

9 (Re)FRAMING TERROR ATTACKS IN KENYA: CONTRASTIVE FRAMES FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF KENYA (NCKK) AND THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE OF KENYA (EAK)

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INTRODUCTION

Violent attacks in Kenya have escalated over the years and are said to be on the increase due to factors such as the desire by Al-Shabaab to reinvent itself.² Kenya Defence Force (KDF) counterinsurgency has not been without contestations and framings of the stock of narratives, such as that no one has won war against Somalia and that the incursion is an expensive and fruitless effort. The Kenyan government, however, insists that the war is on to the bitter end, until victory is secured. Variant framings of the conflict abound among the political class, non-governmental agencies, common citizens, religious actors and the security apparatus, and these framings present muddled and conflicting angles on the situation.

In the aftermath of terror attacks, religious organisations in Kenya have issued press statements which conflate discourses on religion, law and security. Religious organisations, as societal actors and frame sponsors,³ seek to provide credible and successful frames. Two such actors are the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCKK) and the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK). The statements selected for analysis in this chapter decry violence and terror attacks witnessed in Kenya. They were issued in the aftermath of violent attacks, while at the same time making religious identity pronounced. An investigation into the framings of religiously motivated violence by these frame sponsors is fruitful to note convergences, divergences and contrasts. Using framing theory and religious identity theory, this chapter examines two press statements issued by NCKK and EAK in the aftermath of violent attacks in Kenya to show how the end product of their framing processes are embedded in power relations and also done to suit their audience. In so doing,

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2 Bogorad O. 2016. "Kenyans on High Alert as the Threat from Al-Shabaab Rises", *IPI Global Observatory*, 2 March. Olga Bogorad suggests that there has been in recent times the need for Al-Shabaab to reinvent itself in the East African front and carry out big attacks to avoid the loss of its recruits to the ISIS. In order to have a larger public effect, there shall be many other larger attacks planned and executed.

3 Frame sponsors promote certain versions of framing.

they provide contrastive framings for terror violence in Kenya and thereby present alternative interpretive schemata for judgments on events in public media spaces.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF KENYA

The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) was founded in June 1913. Its long history, spanning decades, places NCCCK in a unique place as a social actor. As early as the 1960s, while bearing the name Christian Council of Churches (CCK), the group petitioned the governor to release freedom fighter and later Prime Minister and President of Kenya Jomo Kenyatta after visiting him in prison. Therefore, their engagement in the political arena is not new, and neither do they seem afraid to cross paths with the political elite. During the era of President Daniel arap Moi, they condemned the adoption of queue voting by KANU government.⁴ They have taken part in advocacy, civic education and even in election monitoring across the country. In so doing, they hope to fulfil their mission which is "To transform lives through ecumenism, capacity building, advocacy and service delivery".⁵ Yet, service delivery cannot be achieved across the country when governance structures are faulty. To bring the political class to account, NCCCK has insisted that there has to be capacity building, so that many are able to carry out their civic duties without fear or favour. This is in line with their stated objective: "To build the capacities of the membership to enable them undertake their mission."⁶

NCCCK, being the oldest ecumenical organisation in Kenya, brings together a membership drawn from three categories. The first is membership open to all churches duly constituted in Kenya, a category which is referred to as full membership. The second category is that of associate members, which includes locally constituted Christian organisations and groups organised to promote some definite Christian activities, but not directly under any church. The third category is the fraternal membership for those who are unwilling to accept the basis of membership limited to church or Christian organisations, but who want to have a fraternal relationship with the council.

NCCCK has gone through several name changes, starting out as Federation of Missions in 1913 to Kenya Missionary Council in 1924, to Christian Council of Churches in 1943, to the National Christian Council of Kenya in 1966 and, finally, in 1984 to the National Council of Churches of Kenya. This last change was in order to reflect that membership was by churches and not individuals, while the 1966 name change was to embrace nationalism. According to Agnes Chepkwony, NCCCK serves as an alternative carrier of development besides efforts by the government. While examining the role of NCCCK in the first 16 years of independence in Kenya, Chepkwony paints a picture of NCCCK within the colonial legacy. Further, she shows

4 See National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK). 2014. "Our Journey", 2 August. Online at: <http://www.ncck.org/newsite2/index.php/about-ncck/our-journey>

5 NCCCK, "Our Journey".

6 NCCCK, "Our Journey".

the increase in the range and size of NCCCK operations in rural development and the interaction of NCCCK in Kenyan political life.⁷

The pressing national needs that NCCCK addresses in their sixth corporate plan include security, poverty, education, land and drug abuse. This includes economic needs, marriage, spiritual and health needs. NCCCK owns subsidiaries individually and also co-owns others. The co-owned ones include St. Paul's University Limuru, Ufungamano House and Jumuia Resorts. In order to align itself with the current devolved structures⁸ in Kenya, the NCCCK has a structure that is devolved to the counties and regions. In this way, member churches and organisations come together at the county level to form a County Coordinating Committee (CCC), then several county committees are clustered to form a region. In all, NCCCK has nine regions. Current NCCCK council officials include a chairperson, the vice chairperson, a general secretary and a deputy general secretary. The current general secretary is Rev. Canon Peter Karanja.

Following a spate of violence against churches, Rev. Canon Karanja issued a press statement cited in full below:⁹

NCCCK Press Conference of 29 August 2012

The Government must pay for the loss of life and damage to Churches and their Property.

The National Council of Churches of Kenya has followed with growing repudiation the ever-increasing attacks on Christians and Churches. The violence appears to be well planned, premeditated and systematic. In the last five months alone, eleven churches have been attacked while attempts were made on others. Christians have been killed, injured or maimed for life. We see this as an intentional provocation of Christians to retaliate. We thank Christians for the restraint and sobriety they have demonstrated in the face of sustained attacks. We appeal to religious leaders and Christians to continue to exercise the same restraint and seek for peaceful and legal means of resolving our grievances. The Government has an obligation to protect lives and property of all Kenyans as enshrined in the constitution and international law. It has clearly failed to fulfil this mandate. What is clear is that peace in this country is about appeasing the angry rather than protecting the innocent.

The National Council of Churches of Kenya has on her part decided to seek justice for the victims of this wave of violence. Consequently, we have instructed a team of lawyers to sue the government in court to seek

7 Chepkwony A. 1987. *The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Development: A Study of the National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCCK) 1963–1978*. Uppsala: Studia Missionalia Uppsaliensia XLIII.

8 Kenya went through a decentralisation in 2013, a constitutional change that introduced 47 regional governments called counties which are devolved units. Within the counties are more subcounties which were formerly known as districts.

9 This NCCCK Press Conference of 29 August 2012, used in this chapter, is transcribed verbatim by the author from the online source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mc25ODQVGpA>

compensation for the loss of life and destruction of churches and property. The Government bears full responsibility for the violation of the human rights and the fundamental freedoms of the victims who are under its care. Further, we have keenly observed the security related developments in the country. The violence that has happened in the last one month in different parts of the country is without doubt premeditated, planned and systematic.

The resultant murder, looting, arson and forcible displacement of hundreds of Kenyans are indicative of crimes against humanity as defined by the Rome statutes and the Kenya international crimes act. As Kenya prepares for the general elections in early March 2013, the violence is likely to escalate presenting a major humanitarian crisis, a reality that the government of Kenya is either unwilling or unable to face up to.

In this regard the NCKK will open communication with the international criminal court, requesting the office of the prosecutor to consider opening preliminary and continued investigations on the situation in Kenya with a view of pinning down and charging the perpetrators who hide behind the youths to unleash mayhem. We also urge all Kenyans whose rights are violated to avoid violent reactions and retaliations and in light of the new constitutional dispensation seek justice in our courts. We must contribute to making our nation shine. Our prayer remains that god will bless all Kenyans as we often pray through our nation, justice be our shield and defender. May we dwell in Unity, peace and liberty. Plenty be found within our borders.

Signed this 29th Day of August at Jumuiya Place Nairobi by
Rev. Canon Peter Karanja
The General Secretary

According to NCKK, Christians have suffered greatly in the recent past, with many losing their lives and their properties. To fully understand the situation, it is necessary to understand religious identities in the Kenyan religious landscape. There are different religions practised in Kenya. Kenyan Christians make 83% (Protestant 47.7%, Catholic 23.4%, other Christian 11.9%), Muslim 11.2%, Traditionalists 1.7%, and others 1.6%, none 2.4%, unspecified 0.2%.¹⁰ Religious identity theory points to the ways in which groups of people gravitate towards the teachings, beliefs and values of certain religions. Adherence to these group norms and values ensures that the group remains one and that there is group cohesion. This perspective is useful, in that it helps bring to fore that, in adhering to the norms and codes of a group, there is a creation of perceptions of group membership. Often religious group formations are not ambiguous or haphazard. Followers of Christianity, Islam, Traditional Religions, Hinduism and the like begin in their groups to make a distinction between “them” and “us”. Consequently, the group

¹⁰ Central Intelligence Agency. 2009. “Africa: Kenya”, in *The World Factbook*. Washington, DC: CIA, 2.

considers itself as better than others around them. Within their circle, they may incite prejudice and use words to polarise and form negative attitudes against others.¹¹

Religious identity theory explains in part just how attackers made a distinction between themselves and Christians when carrying out violent acts. They carried themselves in a particular way, used particular words or phrases that polarised and were prejudiced against others.¹² According to Lori Peek, religious identity becomes apparent within specific historical and social contexts. This contextual emergence demonstrates that religious identity is not static, but that its development is variable.¹³ For NCKK, attacks against Christians are not accidental, but planned. Thus, they frame the violence in a manner that would make sense to NCKK members and sympathisers.

The concept of framing has emerged from a range of disciplines such as political science, sociology, media studies, psychology, cognitive linguistics, communication and others. There are a wide range of approaches and paradigmatic diversity on framing. This variety is celebrated as leading to a comprehensive understanding of framing. However, others insist that framing has been used synonymously with approaches that are distinctly different and call for a single paradigm to be used.¹⁴ An examination of conceptual issues and approaches in framing theory has been made elsewhere with the hope of revealing pertinent directions for future research.¹⁵ According to Robert Entman, "To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described."¹⁶

Framing theory has been used to understand and investigate communication and related behaviour in various disciplines.¹⁷ Since framing theory is useful for examining what occurs in public media spaces, it is conceptually relevant to examine information streams, make judgments and to draw inferences about the happenings

11 Fox J. 2013. *An Introduction to Religion and Politics: Theory and Practice*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge.

12 Maseno L. (Forthcoming). "Securitizing Places of Worship in Kenya: The Case of Faith Evangelistic Ministry (FEM)", in Tarusarira J and Chitando E (eds). *Religion and Human Security in Africa*. New York: Routledge.

13 Peek L. 2005. "Becoming Muslim: The Development of a Religious Identity", *Sociology of Religion* 66(3):215-242.

14 Entman R. 1993. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm", *Journal of Communication* 43(4):51-58.

15 Borah P. 2011. "Conceptual issues in Framing Theory: A Systematic Examination of a Decade's Literature", *Journal of Communication* 61:246-263.

16 Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm", 52.

17 Framing research has accrued in a range of academic disciplines such as literature, sociology, economics, psychology, cognitive linguistics and communication. As a result, there are multiple theoretical and methodological approaches to framing. See D'Angelo, "News Framing as a Multiparadigmatic Research Program".

in the world.¹⁸ Through frames, otherwise meaningless succession of events are packaged into something for the audience and are “schemata of interpretation”.¹⁹ Framing goes on to facilitate the organisation of enormous amounts of information into meaningful doses through frames which are “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation of selection, theoretical and methodological approaches to framing, emphasis and exclusion”.²⁰ Framing, thus, highlights some aspects of reality while excluding other elements, leading individuals to interpret issues differently. In general, framing entails looking for ideational elements within the cultural universe of the target group, especially beliefs and ideologies, that can best present the issue at hand in ways that may lead to successful mobilisation.²¹

THE EMPHASIS APPROACH TO FRAMING IN THE NCKK PRESS STATEMENT

The NCKK statement accentuates the obligation of providing security that the government has, thereby making a political statement. Frames exclude, include or even emphasise.²² The emphasis approach to framing accentuates certain considerations in order to influence the audience to focus on those considerations.²³ In this case, through emphasis on a subset of potentially relevant considerations, individuals are directed to focus on these in their decision making.

In the statement above, several lines are emphasised through repetition as follows. First, violence in the country is planned, premeditated and systematic as described in the two sentences below:

“The National Council of Churches of Kenya has followed with growing repudiation the ever increasing attacks on Christians and Churches. The violence appears to be well planned, premeditated and systematic.”

“The violence that has happened in the last one month in different parts of the country is without doubt premeditated, planned and systematic.”

This emphasis leads the audience to focus on this consideration. Granted that violent acts in Kenya are not sporadic or accidental, NCKK remains adamant that there are people who sponsor these acts. Behind the rowdy youth who torch

18 Scheufele D. 1999. “Framing as a Theory of Media Effects”, *Journal of Communication* 49(1):103-122; Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm”.

19 Goffman E. 1974. *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2.

20 Gitlin T. 1980. *The Whole World is Watching: Mass media in the making & Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 7.

21 Snow D and Benford R. 2005. “Clarifying the Relationship between Framing and Ideology”, in Noakes J and Johnston H (eds). *Frames of protest. Social Movements and the Framing Perspective*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 209.

22 Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm”.

23 Druckman J. 2001. “The Implications of Framing Effects for Citizen Competence”, *Political Behavior* 23(3):230.

buildings, kill and harm Christians, other Kenyans, their churches and property are some perpetrators who benefit in the forcible displacement of people.

A second potentially relevant consideration that should lead to decision making is the emphasis laid on the government's obligation, responsibility and failure as indicated in these sentences below:

"The Government has an obligation to protect lives and property of all Kenyans as enshrined in the constitution and international law. It has clearly failed to fulfil this mandate."

"The Government bears full responsibility for the violation of the human rights and the fundamental freedoms of the victims who are under its care."

NCKK emphasises that the Kenyan government has a responsibility to protect all Kenyans. This is a responsibility whose gravity the government does not seem to appreciate. NCKK reminds the government and its audience that the buck stops somewhere, and precisely at the government. Further, that this responsibility finds bearing within constitution and international law. In other words, it is not debatable who should carry the burden of securing the citizenry. This consideration that government obligation has been neglected is what NCKK shares with its constituent and makes them see the reason why NCKK is justified to seek redress.

The third consideration accentuated is the role of legal frameworks, such as courts, be they national or international, as in the following sentences.

The National Council of Churches of Kenya has on her part decided to seek justice for the victims of this wave of violence. Consequently, we have instructed a team of lawyers to sue the government in court to seek compensation for the loss of life and destruction of churches and property.

In this regard the NCKK will open communication with the international criminal court, requesting the office of the prosecutor to consider opening preliminary and continued investigations on the situation in Kenya with a view of pinning down and charging the perpetrators who hide behind the youths to unleash mayhem."

We also urge all Kenyans whose rights are violated to avoid violent reactions and retaliations and in light of the new constitutional dispensation seek justice in our courts.

NCKK states that it will open communication with the International Criminal Court. This is a topic that is politically charged at the moment within the political arena in Kenya. In raising it, NCKK is accentuating certain considerations. There being no way to present this altered political situation in different but equivalent ways NCKK uses emphasis framing with the hope that the message sent shall be clear and uncompromised. Reference to the International Criminal Court highlights the legal implications at stake are at an even higher level. This being taken up by NCKK is no mean feat and can rarely be taken up by many other actors in society.

NCKK characterises the course of action that they shall take. In light of what is happening, they consider legal action against the government and sending an invitation to the International Criminal Court to come into the country before the elections, to gather evidence of planned and systematic incitement, violence and organised crime by the political elite before, during and after is an important thing to do. Indeed, the audience of this statement would wonder at the audacity of NCKK in sending such strong messages to the government and at the same time its faith in the legal institutions that be, since in times past, those who were behind such acts had never faced trial in the country. The linguistic-grammatical composition is essential to understand the outcomes that are desired. Further, NCKK, as a societal actor, has emphasised the problem and the solution through discursive practices. Reading from this press statement, NCKK as a social actor occupies a relative position of power in order to speak back at power and even initiate court proceedings. NCKK does hold a privileged position to signal important developments to its audience.

Since the government is not rising to the occasion, the compensation claims by victims being expedited by NCKK lawyers through the courts will awaken security personnel who are complicit in the wake of these church attacks. NCKK framing, through the emphasis approach, insists that the loss of Christian lives and property cannot continue unchecked. To NCKK, some quarters at the local level must be rattled to action to take up their obligations. Court cases by NCKK demonstrate that legal institutions have a role to play in disputes that touch on religious institutions. In which case, direction, compensation and the like are sought from legal quarters.

In the foregoing, it is clear that the NCKK statement emphasis frame is a critical activity aiding in the construction of social reality and shapes the perspectives through which people see the phenomena. When placed in different frames we are now faced with discussions that touch on various dimensions that hitherto may have been taken for granted. This approach remains effective in that it aligns NCKK members and the wider public to focus on particular considerations for further reflection and action.

THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE OF KENYA

The concentration of Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Nairobi, as in other African cities, has more than doubled since the 1970s.²⁴ According to Nairobi Baptist Church Senior Pastor Calisto Odede, "Kenya in particular has 82% Christian, with the second highest evangelicals all over the world as 45% claim to be born again."²⁵ It is this large number of claimants that drives the need to have them organised and mobilised as EAK draws its membership from denominations, parachurch organisations, development agencies and government agencies. In December 2015,

24 McClendon G and Riedl RB 2015. "Individualism and Empowerment in Pentecostal Sermons: New Evidence from Nairobi, Kenya", *African Affairs* 115(458):119-144.

25 Address by Rev Calisto Odede, Senior Pastor, Nairobi Baptist Church, in his speech on 2 December 2015 at the EAK convention.

the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya celebrated its fortieth Anniversary at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre, in Nairobi. In this meeting, an Annual General Meeting (AGM) was conducted and a strategic plan, dubbed “From Now On. National Transformative Agenda. Transforming Kenya, County by County”, was launched. This is in line with the core mission of EAK, which is to empower persons to bring God’s transforming grace to the people of Kenya through a united prophetic voice and holistic ministries. Transformation is seen as important for lasting impact, hence the transformative agenda that is set to roll out county by county and later outpour to other nations.

EAK was established in 1975 as Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya under the auspices of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA). It serves as the representative umbrella organisation for evangelical churches in Kenya with a current membership of 308 denominations whose branches are across the country. It represents over 38,000 congregations of different evangelical denominations in Kenya.²⁶ Beyond Africa, it has international affiliation to the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). Central to the EAK convention held in December 2015 was an evangelical summit, which sought to encourage its members to carry out good works and be relevant in society. Further, there was considerable reflection on issues that affected the church in Kenya. These issues include among others drug abuse, human trafficking, corruption, violence and negative ethnicity.

The leadership of EAK includes a national board with four executive office bearers and fifteen other board members representing church denominations and parachurch organisations. The Board Chair Bishop Mark Kariuki considers EAK to be the voice of the church in the nation.

Further, he adds that the strategic direction provided by the new campaign “From Now on” is set to change the nation, something that the politicians, the government and the opposition cannot, except the church as it stands firm.²⁷

In recent times, following the spate of terror violence, EAK has issued press statements that resonate with their objective of advocacy and leadership in issues affecting the spiritual, social and physical welfare of the nation. This they have done this with an intention that captures their other objective of facilitating conflict and dispute resolution and peace building. The press statement sampled for this chapter is the 4 July 2012 statement in the aftermath of violent twin attacks on churches in Kenya. The statement was signed by EAK general secretary Dr. Willy Mutiso.

Following twin attacks in churches in Garissa on Sunday, 1 July 2012, in which attacks were simultaneously launched on the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Garissa

26 See the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/EAKKenya>

27 See “Bishop Mark Kariuki – Evangelical Alliance of Kenya #FromNowOn”, 13 November 2015. Online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWiuJ60fE6Q>

and Our Lady of Consolata Churches in Garissa,²⁸ EAK issued a press statement. Police sources insist that attackers used grenades and guns at worshippers. In the first attack, at the Africa Inland Church (AIC), gunmen shot two policemen outside the church, and grenades were then thrown inside. As the panicked congregation rushed out to escape, gunmen fired on them indiscriminately, thereby killing many. In the second attack, at Our Lady of Consolata Catholic church, two grenades were thrown inside the church. One failed to go off, but police say three people were injured by the second grenade. Though up to seven gunmen were involved in the attacks, the police said that none had been apprehended. The total death count was fifteen people in the two church attacks. The EAK statement signed by EAK's general Secretary, Dr Willy Mutiso is cited below:²⁹

Evangelical Alliance of Kenya Press Statement 4 July 2012

CHURCH ATTACKS IN GARISSA SUNDAY 1st JULY 2012

Why is the Church Targeted?

It is with great sorrow that the entire fraternity of the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK) console and empathize with the families of our brothers and sisters who were massacred last Sunday (1st July 2012) at our member denomination churches at the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Garissa. Our prayers are with those who were injured both at the Africa Inland Church and Catholic Churches in Garissa. It is our prayer that God will give them a quick and full healing. We share the pain and losses arising out of the senseless and devilish act.

The Evangelical Alliance condemns the horrific bombing and the shooting of innocent worshippers at the Africa Inland Church and Our Lady of Consolata Churches in Garissa. We are deeply saddened that these innocent Kenyans were worshipping God when they were murdered by the terrible criminals.

It is extremely worrying on our part that these attacks on Churches are on the increase and assurances of security by the Government of Kenya appear more rhetoric than pre-emptive. The National Security and Intelligence Service (NSIS) and the police seem to be sleeping on the job. The statement by the commissioner of police that the police service had information about imminent attacks but were not sure where "is devoid of security intelligence."

As evangelicals, we feel targeted by these Islamic forces because even before Al-Shabaab, our churches were still being bombed as witnessed in, 2006, where Nairobi Pentecostal Church – Valley Road was bombed, church workers died and property destroyed. To date, no one has been arraigned in court and those who were arrested were left free.

28 See "Kenya church attacks 'kill 15' in Garissa", *BBC News*, 1 July 2012. Online at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-18662975>

29 The Evangelical Alliance of Kenya press statement issued on 4 July 2012 following church attacks in Garissa on Sunday, 1 July 2012.

2010, a prayer meeting at Uhuru parked was bombed, 13 Kenyans died, more than 100 worshippers injured. No one has been arrested to date.

2011, East Africa Pentecostal Church (EAPC) Garissa. 3 Kenyans died.

2012 April, Mtwapa joint crusade – Kilifi. 3 Kenyans died.

2012 June, Ngara – Nairobi, 4 Kenyans died.

2012 July – AIC – Garissa, 17 Kenyans died.

In all the above instances those arrested have been freed and none brought to court. Kenyans, especially Christians should not be fooled that Al-Shabaab does not spare anyone. This is because their attacks against their Muslim brothers are either accidental or against those they deem to be working against their agenda. Their major targets are Christians and our places of worship. The bombings and killings of innocent Kenyans may be termed senseless but that is not without sense for those sponsoring these acts. We believe the killings and bombings are being done according to plan in order to instill fear with subsequent aim of eradicating religious freedom, democratic liberties with the Church being the primary target. It is the Government of Kenya that declared war on Al-Shabaab, why is it that Al-Shabaab would not be targeting the government's interest but the Church?

The Kenyan public and the international community has been witness to the step by step escalation of violence against innocent citizens with Christians and the Church suffering the greatest loss. We have persistently pleaded with the government to take courage and act to stop the scourge of terror. Due to the unfolding insecurity challenges it is now irrelevant whether the root cause is political, religious, ethnic or ideological. The main issue is that the intimidation, killings, bombings and wanton destruction of lives and properties must stop forthwith. We hereby make an appeal to Kenyan government to use all resources available to clearly define and neutralize the problem as other nations have done. The Church leadership has put restraint on the aggrieved millions; we can no longer guarantee cooperation if this trend of terror is not halted immediately.

We therefore call upon the Government of Kenya to take issue of security of Christian worshippers in Churches and crusade grounds seriously. The following actions require urgent consideration:

The police must secure places of worship and open air preaching by increasing the number of armed officers.

The police should increase vigilance and intelligence gathering.

The government should without delay remove taxes on security equipment acquired by the Church for self defense.

We call upon the Churches to be vigilant in security matters and be ready for self defense.

Further, considering that Kenya is at war, homeland security must be given greatest priority by the government. We ask all Kenyans to earnestly pray

for our nation, soldiers fighting in Somalia and for the security agents working within the country. May the Almighty God protect all of us.

Rev Dr Willy Mutiso
EAK – General Secretary

An initial analysis of the tone presents the statement as combative, head on and assertive with figures. For some, it narrows the gap between freedom and hate speech in the constellation of religious identities. The statement in some ways stirs negative emotions by asserting that such acts of hostility and violence against Christians are not senseless but are planned and carefully executed. An evaluation of the connection and disconnect between the figures provided is useful at this point. Granted that the twin attacks which left fifteen people dead took place in two small local congregations which host few members, the latitude of space to diminish or exaggerate casualties was limited as opposed to large centres like the Westgate Mall.

EQUIVALENCY APPROACH TO FRAMING IN EAK STATEMENT

The EAK statement of 4 July 2012 makes prominent the idea that the church is targeted by asking the question “Why is the Church Targeted?” at the very start of the statement. From where EAK stands, the word church is self-explanatory and conflates the body of Christian believers including their faith and sacred objects. Butnew framing has an influence on the information processing and the subsequent action by the audience. The audience has been said not be passive, as they do not immediately accept the elite frames presented to them.³⁰ According to William Gamson and colleagues, instead of the term audience it is appropriate to use terms such as readers or listeners to imply that they are active processors who engage in meaning decoding.³¹ As such, EAK in taking steps to frame the violent attacks paid attention to what would most influence their target audience to action. Some of the action they wanted their members is implied in the following statement: “We call upon the Churches to be vigilant in security matters and be ready for self defense.” This call signals the need for churches to take their security seriously, to put in place security apparatus around their premises and even have extra training for their members and ushers on security. If churches hire armed security guards in their precincts, they will be able to tackle or foil any possible attacks. It is not uncommon in Kenya today to see armed security personnel at many church venues in Kenya today.

Since, not all frames nor proffered interpretations are accepted, different presentation of the same information can lead to wider acceptance.³² Analytically, the above

30 Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm”.

31 Gamson W, Croteau D, Hoynes W and Sasson T. 1992. “Media images and the social construction of reality”. *Annual Sociological Review* 18:384.

32 Kahneman D and Tversky A. 1984. “Choices, Values and Frames”, *American Psychologist* 39(4):341-350.

statement framing by EAK has significant implications, as it highlights aspects of reality which lead individuals to interpret issues differently. It may elicit, between Christians and Muslims, the idea of religious intolerance or animosity and even exacerbate violence while in self-defence mode. Framing influences information processing in the equivalency approach as EAK points out the loss of lives and property by Christians, thus highlighting the losses involved.

The losses by Christians highlighted in the statement are as follows. The first is the loss of lives and injury to many others,

It is with great sorrow that the entire fraternity of the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK) console and empathize with the families of our brothers and sisters who were massacred last Sunday (1st July 2012) at our member denomination churches at the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Garissa. Our prayers are with those who were injured both at the Africa Inland Church and Catholic Churches in Garissa.

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2012 July, AIC – Garissa, 17 Kenyans died.

EAK selects of this aspect of loss and makes it prominent in the communication, so as to define the problem as being that many Christians have been killed in violent attacks. To this, they lend credibility by listing various occasions when this has happened as above.

The EAK framing has selected aspects of perceived reality and made them more pronounced within the text of the statement. This further makes the link of a possible causal interpretation on the matter at hand. The figures and facts listed above perhaps have been or have not been substantiated. In such cases, there stands the risk which may be exploited to exaggerate or diminish the records. Hence, at face value, statements could seek effectiveness much more than be truth seeking. To address this problem, my focus in this chapter is to explain the effect of the figures and facts as presented for framing as not to investigate the individual figures of each attack event.

The second measure of loss is damage to property, which EAK sees is wanton and a lot of property is destroyed in these attacks. As the EAK has indicated in the statement above: "We have persistently pleaded with the government to take

courage and act to stop the scourge of terror. Due to the unfolding insecurity challenges it is now irrelevant whether the root cause is political, religious, ethnic or ideological. The main issue is that the intimidation, killings, bombings and wanton destruction of lives and properties must stop forthwith.” Whereas much of what comes to the public domain is the loss of lives, EAK also draws attention to the additional loss of property. Church establishments additionally make losses into millions of Kenya shillings when their Church buildings, offices, schools and premises are targeted. This often goes unnoticed in the immediate reporting hence EAK highlights this additional loss.

The third measure of loss is the potential loss of freedoms, religious and democratic. EAK reads mischief and intimidation in the attackers, who over time have become more courageous and heinous, as suggested in the statement above and as follows: “We believe the killings and bombings are being done according to plan in order to instill fear with subsequent aim of eradicating religious freedom, democratic liberties with the Church being the primary target.” When EAK highlights these losses to its readers, it is clear that the presentation gives sharp focus to loss. Studies indicate that when losses are highlighted, readers are more inclined to take risks.³³ The equivalency frame in this case has not focused on the gains, therefore the risk-gain ratio is incomparable. In general, the equivalency approach also gives a preview of subsequent decision making after framing.³⁴ Owing to the EAK statement, individuals are inclined to take risks as many losses are highlighted to them as opposed to gains.

This equivalency approach to framing by EAK gives rise to the interpretation that there are many more losses experienced due to acts of violence, such as damage to property and loss of religious freedom, besides the loss of lives of which Al-Shabaab is often accused of by the state,³⁵ and it further makes prominent that the targets of the violence are Christians by listing all the attacks that have been previously carried out. Further, the statement points out: “As evangelicals, we feel targeted by these Islamic forces because even before Al-Shabaab, our churches were still being bombed.” This salient idea therefore accentuates the role of Islamic forces as the ones responsible for the loss of Christian lives, and such an interpretation presents a contrastive narrative from that which the Kenyan Government has continued to give in isolating the Al-Shabaab.

Perhaps a further loss indicated by EAK is loss of faith in the Kenyan intelligence and security service. This is indicated in the part of the EAK statement above that reads:

It is extremely worrying on our part that these attacks on Churches are on the increase and assurances of security by the Government of Kenya

33 Druckman, “The Implications of Framing Effects for Citizen Competence”, 228.

34 Kahneman and Tversky, “Choices, Values and Frames”.

35 For a recent rendering of the place of Al-Shabaab in the East Africa Constellation, see Anderson D and McKnight J. 2014. “Kenya at war: Al-Shabaab and its enemies in Eastern Africa”, *African Affairs* 114(454):1-27.

appear more rhetoric than pre-emptive. The National Security and Intelligence Service (NSIS) and the police seem to be sleeping on the job. The statement by the commissioner of police that the police service had information about imminent attacks but were not sure where “is devoid of security intelligence.

The EAK statement brings to sharp focus the perceived incompetence of the security intelligence in Kenya. To EAK, such a statement by the police commissioner is devoid of security intelligence and suggests that the member of the security apparatus are sleeping on their job. By EAK focusing on the incompetence of intelligence security and the inability to apprehend any attacker this far, the reader is at loss as what steps to take and begins to think of their own security and how to ensure it. Christians in Kenya would, therefore, perhaps consider installing additional security infrastructure and personnel at their meeting points for their own safety.³⁶

TOWARDS A CONCLUSION: CONTRASTIVE FRAMINGS BY NCCK AND EAK

Both EAK and NCCK as social actors construct their challenges through discursive practices. In these statements, there are similarities. Both decry the violence meted out on Christians in Kenya and both make religious identity pronounced. Both statements consider the government and its security agencies as failing. They are keen to point out that the state of affairs should not be the case and must not be considered normalcy.

Both statements have a call to prayer for the nation. NCCK uses the national anthem lyrics to submit that justice be our shield and defender in the form of a prayer. EAK asks Christians to pray for the nation, for soldiers in Somali and peace. Yet, even as both EAK and NCCK frame the threat against Christians and their places of worship clear contrasts can be noted. Whereas the NCCK statement framing lays emphasis on its approach in dealing with the government through courts, EAK highlights the losses that Kenyan Christians have had to undergo and could suffer in future. NCCK's statement is a prelude to a court process whereas EAK statement does not reach those heights. EAK states in detailed account the attacks that have been carried out against Christians. This reflects the social capital that NCCK enjoys as opposed to EAK, with the former being an actor with more social capital and positional power. Indeed NCCK represents 83% whereas EAK represents a percentage of the entire population of 47.7% protestant Christians. At the same time, EAK was started in 1975 when NCCK had already been at work in Kenya for over 6 decades. EAK re-frames the narrative presented by the Kenyan Government apparatus, who insist it is the Al-Shabaab at work and blame must be laid squarely on them. EAK's statement points beyond the militia group to a wider background of religious origins. These links have hitherto not been made in

³⁶ Maseno, “Securitizing Places of Worship in Kenya”.

the public arena since government security personnel stop at the Al-Shabaab and not their religious inclinations. However, NCCK not taking any route as to who is causing the attacks, insists that the government solely has the obligation to protect the lives and property of all Kenyans. To NCCK, the blame game is inconsequential.

Directions on the next cause of action provided by NCCK and EAK differ greatly. Whereas NCCK asks Christians to avoid retaliation but seek reprieve through the courts, the EAK statement calls on churches to be ready for self-defence and asks the government to lift taxes on security items that churches may want to acquire for self-defence. Taking the government to court is no mean feat and not all actors in Kenya can afford to do so. Therefore, it would seem that, to EAK, there is no option but to ask members to be vigilant and arise to occasion for self-defence. The EAK statement derides the security apparatus of the state by stating that some utterances are devoid of security intelligence. NCCK takes the bull by the horns and talks of mobilizing a team of lawyers to seek compensation locally but also make inroads to the International Criminal courts for investigative trips into the country way in advance of elections. From the perspective of NCCK, compensation for these atrocities must be made to the victims and this done through the courts. EAK gives recommendations that the government takes security seriously, the police to secure places of worship and increase their intelligence gathering.

The successful frame, however, is the one which passes the credibility and salience tests with the target audience. According to Pinto, credibility includes being consistent, having arguments flowing in a logical sense, being in line with the audience's perceived problems and being credible in the eyes of the audience.³⁷ Both NCCK and EAK's framings addressed to the Kenyans and the Kenyan government are presented logically. Both NCCK and EAK are considered legitimate to Kenyan Christians. In the wake of violent attacks on churches, the message in both these statements was important, as it connected to the readers. Kenyan Christian readers and the wider public were aided to make judgments and also draw inferences about the happenings in the country. In the end, the interpretive schemata from these messages reached their target audiences and serve as highly successful examples of effective re-framing of the official government narrative.

37 Pinto V. 2014. "Exploring the interplay between Framing and Securitization theory: The case of the Arab Spring Protests in Bahrain", *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional* 57:166.