

## **Early Warning Systems and Response Mechanisms for Countering Violent Extremism in Tanzania**

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### **Abstract**

This paper analyzed the early warning and response mechanisms developed and deployed at the local levels to respond to episodes and threats related to violent extremism. Qualitative methods – namely key informant interviews and documentary review were employed to gather findings from local community members and leaders, government official and police in Mwanza and Mtwara regions. The paper discovered that, first, growing incidents of violence in Tanzania ensued from the weakening of early warning and response mechanisms, and secondly, recent interventions to reinforce and deploy early warning and response mechanisms have helped to increase the capacity of communities to prevent incidents of violence. However, the paper found that, that even though the usefulness of early warning and response mechanisms to prevent VE - related security threats is acknowledged by all actors, success in the operationalization of these mechanisms is politically negotiated. Findings point to the need to invest in early warning mechanisms allowing communities to engage in developing context – specific solutions to address growing cases of violence.

### **Introduction**

The period after the September 11, 2001 terrorism incident in the United States of America (USA) has witnessed increasing attention to studies regarding violent extremism (VE), recruitment and radicalization. Understanding VE and radicalization is especially critical – as it helps to determine the process through which terrorism is produced. Counter terrorism measures deployed after September 11, 2001 would be expected to deter the problem, but on the country, the number and magnitude of cases of terrorism and VE affecting developed and developing countries has increased since September 11 (Kaldor, 2018; Brown, 2011). Terrorism is now considered one of the greatest global security challenges, a ‘new war’, according to Kaldor (2018). A realm of academic and policy studies known as prevention/counter violent extremism (P/CVE) has now emerged and gained importance, attempting to find out “how and why individuals become involved in extremist violence” (United States Institute of Peace, 2013, p. 2). However, terrorism is not new (Simon, 2008; Shughart II, 2006; Garrison, 2003). As Garrison would argue, terrorism could be traced back to 2000 years ago when, for example, a Jewish insurgency group known as Sicarii-Zealots organized a ‘terrorist’ movement against the Roman occupation.

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Africa has not been spared from VE, radicalization and terrorism. It is evident that activities of terrorist groups and networks have since September 11 occupied a central part in the security and political life of many African states. Africa is becoming an epicentre of terrorist groups, so much so that terrorist groups have now established operational grounds in countries like Mali, Somalia, Mozambique, Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Niger and Burkina Faso (Gardner, 2020). Already existing ethnic, economic, political and religious conflicts have created a ground for radicalization, recruitment and establishment of violent extremist groups. This could be said, for instance, about Mali in which existing farmer-herder conflicts have facilitated the recruitment and radicalization of the marginalized groups of pastoral communities. Pastoral communities consider joining extremist groups as alternative solution to fight against their historical marginalization over access to resources (Benjaminsen & Ba, 2019).

In East Africa, the Somali State that has been plunged into civil wars from the 1990s has become a home and organizing unit of *Al-Shabaab*, a major terrorist group in the region. Nonetheless, before the rise of *Al-Shabaab* in 2006, the East African region was already a host of terrorist groups, such as *Al-Qaeda* that claimed responsibility for the twin attacks of the US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 1998. Since then, terrorist attacks and a network of groups linked to terrorism and VE continued to increase and spread across different parts in the region and the continent. The 2010 twin attacks targeting a crowd of people watching a World Cup football match in Uganda, the 2013 Westgate attack in Kenya, the 2015 Garissa University attack in Kenya, and subsequent attacks carried out by *Al-Shabaab* in the region prove how terrorist networks have established a strong footage in the region.

On its part, Tanzania is at risk of becoming a victim of VE and radicalization since it is neighbor to countries like Kenya, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique that have vividly experienced many VE-related episodes. Already, the country saw a rise in the number of VE-related incidents reported in several regions, including Pwani, Mwanza, Tanga, Arusha, and Dar es Salaam during the period from 2010 (LeSage, 2014; Muyomba, 2013; *RaiaMwema*, 2013; Yakub, Said, Jamal & Mwilo, 2016; *Mwananchi*, 2016; Mikofu, 2016; Killian, 2018, Walwa, 2018, Jingu, 2018; Sambaiga, 2018). The period from 2010 was in general terms a critical turning point in Tanzania as VE-related episodes became more frequent and fatal.

In relation to evidence suggesting a rise in episodes related to VE, one of the research areas which is less explored in Tanzania is the analysis of early warning and response mechanisms developed and deployed to prevent VE and radicalization. As such, this paper addresses this knowledge gap by analysing the context specific early warning and response mechanisms that have evolved and been deployed to prevent VE-related incidents. This analysis would

then be expected to lead to an understanding of the existing conflicts, and how the mechanisms developed and deployed are contributing to preventing episodes related to VE.

The research was conducted in Mwanza and Mtwara regions. In Mwanza, it covered two districts, Nyamagana and Ilemela, and Mtwara district in Mtwara region. The two regions present several variations and similarities, which were useful in drawing insights about early warning and response mechanisms. Precisely, Mtwara region, which borders the northern part of Mozambique, has never experienced notable incidents of VE, but neighbouring communities in Mozambique have experienced incidents of VE. As such, conducting the research in Mtwara offered an opportunity to gather findings helping to understand the early warning and response mechanisms developed and deployed by communities that border Northern Mozambique, which has become a home of insurgency activities.

On the other hand, Mwanza does not have a history of experiencing notable violent conflicts, but it lies near Burundi, Rwanda and DRC that have historically been plunged into violent conflicts. DRC, for example, is a home of one of the notable terrorist groups, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). As such, conflicts from these countries can easily be exported to Mwanza through cross-border movements of suspects. During the period from 2010, Mwanza experienced VE-related episodes attracting public attention. The most remarkable incident was the April 2016 brutal killing of people in the mosque in Utemini sub-ward, Nyamagana district. Thus, a case study of Mwanza helps to understand and analyze the early warning and response mechanisms that have evolved in response to VE-related episodes and other security threats.

Findings were gathered through qualitative data collection methods. Two main methods of data collection were employed. First, relevant literatures, reports, policy documents and documented cases on conflicts and early warning and response to VE related threats were reviewed. The second was key informant interviews (KIIs) with community leaders, civil societies, religious leaders, leaders of women and youth networks and government officials at the district, ward and *mtaa* (street) levels. A total of 33 KIIs (17 in Mwanza and 16 in Mtwara) were conducted at different times in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Participants involved in KIIs were selected purposively based on their potential to hold strategic information in responding to questions about early warning and response mechanisms to VE related threats.

The paper is divided into five sections. Following this introduction, the next part reviews literature on early warning-response mechanisms and prevention of VE, and third and fourth sections analyze the early warning and response mechanisms developed and deployed in Mwanza and Mtwara to prevent incidents related to VE, and a conclusion is provided thereafter in the last part.

### **Early warning-response and prevention of VE: Review of literature**

States, governments and non-state actors are increasingly developing interest in early warning-response mechanisms to offer solutions to presently increasing security threats, notably terrorism, violent extremism (VE), and radicalization (OECD, 2009; International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2014). Early warning “[...] functions to predict conflict trends, alert communities of risk, inform decision making, provide inputs to response strategy formulation, and initiate responses to violent conflict” (Nyheim, 2015: p. i). It is a key dimension of conflict prevention – helping to alert key actors, such as decision makers and the security forces regarding the potential outbreak and magnitude of violent conflicts and the likely impacts of the same.

VE and radicalization ensue from social-psychological and structural drivers; as such, they are best addressed through an investment in soft approaches (e.g. early warning) that provide room for partnering with local communities to find solutions to insecurities (Subedi, 2017). Early warning-response mechanisms are capable of helping to detect VE and radicalization signs and eventually provide responses (Carlsson, Rostami, Mondani, Sturup, Sarnecki&Edling, 2020). Several yardsticks have been suggested as good practices for the conduct of early warning: “a) understand the problem – base analysis from the ground; b) ensure that responses are diverse, flexible and sustainable; c) invest time in planning and strategy; d) be conflict sensitive; e) don’t push technical solutions onto political problems; f) balance speed, ownership and co-ordination” (OECD, 2009, p. 16).

However, adopting and deploying early warning and response mechanisms to prevent VE does not mean doing away with the traditional state-centric approach. It rather implies, as Christensen (2009) would argue, complementing it with a human centered approach that demands accommodating the inputs of people and non-state actors in finding solution to security threats. In other words, early warning and response mechanisms are decisive components of prevention/countering violent extremism (P/CVE), which appreciates and embraces the use of soft approaches. These soft approaches provide for a broad understanding of the socio-political, economic and cultural contexts through which VE and radicalization evolve.

In this respect, it is now recognized by international legal instruments - such as the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 2178 of 2014 and UN Security Council Resolution 2250 of 2015 – that the prevention of VE through such soft measures as youth inclusion, is an important benchmark to prevent the breeding of VE and terrorism. Youth inclusion can help to generate early warning and response indicators such as platforms for dialogue. Also, the intervention of civil societies can help in the dissemination of early warning and response

approaches for government agencies and other actors to act upon (Subedi& Jenkins, 2016).

There is nonetheless no single typology of early warning. A study by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) (Pawlak and Ricci, 2014) classifies early warning into three generations. The first generation (1995 – 1999) was characterized by a centralized structure on information analysis and management; it was mainly concerned with offering predictions and analysis for the purpose of informing decision-making. Information was collected through secondary qualitative and quantitative methods. The main limitation of this approach to early warning is that it had weak linkage with response mechanisms that inform decisions to carry out interventions. This generation of early warning was also not informed by context specific evidence which normally allows decision makers to determine the response and predict what is likely to happen from a conflict at local levels (Nyheim, 2015).

The second-generation systems of early warning (1999-2003) are regional specific. It involved deploying field monitors in areas experiencing crisis in order to help to provide analysis and predictions. The field monitors used open sources of information gathering. Unlike the first generation, the second offers proposition for response. Also, in the second generation, there is higher quality of data and information sharing is possible through the field monitors present in the conflict zone area. A main weakness of this generation is that it maintained a top down approach that did not necessarily accommodate the inputs of multiple actors, such as civil societies, women, youth and local governments (Ibid).

Third generation systems (2003 to date) are localized in structure and operation. They are deployed for purposes of preventing the occurrence of violent conflicts in specific localities. In the third generation, the center and field officers are connected, and this helps to provide real time information to inform response mechanisms. Since the third-generation systems cover a small-localized conflict area, they are often unable to provide analysis of cross-border conflict dynamics. In terms of structure, the third generation is not centralized. Indeed, it accommodates working with and obtaining information from a broad range of actors, notably women, youth and civil societies in the local settings (Ibid). An example of third-generation early warning is the 2002 Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWRM) of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD). CEWRM coordinated efforts of IGAD members to gather, analyze and share information on conflicts and violence in order to facilitate and inform early warning and response (IGAD, 2002).

Nonetheless, while there is an institutional acknowledgement of the link between early warning and response, response is often a negotiated process. The deployment of response depends on some other underlying variables, such as political will and interest (Nyheim, 2015). From experience, early warning has

always presented rich predictive evidence for possible violent conflicts, such as civil wars, genocide and politicide, but response is often affected by political will and bureaucratic hurdles within local and international organizations (Wulf & Debiel, 2009).

Experience from conflict prone areas of Africa indicates that early warning mechanisms are often poorly conceived and deployed, and responses are not deployed in time. Some other defects, such as weak decision-making processes and political and institutional personnel setbacks, affect the effectiveness of responses (OECD, 2009). The IGAD early warning and response mechanism, for instance, is hampered by internal problems and tensions within member states. Uganda, for instance, is deeply involved in the 'war' against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) while Ethiopia and Eritrea have a historical tension that makes it difficult for troops from the two countries to work together in an intervention. In a similar vein, Sudan and South Sudan are marred by internal tensions – and Kenya and Ethiopia are struggling for regional dominance in the IGAD region (Wulf & Debiel, 2009).

Thus, it is worthwhile reiterating that the presence of early warning mechanisms is one thing, but the effectiveness of the response is a negotiated process. In light of this dilemma, the subsequent section analyses the early warning and response mechanisms developed and/or adopted to prevent VE and radicalization – related violent episodes in Mtwara and Mwanza.

#### **Early Warning and VE in Mwanza and Mtwara**

Tanzania has had a celebrated experience of implementing early warning and response mechanisms. The country developed and implemented successful community-oriented policing mechanisms, such as *sungusungu* vigilantism in the Lake Victoria regions, and *nyumbakumi* (ten cell) during the one-party state (Cross, 2014). The Tanzanian ten-cell system has been adopted in some other countries because of its perceived success in terms of increasing community resilience to prevent conflict and violence in Tanzania. Kenya adopted the ten-cell system in 2013 – in response to increasing episodes of VE (Leting, 2017; Diphoon & Stapele, 2020; Mutsya, 2017). It was envisioned that the institutionalization of *nyumbakumi* in Kenya would facilitate the achievement of *Usalamakwa Wote* (security for all) by way of reinforcing the participation of community members in community policing (Kenya Gazette, 2013).

This study discovered that VE related incidents and other security threats in Mtwara and Mwanza resulted from the weakening of early warning and response mechanisms that communities implemented in the past. The ten-cell system, for example, was detached from the government in the 1990s following the re-

instatement of multi-party politics in the country.<sup>1</sup> However, as the analysis in the next section will unveil, communities in the two areas have responded to VE related threats by developing and deploying different early warning and response mechanisms. Early warning and response mechanisms that had been disbanded have also been reinforced to suit the existing socio-political context.

In Mwanza, participants narrated about the presence of some radical groups and criminal networks that were responsible for VE related incidents and criminality, but this information did not reach the police in time for two reasons. First, there was absence of effectively working early warning and response mechanisms, and secondly, there was a disconnect between the police and local communities – as the police were accused of being corrupt. This made it difficult for local people and religious leaders to interact with the police.

The May 2016 brutal killing in the Rahman Mosque in Utemini area in Mkolani ward, Nyamagana district is a point of reference explaining how the weakening of early warning and response mechanisms created a room for VE-related incidents to take occur. The killing started with a religious ideological conflict between two groups of Muslims who had been sharing a mosque [Rahman Masjid] where the killing took place. Following this conflict, some radical members decided to separate from the mainstream mosque – and eventually built their own new mosque a few meters from the old mosque where the killing took place. A member of the radicalized group donated his piece of land where the new mosque was built. This tension had persisted for some time, but it was not addressed in time because of the absence of effectively operating early warning and response mechanisms that would be linking together different actors at the local, district and regional levels.<sup>2</sup>

The presence of an alleged radical preacher who was also a leader of the group that separated from the old mosque had caused tensions in several mosques because of his intolerant extremist preaching. Religious leaders narrated during interviews that this so-called radical preacher had been expelled from several other mosques because his preaching was divisive and unacceptable. At *Ijumaa*[Friday]Mosque, the main mosque in Mwanza, for instance, this alleged extremist leader was summoned by prominent Muslim leaders to explain the source of his teachings, such as discouraging *salayajamaa*[community prayers of

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<sup>1</sup>When Tanzania reintroduced multi-party politics in the 1990s, *nyumbakumi* system was detached from the government since it was deemed to be a political organ of the ruling party, CCM. It was indeed detached in order to allow creating a level playing field for all political parties. Thus, since the 1990s, *nyumbakumi* system has remained to be a structure within the ruling party. In practice, however, *nyumbakumi* leaders have continued to command some respect and legitimacy at the local levels. In a good number of areas in Tanzania, for example, people are asked for introduction letters from their *nyumbakumi* leaders when they seek service from local government offices.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews in Utemini, Mkolani, Mwanza in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Muslims]. He, however, never appeared and decided to relocate to Mabatini mosque where he was also later expelled. After Mabatini, he moved to Bugarika mosque, from where he was also expelled. In the end, he relocated to Utemini where he mobilized the construction of his own mosque that was accused of being involved in radicalization and in organizing the killing in the Utemini mosque.<sup>3</sup>

Elected local leaders in Utemini claimed during interviews that they were not aware of what was going on in the compound of the new mosque. According to elected leaders, people that were running the alleged extremist mosque disentangled themselves from the rest of the community members. Members of the new mosque did not participate in community activities, such as burial ceremonies that bring together community members, and they never allowed other community members to step in their compound. Also, local leaders narrated that members of the new mosque refused to be registered in the register of community members. In a similar vein, some local people near the new mosque complained that they were at times prevented to cross near the compound of the new mosque. On this point, one of the local leaders in Utemini said:

“These people from the new mosque do not have good cooperation with the community. There was one time they lost a family member who was a woman. When we went there to join them, they refused us to be involved in the burial. They said they would bury her on their own; they took the body in a car and left. There was a time we called community members to go to clean our well of water; they [members of a new mosque] refused to come.”<sup>4</sup>

In connection to the quotation above, survivors of the brutal killing narrated a case about the alleged extremist group being involved in the recruitment of children. The new mosque was running a madrasa, and children attending this madrasa were staying in hostels that were built within the compound of the new mosque. Apart from receiving radical teaching, children in the madrasa were supposedly also receiving martial training ready to defend Islam once attacked. According to survivors of the brutal killing, at times the children in question were sent by their madrasa teacher to stone the old mosque during the evening prayers. It was also alleged by survivors that the said children once polluted the well belonging to the old mosque by throwing faeces in it.

Also, survivors claimed that two kids from the new mosque were involved in the organization of the killing by way of supplying information to the killers. The two kids entered the old mosque during the preparations for the evening prayer and left after a while. They later came back and stayed during the prayer. A few minutes after they had entered for the second time, the killers raided the mosque. In the view of survivors, the said children passed information that aided the killers to execute the killing. Illuminating this, one of the survivors said the following during an interview:

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<sup>3</sup> Interviews with religious leaders in Mwanza, March 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with an elected local leader in Utemini, Mwanza on July 27, 2019.



“Before the incident [killing in the Mosque], there used to be more than ten children that stayed in this new mosque. They were there all the time in a madrasa, and they came from different places. Those two children entered in our mosque on the day of the incident and they went to pass information to the killers. Those children were taught to fight; you would find them in the morning lined-up to be taught how to fight. I am told these children were returned to Kigoma.

These people used to collect children from different places. The children did not receive proper training; imagine a child is taught to put faeces in a well of water belonging to a mosque! Those kids were trained on karate. It reached a point in which people were prevented to cross here when the training on karate and jihad was being offered”.<sup>5</sup>

Responding to the claims above, members from the new mosque confirmed during interviews that the mosque had a hostel that hosted children that received religious education. Nonetheless, they claimed that some of the children in the hostel were their relatives that had come to receive religious education. One of the female members of the new mosque claimed that two of the kids were sons of her sister from Kigoma. Members of the new mosque rejected the claims that the children had been involved in the killing. According to followers, the children in the madrasa received religious education only.<sup>6</sup> These members, however, never explained the reasons as to why these children were never receiving formal education in the government schools around. Religious education in the madrasa was offered by a teacher who was trained in a religious school in Morogoro region.

Furthermore, it was alleged that in some other areas in Mwanza, the alleged extremist groups established camps that were supposedly linked to banditry and radicalization. Following the brutal killing in the mosque, for instance, the police received information about the presence of a group of bandits hiding in the caves near Utemini area. According to media reports, the police and interviews with local community leaders, armed police surrounded the caves on June 04, 2016. Seeing that, the bandits in the caves responded aggressively by shooting erratically towards the police. This resulted in fighting between the police and the bandits. Two bandits died on the spot and another was killed on the next day in Nyasaka ward in Ilemela district, Mwanza (ITV, 2016). According to the police, the bandits were so armed, so much so that they managed to fight the police for about one night, and when they were overpowered, they threw bombs towards the police and eventually escaped. This group in the caves was allegedly connected to the alleged extremist group that was behind the brutal killing in the mosque.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Interviews with survivors of the VE attack on July 27, 2019 in Mwanza region.

<sup>6</sup> Interviews with members of new mosque in July and August 2019 in Mwanza.

<sup>7</sup> Interviews with the police in July and August 2019 in Mwanza.

On the other hand, Mtwara has not experienced notable VE-related incidents, but as said earlier, Mtwara sits near a conflict zone area in Mozambique, reported to be hosting a radical insurgency group. In this research, interviews with participants from the government and non-government organizations disclosed that radical elements and an alleged loose network of extremists have started to develop in Mtwara. Some participants in Mtwara, for example, talked about the presence of individuals from religious bodies that have been hosting individuals affiliated to radical networks recruiting children and youth from poor families. These children and youth are collected from their families under the pretext of being provided with education sponsorship away from their homes. Participants made reference to Tanga region in Tanzania and Northern Mozambique as key destinations where children and youth collected from Mtwara are taken. Narrating this, one of the para-social workers that has experience working with children in Mtwara narrated:

These [...] use this loophole (poverty) to come and collect children saying they are going to educate them. Last year there were children that I prohibited from leaving. Someone [a new comer] came and stayed in a mosque [she declined to name the mosque] and he came with some other people wanting to collect children for purposes of going to help them, by means of educating them and taking care of them. They even did not mention where they were going to take these children to. And three years ago, someone came here and he wanted to collect a child who was living with his grandmother. They wanted to take him to Tanga to educate him. Many children are taken away through this means. They are manipulating children from poor families.<sup>8</sup>

Based on the quotation, it is important to underline that VE – related activities have also exposed vulnerable groups, such as poor children, to recruitment into armed and extremist groups. Questions about the recruitment of children into extremist groups are a growing concern as non-state armed groups have taken advantage of groups of children at risk (Dudenhoefer, 2016). Footages from well-known extremist groups in African often show videos of children holding guns and receiving military and extremist training. Absence of effectively functioning early warning and response mechanisms, increases chances of vulnerable groups being recruited into extremist groups. The following section analyses the early warning and response mechanisms developed and deployed to prevent VE related incidents in Mwanza and Mtwara.

### **Early warning initiatives developed and deployed to prevent VE**

Government and non-government organs in Mwanza and Mtwara have responded to violence and VE-related incidents in different ways. With specific reference to early warning and response mechanisms, this study uncovered two important mechanisms developed and deployed in the two regions. In Mwanza, the ten cell (*nyumbakumi*) leadership system that was detached from the

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with a para-social worker in Mtwara on 18 August 2019 in Mtwara.

government in the 1990s has been reinforced and formalized. This is expected to create a referral system of reporting and responding to incidents of violence and criminality. In Ilemela district, a by-law has already been passed to formalize *nyumbakumi*. In Mtwara, efforts to address episodes of violence related to VE have involved the introduction of a register of residents, which is being managed through the formal leadership system at the local level.

The initiatives developed and deployed in Mwanza and Mtwara relate to each other in several respects. But it is worthwhile highlighting that differences in historical and political contexts of the two regions have made the implementation of the initiatives developed and deployed to differ. This is underlined in detail in the next two sub-sections where initiatives developed and deployed in each of the regions are analyzed.

***Mwanza: Formalization of NyumbaKumi***

Mwanza has a history of successful implementation of community policing initiatives, such as the famous Sungusungu vigilantism and *nyumbakumi* systems. Sungusungu was introduced and operated in the 1970s, 1980 and 1990s in response to incidents of criminality, especially banditry and cattle rustling (Reisman, Mkutu, Lyimo and Moshi, 2013; Heald, 2005, 2002; Cross, 2014; Fleisher, 2000). According to Reisman, Mkutu, Lyimo and Moshi (2013) and Heald (2002), the growth of incidents of criminality during this time resulted from the economic crisis generated by the involvement of Tanzania in the Uganda-Tanzania war (Kagera war) in 1977 and 1978.

Sungusungu was, however, criticized for considerable human rights violations. It breached the practice of rule of law – as it took over the mandate of the police to arrest, interrogate and investigate. It similarly took over the mandate of the judiciary organ to punish offenders. In some cases, Sungusungu was accused of punishing offenders and suspects to death (Heald, 2002).

Although Sungusungu was opposed by the police who sometimes arrested its leaders, it received popular support at the local levels and also enjoyed support from the ruling party, *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (CCM). Certainly, the People's Militia Act was enacted in 1989 to legalize Sungusungu. It empowered Sungusungu to arrest without a warrant of arrest and to arrest when there were reasonable grounds of crimes being committed or about to be committed. But Sungusungu is longer eminent and influential as it used to because of the 1990s good governance reforms and the activities of human rights groups that discouraged acts of excessive use of force and punishments that do not follow the rule of law.

*Nyumbakumi* on the other hand was formally institutionalized after independence in the 1960s. Headed by a *balozi* (ambassador), *nyumbakumi* played multiple functions – from social and political mobilization to conflict resolution. Leaders

of *nyumbakumi* would be expected to represent the government at the local levels. They collected security information that aided the government to keep records of all the residents within the limit of ten houses. Also, they helped to understand the movements of people as they registered new comers even when they were to spend a day in their neighborhoods. Any new comer in the *nyumbakumi* setting would be required to introduce himself or herself to the *balozion* arrival and when leaving. The *balozzi* played a mediation role by resolving conflicts involving different actors in their areas of jurisdiction. Indeed, many conflicts at the local levels were first reported and resolved by the *balozzi* (Cross, 2014).

Nonetheless, as argued earlier, *nyumbakumi* was removed from the formal government system in 1992 following the re-establishment of the multi-party politics in the country. The *balozzi* [nyumbakumi leader] were cadres of the ruling party, and so in order to level the playing field between different political parties, a decision was made to remove *nyumbakumi* from the formal government system. But the *nyumbakumi* system continued to operate within the structure of the ruling party. *Nyumbakumi* leaders continued to be key instruments for the ruling party's political mobilization at the local level. Activities of the *balozzi* are especially more pronounced during the time of elections when they actively involve themselves in the mobilization of voters for candidates of the ruling party.

**Table 1: Presence of *nyumbakumi***

		Do you have <i>Nyumbakumi</i> in your area?		<b>Total</b>
		Yes	No	
Arusha	No. of respondents	62	3	65
	% within Region	95.4%	4.6%	100%
Dar es salaam	No. of respondents	167	-	167
	% within Region	100.0%	-	100%
Kagera	No. of respondents	88	3	91
	% within Region	96.7%	3.3%	100%
MjiniMagharibi	No. of respondents	45	-	45
	% within Region	100%	-	100%
Mtwara	No. of respondents	40	5	45
	% within Region	88.9%	11.1%	100%
Mwanza	No. of respondents	99	2	101
	% within Region	98%	2%	100%
Tanga	No. of respondents	27	43	70
	% within Region	38.6%	61.4%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>584</b>
	<b>% within Region</b>	<b>90.4%</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Source:** Field research in Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Kagera, MjiniMagharibi, Mtwara, Mwanza and Tanga.

Also, though *nyumbakumi* was detached from the government in the 1990s, its leaders (*balози*) have in many areas continued to enjoy social license. Local people wanting to get government service, such as introduction letters are often asked to indicate names of their *nyumbakumi* leaders and at time to accompany their requests with a letter from the *nyumbakumi* leaders. Indeed, the presence of *nyumbakumi* leaders in many regions in Tanzania is still significant. Table 1 above, which is drawn from the 2017 University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) study on community security infrastructures in Tanzania summarizes:

Based on the table above and as provided before, *nyumbakumi* remains influential in Tanzania even though it was removed from the formal government structure some 30 years ago. As the table indicates, for instance, 70.3% of respondents from Arusha, Tanga, Mwanza, Dar es Salaam, Kagera, MjiniMagharibi and Mtwara confirmed that they had happened to seek service of *nyumbakumi* leaders in their neighborhoods. In line with questions about early warning and response mechanisms, 40.2% of respondents approached *nyumbakumi* leaders to seek mediation of their conflicts. Also, 37.7% of respondents confirmed that they reached *nyumbakumi* leaders to get introduction leaders, 4.4% for coordinating activities of the ruling party, 8% for mobilizing community development and 10.1% for other related services. This is to say, therefore, that *nyumbakumi* remains an important peace infrastructure at the local levels.

During interviews, local communities often made reference to *nyumbakumi* to explain how it was an effective early warning and response system to address conflicts and organize the society at the local levels. Some elders described the act of the government to remove *nyumbakumi* from the formal government one of the most terrible mistakes that Tanzania has ever made in its history.

This is because of the perceived success and celebrated history of *nyumbakumi* that communities in Mwanza have reinforced and formalized this system to respond to incidents related to VE. In Ilemela district, for example, a by-law was passed in 2017 to formalize the already existing system of *nyumbakumi*. But Ilemela has changed the names of *nyumbakumi* leaders from *balози* to coordinators of *nyumbakumi*. This, in the view of local government officials in Ilemela, was intended to de-politicize the *nyumbakumi* system from its current tie to the ruling party. Nonetheless, the formalization and implementation of the new *nyumbakumi* system in Ilemela is facing resistance from existing *nyumbakumi* leaders who have insisted continuing to assume their positions and responsibilities. Impliedly, therefore, the successful implementation of a new *nyumbakumi* system will depend on the will of the ruling party to accept this formalization and transfer the structure to a newly established formal set up.

Also, in some other areas, such as Igogo ward in Nyamagana district, Mwanza, community members have not formalized *nyumbakumi*, but they have reinforced

the already *nyumbakumi* arrangement in order to respond to criminality and VE-related incidents. During interviews, many elders in Igogo cited the weakening of *nyumbakumi* as one of the reasons for the spike of crimes and VE related incidents. According to these elders, during the heydays of *nyumbakumi*, it was difficult for criminal networks to operate at the local levels since *nyumbakumi* provided room for monitoring and providing solutions to insecurities. Describing his experience and understanding of what *nyumbakumi* is, one of the elders who is currently a *nyumbakumi* leader concluded:

“*Nyumbakumi* starts with one house, which is a family. If you add one more family, then a system of administration is developed, in this case, security. The meaning of *nyumbakumi* is my security first and security for my properties. Security is the most important thing because we all want to live without problems. *Nyumbakumi* means security.”<sup>9</sup>

Igogo is a low – income neighborhood, which is known for having the highest rate of criminality and violence. According to participants in Igogo, VE suspects, such as those that were responsible for the brutal killing in Utemini were organizing from Igogo. One of the suspects who were killed during the fight between the police and suspects in Utemini, for example, was from Igogo.

Residents from Igogo resolved in 2013 to reinforce the existing *nyumbakumi*– by giving it mandate to organize community-policing initiatives. The community-policing initiatives organized and mobilized through *nyumbakumi* leaders include patrol units at night and neighborhood watch during the day and at night. In order to promote an inclusive community policing arrangement through the *nyumbakumi* set up, every community member in Igogo has been assigned some tasks to perform. Such tasks include, for example, providing security at night through patrols of youth, and the provision of non-financial contributions to support the patrol units. “We wake up at night and start providing security from 10 p.m. to 05 a.m. We are now sleeping peacefully because of *nyumbakumi*”, narrated one of the *nyumbakumi* leaders in Igogo during interview in May 2017.

Even though *nyumbakumi* is embedded in the ruling party structure, the experience in Igogo ward has shown that when it comes to security issues, leaders of *nyumbakumi* serve everyone irrespective of their political affiliations. Four elected representatives assist *nyumbakumi* leaders. These representatives oversee security issues in their neighborhoods and bring them to the attention of the *nyumbakumi* leaders and the community. The four representatives together with *nyumbakumi* leaders form the security committee in the *nyumbakumi* setting. This committee is mandated to develop community-policing initiatives and mobilize community members to participate in community policing. According to participants from Igogo, reinforcing *nyumbakumi* has promoted social cohesion as well as ability to identify and deal with security threats. “Before this [reinforcing

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with a *nyumbakumi* leader on May 13, 2017.

*nyumbakumi*] we did not know each other well, but after instituting it no one can now come in this area without the knowledge of the security committee [of the *nyumbakumi*] setting and the community”, said one of the female participants during interview in May 2019.

One of the advantages of deploying *nyumbakumi* is that it takes a holistic approach to conflict prevention. That is, apart from dealing with crimes and insecurities related to physical security of community members, it also deals with other social problems, such as child abuse and violence against women and children. These social problems could equally create conditions for VE, criminality and violence. According to participants, when *nyumbakumi* leaders receive information about child abuse and cases of children not attending school they often intervene by summoning parents and relatives. Narrating a case about the role of *nyumbakumi* in child protection, one of the participants noted:

“When you see a woman mishandling children [child abuse], you have to report to the *nyumbakumi* leadership. I myself happened to see a child whose arms were burnt by a stepfather. I reported the matter to the *mtaa*[street] leader and the police. These days there are even boys who are raped. We have come to know these problems after reinforcing *ulinzishirikishi* [participatory security] through *nyumbakumi*”.<sup>10</sup>

An important observation to derive from the quotation above is that the operationalization of *nyumbakumi* as a community early warning system has gone beyond a mere focus on physical security – related issues. It has instead focused on some other social problems that create conditions for VE and radicalization.

On security, participants in Igogo commended *nyumbakumi* for assisting to address incidents of violence, criminality and VE – related cases. This has happened in different ways: First, operationalization of *nyumbakumi* has promoted social cohesion – by way of bringing community members together to address common security threats in the community. In the view of local communities, this is progressively creating a culture of peace. A key element helping to promote social cohesion is that *nyumbakumi* does not punish offenders, but rather it works towards bringing solutions that promote reconciliation among community members.

Secondly, participants narrated that the operationalization of *nyumbakumi* allowed communities and the police to identify and arrest suspects and seize weapons that were being used in criminal activities. “In short, there are many weapons that have been confiscated from bandits; innumerable matchets and iron bars. In general, a lot has been achieved”, said a *nyumbakumi* leader during interview in May 2017. Similarly, another *nyumbakumi* leader posited during an interview in May 2017 as follows: “We were never sleeping, but ever since when we started

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with an elected representative in the *nyumbakumi* setting in Igogo on May 15, 2017.

this system of *ulinzishirikishi* [participatory security] through *nyumbakumi*, these days you leave your clothes outside and find them on the next day.”

Also, community members narrated that reinforcing *nyumbakumi* system has allowed suppressing what community members described as a network and groups of extremists in their area. As posited before, some participants claimed that extremist groups, such as that which was responsible for the brutal killing in the mosque, was connected to similar groups and individuals in Igogo. On this, one of the participants, for instance, claimed during FGD:

“There were groups of terrorists that used to do trainings in the caves around this area. We shared information with the police and they acted accordingly even though we did not report in time, as we were never aware about what that group was doing in the caves. The war on drugs also we did through *nyumbakumi*”.

Third, community policing through the *nyumbakumi* set up has helped community members to establish a communication system to track and report on crimes, VE related incidents and violence. This communication system has involved enlisting phone numbers of local community members – and sharing these numbers with everyone in the *nyumbakumi* set up. Community members use these numbers to communicate with each other on issues related to security and some other problems in the community. Another medium of communication developed is the introduction of a register of all residents in the *nyumbakumi* set up and new comers. It is now a requirement that every family receiving a guest should report and register this guest to a *nyumbakumi* leader. Also, any family or individual relocating to Igogo is required to submit to the *nyumbakumi* leaders an introduction letter from the place they were staying before. Community members from Igogo claimed that they introduced a register of residents because some new comers were criminals that come to hide in Igogo. On this, a female participant said during FGD in May 2017:

“These days, when a person comes from other places, he should be accompanied by an introduction letter and he should introduce himself. The *balozi* [*nyumbakumi* leader] has phone numbers of all residents and he knows what they do for a living. Through the use of phones, we have been able to track and arrest thieves. One day there was a group of petty thieves that was preparing to rob some bystanders. We communicated and surrounded this group even though one of them managed to escape. When a member of this neighbourhood leaves this place, then that information has to be shared with the *nyumbakumi* leaders. It has been easy to identify the wrong doers because every time when someone new comes here they are reported to and registered by the *nyumbakumi* leaders”.

Concluding this sub-section, it is worthwhile highlighting the following. First, Mwanza has a history of operationalizing successful community policing arrangements, such as the famous *nyumbakumi* system. In areas such as Igogo, community members are not implementing *ulinzishirikishi* as a new system of



community policing, but they are reinforcing something that was already there. Mwanza remains to be one of the strongholds of the ruling party, CCM that has maintained the *nyumbakumi* set up in its party structure. But this is not the case in Mtwara, which is neither a stronghold of CCM nor has a history of operationalizing community policing security structures.

Secondly and related to the above, even though there is success in reinforcing and operationalizing *nyumbakumi*, there is some resistance in some areas where local leaders come from the opposition. Government officials and *nyumbakumi* leaders are concerned that elected local leaders in some areas, for example, Kwimba were initially reluctant to recognize and implement community policing through the *nyumbakumi* set up. In Igogo, government officials and elected leaders made reference to Kwimba. Explaining about the resistance experienced, one of the ward government officials maintained:

“But then some people from other political ideologies do not recognize the position of *balози*. In Kwimba street, there is a chairperson that does not respect and recognize the *balози*. In that street there are still many security problems because they do not have *ulinzishirikishi* organized through the *balози*. But after accepting to embrace *ulinzishirikishi* through elected representatives, they have made significant developments in addressing insecurities”.

A recent study on community policing in Mwanza (Cross, 2014) also discovered the presence of some resistance to recognize community policing structures inherited from the one-party state. According to Cross, these structures are experiencing resistance because they promote and employ a top-down approach, which contradicts democratic principles. On the contrary, this research uncovered that the role and position that *nyumbakumi* plays in addressing insecurities is not something, which is disputed by community members and leaders – irrespective of their political affiliations. Indeed, elected local leaders from Kwimba, an area accused of rejecting *nyumbakumi*, acknowledged the usefulness of *nyumbakumi* in terms of preventing conflict, violence and crimes. But these opposition leaders, complained about *nyumbakumi* leaders serving political interests of the ruling party. In the view of opposition leaders, promoting *nyumbakumi* equals lifting up the status of the ruling party. Still, opposition leaders confirmed that they are also using the *nyumbakumi* system when it comes to dealing with issues about security challenges since an alternative to *nyumbakumi* has not been found.

#### ***Mtwara: Formalization of a Resident Registrar***

The previous section unveiled efforts to address growing violent incidents in Mwanza by formalizing and reinforcing existing early warning and response infrastructures, especially the ten-cell leadership system (*nyumbakumi*). The formalization of *nyumbakumi* has been possible because of the historical experience of Mwanza in practicing and implementing community early warning systems, such as *nyumbakumi* and *sungusungu* vigilantism. Again, as narrated before, operationalization of *nyumbakumi* in Mwanza has been possible because

Mwanza is comparatively a stronghold of the ruling party, CCM, which is the custodian of the *nyumbakumi* system. Despite facing resistance from opposition party leaders, the role and position of *nyumbakumi* in early warning and response to prevent conflict, violence and VE – related insecurities are widely acknowledged.

On the other hand, Mtwara presents a different experience in terms of understanding responses of communities to incidents related to VE, which have become a great concern to communities bordering Northern Mozambique. In Mtwara, the operationalization of early warning and response mechanisms through such mechanisms like *nyumbakumi* and *ulinzishirikishi* [participatory defense] has not worked effectively due to context – specific reasons. It is important to highlight here that community policing initiatives are normally organized and mobilized at the grassroots (village and/or *mtaa* [street]) levels. Elected leaders who serve for the period of five years are the ones that oftentimes translate the security concerns of local communities by working with community members to organize and establish community policing initiatives.

Security concerns at the grassroots levels are indeed one of the top priority agendas in the local government elections. Electorates elect their grassroots leaders with the expectation that they would help to find solutions to insecurities in their neighborhoods. Chairpersons of streets/villages are heads of village/street security committees. It could, therefore, be said that chances of local leaders to be re-elected are dependent on their ability to address insecurities in their areas.

In Mtwara urban, this research revealed that the existing political context, which is characterized by mistrust and suspicion between actors from the main opposition party and the government, influenced the operationalized of community policing. In specific terms, Mtwara urban is considered a strong hold of the opposition party, Civic United Front (CUF). Local elected leaders from the opposition party complained that government officials at the local, ward and district levels have often blocked and not supported local leaders' efforts to establish community policing initiatives, such as patrol units of youth. According to these local government leaders from the opposition party, the government officials fear to allow community policing initiatives thinking that these initiatives may help to strengthen the influence of opposition parties at the local levels.<sup>11</sup>

On their part, government officials in Mtwara district narrated two reasons explaining the hesitancy of government to support the community policing initiatives of elected opposition leaders. First, it was argued that community policing initiatives of political opposition leaders are formed to serve some dirty political ends. According to district government leaders and officials associated with the government, many grassroots political leaders attempt to establish

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<sup>11</sup> Interviews with local elected leaders from the opposition party in August 2019 in Mtwara urban.

community policing initiatives when the election period approaches. These established community policing structures, especially patrol units of youth, are then used to mobilize votes and threatening followers of other political parties, especially followers of the ruling party. In the view of government officials, youth in the patrol units are mobilized and recruited on political lines – and they would be expected to serve their political lines. On this, three of the government officials at the ward, division and district levels said:

“We have discovered that some of these groups (patrol units of youth) are sometimes used badly during the general elections and local government elections. They have been used to threaten citizens from other political lines. Some other people, especially women have not been voting or sometimes they relocate from their areas because of threats from youth running community security groups”.

“In Raha Leo street, they established community policing, which worked very well. But it later collapsed because it was politicized by political leaders. I have decided to suspend these requests to establish community security groups until when the general elections come to an end. I am suspicious that these local leaders from the opposition party have hidden political motives to establish community security groups”.

“Many local government leaders here in Mtwara (district) are from opposition parties, and these are the ones that have been pushing for the establishment of community security groups of youth in their areas. During elections, these groups are politicized and this is the time when they are established in good numbers. For example, now we are heading to the election period, and the demand to establish community security groups has increased. This is happening because of the desires of opposition leaders to create a network of youth at the local level in order to serve political ends during elections”.<sup>12</sup>

Based on the narratives from leaders of opposition parties and the quotations above, it should be noted here that the role and position of community policing in helping to prevent insecurities are acknowledged. Nonetheless, it is clear that the successful operationalization of community security infrastructures is a politically negotiated process. In Mwanza, government officials and leaders have been on the forefront pushing to reinforce *nyumbakumi* because they do not see it compromising the position of the government and ruling party in the community. This is not the case in Mtwara where the government feels threatened because these initiatives originated from opposition party leaders whom the government feels have a hidden political agenda.

The second factor explaining hesitance of government officials to endorse community security groups has to do with the view that some opposition political leaders are accused of being associated with criminal networks and VE related groups. Specifically, some government officials pointed a finger to one of the

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<sup>12</sup> Interviews with government officials in Mtwara district on August 14, 2019 in Mtwara.

opposition parties in Mtwara for harboring and protecting criminal and VE related groups. These government officials made reference to the 2012 natural gas violent uprisings in Mtwara and they accused opposition party leaders for being behind these riots. Accordingly, government officials claimed that the 2012 natural gas uprisings were organized in areas, such as Mkanaledi street which are said to be strongholds of the accused opposition. “Many violent incidents that involve extremist ideology happened in the areas that are dominated by [the accused opposition party]”, said one of the government officials during interview in August 2019.

Addressing the impasse over the establishment and operationalization of community policing to respond to VE related incidents in Mtwara, a solution involving the use of ‘resident register’ has been developed and deployed. This Register was first introduced in 2015 to help in providing information about residents, their locations and the kind of activities that each is doing. Also, the register was expected to help to identify and register new comers – especially during this time when there are concerns that some suspects from Mozambique may be crossing to Mtwara to hide and organize. The register is administered at the local levels by employed street executive officers in the urban settings and village executive officers in the rural settings. Registration of all residents and new comers in the community is mandatory. The registration is extended to vendors operating in each neighborhood in order to identify their places of origin and contact information. A resident who is not registered in the cannot receive government services, such as introduction letters.

The register has become an importance and celebrated early warning and response mechanism, to which the government and security organs are making reference to identify, track and arrest suspects. The police especially make reference to the register to identify records and residences of suspects and people that appear to the police station to bail their relatives or friends. According to the police, local government officers should make due diligence when writing to introduce people that appear before the courts and police stations to bail their relatives or friends. Government officials would be held responsible when it is established that they approved letters of people whose names are not in their register. The same responsibility would be borne by relatives that provide false information about status of residences of members of their families and relatives visiting Mtwara.<sup>13</sup>

The police have integrated the use of a register as one of the programs in their community policing engagements in Mtwara. According to the regional police community engagement officer, the register has helped to promote community participation in the provision of security information, identifying new comers, monitoring incidents of insecurity and the provision of security information. “If

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<sup>13</sup> Interviews with the police in August 2019 in Mtwara.

there is a new comer in the community, we have to receive information about where [he/she] is coming from, the length of time [he/she] is staying and when this person is leaving” claimed a regional community engagement police officer during interview on August 22, 2019.

Interviews with the police, government officials and local communities indicated that the use of register has successfully helped to address cross-border VE related insecurities – by way of providing information about suspects from Mozambique. On this one of the police officers in Mtwara said “This was successful because of efforts of citizens. It is citizens themselves because of their own awareness about the register who are helping us to arrest suspects. We arrested a person from Mozambique because of the register.”<sup>14</sup> It is now a routine that when the police visit any local area, their starting point is to be that of checking information of residents in the register and establishing whether there are suspicious cases or new comers which require investigation. “The police always come; if there is anything, they often go to the office of the street government,” claimed one of the elected leaders in Magomeni ward.<sup>15</sup>

Implementation of *nyumbakumi* in Mwanza and a register in Mtwara, however, relate in several aspects. In the *nyumbakumi* set, there is a register of residents, which is held and administered by *nyumbakumi* leaders. This is the same kind of register that could be found in Mtwara – where it is held and administered by elected government officials at the village levels and *mtaa* [street] levels. The difference, therefore, is the level at which a register is administered. In Mtwara, it is employed government officials that administer the register and in Mwanza *nyumbakumi* leaders administer it. Nevertheless, apart from administering a register of residents, the *nyumbakumi* set-ups in Mwanza organize and implement community policing – in which patrol units of youth conduct patrols during the day and night.

### **Conclusion**

This paper established that the weakening of effective community-led early warning and response mechanisms in Mwanza and Mtwara regions created a security vacuum that was exploited by criminals and VE-related networks to establish and operate. Incidents, such as the brutal killing in the mosque in Mwanza would have been prevented if the early warning and response mechanisms had been effectively operational. As such, in response to growing security threats, such as those related to VE, communities in Mwanza and Mtwara have developed different context specific mechanisms. The deployment of these mechanisms has allowed to facilitate the detection and prevention of VE related incidents and crimes. That is to say, grassroots early warning and response mechanisms, such as *nyumbakumi* and a register, which have been deployed in the

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with the police on August 10, 2019 in Mtwara.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with elected local government leaders from Magomeni ward on August 09, 2019 in Mtwara.

two regions, have reduced the likelihood that criminals and VE related culprits would establish and operate.

However, two critical issues are worth highlighting in relation to questions around the establishment and operationalization of *nyumbakumi* in Mwanza and a register in Mtwara. First, it was easy reinforcing *nyumbakumi* in Mwanza where the structure already existed – as Mwanza has a history and experience of implementing such early warning and response mechanisms. But it should be noted also that *nyumbakumi* has been successful in Mwanza because this is in the interest of the government. The ruling party is a custodian of the *nyumbakumi* structure. In other words, the government and the ruling party have been supportive of this structure, which does not threaten them politically. In this respect, the second issue that should be emphasized here is that even though the usefulness of early warning and response mechanisms to prevent VE related security threats and incidents is appreciated by all actors, the success in developing and deploying early warning mechanisms is politically negotiated.

Questions about who exercises control over the existing early warning and response mechanisms have oftentimes raised political sentiments, especially in Mtwara, which is considered to be a strong hold of opposition parties. Mistrust between government officials and leaders of opposition parties have made it difficult to establish early warning and response mechanisms driven by initiatives of elected local leaders in Mtwara. The government has been more comfortable and supportive of a register of residents as an early warning and response mechanism since this register is held and administered through government officials. Thus, as said before, whereas all actors institutionally acknowledge early warning and response mechanisms, their deployment and ability to effectively respond to VE related threats are negotiated.

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