



Press Release
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Seven out of ten citizens want the Kenya Defence Forces to withdraw from Somalia But only 1 out of 50 think that this will help to counter the appeal of radical groups

17 November 2016, Nairobi: The majority of Kenyans (70%) feel that Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) troops should be withdrawn from Somalia. Just over half of citizens (53%) want the troops to be deployed to Kenyan borders. A further 9% want them to return home if other African countries send troops to replace them while 8% think they should be brought home regardless of whether they are replaced. At the same time, when asked about ways in which the appeal of radical groups for marginalized youth can be reduced in Kenya, only 1 out of 50 citizens (2%) think that withdrawing troops from Somalia will support this aim.

These findings were released by Twaweza, in a research brief titled *The roots of radicalization: Citizens' views on the causes and solutions for insecurity in Kenya*. The findings are based on data from *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative high-frequency mobile phone survey. The findings are based on data collected from 1,801 respondents across Kenya in August and September 2016.

Citizens also have faith in KDF's readiness for a terrorist attack, and two out of three Kenyans think they are very ready or ready for such an attack. This is important as 8 out of 10 citizens think that Al-Shabaab are still a threat to the country's security. This fear may be driven by high levels of awareness of past attacks; 71% have heard of at least one attack. The most infamous attack was that on Garissa University (55%), followed by the Mandera attacks (36%) and the Westgate Mall attack (32%).

Citizens are also largely in favour of the closure of Dadaab refugee camp. Among those who are aware of this plan (64%), 8 out of 10 (80%) support the decision.

Sauti za Wananchi also sought citizens' views on the recruitment into radical groups of young Kenyans and the possible causes and solutions for this. The single most mentioned reason given for the growing appeal of radical groups in Kenya is the lack of employment (56%). Poor governance is cited by 20% of citizens. Other reasons, including the influence of social media or radical clerics, each cited by fewer than 5% of Kenyans.

At the same time, many more Kenyans favour a military approach to these groups compared to a conciliatory one. Almost half of citizens (45%) think that the best response is to use the military and intelligence forces to crack down on radical groups and the communities in which they are located while 25% suggest working with the communities both to address socioeconomic grievances and to identify at risk individuals. A smaller number (13%) suggest engaging with the radical groups directly to understand and mitigate their concerns while the same number think reducing corruption is the most effective way to deal with radical groups.

Kenyans are also concerned about radical groups; half (49%) are very worried that these groups may attempt to recruit their family members and a significant minority of 7% of citizens actually know of someone who has been recruited (or attempts made to recruit them).

John Mugo, Director of Data and Voice at Twaweza, said *“The debate rages as to whether we should withdraw our troops from Somalia. Citizens have voiced their views clearly – they believe in KDF’s preparedness to protect them but they would rather troops were brought home to protect our borders. Very few make any direct connection between the presence (or not) of these troops in Somalia and the proliferation of radical groups. But they have also provided some important insight for government about the appeal of radical groups in the country, which they connect to governance and economic failures. And they have shown they are feeling unsafe, both in terms of the threat of Al-Shabaab and the potential for radical groups to recruit those close to them. These views and voices of citizens provide important insight for policy-makers looking to ensure that Kenya’s security situation, both actual and perceived, provides a productive and peaceful environment for all citizens.”*

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For more information:

Brezhnev Otieno, Advocacy Manager for Kenya, Twaweza
e: botieno@twaweza.org | t: (+254) (0) 786 563 722

Notes to Editors

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