Implications of Military Deployment in Internal Security Operations in Turkana East Sub-County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Persistent insecurity in Turkana East Sub-County, Kenya, driven by inter-ethnic conflicts, cross-border raids, and resource competition, prompted the deployment of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) under Operation Maliza Uhalifu in 2019. This study investigates the implications of military involvement in internal security on community safety, civil-military relations, and local governance structures. Utilizing a community security framework, the research draws on qualitative data from local stakeholders and secondary sources to examine how KDF presence influences physical security, institutional legitimacy, and social cohesion. Findings indicate that while the deployment has led to a notable reduction in violence and improvements in basic services, challenges remain regarding the militarisation of civilian spaces, erosion of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, and limited civilian oversight. The study concludes that achieving sustainable peace in Turkana East requires a shift from military-led security interventions to inclusive, community-driven strategies that enhance civil-military cooperation and support local governance. The paper recommends embedding security efforts within broader development and reconciliation initiatives to ensure long-term stability and resilience.

Keywords: Kenya Defence Forces, internal security, Turkana East, Operation Maliza Uhalifu, community security, civil-military relations.

INTRODUCTION

The military's primary mandate is to defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state from external aggression. In Kenya, this role is explicitly defined in Article 241(3) of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) and elaborated in the Kenya Defence Forces Act (2012), which outlines the functions of the KDF as defending the country against external threats, supporting civil authorities when required and participating in international peace operations. Internal security, by contrast, falls within the jurisdiction of the National Police Service.

However, in recent years, internal threats to national stability such as terrorism, inter-communal violence and organised crime have increasingly blurred the lines between internal and external security. Militaries are being drawn into non-traditional roles in domestic contexts, particularly where police capacity is limited or overwhelmed. Kenya is no exception. In remote and historically marginalised areas such as Turkana East Sub-County, the state has expanded the role of the military to manage persistent internal insecurity.

Turkana East, situated in north-western Kenya, has long faced structural challenges including underdevelopment, inadequate infrastructure and weak governance. These conditions have contributed to recurring cycles of insecurity marked by inter-community conflicts, cattle rustling and cross-border raids (Wairagu, 2018). Between 2015 and 2023, these threats escalated significantly, surpassing the capacity of traditional policing mechanisms to respond effectively. In light of this, the Kenyan Government launched Operation *Maliza Uhalifu* translated in Swahili as *"Operation End Crime"* a militarised internal security initiative aimed at restoring order in the North Rift region, including Turkana East.

The deployment of the KDF in domestic security operations, despite its constitutional focus on external threats, represents a profound shift in Kenya's internal security approach (Ketter, 2022). While some reports

indicate that the operation led to improved security and a reduction in violence, this shift raises critical concerns about civil-military relations, the militarisation of public life and the implications for democratic accountability and governance (Bor, 2020).

The socio-political environment of Turkana East further complicates these interventions. The region's geographic isolation, deeply rooted pastoralist traditions and history of marginalisation render it a complex site for externally imposed, top-down security solutions. Without meaningful engagement with local institutions and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such interventions risk reinforcing alienation and resistance (Acharya, 2014). Additionally, the regular presence of uniformed soldiers in daily life reshapes how communities perceive state power and legitimacy, potentially altering the social contract between citizens and the state (Ayoob, 1995).

This paper draws on the Human Security Framework, particularly the dimension of Community Security, to examine the implications of militarised interventions in Turkana East. Although Human Security first introduced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994) is not a theory in the traditional academic sense, it provides a conceptual foundation for understanding security beyond state-centered paradigms. It emphasises safety from violence, access to essential services and protection of human dignity. Within this framework, Community Security underscores the importance of localised, culturally grounded approaches to peacebuilding that prioritise social cohesion, trust and the role of traditional institutions (Luckham, 2017).

The broader literature on militarised security responses presents mixed evidence. In Colombia, for example, national military interventions helped stabilise conflict-prone areas but often failed to deliver sustainable peace in the absence of institutional reform and community engagement (Staniland, 2012). In the Kenyan context, scholars such as Mkutu (2017) and Bor (2020) acknowledge that while KDF operations may be tactically effective, they frequently lack long-term developmental grounding, which can erode trust in government institutions.

This paper critically assesses the deployment of the KDF in Turkana East Sub-County between 2015 and 2023 and its impact on community security. It explores the underlying rationale for involving the military in internal security operations, evaluates the short-term security outcomes and interrogates the broader consequences for governance, civil-military relations and sustainable peacebuilding in fragile and marginalised regions. The analysis contributes to ongoing policy debates on the appropriate role of the military in domestic security and the design of integrated, rights-based approaches to peace and stability.

Statement Of the Problem

The growing reliance on military forces for internal security raises important questions about the broader impact of such deployments on local communities. In Turkana East Sub-County, a region marked by historical marginalisation and fragile inter-ethnic relations, the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) play a significant role in stabilising insecurity caused by banditry and communal conflict. While the military presence has contributed to improved security, there is limited empirical evidence on its longer-term social, ethical, and developmental effects. Existing studies highlight both the benefits of military involvement in restoring order and delivering humanitarian assistance, and the risks related to militarisation of civilian spaces, such as human rights concerns and disruption of local governance. Previous research has examined variables such as community trust, civil-military relations, and socio-economic outcomes, but findings remain conflicting: some scholars emphasize positive civil-military cooperation, while others warn of unintended consequences including dependency and weakened civilian institutions. Importantly, there is a gap in localized, multi-stakeholder assessments that capture how military deployment affects community perceptions of safety and legitimacy in pastoralist, marginalised settings like Turkana East. This study addresses these gaps by evaluating the implications of sustained KDF presence for community security, development, and social cohesion, incorporating insights from local leaders, NGOs, and security personnel. By focusing on both the benefits and challenges of military engagement, including logistical and cultural factors, the research uniquely contributes to understanding how military interventions can support sustainable peace without exacerbating underlying

tensions. The main research question guiding this study is: What are the implications of KDF deployment for community security and development in Turkana East Sub-County?

Scope And Limitations of the Paper

This paper focuses exclusively on Turkana East Sub-County, an area that has become a focal point for internal security operations involving the KDF. It examines the implications of military deployment under Operation *Maliza Uhalifu*, particularly as perceived by local communities, administrative officials, civil society actors and KDF personnel.

The analysis concentrates on social, psychological and developmental impacts rather than military strategy or combat effectiveness. Limitations of the paper include potential respondent bias, particularly due to fear of reprisal, as evidenced by a high rate of anonymity in survey responses. Additionally, the paper 's geographic and temporal scope limits the generalisability of findings to other contexts or future periods.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Military deployment in internal security operations has been widely adopted across various global contexts, often producing mixed outcomes depending on the balance between force and governance. In Colombia, Staniland (2012) examined how sustained national security force presence in rural conflict zones led to the gradual restoration of civic life, infrastructure, and public services. His study highlights that when the military operates as a stabilising agent alongside civil institutions, it can yield long-term peace dividends. However, he also cautions that such success is conditional on legitimacy and parallel state-building processes.

Perito (2013), in his analysis of Afghanistan, presents a more cautionary view. While initial deployments of U.S. and NATO forces improved security conditions, the expansion of military authority into civil spaces created distrust and weakened democratic governance. This blurring of military and civilian roles led to resentment among local populations and eventually eroded the perceived legitimacy of the mission. These findings raise critical concerns about militarisation in fragile societies, particularly where civil authority remains weak.

In Africa, similar tensions have emerged. Okoli (2020) evaluated Nigeria's counter-insurgency efforts in the north-east, where the military sought to suppress Boko Haram insurgents. His findings underscore that while the military was successful in reclaiming territory, its operations were often marred by human rights violations and community alienation. Okoli stresses that military force alone is insufficient for sustainable peace, recommending the integration of social investment initiatives such as education, youth empowerment, and local governance reforms to accompany security operations.

Closer to the East African region, Bor (2020) notes that military deployment has played a critical role in quelling violent extremism and cattle rustling in pastoralist zones. However, he argues that success has been short-lived in contexts where deployments were not followed by investment in livelihoods and local peace infrastructures. His findings highlight a pattern: without embedding military actions within broader development and community engagement strategies, the gains of security interventions are rarely sustained.

In the Kenyan context, Mkutu (2017) critically examines the internal deployment of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF), especially in historically insecure regions like northern Kenya. While he acknowledges that the military has contributed to a reduction in cattle raids and banditry, he cautions that this approach risks alienating local communities if not coupled with inclusive, participatory peacebuilding. He points to the danger of eroding traditional governance structures and fuelling perceptions of state coercion, particularly in pastoralist settings where militarisation can disrupt social order.

Ketter (2022), focusing specifically on Turkana East Sub-County, presents a more optimistic assessment. He finds that the KDF's involvement under Operation Maliza Uhalifu has significantly reduced traditional threats such as cattle rustling, banditry, and inter-ethnic conflict. His study attributes these improvements not only to the deterrent effect of military presence but also to the role of the KDF in enabling the rehabilitation of roads,

schools, and essential services. Community life, according to his findings, has begun to stabilise, with social and economic activities resuming in areas that were previously inaccessible due to insecurity.

Nonetheless, Ketter also observes that sections of the population remain wary of long-term militarisation and express concerns about civil liberties, echoing broader critiques found in global and regional contexts. This mirrors experiences in Nigeria and Afghanistan, where military interventions initially improved security but led to disillusionment when civil oversight and public accountability lagged behind.

Synthesising these studies reveals a consistent theme: while military deployment can deliver short-term gains in restoring order and curbing violence, it is not a panacea for deep-rooted insecurity. Sustainable peace requires complementary interventions—such as inclusive governance, community policing, and socio-economic development—to address the structural drivers of conflict. Moreover, local perceptions of military presence, whether as protectors or occupiers, significantly shape the effectiveness of these operations.

Although the current literature offers substantial insights into the outcomes of internal military deployments, a gap remains in understanding how these interventions are perceived and experienced by communities at the grassroots level—particularly in marginalised, pastoralist regions like Turkana East. Studies such as those by Bor (2020), Mkutu (2017), and Ketter (2022) provide macro-level perspectives or focus on military efficacy, but few systematically assess the nuanced, everyday implications of such deployments on community security, livelihoods, and local governance.

This study addresses that gap by exploring both community and expert perspectives on the implications of KDF deployment in Turkana East. It contributes a context-specific, multi-stakeholder understanding that links military operations to lived realities, aiming to inform more responsive and sustainable internal security strategies in Kenya.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the Community Security Framework (CSF), which is an integral component of the broader Human Security Framework (HSF) developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1994. The Human Security Framework marked a paradigm shift from the traditional, state-centric and militarised conception of security to a people-centred model. It proposes that true security is achieved not merely through territorial defence or state sovereignty, but through the protection of individuals and communities from chronic threats such as poverty, conflict, exclusion, and fear. Within this broad construct, the Community Security Framework narrows the focus to the safety, resilience, and social cohesion of communities, recognising that insecurity often stems from internal societal dynamics rather than only external aggression.

The central proposition of the CSF is that security must be locally owned, participatory, and integrated with broader development goals. It holds that interventions addressing insecurity are most effective when they incorporate local actors, understand socio-cultural contexts, and strengthen governance systems at the community level. It posits that sustainable peace and stability arise not solely from the suppression of violence but from addressing its root causes, including marginalisation, resource competition, and the erosion of trust between communities and the state.

Several empirical studies have applied the Community Security Framework to understand the impact of security interventions in fragile settings. For instance, Krause and Jütersonke (2005) utilised the framework in post-conflict urban settings, finding that community-driven security initiatives helped reduce violence by building trust between civilians and security actors. Similarly, Baker and Scheye (2007) applied the CSF in the context of informal policing systems in Africa, demonstrating that locally embedded security models enhanced accountability and improved perceptions of legitimacy. These studies highlight the utility of the framework in analysing the effectiveness of security strategies within complex, community-based environments.

The CSF's primary strength lies in its emphasis on inclusivity, bottom-up engagement, and adaptability to local contexts. It is particularly useful in regions where state institutions are weak or where the population has

experienced historical neglect, such as Turkana East Sub-County. The framework allows for an analysis of security beyond military effectiveness, considering human development, social cohesion, and governance. However, a noted limitation of the CSF is its relative under-specification in operational terms; it lacks a clear set of indicators for measuring outcomes and may be challenging to apply uniformly across different conflict scenarios. Additionally, in highly volatile areas, the call for inclusive participation may be constrained by urgent security imperatives that prioritise rapid response over deliberative engagement.

Despite these limitations, the Community Security Framework remains relevant and appropriate for this study. Turkana East faces not only physical insecurity manifested in cattle rustling, banditry, and inter-ethnic violence but also structural insecurity rooted in historical marginalisation and weak governance. The framework provides a robust lens through which to assess how the deployment of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) interacts with these dynamics. It facilitates a holistic evaluation of the implications of military presence not only in terms of reducing violence, but also in terms of fostering or undermining social trust, local governance structures, and long-term resilience.

By applying the Community Security Framework to the case of Turkana East Sub-County, this study contributes to the theoretical literature by extending the application of CSF to rural, pastoralist regions experiencing both chronic insecurity and military intervention. It provides empirical insights into how military operations affect community security outcomes in under-studied contexts and offers policy-relevant recommendations grounded in local realities. Moreover, the study addresses gaps in existing literature by exploring both the perceived and actual effects of internal military deployment on community cohesion, thereby enhancing the analytical utility of the CSF in informing people-centred security strategies.

Identified Gaps in the Literature

Despite growing scholarly attention to military roles in domestic security, several critical gaps remain, especially in the Kenyan context. First, existing studies predominantly highlight short-term operational successes of military deployments, but pay little attention to the long-term sustainability of such interventions or their deeper impacts on community security (Daddah, 2022). This oversight limits our understanding of whether military engagement translates into enduring stability or merely suppresses violence temporarily.

Second, there is a persistent absence of community-based perspectives. Much of the literature neglects the voices and experiences of local populations, thereby hindering insights into how communities interpret and respond to military presence (Ketter, 2022). Without capturing these lived narratives, assessments of legitimacy and social impact remain incomplete.

Third, the dynamics of civil–military coordination are underexamined. Few studies explore how the military, police, local government and civil society collaborate or fail to do so in internal security domains. Given Kenya's evolving security architecture, this represents a notable research deficiency (Ketter, 2022).

Finally, the civil liberties and accountability implications of military deployment in civilian spaces are rarely addressed. Even though rights-based frameworks exist, such as those advocated by ICJ Kenya (2024), empirical evidence on operational misconduct and protection of human rights remains scarce.

This paper addresses these gaps by leveraging a mixed-methods approach to assess the KDF deployment in Turkana East Sub-County. By integrating quantitative data with qualitative insights and centring community perceptions, it provides a detailed evaluation of how internal military operations affect local security, governance dynamics and human rights in a historically marginalised region.

Contribution Of the Paper

This paper addresses these gaps by offering a community-centered, empirically grounded examination of the implications of military deployment in Turkana East Sub-County. It specifically contributes by providing evidence on how KDF operations shape community security, governance perceptions and inter-group dynamics, insights into community acceptance, resistance, or ambivalence toward militarisation of internal

security and analysis of the effectiveness and risks of military-led stabilisation in marginalised, under-governed regions.

The paper makes recommends how military deployment can be better aligned with community resilience, human rights and inclusive development. By grounding the analysis in the Community Security Framework, this paper bridges the gap between operational security thinking and the lived realities of civilians affected by militarised interventions.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design to examine the impact of military deployment on community security in Kenya, focusing on the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) in Turkana East Sub County. The methodology integrated qualitative and quantitative approaches to allow for both broad population insights and deep contextual understanding, enhancing the validity of findings and supporting evidence-based policy recommendations.

Research Design

A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires with both closed and open-ended questions, including Likert scale items assessing perceptions of safety, trust, and effectiveness of military operations. Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews and document reviews to capture nuanced insights. Quantitative analysis was conducted using SPSS (descriptive statistics and ANOVA), while qualitative data were thematically analysed using NVivo software. This design facilitated triangulation and ensured a comprehensive understanding of community experiences.

Area Of Study

The research was conducted in Turkana East Sub County, a region in Kenya's North Rift marked by persistent insecurity, inter-community conflict, and limited state presence. The area is strategically significant due to its proximity to Samburu and Baringo Counties and its centrality in Operation Maliza Uhalifu—a security initiative involving KDF to counter armed violence and restore order. Chronic cattle raiding, boundary disputes, and resource-based conflicts make the region highly relevant for studying the effects of military deployment on civilian populations.

Fig 1: Map of Turkana County,

Source: Research Gate

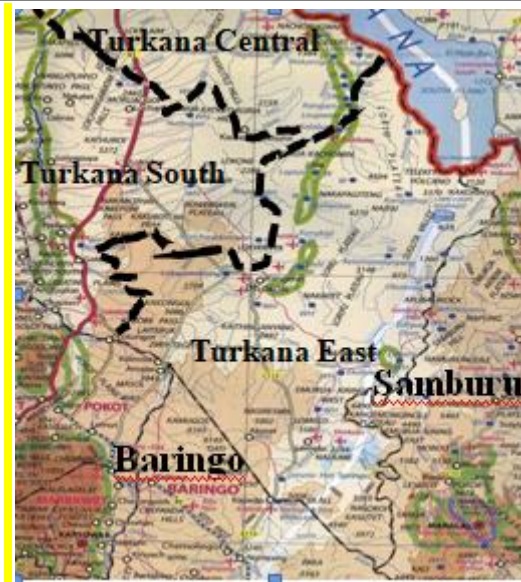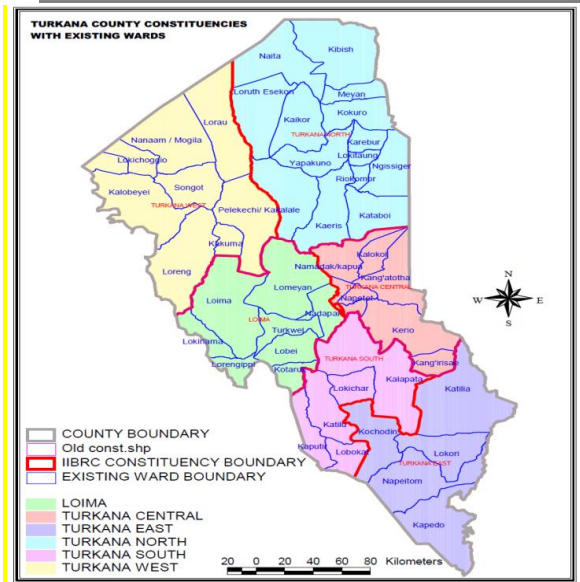**Fig 2: Map for Sub Counties**

Source: Frontiers in Veterinary Medicine

Fig 3: Map of Ward Boundaries

Source: Turkana County Government

Fig 4: Route Map of Turkana East

Source: Survey of Kenya

Target Population

The target population included a cross-section of individuals affected by or involved in internal security operations. These included community members, Kenya Defence Forces personnel, National Police Service officers, National Intelligence Service officers, chiefs and elders, religious leaders, local government officials, NGO staff, educators, and scholars. This diverse population ensured multiple perspectives on security operations, from lived community experiences to professional security assessments.

Sampling Techniques

A combination of sampling techniques was used. **Simple random sampling** was applied to select community members, ensuring every individual had an equal chance of participation, thus reducing bias. **Purposive sampling** was used to identify key informants with specific knowledge or authority, such as KDF officers, police commanders, NGO officials, and scholars. **Snowball sampling** complemented this by enabling the identification of additional informants through referrals, particularly in hard-to-reach or sensitive contexts.

Sample Size Determination

The sample size was calculated using **Cochran's formula** for finite populations. Based on a projected population of **163,801** (from the 2019 Kenya Population Census adjusted for annual growth), a **90% confidence level**, **5% margin of error**, and maximum variability (p = 0.5), the required sample was calculated as follows:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{e^2} = \frac{(1.645)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot 0.5}{0.0025} \approx 270$$

Adjusting for a finite population:

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{n_0 - 1}{N}} = \frac{270}{1 + \frac{269}{163801}} \approx 269$$

The final sample included **264 community members** and **5 key informant groups** (2 scholars, 2 senior NPS officers, 1 NIS officer, 2 religious leaders, 3 NGO officers, and 3 county officials).

Data Collection Instruments

Multiple tools were used to ensure data richness.

Structured questionnaires collected quantitative data on community perceptions of safety and KDF operations.

Open-ended survey items and **in-depth interviews** provided qualitative insights.

Phone interviews were conducted for participants in remote or insecure locations.

Document analysis (government reports, security documents, and academic literature) provided contextual background and validated field data.

Questions covered themes such as perceived changes in crime rates, trust in security forces, experiences of conflict, and military-civilian interactions.

Validity And Reliability

Triangulation across data sources and tools enhanced the internal validity of findings. A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the questionnaire. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient obtained was 0.812, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating high internal consistency. Reliability was further strengthened through consistent administration procedures and alignment of thematic content across instruments.

Data Collection Procedures

The study obtained ethical approval from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and permissions from relevant national and county security offices. Community entry was facilitated through local administrators. Participants gave informed consent, and data were collected through on-site surveys, phone calls, and scheduled interviews. Sensitive topics were handled with cultural and ethical sensitivity, and participants retained the right to withdraw at any point.

Data Processing and Analysis

Quantitative data from questionnaires were entered and cleaned in SPSS and analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) and inferential statistics (ANOVA) to detect differences across demographic variables. Qualitative data from interviews and open-ended questions were transcribed and analysed thematically using NVivo. Document analysis complemented field findings. Results were integrated and triangulated for consistency and validity.

Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to ethical standards set by NACOSTI. Informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and anonymity were guaranteed. Data were securely stored, and participants were not exposed to harm. The study was culturally sensitive and ensured that vulnerable groups were not exploited. Ethical reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process to uphold academic integrity and community trust.

FINDINGS

Response Rate

The study achieved an exceptional overall response rate of 91.97%, with 252 out of 274 targeted participants responding, including 91.67% of community members the primary population affected by military deployment in Turkana East Sub County. Full participation from all key informant groups (security experts, local leaders, religious leaders, NGO officers, and KDF personnel) further enriched the data with expert perspectives. This

high response rate, well above the 50% adequacy threshold for social science research (Baruch & Holtom, 2008), reflects the study's relevance to local security concerns and the effectiveness of culturally sensitive, community-engaged data collection strategies. The diverse stakeholder input enhances the credibility of the findings and aligns with best practices in security research, which emphasize inclusive, multi-perspective analysis of complex interventions (Mkutu, 2008; Nulty, 2008; Fowler, 2014).

Table 1: Response Rate

Respondent Group	Sample Size	Actual Respondents	Percentage
Community	264	242	91.67%
Security Expert Scholars/Academicians	2	2	100%
Local Leaders	2	2	100%
Religious Leaders	2	2	100%
NGO Officers	2	2	100%
KDF Officers/Logistic Support Component	2	2	100%
Average	**274**	**252**	**91.97%**

Source: Research Data (2025)

KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The study found that the deployment of the KDF in internal security operations in Turkana East Sub County was broadly perceived by both military personnel and community stakeholders as a necessary and legitimate response to persistent and escalating security threats. These threats included armed banditry, intercommunal violence, and the inability of the police to contain such incidents effectively. To better understand the rationale and implications of this military deployment, the study examined the findings through the theoretical lenses of Human Security and Community Security.

Human Security Perspective

The study revealed that the deployment of the KDF aligns with the core tenets of Human Security Theory, which emphasises the protection of individuals from violence (freedom from fear), the fulfillment of basic needs (freedom from want) and the preservation of dignity. Respondents consistently indicated that the presence of the KDF significantly reduced the fear of violence, created a secure environment for civilian life and allowed for the continuation of basic economic and social activities. From this perspective, the KDF was not merely viewed as a coercive state apparatus but rather as a temporary enabler of safety and stability, particularly in regions where traditional law enforcement had become ineffective. However, the human security lens also warns against the potential normalisation of military solutions to civilian security issues, and calls for eventual demilitarization and a transition toward development, justice, and civilian governance as sustainable means of ensuring human well-being.

Community Security Perspective

Similarly, the study found that the rationale for KDF deployment resonated with principles embedded in Community Security Theory, which focuses on protecting communities often defined by ethnic, cultural, or regional identities, from threats to their collective safety and cohesion. In Turkana East, where insecurity is largely intercommunal and resource-driven, communities supported the KDF's involvement as a context-specific and locally justified intervention. Community leaders, religious figures, local officials, and civil society organisations affirmed that the deployment of the KDF was not externally imposed, but rather demand-driven and responsive to the lived experiences of insecurity within the region. This aligns with community security principles that advocate for localized, participatory, and identity-sensitive approaches to peace and stability. Nevertheless, the theory also raises concerns about the erosion of traditional mechanisms for conflict

resolution and the risk of fostering community dependency on military intervention. Sustainable peace, according to community security frameworks, requires strengthening the capacity of local institutions and actors to manage and resolve conflict autonomously. The matrix in *Table 2* below highlights key dimensions of interpretation from Human Security and Community Security perspectives to synthesise the application of both theoretical lenses.

Table 2: Key dimensions from Human Security and Community Security perspectives

Dimension	Human Security Perspective	Community Security Perspective
Primary Focus	Individual safety, dignity, and well-being	Protection of identity-based communities and promotion of social cohesion
View of KDF Role	Enhancer of physical safety short-term protector of civilian life	Responsive actor aligned with local needs and accepted by communities
Short-Term Impact	Reduction in violence and fear, enabling humanitarian and civil functions	Builds local trust and addresses immediate community-level threats
Long-Term Concern	Risk of normalizing militarized security and marginalizing civilian roles	Erosion of traditional conflict resolution systems, dependency on military
Sustainability Needs	Transition to development, governance, and rule of law reforms	Community empowerment, peacebuilding, and capacity-building for self-security

Source: Researcher (2025)

The first objective of the study was to examine the rationale for the deployment of the military in internal security operations and implications on community security in Kenya. The findings reveal that both military personnel and community stakeholders recognise valid justifications for KDF deployment in Turkana East Sub County. Key rationales identified include responding to persistent security threats that exceed police capacity, protecting civilians from armed groups and stabilising regions affected by intercommunal violence. The study employed quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse perspectives from community members, security experts, local leaders, religious figures, NGO officers and KDF personnel on this deployment rationale.

Community Perceptions on Military Deployment

The section includes descriptive statistics analysing community perceptions of military deployment in Turkana East Sub County, focusing on how local residents view and interact with KDF operations. Table 3 presents descriptive statistics of community perceptions on military deployment.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Community Perceptions on Military Deployment

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
The community has a positive perception of the military deployment in handling internal security issues	0.00%	3.60%	3.60%	43.60%	49.10%	4.38	0.73
KDF is perceived to play an important role in internal security operations in the area.	0.00%	1.80%	5.50%	49.10%	43.60%	4.35	0.67

KDF operations are perceived as necessary for maintaining peace and order in the community.	0.00%	1.80%	1.80%	49.10%	47.30%	4.42	0.63
The local community members play a critical role in supporting the military to improve internal security in the area.	0.00%	1.80%	7.30%	56.40%	34.50%	4.24	0.67
There are community-based participation initiatives supporting the process of military deployment in internal security in the area.	0.00%	1.90%	15.10%	52.80%	30.20%	4.11	0.73
Community policing should be prioritized over military involvement in the area.	3.80%	15.10%	17.00%	45.30%	18.90%	3.60	1.08
There is a genuine desire from the community to team up and work with the military to promote internal security.	1.90%	0.00%	3.70%	38.90%	55.60%	4.46	0.75
Military operations in internal security contexts are often necessary to protect civilians from potential harm.	0.00%	7.70%	9.60%	46.20%	36.50%	4.12	0.88
Average						**4.21**	**0.77**

Source: Research Data (2025)

Community perception of KDF deployment in internal security operations shows overwhelming support, with statistical evidence demonstrating high approval ratings across multiple dimensions. Survey results indicate 92.7% agreement regarding military deployment (mean=4.38), 92.7% endorsement of KDF's security role (mean=4.35) and 96.4% agreement on the necessity of KDF operations for maintaining peace (mean=4.42). This strong community backing is rooted in the military's demonstrated effectiveness in restoring stability while simultaneously implementing development initiatives. The qualitative data reveals that community support stems from KDF's multifaceted approach combining security with development. Respondents particularly valued the military's fair treatment; quick response capabilities and professionalism compared to other security forces. They highlighted KDF's contributions to infrastructure development (schools, boreholes), medical services, humanitarian assistance and economic growth through improved business environments and transportation networks. Additionally, community members appreciated KDF's non-partisan stance and educational initiatives promoting peace among conflicting communities.

Community participation in security initiatives further strengthens KDF's effectiveness, with 90.9% of respondents acknowledging their critical role in supporting military operations (mean=4.24). This manifests through active engagement in peace dialogues, intelligence sharing and establishing early warning systems. The strong desire to collaborate with the military (94.5% agreement, mean=4.46) demonstrates the community's trust and confidence in KDF, evidenced by their willingness to provide land for permanent military bases and participate in joint activities. Overall, the findings (average mean=4.21) indicate that KDF's

balanced approach, combining security operations with community development while respecting local customs, has created an effective model for military deployment in internal security operations.

These findings align with several studies in the literature. Acacio (2022) found that civilian perspectives on military deployment are shaped by their direct experiences with security forces and the perceived effectiveness of operations in reducing threats. Similarly, Daddah (2022) noted that communities in conflict-prone areas often view military presence positively when it results in tangible security improvements and reduced violence. Ichani (2019) observed that community support for military operations increases when personnel demonstrate respect for local customs and engage meaningfully with residents. Additionally, Mkutu (2008) highlighted that in pastoralist communities like those in Turkana East, military deployments that address resource-based conflicts while respecting traditional governance structures tend to gain stronger community acceptance and cooperation.

Security Experts and Scholars/Academicians Perceptions on Military Deployment

Security experts highlight KDF's evolution from traditional combat operations to a multifaceted security approach encompassing humanitarian assistance, conflict resolution and infrastructure development. A key informant noted, *"It has provided medical care in the areas and security has improved"* [KISE 1], while another responded, *"Construction of a road and a primary school"* [KISE 2]. This expanded role reflects KDF's growing engagement in providing essential services beyond security enforcement, including disaster response as noted by one expert: *"Help the community manage disasters and keep the community safe from enemy attack"* [KISE 4]. Technological advancement and strategic innovation have significantly enhanced KDF's operational effectiveness in countering security threats.

One respondent highlighted this transformation: *"By coming up with new tactics and using technology"* [KISE 10]. This modernisation has improved threat neutralisation while reducing civilian casualties, as noted by another expert: *"Good - they have provided soldiers with good equipment to fight bandits"* [KISE 3]. Despite these improvements, challenges persist with external security threats, as one informant observed: *"External interference by criminal who attack of community leading to deaths in the area"* [KISE 22]. KDF's impact on community relations and economic activities presents a complex picture of both benefits and challenges. While one respondent highlighted the positive economic impacts that *"They promote trading activities"* [KISE 12] others noted civilian apprehension: *"People feel less safe when they see the KDF personnel in the area"* [KISE 7]. Concerns about selective enforcement were raised by one respondent who stated, '*Since the military gets to choose who they go after, they'll leave the regular community members alone. But some criminals might try to save themselves by hiding among innocent people."* [KISE 9], highlighting tensions in the application of military force. These findings align with existing literature on military deployment in internal security operations. The expanded humanitarian role supports Acharya's (2014) contention that security encompasses health, education and economic dimensions, while the technological adaptations confirm Mugambi's (2019) research on military effectiveness. The community relation challenges echo Wairagu's (2018) findings on militarization concerns and Karanja's (2021) identification of engagement gaps. As Abiew (2007) cautioned regarding unintended economic consequences, the experts' observations about market restrictions demonstrate the complex interplay between security and development that must be navigated in military deployments, reinforcing the need for what Luckham (2017) termed "balanced security approaches" that integrate immediate threat response with sustainable community development.

In summary, the study highlights both the strengths and challenges of KDF's involvement in internal security operations. While respondents acknowledged the military's role in stabilizing conflict-prone areas, concerns about community trust, cultural barriers and socio-economic disruptions remain significant. The findings suggest that effective military operations should integrate community engagement, infrastructure development and cultural awareness to ensure long-term stability. Additionally, efforts to build trust between security forces and civilians must be prioritized through transparent communication and collaborative decision-making. Addressing governance challenges, improving resource allocation and enhancing security-civilian relationships will be crucial in strengthening the effectiveness of military interventions in Kenya. A multidimensional strategy that combines security with socio-economic development initiatives may offer the most sustainable path forward in ensuring national stability and resilience.

Local Leaders' Perceptions on Military Deployment

The perception of local leaders regarding the deployment of the KDF in Turkana East Sub County is largely positive, with the majority acknowledging the military's role in enhancing security, reducing crime and fostering stability. The study found that community participation in supporting military operations in Turkana East Sub County is divided, with 53.7% (44) of respondents indicating that they take part in supporting KDF operations in some capacity, while 46.3% (38) stated that they do not engage in any direct support. This suggests that a slight majority of the local population is actively involved in military initiatives, either through collaboration, intelligence sharing, or logistical assistance. The level of participation indicates that while there is a degree of community backing for KDF's presence, a significant proportion remains either indifferent or opposed, potentially due to personal reservations, security concerns, or lack of direct engagement opportunities. The findings highlight the need for increased efforts to bridge the gap between the military and civilians by fostering trust, clarifying the role of the community in security operations and promoting inclusive participation in stability efforts within the region. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the local leaders perceptions regarding military deployment.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Local Leaders Perceptions on Military Deployment

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
The KDF acts in the best interest of the communities in the deployment area.	1.20%	3.70%	7.30%	54.90%	32.90%	4.15	0.80
The KDF engages with local community members in a respectful manner.	0.00%	2.40%	6.10%	53.70%	37.80%	4.27	0.69
The KDF understands the unique security needs of communities.	1.20%	3.70%	8.50%	61.00%	25.60%	4.06	0.78
The local community sees the KDF as allies in maintaining security.	4.90%	4.90%	4.90%	51.20%	34.10%	4.05	1.02
The KDF communicates effectively with the local community about their operations and objectives.	6.10%	9.80%	26.80%	37.80%	19.50%	3.55	1.10
Average						4.02	0.88

Source: Research Data (2025)

The community in Turkana East Sub County identifies several significant operational challenges confronting KDF while recognizing substantial opportunities for enhancing security and promoting development through military deployment. Operational challenges include infrastructure deficiencies, particularly poor road networks that limit military mobility and response capabilities, alongside harsh climate conditions creating resource scarcities affecting both troops and locals. Communication barriers present persistent difficulties, with language differences and cultural misunderstandings complicating community engagement efforts. Security identification represents another major challenge, as KDF personnel struggle to distinguish between bandits and civilians, risking both incorrect targeting and intelligence failures. Logistical constraints further hamper operations, with community members noting inadequate transport, equipment and supply shortages affecting military effectiveness. These challenges align with what Mkutu (2008) identified as characteristic obstacles in

pastoralist security operations, where geographical isolation, resource constraints and complex social dynamics create multifaceted operational difficulties requiring adaptive approaches.

Despite these challenges, community members recognise substantial opportunities through KDF's multidimensional approach combining security enforcement with development initiatives. They strongly value KDF's humanitarian contributions, particularly infrastructure development including schools, boreholes and road construction that addresses immediate needs while building long-term community resilience. The military's civil-military cooperation activities including open *barazas*, medical camps, provision of water, reconstruction of schools and hospitals, sports events and peace dialogues foster both immediate stability and enhanced civil-military trust. Community members express willingness to deepen collaboration, including offering land for permanent military bases and participating in joint security initiatives. The overwhelmingly positive community assessment (average mean=4.21, SD=0.77) demonstrates that KDF has successfully established what Neild (1999) termed "citizen security" a framework integrating traditional security enforcement with human-centered approaches addressing root causes of insecurity. According to Human Security Theory (UNDP, 1994) and Community Security Theory (Luckham, 2017), this integration of security with development creates sustainable stability by addressing both immediate threats and underlying socioeconomic vulnerabilities a model that community responses suggest KDF has effectively implemented in Turkana East despite persistent operational challenges.

In summary, local leaders in Turkana East Sub County generally view the KDF's deployment as beneficial for community security. They acknowledge the military's role in reducing crime rates, fostering inter-community harmony and supporting development initiatives. Local leaders appreciate the KDF's efforts in maintaining peace and order, which has allowed for improved economic activities and social stability. However, they also point out challenges in communication and localised engagement, suggesting that additional measures are needed to build more trust and ensure that military operations align with community expectations and needs.

Religious Leaders Perceptions on Military Deployment

Religious leaders in Turkana East Sub County provide great insights on KDF deployment, highlighting the transformative impact on peace, infrastructure and socio-economic conditions. They highlight KDF's role in fostering unity and bridging ethnic divides, with one respondent noting: *"KDF have promoted unity among the communities"* [KIRL19]. This perspective aligns with Jowell's (2018) findings on civil-military cooperation's implications for peace in Kenya, where religious institutions serve as critical intermediaries between security forces and local communities. Religious leaders particularly value KDF's infrastructure development initiatives, with one respondent stating: *"Water pan construction, borehole drilling and peace barazas"* [KIRL20]. These interventions directly address resource-based conflicts that Mkutu (2008) identified as primary drivers of insecurity in pastoralism areas, where competition over scarce resources like water often fuels intercommunal violence.

Religious leaders appreciate KDF's contributions to community welfare through infrastructure and social service provision. One religious leader commented the *"Provision of free medical clinic and building a perimeter wall for Kapedo school"* [KIRL17], while another highlighted the community peace building initiatives: *"Conducting peace barazas and intercommunity football competitions"* [KIRL8]. These initiatives reflect what Karanja (2021) described as essential for building community trust in security operations. The economic impact of KDF's stabilising presence was also acknowledged: *"Expansion of trading centers, agriculture improvement and improved living standards"* [KIRL10]. However, concerns remain about the boundaries of military involvement in governance, with one leader cautioning: *"They should play their respective roles"* [KIRL4]. This reservation echoes Ivey's (2024) analysis that military deployment risks depend significantly on maintaining appropriate civilian oversight rather than the mere presence of military forces.

The partnership between KDF and religious institutions emerges as fundamental to sustainable security outcomes. Religious leaders describe collaborative efforts:

"Through conferences, seminars, charity work and prayers" [KIRL9] and health initiatives: *"Medical camps, distribution of water and improved health"* [KIRL14].

These collaborations demonstrate what Bodie, Worthington and Beyene (2023) identified as critical listening and engagement practices for effective peacebuilding. Religious leaders suggest maintaining this partnership through continued humanitarian assistance while respecting appropriate institutional boundaries. Their perspectives align with Abbas and Agisilaou's (2023) analysis of security beyond state institutions, emphasizing that sustainable security requires integration of formal security operations with community-based initiatives and spiritual leadership. This balanced approach, combining KDF's security capabilities with religious leaders' moral authority and community influence, represents a promising model for addressing complex security challenges in Turkana East Sub County while promoting long-term stability and development.

In summary, the deployment of KDF in Turkana East has resulted in notable improvements in security, economic growth and social cohesion. KDF efforts have led to a safer environment where businesses can thrive, children can attend school without disruption and interfaith and intercommunity relations have strengthened. Infrastructure improvements, particularly in water access and road networks, have reduced competition over scarce resources, further promoting peace. The military's collaboration with religious institutions has reinforced the importance of spiritual guidance in conflict resolution, ensuring that peace initiatives are not just temporary but embedded in the community's way of life. However, challenges remain, including concerns over the balance of power between military and civilian governance and the need for more non-military peacebuilding strategies. Moving forward, a combined approach that integrates security, economic empowerment and cultural reconciliation will be essential in sustaining the progress made. The military's continued engagement with local leaders, religious organizations and development agencies will ensure that Turkana East remains on a path of lasting peace and prosperity.

Ngos Officers Perceptions on Military Deployment

NGO officers provide critical perspectives on KDF deployment that emphasize both positive security outcomes and operational challenges. Their assessments highlight the perception of safety that military presence creates among community members, with one respondent simply stating: *"They are protected"* [KINGOs6]. This reflects what Neild (1999) described as the shift from national security to citizen security paradigms, where protection of individuals becomes the central focus of security operations. NGO officers particularly value KDF's contributions to essential infrastructure and education, with one noting:

"Drilled boreholes, constructed Lomelo Primary School, provision of food to learners" [KINGOs8]. These development initiatives align with Okwaro's (2023) analysis of KDF's infrastructure development impact on livelihoods, demonstrating how military operations can simultaneously address security and development needs in conflict-affected regions.

Despite these positive contributions, NGO officers identify several challenges in military-civilian interactions. Some note operational disruptions, with one respondent stating: *"Should people not work during operation time?"* [KINGOs16], indicating that security measures can inadvertently impact economic activities. Cultural understanding emerges as another concern, with one NGO representative recommending: *"Education set up required for the military to understand human cultures"* [KINGOs8]. These observations support Bor's (2020) findings on the importance of cultural competence in multi-agency security operations. Trust issues also surface in some communities, with one respondent noting: *"Communities always see them as traitors"* [KINGOs5], suggesting complex dynamics between security forces and local populations that Mawby (2020) identified as challenges in balancing community policing with military operations.

NGO officers emphasize several opportunities for enhancing KDF-community relations through structured engagement and youth activities. One respondent highlighted: *"Community sensitisation on KDF purpose, including employment of community children to KDF"* [KINGOs1], while another noted the success of *"Setting up sports competition with the locals"* [KINGOs8]. These engagement strategies align with Baker's (2020)

research on rebuilding trust between security forces and communities through participatory approaches. NGO representative also value KDF's coordination with civilian agencies, with one stating

"KDF meets with NGOs to provide security in a harmpnious manner" [KINGOs9].

This collaborative approach mirrors what Bootsma (2019) described as essential security governance practices that integrate military and police functions in domestic settings. The perspectives of NGO officers ultimately reveal that while KDF deployment brings significant security and development benefits, continued attention to cultural sensitivity, civilian protection and coordinated interventions remains essential for maximizing positive community impacts while minimizing disruptions to civilian life.

In summary, the deployment of KDF in internal security operations has had a profound impact on community security and development in Turkana East. The military's involvement in security enforcement, infrastructure development and humanitarian assistance has significantly improved the region's stability. Borehole drilling, school construction and food distribution have addressed some of the most pressing challenges faced by the community. However, concerns regarding the disruption of economic activities, cultural misunderstandings and the balance between military and civilian governance remain. Effective collaboration with NGOs, religious organizations and community leaders will be crucial in ensuring that security efforts are sustainable and inclusive. Moving forward, structured partnerships, cultural awareness training and continued humanitarian support will be essential in maintaining long-term peace and stability in Turkana East.

Kdf Officers Perceptions on Military Deployment

The section includes insights from KDF officers regarding their perceptions of military deployment in Turkana East Sub County, focusing on their confidence in security provision and community engagement. Table 5 presents descriptive statistics KDF officers' perceptions on military deployment

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of KDF officers Perceptions on Military Deployment

	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
The KDF act in the best interest of the communities in deployment area.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	36.40%	63.60%	4.64	0.51
The KDF engages with local community members in a respectful manner.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	63.60%	36.40%	4.36	0.51
The KDF understands the unique security needs of communities.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	63.60%	36.40%	4.36	0.51
The local community sees the KDF as allies in maintaining security	0.00%	0.00%	9.10%	45.50%	45.50%	4.36	0.67
The KDF communicates effectively with the local community about their operations and objectives	0.00%	0.00%	9.10%	63.60%	27.30%	4.18	0.60
Average						**4.38**	**0.56**

Source: Research Data (2025)

KDF officers demonstrate exceptionally high confidence in their deployment effectiveness and community engagement in Turkana East Sub County. Statistical data reveals unanimous belief that they act in communities' best interests (100% agreement, mean=4.64, SD=0.51) and engage respectfully with local populations (100% agreement, mean=4.36, SD=0.51). Officers strongly believe they understand communities' unique security needs (mean=4.36, SD=0.51) and that locals view them as security allies (91% agreement, mean=4.36, SD=0.67). This strong consensus aligns with Posen's (1992) research linking personnel conviction with operational effectiveness and supports Harig, Jenne and Ruffa's (2022) findings on how field experiences shape military self-perception and civil-military relations.

Communication effectiveness receives the lowest self-assessment, though still overwhelmingly positive (90.9% agreement, mean=4.18, SD=0.60), with 9.1% of officers remaining neutral suggesting recognition of improvement in conveying security objectives to communities. This reflects Khisa and Day's (2020) observations about evolving military engagement approaches in African security contexts. The officers' overall perception means of 4.38 (SD=0.56) demonstrates exceptional confidence in their community impact while acknowledging that trust-building requires ongoing communication improvement. As Beckley (2010) noted, this self-perception directly influences operational approaches and effectiveness, with KDF officers viewing themselves primarily as community protectors rather than mere enforcement agents—a distinction that Sanborn (2018) identified as crucial for successful military deployment in civilian environments.

In summary, KDF officers' express confidence in their effectiveness in enhancing security and fostering community relations in Turkana East Sub County. They highlight the importance of their presence in maintaining order and reducing crime rates. KDF officers also highlight the need for continued efforts in community engagement and trust-building to ensure that their operations align with community needs. They recognise the challenges posed by logistical constraints and harsh environmental conditions but believe that these can be overcome through improved infrastructure and resource allocation. Overall, KDF officers view their deployment as crucial for maintaining peace and stability, while also acknowledging the importance of working closely with local communities and other stakeholders to achieve sustainable security outcomes.

Logistic Support Component

The logistics component plays a vital role in KDF's internal security operations in Turkana East, with key informants emphasizing its critical function:

> *"The Logistics Department plays a very vital role in deployment of KDF personnel on internal security through sustenance of troops in the field, movement and repair and recovery of all the equipment involved in the operation"* [KILS1].

Despite this importance, significant coordination challenges persist, as evidenced by the observation that

> *"There is no unified resource allocation on this operation between the agencies, this leads to each agency spending their own budget on this operation, thus budgetary constraints because of different capabilities"* [KILS1].

This lack of centralized resource management creates inefficiencies and financial strain that limit operational effectiveness. The logistical support adequacy was rated merely as *"Neutral"* [KILS1], suggesting substantial gaps that potentially undermine security operations by restricting mobility, delaying responses and creating supply shortages in the vast, remote terrain of Turkana East.

Despite these challenges, logistical operations significantly contribute to community security through Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMICs) programs. As one informant noted,

> *"Through CIMICs programs, the community benefits in terms of improving lives in this region"* [KILS1], while another emphasized that

> *"Cordial relationships through CIMICs programs have been essential in ensuring the smooth flow of logistical operations"* [KILS1].

These partnerships with local organizations enhance intelligence-sharing, resource distribution and community trust, with respondents acknowledging that

> *"Partnerships with local organisations enhance logistics operations"* [KILS1] and *"Community concerns are mostly taken into account in logistical planning for military operations"* [KILS1].

This approach aligns with Bordea's (2023) research on defense resource management implications and Beckley's (2010) findings on the relationship between logistical capabilities and operational effectiveness. As Homel and Masson (2016) noted in their study of partnerships in fragile contexts, such collaborative approaches create frameworks for sustainable security by integrating military operations with community development initiatives that address root causes of instability.

In summary, the deployment of the military in internal security operations in Turkana East has been driven by the need to restore peace and address persistent security threats. Logistical support plays a critical role in sustaining these operations by ensuring that troops have the necessary resources to maintain stability. However, challenges such as poor coordination in resource allocation, financial constraints and infrastructure limitations continue to hinder the efficiency of security interventions. Despite these obstacles, logistical operations have contributed significantly to community security through development initiatives, CIMICs programs and partnerships with local organizations. While logistical support has been rated as neutral, its overall impact on security improvements is widely recognised. Strengthening coordination among security agencies, investing in logistical infrastructure and enhancing community engagement would further improve the effectiveness of military-led security initiatives. By addressing logistical gaps and fostering greater collaboration, the military can ensure that its presence not only enhances security but also contributes to long-term socio-economic development in conflict-prone regions.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the implications of Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) deployment in internal security operations within Turkana East Sub-County through the lenses of Human Security and Community Security frameworks. The findings reveal that KDF deployment is widely perceived as both necessary and effective in addressing persistent security threats such as banditry, inter-communal conflict, and police capacity limitations. The military's presence has not only reduced violence and restored order but has also contributed to infrastructural development, humanitarian assistance, and improved socio-economic conditions.

The study found strong community approval for military deployment, rooted in both improved security and development efforts. Community members, local leaders, religious figures, NGO officers, and KDF personnel all acknowledged the military's positive role in restoring peace and building local trust. KDF's respectful engagement, professionalism, and incorporation of community-based support mechanisms have further enhanced civil-military relations. However, challenges remain, particularly around issues of coordination, communication, cultural sensitivity, and the risk of long-term militarization of civilian spaces.

The study concludes that while KDF deployment has significantly improved internal security in Turkana East, sustainable peace requires a multi-sectoral approach that transitions from militarized intervention to civilian-led governance, development, and community empowerment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure sustainable peace and stability in Turkana East Sub-County, the study recommends a comprehensive, community-centered approach to internal security operations. Firstly, there is a critical need to strengthen civil-military coordination and communication. While the KDF is largely perceived as professional and community-friendly, gaps in communication remain. Establishing structured engagement platforms such as community security forums, public sensitization campaigns, and regular joint briefings with NGOs and local leaders would enhance transparency, reduce mistrust, and align military operations more closely with community expectations. Improved communication would also address misinformation, clarify the purpose of military operations, and build a shared understanding of security objectives.

Secondly, the integration of development and humanitarian assistance as part of security operations should be institutionalized. The KDF's role in constructing schools, drilling boreholes, and organizing peace barazas has not only improved infrastructure but also addressed the root causes of conflict such as poverty, resource scarcity, and marginalization. Expanding such initiatives and embedding them in long-term civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) programs can build resilience and reduce communities' overreliance on military force for basic services. Moreover, development-focused deployment helps reframe the military not just as an enforcer of order, but as a partner in national development and peacebuilding.

Thirdly, enhancing cultural competence and community inclusion in security planning is vital. Some NGOs and community members expressed concern over cultural misunderstandings and a lack of deep contextual awareness by security personnel. Providing KDF officers with training on local customs, inter-ethnic dynamics, and conflict histories will improve their ability to engage respectfully and effectively. Furthermore, actively involving women, youth, religious leaders, and elders in decision-making processes can bridge trust gaps and foster locally owned peace efforts. Inclusive engagement ensures that interventions reflect the lived realities of the people they are meant to protect.

Lastly, logistical coordination and agency collaboration must be significantly improved. The current model where each agency operates within its own budget and mandate leads to inefficiencies, duplication, and resource constraints. A unified resource planning framework should be developed to coordinate budgets, share infrastructure, and streamline operations across all involved actors, including the police, NGOs, and local administration. Enhancing the logistical backbone of security operations will increase the speed and effectiveness of response efforts, especially in Turkana's vast and remote terrain. Alongside this, a long-term exit strategy should be considered, whereby KDF gradually transitions its responsibilities to civilian authorities, supported by strengthened local governance and policing systems.

Future Study

future research should evaluate integrated approaches where security interventions are embedded within development initiatives such as education, infrastructure, and livelihood support, ensuring long-term resilience beyond militarised responses.

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