

INTRODUCTION

The violent extremist narratives carry ideological messages that are carefully crafted to target young and impressionable minds, willing to join the violent extremist groups' 'struggle'—often misrepresented as 'Jihad' by groups such as Al Shabaab and Islamic State. Their audience gets radicalized in the process, and as a result, begin to harbour extremist and violent views. The call to action is for the **Kenyan youth** to **rise and reject these extremist ideologies and negative narratives through talent.**

THEMES

1. YOUTH RESPONSIBILITY IN:

a. Countering Radicalization, Extremism and Terrorism

Violent extremist narratives and messages are aimed at radicalizing before recruiting young men and women who are then trained and sent to fight for groups like the Al Shabaab.

During radicalization, a young man or woman may exhibit varied indicators such as: sudden changes in their outlook and appearances, changes in perception and reasoning, showing empathy and sympathy towards extremist groups. Some will also prefer solitude; making them withdraw from family and friends.

Early warning is the ability to, in a timely manner, identify signs, indicators and pointers of recruitment and radicalization, with a view to prevent the process from turning violent or escalating.

TASK: Develop a video (Not more than five minutes) to depict any of the following:

- i. Al Shabaab radicalization and recruitment in Kenya
- ii. Youth exhibiting signs of radicalization
- iii. Peer responsibility (Identifying early warning signs among peers and action to take upon identification of the radicalization process)

b. Effectively and responsibly responding to terrorist attacks

In the unfortunate event of a terrorist attack, inappropriate response to the incident may lead to more injuries and deaths, some regrettably not inflicted by the terrorists. For instance jumping from high floors of attacked buildings, running towards sounds of gunshots, scampering for safety leading to a stampede among other unsuitable actions.

TASK: Develop a video (Not more than five minutes) to depict how to **effectively and responsibly** respond to a terrorist attack. The scene may be set in a campus, mall, religious institution scenario, etc. Include appropriate actions that may be undertaken during such incidents.

2. THE CHANGING FACE OF TERRORISM

In the recent, past terrorists' recruitment and radicalization have evolved in all aspects such as the methods, the avenue of recruitment to the recruiters and the recruits. This phenomenon has led to what is now referred to as "*The new terrorism*" or "*The Changing Face of Terrorism*" where we are now seeing younger militants, female terrorists and use of internet as an avenue of radicalization.

a. Social Media Radicalisation and Terrorism

Terrorists groups such as the Al Shabaab have taken advantage of the open and ungoverned architecture of the Internet. They have flooded online platforms with recruitment and radicalization content that get reposted and forwarded uncontrollably among Kenyan youth. Common platforms in Kenya include WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, You Tube and Telegram among others.

TASK: Develop a video (Not more than five minutes) to illustrate:

- i. How violent extremists use social media to recruit and radicalize the youth.
- ii. How the youth can use online platforms to counter violent extremists' narratives.

b. Women Radicalisation and Terrorism

In the past, men have been dominating the list of terrorists; however, there is the increased use of women by terrorist groups. In Kenya, many young women are on the police terrorist watchlist, others have been killed as they attempted terror attacks in the country; tens of others have crossed over to Somalia and Libya to fight alongside the militants.

TASK: Develop a video (Not more than five minutes) to illustrate:

- i. The new phenomenon of women terrorists
- ii. How women can spearhead the fight against recruitment, radicalization and terrorism.

c. All Youth are vulnerable and can be recruited by terrorist groups not only Muslims

Al Shabaab are not only targeting the Muslim youth or restricting their recruitment along the Kenya - Somalia border communities but are also targeting all youth regardless of their tribe, religion, economic and education background whereby, university students/graduates are carrying out terrorist attacks.

TASK: Develop a video (Not more than five minutes) to illustrate how Kenyan youth can fall prey to violent extremists' narratives (depict the "unorthodox" terrorist).

d. Children and Terrorism

Terrorism was in the past associated with adults but lately children as young as 9 years are used as suicide bombers.

TASK: Develop a video (Not more than five minutes) to illustrating the:

- i. Importance of educating children versus children joining a terrorist group
- ii. The irony of Al Shabaab leaders who do not use their own children to carry out the terrorist attacks yet they use child soldiers in their ranks.

3. FAITH INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITIES.

a. Role of Faith Institutions and Communities in Countering Radicalisation, Extremism and Terrorism.

Combating terrorism is currently the greatest challenge in the world. Some religious institutions have been found guilty of recruiting and radicalizing youth, who unwittingly fall prey to the rogue clerics trusted by their parents and the community.

TASK: Develop a video (Not more than five minutes) to illustrate;

- i. How rogue clerics take advantage of their positions to recruit and radicalize Kenyan youth
- ii. How these religious institutions can be used to combat radicalization and recruitment.
- iii. Call to action to the muted or non-existent response to the violence by Imams, Ulama, Sheikhs and other Muslim leaders and inter-faith leaders.
- iv. The need for inter-faith approach in countering recruitment and radicalization among the youth.

b. True Jihad

Jihad is arguably the most misused term in Islam. Terrorists relay it as an obligation to fight anyone that counters their narrative. In the religious concept, as described by the Quran and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), *Jihad* is neither a violent concept nor a declaration of war against other religions. It refers to internal and external efforts to be a good Muslim or believer, as well as working to inform people about the faith of Islam.

TASK: Develop a video (Not more than five minutes) to illustrate:

- i. The “Best Jihad” and its prerequisites.
- ii. Different forms of Jihad.
- iii. Challenge the extremists’ jihad narratives juxtaposition with Quran and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

c. True Islam

Apart from seeking religious legitimacy for their actions, extreme militant groups take advantage of increased misinterpretation of scriptures, increased negative narratives of hatred of the 'other' (having labelled the 'other' as kuffar) and the increased global narratives of violence, death and hate.

All these have led to a misguided understanding of Islam by both Muslims and non-Muslims.

TASK: Develop a video (Not more than five minutes) to illustrate:

- i. Your understanding and interpretation of true Islam.
- ii. Islam as a religion of peace.
- iii. Islam and kindness to non-Muslims