 19 May in connection with the sexual assault of underage girls.
- In Kakamega (3), a woman was killed in Matungu after being sexually assaulted on 25 May. In another case, a woman was forcefully intoxicated before being sexually assaulted in the Rosterman area of the county.
- In Molo, Nakuru (3), a teenage girl was sexually assaulted in a wooded area when she went to collect firewood.
- In Makueni (1), a 15-year-old girl was abducted and held hostage in a house where she was sexually assaulted. She was rescued by police on 01 May.
- In Tana River's (1) Bura area, a Police officer was attacked while trying to arrest a suspect accused of sexual assault.
- An 11-year-old girl was sexually assaulted in Kiminini, Trans Nzoia (1), on 19 May.
- In Nairobi (6), incidents were recorded in Embakasi, Kamukunji, Kasarani, and Langata. In one incident, the perpetrators reportedly lured a woman out of her home by pretending to deliver relief food.

Of the 18 incidents recorded, five targeted female adults and one targeted an adult male. In eleven incidents, the victim was a minor with nine girls attacked (the sex of the other two minors remains unknown). In the final case, the victim of the individual arrested for sexual assault was not identified.

In the one case in which a male was targeted, a male police officer in Nakuru was arrested for the sexual assault of a man he had arrested.

## Other violence targeting women

Here, all incidents recorded during the reporting period are reviewed with specific reference to those targeting females. Of course, one should note that in some cases, the gender of the victim is not apparent in the reporting. Of the 216 incidents reported in May, the gender of the victim was indicated in 102 cases. In the remaining incidents, the victim's gender was either not stipulated or the target was an asset (a shop or home) rather than a human.

A total of 29 violent criminal incidents were registered as specifically targeting women. This list includes five homicides, seven assaults (mostly domestic violence), one abduction and seventeen robberies. Over two-thirds of these incidents were reported within Nairobi. In only three of the incidents were the perpetrators confirmed to also be female. Twelve injuries and five deaths were reported. By comparison, 70 incidents impacted males. Two incidents there were both male and female victims. Of the 85 mob retribution incidents reported, the gender of the targeted individual was only identifiable from the reports in 31 cases. Of these, three targeted women. No deaths were recorded. In one case, the woman was accused of witchcraft in Saboti, Trans Nzoia. In an incident in Nyamira, a woman was accused of killing her husband. Her house was set on fire by a mob. On 30 May, a woman accused of drugging a man and robbing him was attacked in Kiminini, Trans Nzoia.

Finally, turning to the incidents listed as security force activity, a total of 21 (of 199) relate to violence against women. Eight of these cases (38%) involved the recovery of a woman's body (for the sake of comparison - the bodies of 18 men were also recovered in May). In some of these cases, the victim's body displayed injuries indicative of murder. In other cases, security force incidents relate to the arrest of a suspect accused of assaulting a woman. In one incident particularly relevant to REINVENT, a woman was shot dead by police at a roadblock in Emali, Makueni County.

Of 36 arrests in which the gender of the suspect was revealed in reports, seven involved the arrest of a female suspect. In a further two cases, a woman was arrested alongside a man. The remaining 27 involved the arrest of male suspects.

## FIDA-Kenya data

A toll-free helpline was launched in mid-April by FIDA-Kenya for survivors of GBV. The organisation reported that between 15 April and 03 May, 289 cases were reported to them.<sup>9</sup>

Most GBV cases reported to FIDA-Kenya are said to have been categorised as 'intimate partner violence, defilement and rape in Nairobi and Kisumu', but 'widow eviction and physical violence by in-laws' were also reported, especially in Western Kenya.

Highlights from the data provided by FIDA-Kenya for the period between 15 April and 03 May are stated as follows:

- 81 GBV cases, including two cases of rape, 10 cases of defilement, 2 cases of physical abuse by relatives or in-laws and 67 cases of intimate partner violence (physical, mental or economic)
- 117 child custody and maintenance cases
- 1 case of child abuse
- 6 cases of threat or physical abuse by law enforcement officers
- 10 cases of widow eviction
- 7 requests for psychological support in relation to COVID-19 deaths

## Healthcare Assistance Kenya (HAK) Data

As a national NGO, HAK is mandated to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in Kenya. Through the 1195 24-hour hotline, the organisation provides referrals and counselling. The HAK works alongside community groups and the State Department for Gender (SDfG) to protect victims of SGBV. Referrals can be made to ambulance services, healthcare providers, the police, community health volunteers (CHVs), and local leaders. The service has partnered with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to ensure that suspected COVID-19 cases are referred to the Emergency Response Centre. REINVENT has been supporting the project.

Through this hotline, a further indication of trends in rates of SGBV can be ascertained, though the details of incidents are not always clear or confirmed. An increase in cases reported through the hotline was reported in May. 3,201 cases 'responses' to the hotline were reported during the month, an increase of 94% on the 1,649 responses in April. It is difficult to establish whether this reflects an absolute rise in number of cases, or the fact that there is now greater awareness of the services being offered.

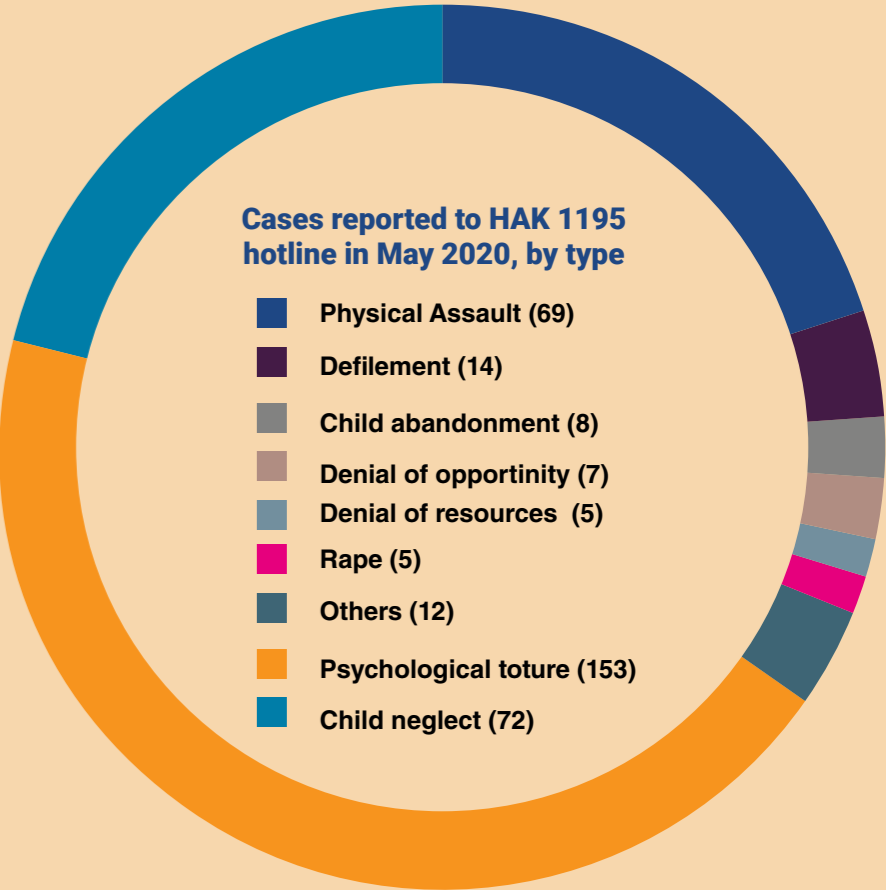
8 The Standard. '15 girl pregnant, married off during COVID-19', 16 June 2020

9 FIDA-Kenya. 'Statistics on sexual and gender based violence cases reported through FIDA-Kenya's toll-free number (0800 720 501) between 15th April to 3rd May 2020'

“Most GBV cases reported to FIDA-Kenya are said to have been categorised as ‘intimate partner violence, defilement and rape in Nairobi and Kisumu.

2,448 people accessed COVID-19 / GBV information provided online in May 2020, an increase on the 1,188 in April. In May 2020, a total of 345 GBV cases were reported, with psychological torture (153) making up 44% of the total:

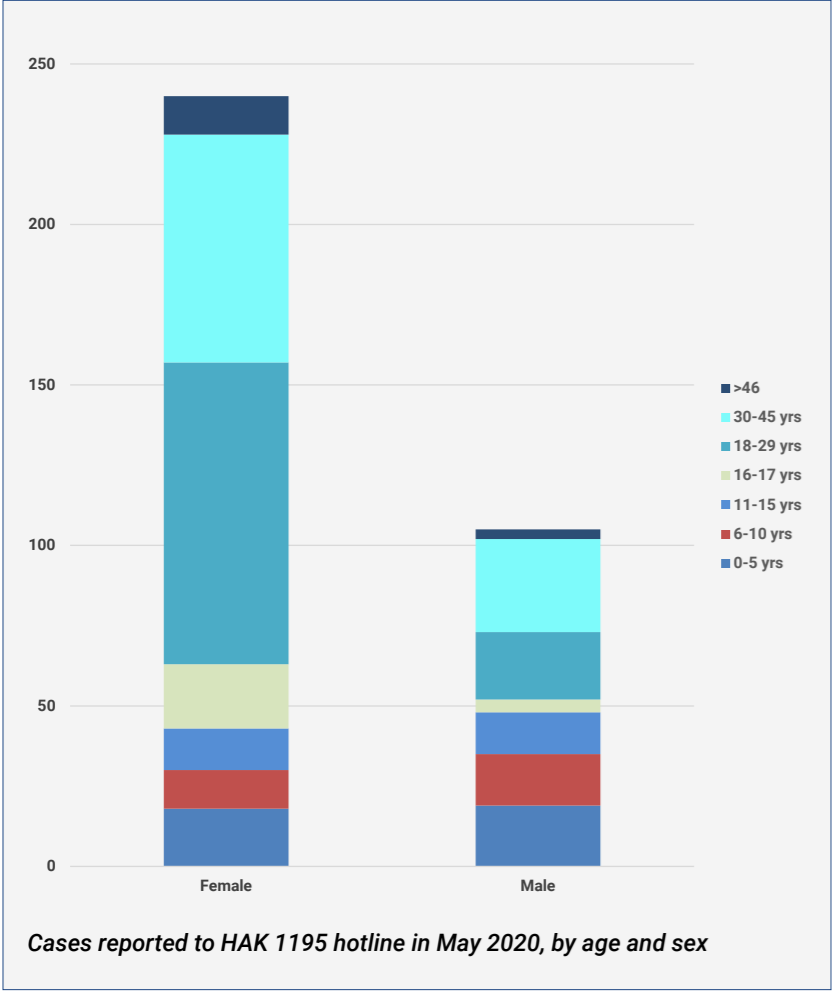
Type of Abuse	Female							Male							Total
	0-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15 yrs	16-17 yrs	18-29 yrs	30-45 yrs	>46	0-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15 yrs	16-17 yrs	18-29 yrs	30-45 yrs	>46	
Psychological Torture	0	0	2	2	54	46	8	0	0	0	1	16	21	3	153
Child Neglect	13	10	6	7	0	0	0	17	8	8	3	0	0	0	72
Physical Assault	1	1	0	1	28	23	3	1	2	0	0	4	5	0	69
Defilement	3	0	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	14
Child Abandonment	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	2	0	0	0	0	8
Denial of Opportunity	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	7
Denial of Resources	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	5
Rape	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Custody and Maintenance	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3
Child Marriage	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Sexual Abuse in Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Child Abduction	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Child Labour	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Female Genital Mutilation	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sexual Harassment	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grand Total	18	12	13	20	94	71	12	19	16	13	4	21	29	3	345



The graph below shows that the most affected demographic during May 2020 was women aged 18 to 29. Women between 30 and 45 have reported the second most cases to the HAK hotline.

The same male age groups were also affected in May with significant numbers reporting ‘psychological torture’. There has been a notable rise in the number of men reporting increased economic pressures.

Cases of child neglect also make up a significant portion of incidents with 29 girls and 33 boys reportedly affected in May, 21% of the total. This was followed by physical assault, mostly against women, consisting of 20% of the total GBV cases reported in May.



Overall, 69.5% of GBV cases recorded by HAK in May affected females. Breaking this down by age, adult females were impacted in 51% of cases, girls in 18%, adult males in 16% and boys in 15%. Notably, a higher proportion of males were minors than was the case with females.

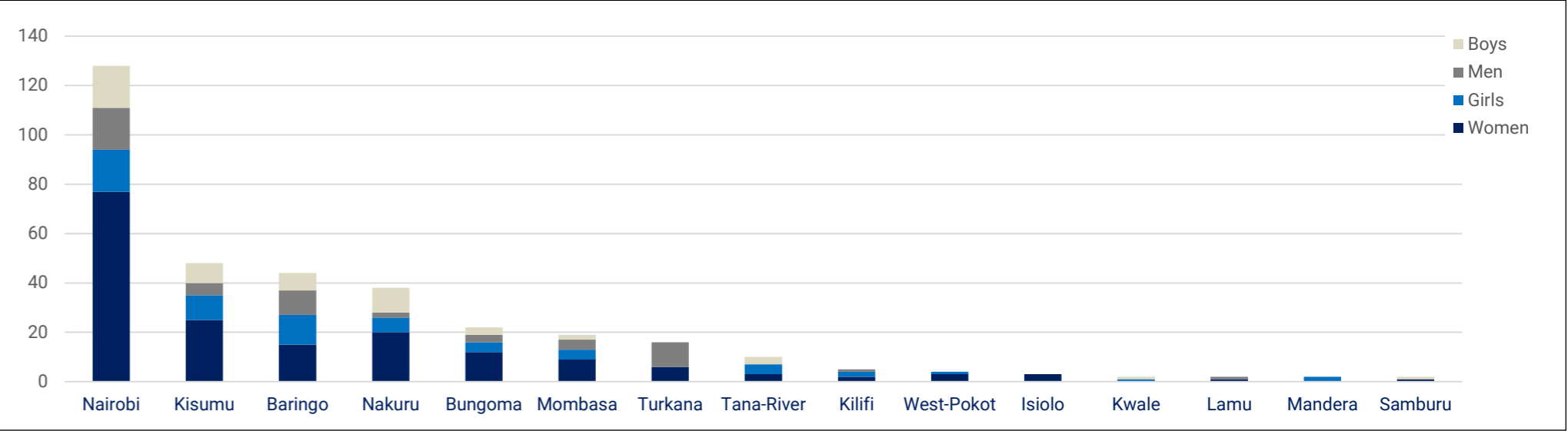
Physical assault disproportionately impacted women with a total of 57 cases recorded against females and only 12 against males. Women have also been affected more by psychological torture with a total of 109 women reporting cases compared to 40 men.



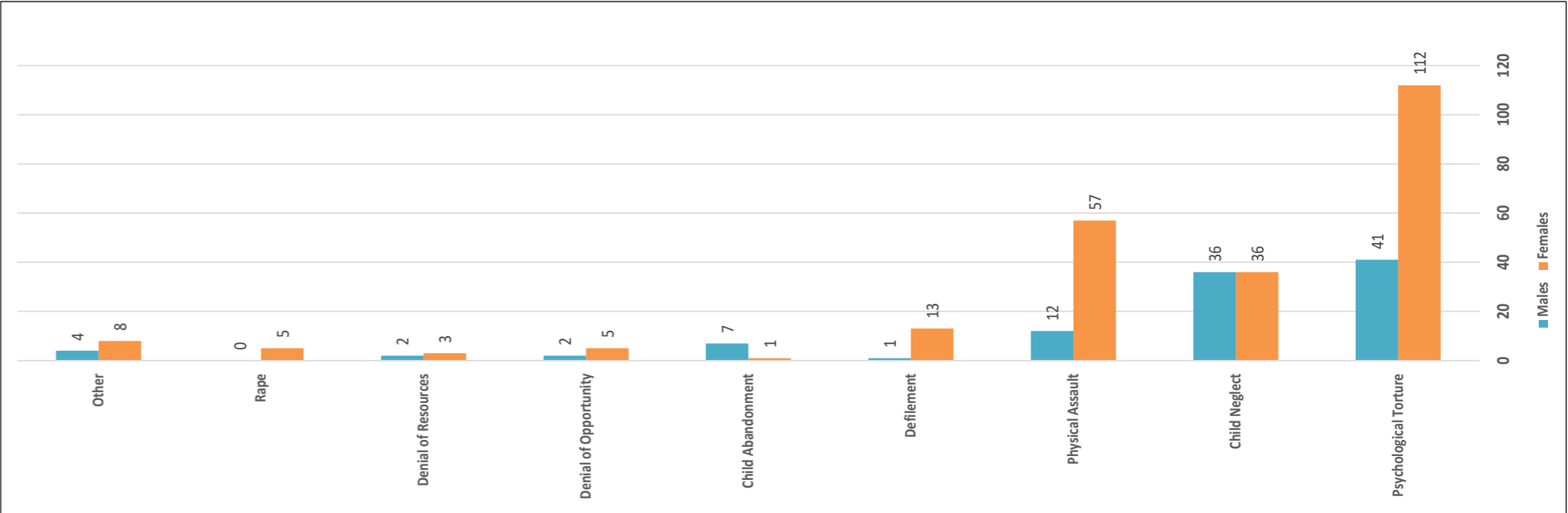
Physical assault disproportionately impacted women with a total of 57 cases recorded against females and only 12 against males.

With 142 cases, Nairobi accounted for the largest portion of incidents (37%). Other counties to record large numbers in May were Kisumu (48), Baringo (44) and Nakuru (38). In four REINVENT counties (Laikipia, Marsabit, Garissa and Wajir), no GBV cases were reported to the hotline at all.

Significant differences can be seen between the nature of the reporting in each county. For example, whilst 60% of incidents in Nairobi impacted adult females, in Turkana 10 of the 16 reported cases affected adult males, with only six incidents affecting adult females.



Cases reported to HAK 1195 hotline in May 2020, by county and demographic



Cases reported to HAK 1195 hotline in May 2020, by type and sex

# Mob Retribution

The frequency of mob retribution incidents reported in the REINVENT database in May is relatively high. Baseline data for 2019 suggests an average of 70 mob retribution incidents per month.<sup>10</sup>

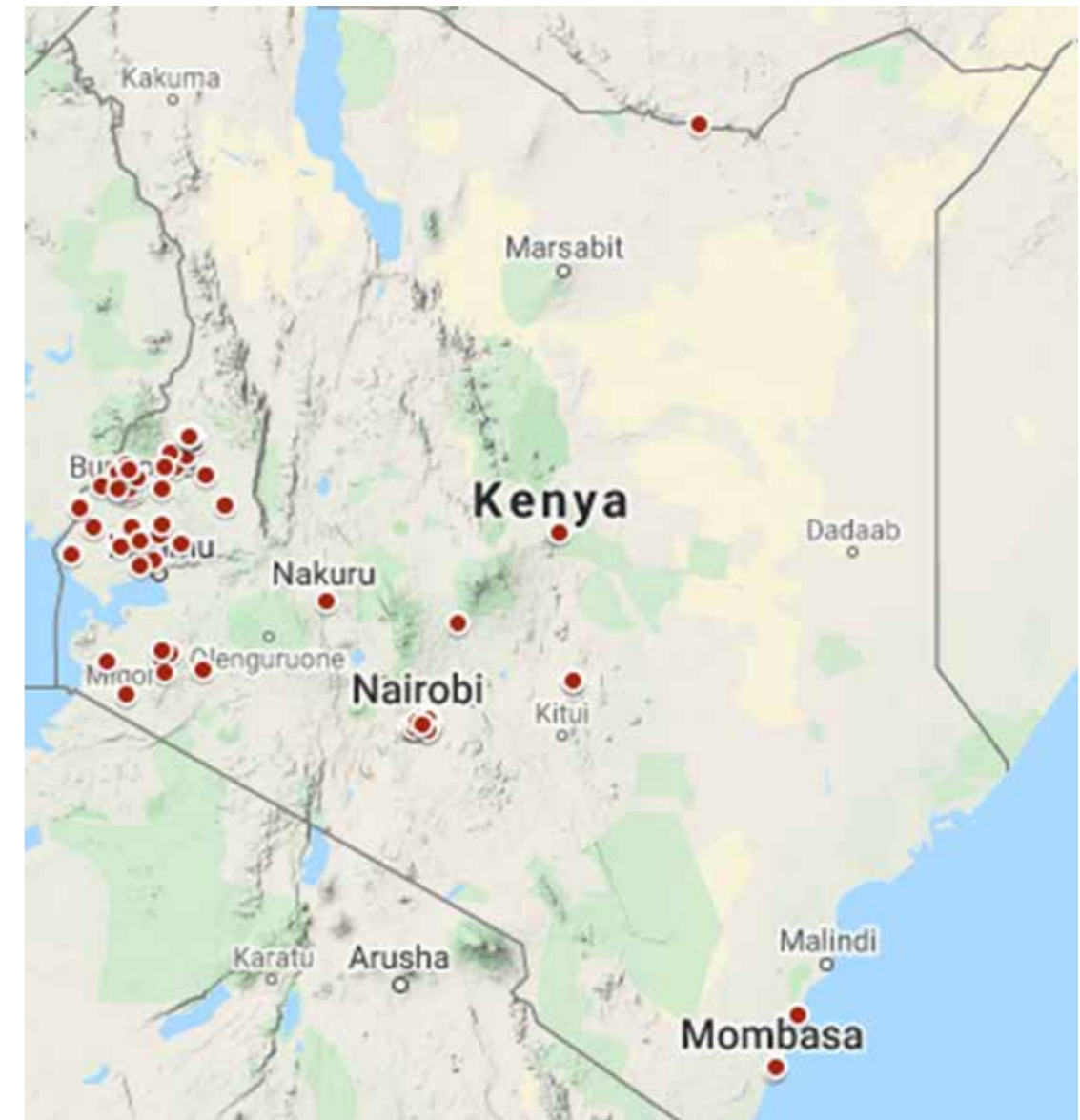
A total of 85 incidents of mob retribution were recorded in May, representing an average of almost three per day. Such incidents are often interpreted as an indication of a lack of faith in security forces and so trends are worth noting. A total of 49 people were killed and 68 injured in these incidents.

The frequency of mob retribution incidents reported in the REINVENT database in May is relatively high. Baseline data for 2019 suggests an average of 70 mob retribution incidents per month.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, 85 incidents marked an increase on the 70 registered by WS Insight in April this year. Insight recorded 90 incidents in March but far fewer in January (63) and February (56).

In over half (51%) of the cases, the victim of the mob retribution was a robbery suspect. Other common targets included livestock theft suspects (in eight cases in May, individuals accused of stealing chickens were attacked). During May, people were killed for alleged crimes as minor as stealing two chickens and a bag of maize (Busia), a single chicken (Migori), a single cow (Bungoma and Trans Nzoia), a bunch of bananas (Trans Nzoia) and a mobile phone (Nairobi and Busia).

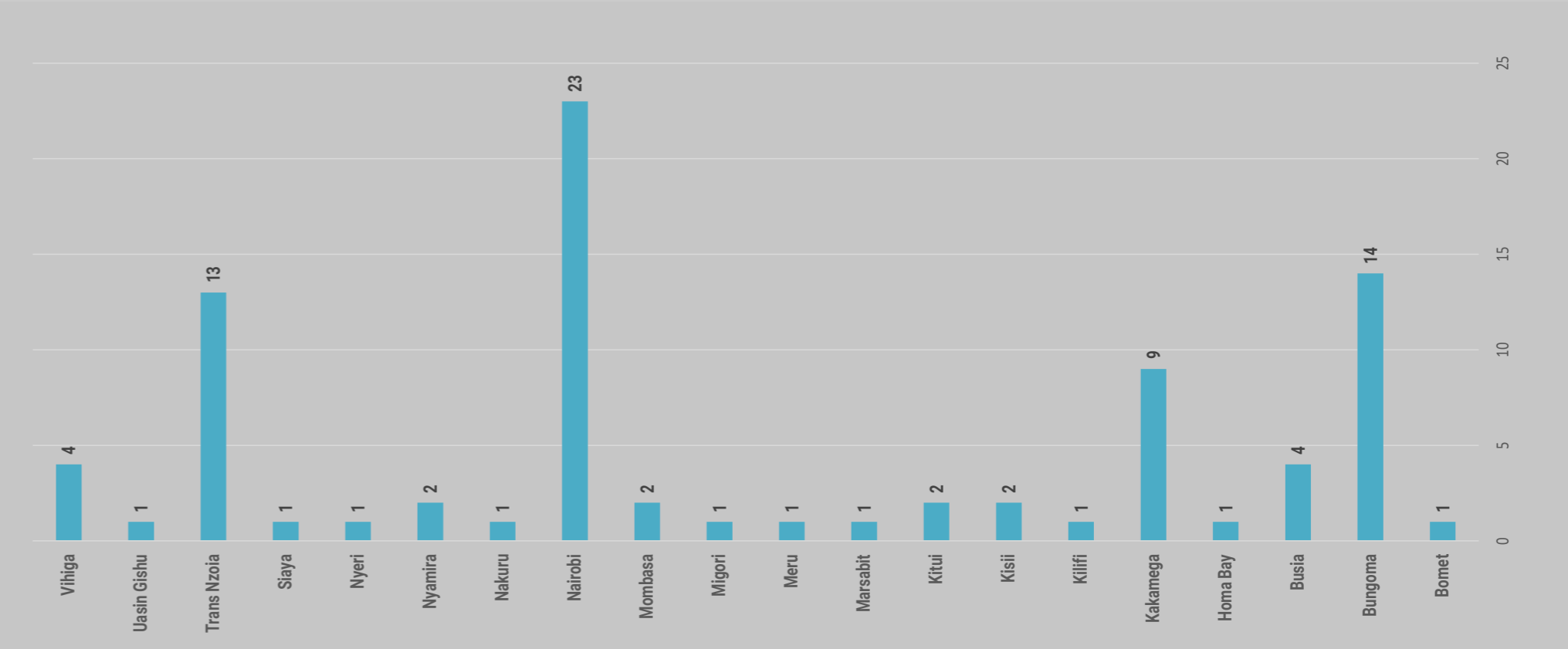
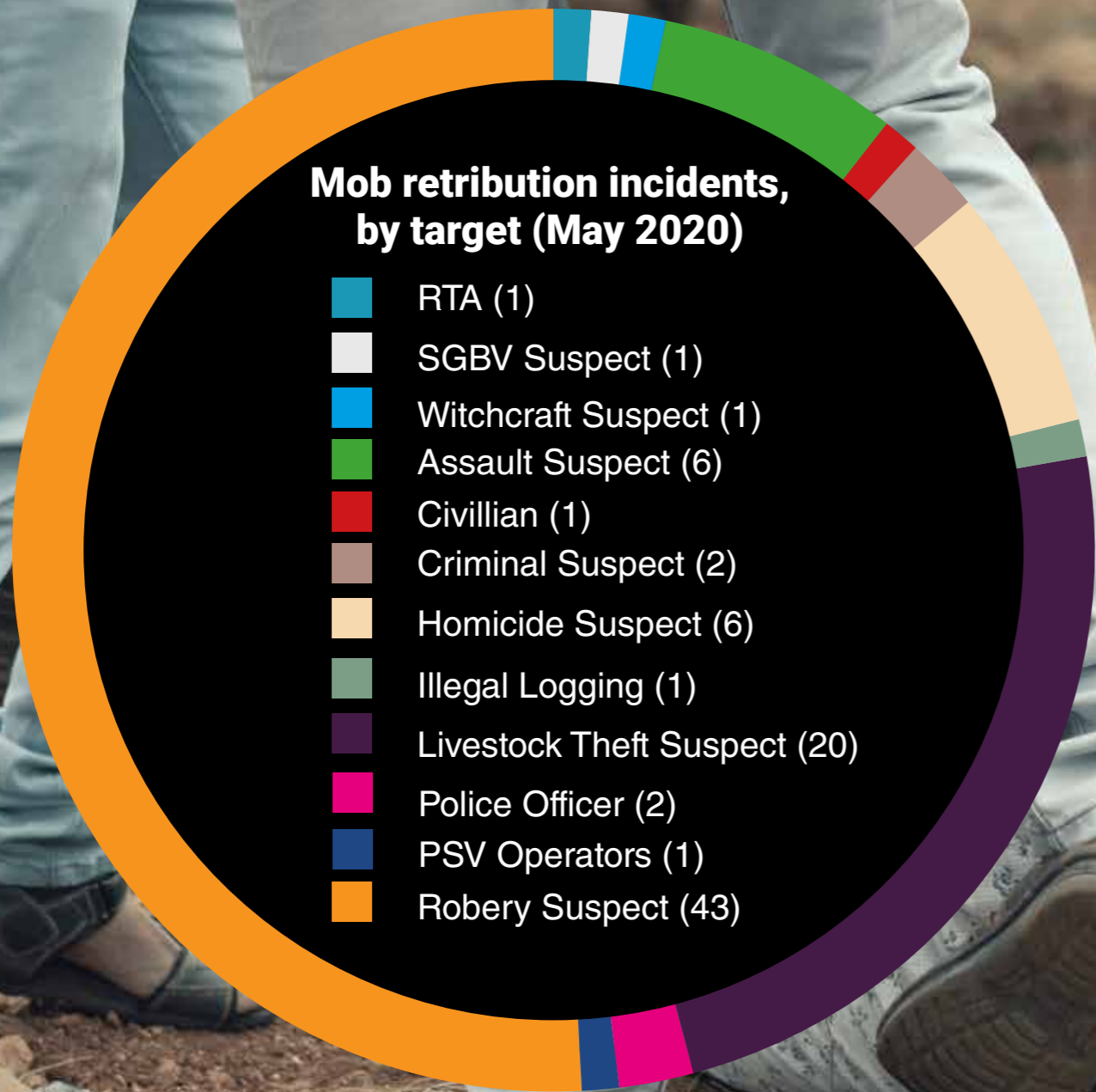
Other notable incidents to have occurred in May include the following:

- Four individuals, accused of robbing members of the public, were killed by a mob in Westlands, Nairobi, on 30 May.
- On 16 May, two criminals who conducted a home invasion in Kakamega were attacked by members of the public who responded to a call for help. A third assailant escaped the scene.
- On 08 May, four individuals linked to a gang were set alight by a mob who accused them of cattle theft in Kisii County.
- In Ndhiwa, Homa Bay County, a police officer was attacked by a mob for unexplained reasons. The officer was killed.
- On 05 May, man accused of killing a journalist in Kibera, Nairobi, was attacked by a mob and killed.
- On 03 May, three police officers in Bomet were injured by a mob after being accused of harassing boda boda operators and demanding bribes while enforcing the curfew.



Mob retribution incidents (May 2020)

<sup>10</sup> Data for 2019 has been prepared in anticipation of the upcoming baseline violence monitoring report.



Mob retribution incidents (May 2020)

# Security Force Activity

Three people were killed by the police in May enforcing curfew regulations (Makueni, Kisumu and Nairobi). The Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA) reported that they received 87 complaints between April and May.

A total of 207 security force incidents were recorded in May. This is broadly in line with the figures registered by WS Insight thus far this year (an average of 192.5 per month between January and April). In 93% of incidents, the officers involved were reportedly part of the regular police.

56% of the total in May were arrests. In a further 29 incidents (14%), bodies were recovered following presumed homicides.

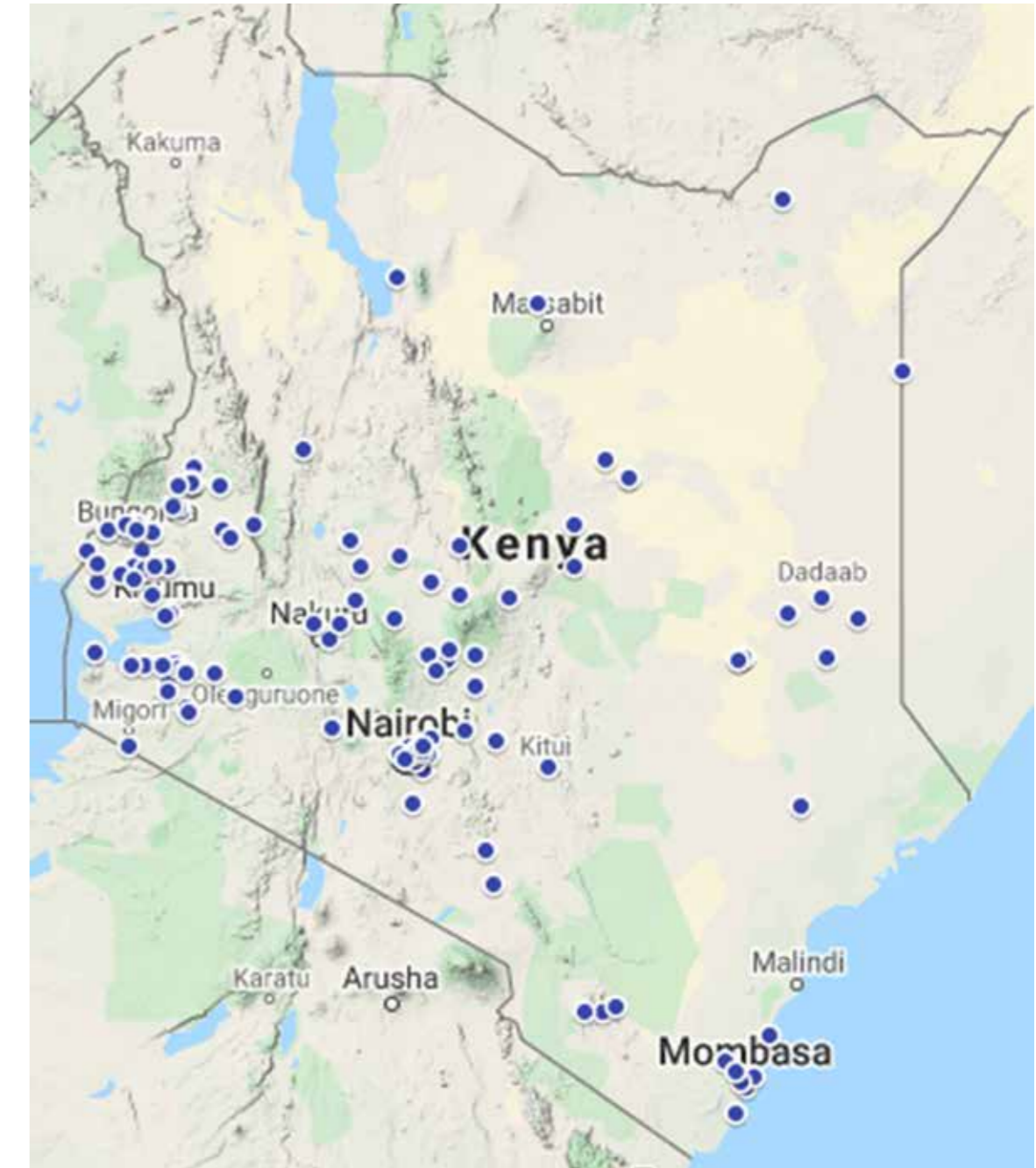
In 31 incidents recorded in May, security forces reportedly opened fire. A total of 35 people were killed and at least ten injured in these incidents. In 26 of the 31 cases, the officers opening fire were reportedly regular police. In the other five cases, police reservists, the Kenya Wildlife Service, the Kenya Defence Forces and DCI officers were involved. Particularly noteworthy incidents (in which three or more people were killed) include:

- **30 May** – Three suspected cattle raiders died, and a further individual injured, during an armed engagement with police officers in Laikipia.
- **13 May** – Four people were shot dead by police when they purportedly defied orders to surrender in Dandora, Nairobi.
- **13 May** – Police engaged suspected criminals in a firefight in Kangundo, Nairobi, killing four. A police officer was also injured.
- **10 May** – Police in Kisauni, Mombasa, engaged five suspects who were reported to have been responsible for robberies in Mombasa, Kilifi and Kwale. Three of the suspects were shot dead and two escaped. One police officer was injured.

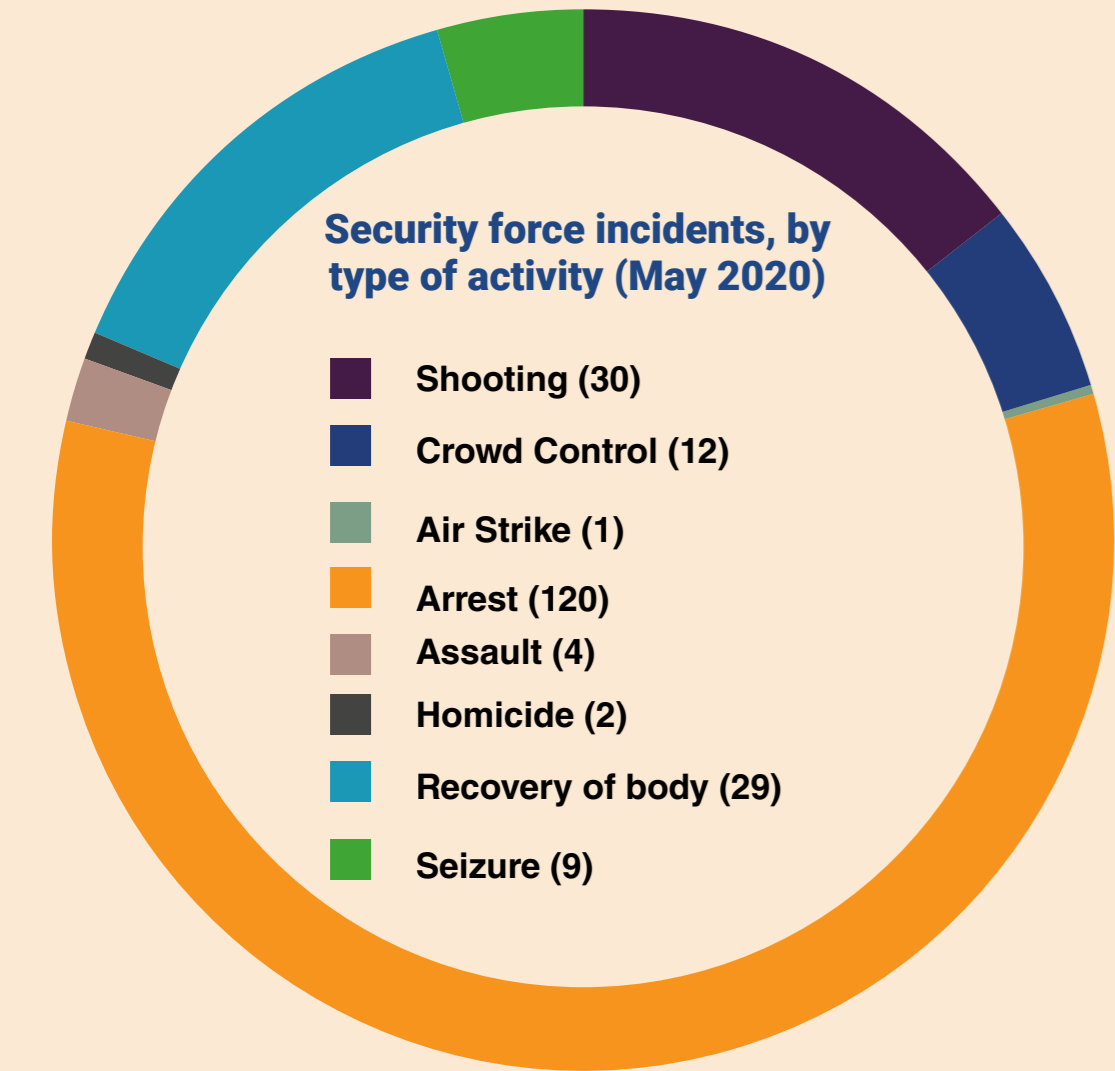
In some cases, protests or localised tensions were reported in the aftermath of shooting incidents involving law enforcement agencies. For example, on 13 May Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) officials shot dead a boda boda rider in Kinna, Isiolo County. The officers claim the victim had opened fire, but the incident led to criticisms from Isiolo leaders.

## COVID-19

Thirty-five security force incidents recorded in May were specifically related to COVID-19. Many of these involved the arrest of those failing to adhere to State directives aimed at preventing the spread of the virus. Others were arrested for taking advantage of the Government



Security force activity (May 2020)



measures in order to defraud members of the public. However, in several cases police were accused of assaulting those not wearing masks or not abiding by the curfew regulations. Three people were killed by the police in May enforcing curfew regulations (Makueni, Kisumu and Nairobi). The Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA) reported that they received 87 complaints between April and May. During COVID-19, police have also been accused of looting and extortion.

## Crime

In 89% of security force incidents this reporting, law enforcement agents were responding to various types of crime including robberies, homicides, the trade in narcotics and violations of COVID-19 regulations. Of these, arrests were made in 62.5% of the incidents. In 25 cases (14%) the law enforcement agents opened fire at suspect criminals. Greater detail regarding operations in each region of the country is provided below.

## Ethnically-motivated violence

In five incidents, law enforcement agents responded to the threat posed by those involved in ethnically-motivated violence. On two occasions – in Laikipia and Marsabit – officers exchanged fire with cattle raiders. During a disarmament operation in Baringo on 31 May, police reportedly killed livestock, vandalised local businesses and looted shops.

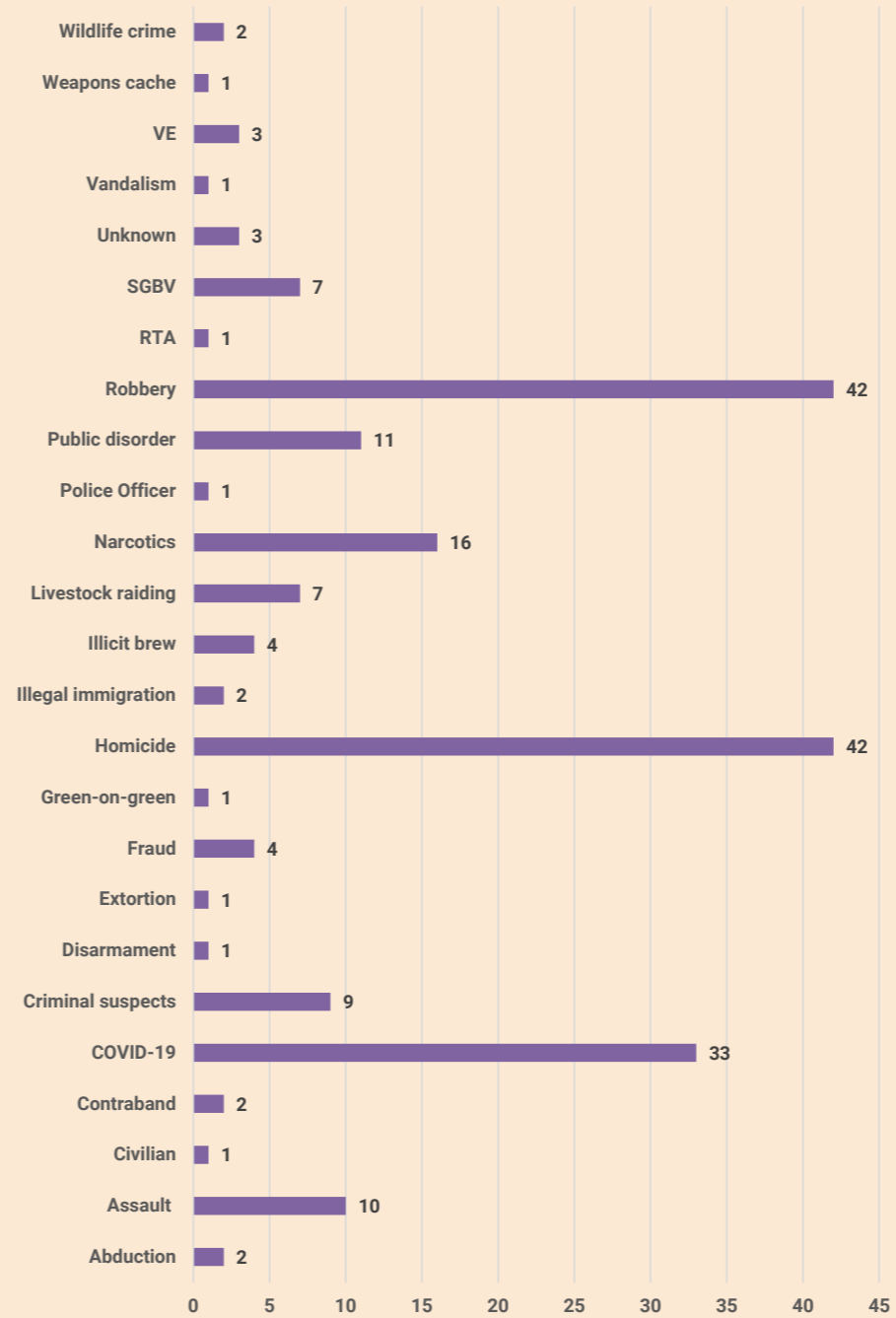
## Public disorder

In 22 of the public disorder incidents recorded in May, a police response was confirmed:

- In at least five cases, demonstrators were arrested.
- In at least five cases CS gas was used to disperse large groups.
- In one case, water cannon was utilised to disperse a gathering.
- In at least two cases, police used live ammunition to restore order.
- In two cases, protesters forced police officers to flee the scene.

## Violent Extremism

In response to several terrorist attacks in mid-May, the KDF launched air strikes against positions within Wajir believed to be used by militants. The use of air assets for such purposes is relatively rare on the Kenyan side of the border. In a significant incident in Kwale, a suspect was killed along with two children (see VE above). The incident has led to heightened tensions between communities and the security forces. On 01 May, police reportedly recovered grenades and extremist paraphernalia at a home in Nairobi's Githurai.



Security force incidents, by target of operation (May 2020)



# Regional overviews

## Nairobi

Eighty-four incidents of security force activity were recorded in May within Nairobi, of which 50 involved arrests. 13 incidents were recorded in which police opened fire. In total 21 people were killed by the police within Nairobi in May.

On 31 May in Dagoretti, a group of youths attempted to steel a firearm from a police officer as he responded to an incident of civil disorder. Seven incidents specifically related to COVID-19 were recorded in Nairobi. In at least one case, police officers were attacked as they tried to break-up a gathering.

## Central

Of the thirteen security force incidents recorded in Central, seven involved operations in relation to localised homicides. Police also responded to public disorder in Mwaa (Kirinyaga) and livestock raiding in Mirangini (Nyandarua).

## Eastern

Security forces reportedly opened fire in a total of seven cases in Eastern region during May, killing four people. In two cases, the targets were involved in the narcotics trade, and were trafficking their illicit substances through Isiolo.

## Coast

A total of six people were killed at the Coast by police during operations (three in Mombasa and three in Kwale). Seven incidents involved the arrest of suspects accused of homicide, robbery, SGBV and COVID-19 related offences. 33 arrests were recorded across the region.

## Rift Valley

Of the 31 incidents recorded in Rift Valley in May, security forces opened fire in four cases. Three people were killed in an engagement with cattle raiders in Laikipia. In 16 cases, arrests were reported. In most of these incidents, the targets were

localised criminals or individuals failing to adhere to COVID-19 directives (especially in Trans Nzoia).

Of particular concern was an incident in Keliot village in Bomet County where an officer is said to have assaulted a man during curfew hours. In another incident, the father of a senior politician was shot by police for not wearing a face mask at Laikipia's Doldol Police Station.

## Nyanza

Only a single incident in which police opened fire was recorded in Nyanza during the reporting period. One person was killed in the incident in Nyamira North on 10 May. Police were attacked by assailants and responded by shooting one person dead. Most other incidents recorded in Nyanza involved arrests targeting local criminal actors. In a noteworthy incident, police were accused of assaulting an individual in Kisumu for not wearing a mask during curfew hours on 20 May. The individual later died.

## Western

Twenty-nine incidents were reported across Western with no recorded case of police discharging their weapons. Most incidents reported were arrests targeting localised crime and violations of COVID-19 regulations. On 12 May in Kakamega, police were accused of assaulting and seriously injuring a man returning home during curfew hours.

## North East

In North-Eastern Kenya, three incidents were recorded in which police opened fire. No deaths were reported but five people were injured. A green-on-green incident was reported in Garissa on 06 May when two soldiers engaged a police officer. The police officer reportedly refused to follow orders from the military. All three were injured.

# Conclusion and Outlook

The security space in May 2020 was unsurprisingly dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Government directives to prevent the spread of the virus. Broadly speaking, though the nature of criminal activity has changed (with media reports suggesting criminals operating at night and a spike in SGBV / domestic violence), we have not observed the widely predicted increase in crime (at least at this stage). In reality, economic hardship does not necessarily lead to an immediate rise in crime rates. Such an assertion fails to recognise individual agency and personal moral codes. Moreover, criminals require capability, intent and opportunity.

The pandemic has arguably decreased some opportunities for criminal acts, with fewer people on the street and fewer empty homes. In the short-term, there has not yet been a significant change in the capability of criminals. It is possible that intent will increase over time as the current economic obstacles begin to impact more people and the real implications of COVID-19 on crime rates may only be visible in the medium-long term.

We continue to see isolated unrest associated with the pandemic, both in terms of public frustration at government measures (and their impact on daily life) and police efforts to enforce these directives. At present, these incidents are localised around specific grievances. However, in the context of Kenya's broader political disputes (with the elections just two years away) and the substantial debt burden, the frequency of public disorder incidents is likely to increase over the next couple of years regardless of the trajectory taken by COVID-19.

Evidence has been identified in several areas which points towards political involvement in localised violence. Organised criminal groups across Central Kenya are reportedly used by politicians in exchange for funds. Moreover, pastoralist communities are being used to play out political disputes over boundaries. One might interpret these as signs of growing divisions

at community and local government level. With so much uncertainty surrounding the political space at present, the threat of a breakdown in public order in the lead up to the elections in 2022 remains high.

The police have repeatedly demonstrated that coercion is often the only tool they have available to enforce Government directives on COVID-19. Whilst there have been cases of cooperation between communities and the police, a single incident of police 'brutality' quickly undoes any gains. The pandemic has highlighted more than ever the weakness in the social contract between the security forces and civilians across Kenya. Genuine 'community policing' must now permeate all levels of the law enforcement agencies.

In terms of VE, several of the classic structural drivers of radicalisation and recruitment are undoubtedly being exacerbated by the pandemic: police brutality, economic hardship, unemployment and disenfranchisement. The longer COVID-19 affects Kenya, the greater the impact of each of these may be. However, again, recruitment will not automatically increase in turn. Structural drivers alone cannot explain trends in radicalisation and recruitment activity. A recruiter needs to be present for a start. Al Shabaab are not in a position themselves at this time to really take advantage of the situation. The group is also dealing with COVID-19 and is struggling with a series of internal struggles. The situation must be monitored carefully, but one should not necessarily anticipate an immediate increase in the threat.

As the violence monitoring tool expands to incorporate all of REINVENT's various data sources, the information will be structured in a way which allows for a particular focus on VAWG trends and the potential impact of politics on all categories of violence. In addition, with a bank of data to rely on, broader analysis of longer-term trends will be possible moving forward.



## About The REINVENT Programme

*Reducing Insecurity and Violent Extremism in Northern and Coastal Regions of Kenya (REINVENT) is a five-year programme (2018-2023), funded by UKaid from the British people. REINVENT is a commitment of the UK-Kenya Security Compact. The programme aims to improve security and stability in 18 counties across four regions to enable investment, inclusive growth and equitable service delivery. The programme is led by Tetra Tech International Development and delivered in partnership with the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) and the Danish Demining Group (DDG).*

*The REINVENT Countering Violent Extremism work is based on RUSI's experience from the Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism (STRIVE) programme and works with key state and non-state actors, local partners and local communities to mobilize support to revitalize County Action Plans. The programme also identifies alienating factors and creates platforms to establish trust between security actors and communities. For feedback or any inquiries on this report, please do not hesitate to contact us on [reinventkenya@tetrattech.com](mailto:reinventkenya@tetrattech.com)*

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