Optimizing Multi-Agency Cooperation in Kenya's National Security Planning and Response

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Abstract: Shifting geo-political, environmental, and socio-economic factors on the global front continue to herald new realities to the national safety and security of individual countries. To address security challenges and the emergent threats, nations have had to adopt contemporary perspectives. One of the most common, and fruitful of these perspectives in the Kenyan national security setup is that of multi-agency cooperation (MAC). This qualitative inquiry therefore sought to establish the nature and structure of interagency collaboration, collecting data from 111 participants sourced through the snowball sampling method. The data was collected using interviews and thematically analyzed based on emergent themes. The study established that MAC in Kenya is structured at the cabinet level, but also often takes the peer-to-peer collaboration format, and the in-group structure of collaboration. The study proposes Blending Outsider Insights and Techniques (the BOIT Model) to enhance the operational effectiveness and outcomes of MAC frameworks within Kenya's vast and dynamic security landscape. The model would be useful in improving perspectives, and enhancing Tactical Resourcefulness under Stress (TARUS) within agencies and services involved in managing Kenya's national security and safety.

Keywords: Multi-Agency Cooperation (MAC), Emergent Threat, Collaborative Framework, National Security Organizations (NSOs), the BOIT Model.

Introduction

The nature of the security threats facing Kenya is such that the country has to exploit all its competencies and abilities, to stay safe and secure. In this regard, security agencies and services operating in the country have devised ingenious ways of overcoming challenges that may hinder the realization of their varying mandates. The most notable of these is the collaboration of multiple agencies in pursuit of national safety and security (Kamau, Odhiambo, Wario, and Moronge, 2020). The security organizations therefore work within multi-agency cooperation (MAC) frameworks that enable them address existing and emergent threats to Kenya's safety and security interests (Omweno, 2020). However, the country lacks a singular regulatory framework to guide all MAC efforts, and to create long-lasting partnerships amongst participating agencies. This study examines the manifestations of multi-agency collaboration within Kenya's security landscape. It then delves into the formats that define multi-agency cooperation within Kenya. In its conclusion, the study proposes the establishment of a framework for blending outsider insights and techniques (BOIT) when crafting MAC frameworks.

Nature of Multi-Agency Cooperation in Kenya

In Kenya, the cooperation of multiple agencies and services in managing national safety and security concerns is characterized through different manifestations. Each of these defines the nature of collaboration amongst agencies and services within the security sector. Thus, such collaboration could be in the form of intelligence/information sharing, or through cooperative development of

operational capabilities amongst agencies (as indicated in Figure 1). Similarly, multi-agency collaboration could be manifest through

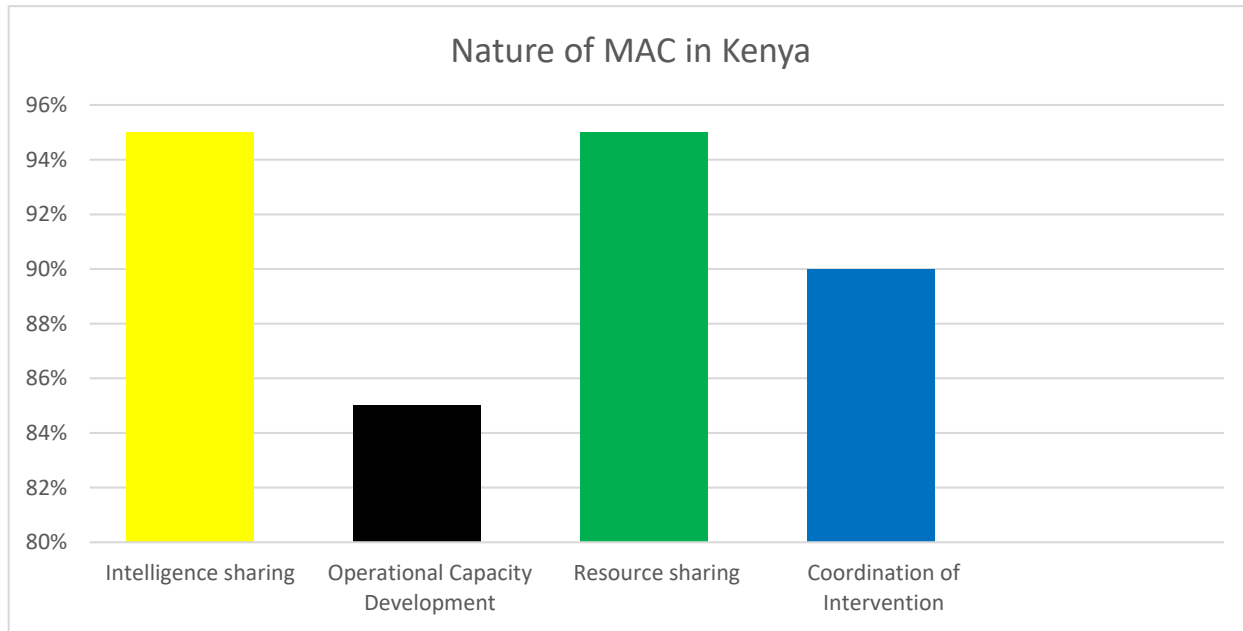the sharing of resources, or through coordinated interventions/collaborative operations.

Figure 1: Nature of MAC in Kenya

Intelligence/Information Sharing

MAC in Kenya is defined by the sharing of information/intelligence within such collective interagency frameworks. The

sharing of information/intelligence often takes place within the NSO environment due to the sensitive nature of such information, and

the need to maintain the integrity of operational details. This manifestation of MAC is particularly useful in the development of

appropriate response strategies to potential threats (Lusiola, 2021). As such it is most commonly evident in guarding of Kenya's

territorial waters, combating drug trafficking, human smuggling, and arms dealing (Makwaka and Muna, 2022). Information and

intelligence sharing, as a manifestation of MAC, also eases the flow of information between and amongst agencies and enhances impact

mitigation (Lusiola, 2021: Manyonge, 2021). Similarly, intelligence sharing in Kenya aids in the active surveillance of threats (Mwagut

and Minja, 2022). NSO collaboration by sharing information or intelligence addresses resourcing challenges that each agency faces but

could surmount within collective frameworks (Onyango, 2022). Finally, the shift in criminality and crime trends makes it necessary for

agencies to work within MAC frameworks. That is, the increasing sophistication and cross-operational jurisdictional nature of modern-

day crime makes it necessary for different agencies to work collaboratively in enhancing national safety and security.

Development of Operational Capacity

Secondly, multiagency cooperation within Kenya could also take the form of collaborative capacity building amongst national security organizations. Collaborative operations include training and preparedness to enable joint capacity development (Ali, 2021). For example, the National Defence University - Kenya (NDU-K) through its various colleges, offers an institutional framework for capacity advancement within Kenya's NSOs. The institution offers training and prepares participants with Tactical Resourcefulness under Stress (TARUS). Thus, cumulative operational capacities within MAC frameworks allow security actors to face the challenges of modern day security operations. Figure 2 details such aspects of capacity development.
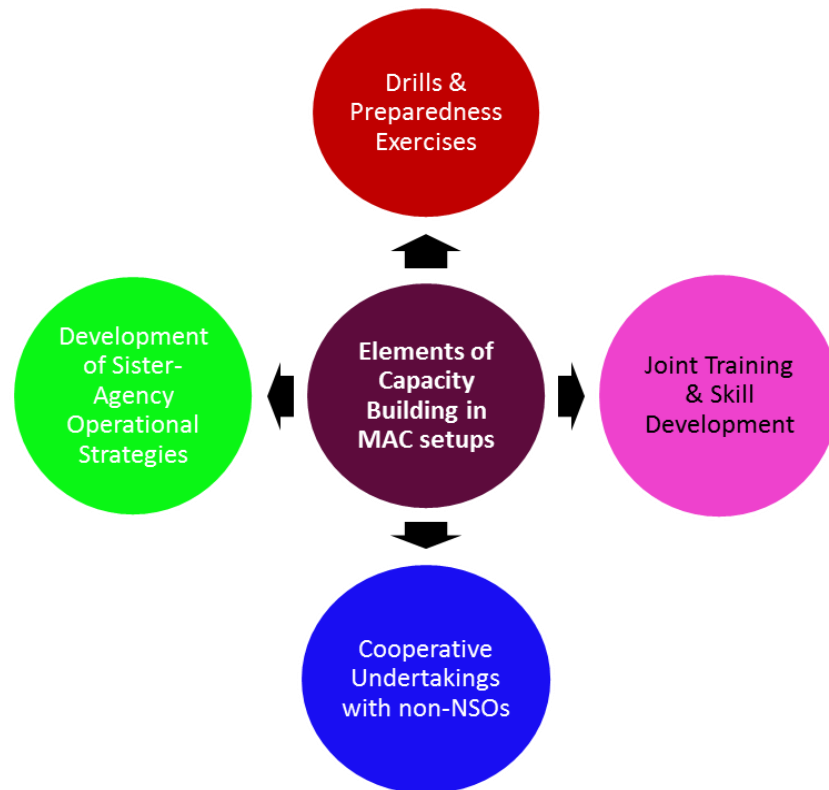

Figure 2: Capacity Building in MAC Frameworks

As a manifestation of MAC in Kenya, the development of operational capacities amongst sister agencies could be evident in joint training and preparedness, as influenced by a host of factors. First among such are the existing gaps in training and capabilities amongst different agencies (Waringa, 2021). The absence of requisite skills and competencies within each different entity makes it necessary for the development of MAC frameworks. Similarly, this manifestation of MAC is influenced by the shifting realities in crime and criminality; a fact that exposes capability gaps of different agencies within Kenya's national security and safety landscape (Nzau and Guyo, 2018). Thus, collaborative frameworks build up the abilities of individual agencies and services to respond to emergent threats within their scope of operation. The agencies might not have otherwise had the ability to counter such. Finally, the existence of

political support and goodwill also makes it possible to collaboratively develop the capabilities of different agencies within MAC frameworks.

Sharing of Resources

MAC in Kenya is also manifest in the sharing of available physical, monetary, and human resources amongst security agencies. In other words, multiagency cooperation within Kenya's security setup also involves the co-utilization of strategic assets owned by different agencies (Kibusia, 2020). For instance, the NPS sources its ordnance and munitions from KDF's Kenya Ordnance Factory Corporation (KOFC), while the military sources its small arms from the National Security Industries. Through the joint utilization of strategic assets and installations, MAC frameworks allow for better realization of security and safety outcomes within the country. Thus, the cooperative operations of multiple agencies within Kenya's security sector enhance outcomes through joint utilization of assets. For example, in *Operation Amani Boni*, a multi-agency collaborative operation meant to rid the Boni Forest of Al-Shabaab insurgents, different agencies collaboratively exploit their resources to meet various operational objectives (Muthee, 2022). Essentially, MAC allows for gap-filling in terms of resource inadequacies by enabling collective utilization of available assets.
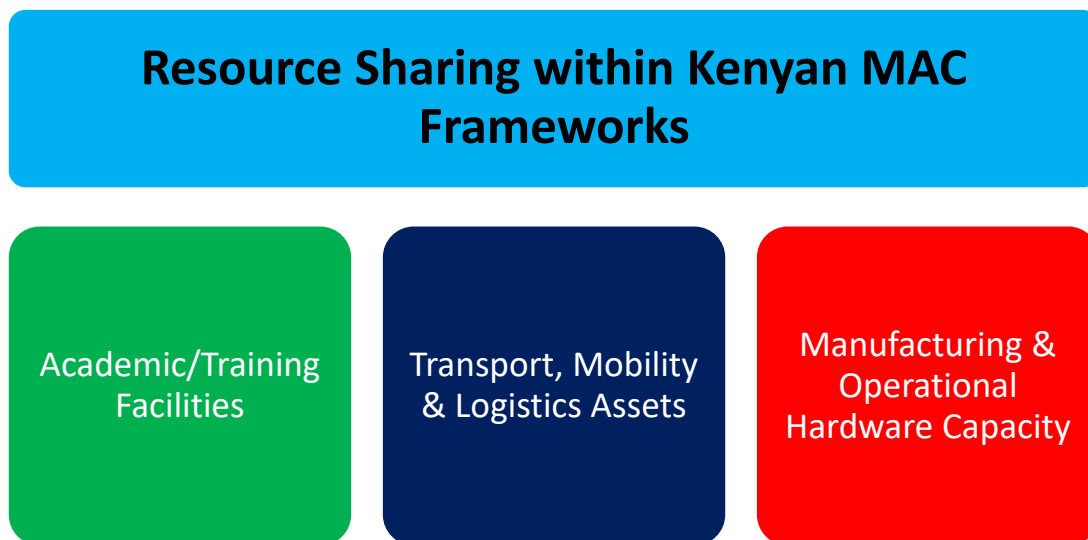

Resource Sharing within Kenyan MAC Frameworks

| Academic/Training Facilities | Transport, Mobility & Logistics Assets | Manufacturing & Operational Hardware Capacity |

Figure 3: Aspects of MAC Resource Sharing

Resource sharing, as manifest in MAC efforts within Kenya's national security architecture, is determined by a number of influences. First, the collaborative use of agency resources within multi-agency frameworks is inspired by the existence of political goodwill within the country. Agencies working inside MAC frameworks share their capabilities due to the existence of enabling policy guidelines and legislations (Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions – ODPP, 2022). For example, inter-agency agreements are founded upon policies such as the Inter Agency Guidelines on Cooperation and Collaboration (IAGCC) of 2022 – which is a product of political goodwill, and which entrenches the sharing of resources in law. Such resource sharing within MAC frameworks is also driven by the existing gaps in capability of individual entities/agencies therein. Thus, the frameworks for cooperation with other agencies and

services offers a chance for individual entities to address their own shortfalls in capability (ODPP, 2022). Overall, MAC in Kenya also takes the form of resource sharing due to the economic realities within the country, and also in part due to limiting factors within each agency.

Coordinated Interventions and Collaborative Operations

The collective operations of multiple agencies in Kenya may also take the form of coordinating interventions and operational collaboration. This would be evident in different manners such as through the harmonization of command structures while pursuing national safety and security concerns (Ogutu, 2021). This form of coordination of interventions has been exemplified in the multi-agency response framework to end banditry and cattle rustling in Baringo County. Coordination of interventions and collaborative operations may also be achieved through the centralization of communication flow, particularly during sensitive operations. A case in point of such exemplification of MAC was in the response efforts to the Dusit-D2 Complex attacks in 2019 (Lusiola, 2021). Similarly, coordination of interventions within multi-agency cooperation frameworks may also be evident in the formulation of early stages of response. That is, MAC frameworks also serve in the coordination of operational input, which has often helped plan more efficiently during security operations (as in Figure 4). Such coordination of operational input could also hasten humanitarian assistance in cases of emergency, thereby diminishing the impact of such occurrences to Kenya's safety and security.
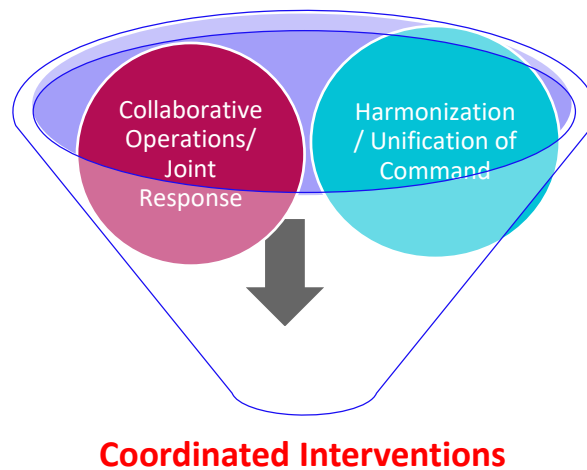

Coordinated Interventions

Figure 4: Coordination of Interventions in MAC Frameworks

As an expression of MAC in Kenya, the coordination of intervention and collaborative operation of agencies is helpful in preempting security threats. These coordinated interventions are occasioned by variations in institutional realities (Ogutu, 2021). As such, it is necessary to coordinate interventions in order to centralize the operational objectives of MAC frameworks. Similarly, political goodwill plays an important role in the formulation of agencies within MAC frameworks. The development of collaborative setups of operation within the security sector is also often a demonstration of good faith by the political class. For instance, political goodwill

enabled the creation of the inter-agency framework that is the National Air Support Department (NASD) which merges the aerial capabilities of NPS, with those of the KWS, KFS, and KPLC into one, and avails them for national security operations (Ministry of Defence, 2021). Overall, the coordination of interventions and operations, as a manifestation of MAC, aids in the streamlining of operations objectives, and in the development of goal achievement strategies.

Structure of MAC in Kenya

Collaboration efforts within MAC frameworks in Kenya is guided by different formats, characterized by various realities on inclusion/exclusion, effort, and longevity. As such, there exists the cabinet-level structuring of MAC, the in-group format of MAC, and the peer-to-peer structure.

The Cabinet-Level Structure

The first format of MAC in Kenya is the cabinet-level structure, involving deliberations on security and safety issues at the highest collective decision making level. The structure is meant to enhance decision-making at the topmost level, on issues involving the safety of the republic and the security of its people and interests. As a format of MAC, the cabinet-level structure enables the formulation of policies, and the response to imminent threats. For the Kenyan case, the format is realizable through the creation of a central entity, the National Security Council (NSC). The NSC allows for the swift and effective allocation of resources to line agencies involved in the pursuit of Kenya's safety and security (Nguru, 2014). It also offers adequate overarching guidance to all entities operating within different MAC frameworks, thus allowing the free sharing of sensitive/top-secret information on national security and safety concerns.

As a format of multiagency collaboration, the cabinet-level structure in Kenya's pursuit of national security is enabled by different legislations and statutes, as well as policies and institutions. For instance, the NSC was established by Article 238 and defined by Article 239 of the constitution of Kenya 2010 (Kenya Law Reform Commission - KLRC, 2022). The council's existence was then codified in the National Security Council (NSC) Act of 2012, the same legislation that also established the National Security Advisory Council, NSAC (Kenya Law Reform Commission - KLRC, 2022). The NSAC, a subsidiary of the NSC is responsible for policy formulation on matters of national security and safety, and advices NSC for the most part. Overall, the cabinet-level structure of MAC tends to last long as it is founded in law and backed by the constitution and enabling statutes. However, only one in every eight respondents who took part in this study (as in Fig. 5) indicated participation/involvement in such format, illuminating its seniority within the Kenyan security architecture.

The In-Group Format

Collaboration amongst agencies and services operating in the national security sphere within Kenya could also take the in-group structure. A format rooted in the in-group concept that champions the exclusion of non-members, the structure is characterized

by the exclusive operations of NSOs (Magara, 2018). The restriction of membership thereto is based on the sensitive nature of operations involved in the management of safety and security concerns (Njuguna, 2020). In-group structuring of MAC frameworks is particularly useful in the harmonization of perspectives on national security realization. The format allows NSOs to brainstorm on the points of views they hold on the pursuit of safety and security goals within the country. The exclusivity of cooperation amongst NSOs also aids in the development of common operational approaches, in the sense that NSOs can and do craft *modus operandi* without outsider involvement (Njuguna, 2020). Similarly, in-group formatting of MAC efforts has also been instrumental in breeding commonality of interests amongst the in-group members.

Within Kenya, the in-group format to interagency cooperation is domiciled in various legal foundations and policy frameworks. For instance, the existence of the NSOs themselves is rooted in Constitution of Kenya 2010 (KLRC, 2020). The operations and cooperative pursuits of these entities are further spelt out in statutes that include the Kenya Defence Force Act of 2012, the National Intelligence Services Act of 2012, and the National Police Service Act of 2011. Each enabling statute not only establishes the line entities, but provides frameworks for their cooperation with sister disciplined forces in the realization of Kenya's safety and security. The in-group approach to MAC is desirable to the extent that it is long-lasting because such efforts are themselves domiciled within legal and policy frameworks. The format is also desirable to the extent that it limits outside interference in sensitive security operations.

The Peer-to-Peer Format

Finally, collaboration efforts amongst the multiple agencies involved in the pursuit of safety and security within Kenya can be formatted through the peer-to-peer lens. That is, MAC in Kenya involves the collective workings of various heads/representatives of different NSOs and non-NSOs with the aim of achieving national safety objectives (Chome, 2020). This format remains the most common and preferred structure in the Kenyan security sector and is evident in various manners. Two out of every five respondents (44.6%) noted their previous involvement in this setup of multiagency cooperation as illustrated in Figure 5.
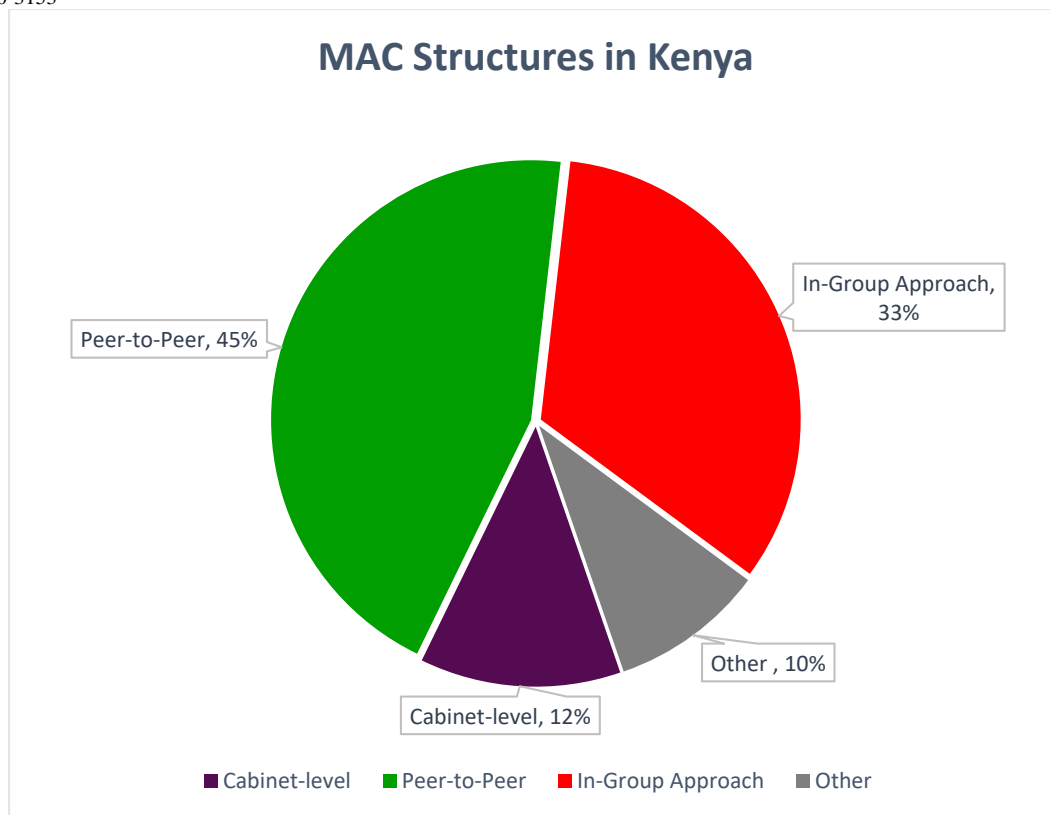
Figure 5: MAC Structures in Kenya

For example, the peer-to-peer approach is evident in the MAC framework working to end cattle rustling in Baringo, Turkana, and West Pokot counties that ropes in the NPS, NGAOs, community leaders, and intelligence agencies. This structure has also been witnessed in the country's response to adverse security events such as the Dusit-D2 terrorist attacks which saw the KDF working together with NPS, NGAO, and MDAs such as the Kenya Red Cross Society (Lusiola, 2021). Similar MAC efforts have also characterized the response to adverse occurrences with potential security implications such as the widespread flooding in 2020 in more than 29 counties (Jones, 2020). Just as much, the peer-to-peer MAC format is also evident in the protection of critical infrastructure and strategic national security installations such as airports and other ports of entry/exit (Mutwiwa, 2021).

The peer-to-peer structure of MAC in Kenya is anchored in different policy frameworks including the IAGCC – 2022 which brings the operations of the ODPP together with those of the NPS, NIS, the Kenya Prisons Services and the CBK (ODPP, 2022). Peer-to-peer cooperation amongst agencies in the national security sector is also founded in enabling policies such as the National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism (NSCVE), and the Counter Financing of Terrorism Protocol of 2022 (ODPP, 2022). As a format of MAC, the peer-to-peer structure is also founded on enabling legislations that include the National Crime Research Center (NCRC) Act of 1997 which aims to collectively operationalize NSOs under a research framework, as a preventive approach to handling national security concerns in Kenya. Finally, the peer-to-peer structure of MAC is institutionalized in entities that include the National Defence University of Kenya (NDU-K), particularly through its constituent colleges, the National Defence College - NDC), and the National

Intelligence and Research University College - NIRUC (Ministry of Defence, 2023). Overall, peer-peer collaboration is desirable due to its longevity as founded in legal, institutional, and policy frameworks, as well as the political goodwill behind such cooperation.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The study herein establishes that MAC in Kenya is already a part of the *modus operandi* of many agencies and services working within the national security landscape. The practice is rooted in different legal, policy, and institutional frameworks. It is thus manifested in four major ways: sharing of information/intelligence, development of operational capacity, resource sharing and coordination of operations and interventions. These manifestations are informed by varying factors including the shifting nature of crime and criminality in Kenya, the resource constraints amongst agencies, and the evident gaps in mandate, training and capability of individual entities. Further, such manifestation of MAC is also influenced by the variations in institutional realities and expertise, and the existence of political goodwill in the country. MAC in Kenya is then structured along the cabinet-level format which involves the engagement of top-level policy makers in deliberations on security issues, and the in-group format that excludes non-NSO actors from MAC frameworks. MAC is also structured along the peer-to-peer format that ropes in leaders of different NSOs working with non-NSO operators of similar ranks and designations.

Considering the absence of a singular framework to guide the collaborative operations of state and non-state actors in pursuing national safety and security goals, this study proposes the adoption of the BOIT model which involves blending outsider insights and techniques into MAC team development efforts. This model would strengthen MAC frameworks by roping in the perspectives of outsiders into the multi-agency cooperation teams. The BOIT model would work best in enhancing MAC in Kenya by expanding the width of perspectives as it champions the whole-of-government approach (WoGA) to security management. Such efforts would then improve the participating agencies' tactical resourcefulness under stress (TARUS) when managing Kenya's existing, and emerging, security and safety concerns.

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