

1.0 - Executive Summary

February was in some ways a quieter month on average with fewer incidents than previous months. This betrays the reality of a slowly spreading ethnic and economic conflict in more regions along the coast and a deepening of hostility between Muslims and government in Mombasa. In addition, in the five months since clashes in Moyale were renewed there appears to be only a slight slow-down in the number of incidents.

2.0 – Incidents¹

Event	Location	Stage	Event Date
Tension Remains High in Kenya Border Region Amid Renewed Clashes	Moyale	General	2014-03-02
Six Hurt As Farmers, Herders Fight in Lamu	Mtondoni	General	2014-02-27
Villagers Flee After Nine Killed In Raid	Kaputir	General	2014-02-07
Two Killed, Two Seriously Injured As Reservists, Raiders and Herdsmen Battle	Merille	Polarization	2014-02-05
Young Girl Shot By Raiders	Kases	General	2014-02-04
At Least Two Killed in Mombasa Mosque Clash	Mombasa	General	2014-02-01

2.1 – Coast Region

The coast region has seen a spate of different conflicts surge since the start of 2014. Mombasa continues to be the central hub of Islamic extremist movements, most notably the Mombasa Republican Council. Rioting broke out after government forces raided Masjid Mussa, claiming to be breaking up a jihadist movement. The riots resulted in several deaths and countless injuries.

Unrelated violence has also emerged closer to the Somali border near Lamu with the point of conflict being the age-old rivalry between agriculturalists and pastoralists taking a destructive turn at the end of February. The fighting appears to follow similar community and economic faults within the local population.

¹ <http://threatwiki.thesentinelproject.org/kenyavisualization>

2.2 – Moyale

The cross-border conflict wreaking havoc in the northern Kenya town of Moyale shows no sign of stopping as fighting has persisted intermittently for the past five months. Indications from the region suggest that despite efforts to halt the clashes, government attempts have shown to be slow in preventing further violence.

3.0 - Mitigating Developments

Appropriate and Proportional Response to Islamic Extremism

As noted in the December monthly update:

“Much of the difficulty in stemming the attacks carried out by groups such as al-Shabaab and affiliated hardliners is the ability to fully understand the dynamics of such actors within the larger community. As moderate Muslims clash with extremist elements this facet becomes even more difficult to decipher however an ongoing focus on these intra-communal conflicts will serve to edify major players and motives.”²

It will be vital that the government response to real or perceived threats from Islamic extremists be proportional and correctly focused. There is a significant risk that overly broad or misdirected measures will alienate the moderate Muslim community which itself is in conflict with hard-line groups.

Additional Resources to Prevent Spread of Moyale Violence

More resources must be dedicated to not only stopping the clashes which have taken dozens of lives over the past five months but also to address the significant cleavages which have driven the communities to a state of war with each other. In addition, as stated in previous reports the Kenya-Ethiopia border represents a destabilizing factor in the region as it creates the potential for armaments to prolong local fighting or even spread the skirmishes further into the surrounding areas.³

4.0 - Conclusion / Assessment

The community violence facing various regions of Kenya have extremely deep roots and require a dedication and consistency from government bodies which will invariably strain their resources and willpower. However, these conflicts do have identifiable solutions which can be accomplished through perseverance and careful application of security measures along with sincere efforts to address the grievances which have pushed communities to the brink.

The growing unrest in the coastal regions, in particular Mombasa, is a hybrid domestic-regional issue which is in large part influenced by Kenya’s foreign policy. As noted above, it is vital that authorities approach any operation with an eye towards the impact on moderate Muslims.

² <http://thesentinelproject.org/kenya-situation-of-concern-december-update/>

³ <http://thesentinelproject.org/kenya-situation-of-concern-sentinel-project-monthly-report-november-2013/>