

FYAG

A photograph of a rural village scene. In the foreground, two women are walking away from the camera on a dirt path. They are wearing colorful, patterned dresses and carrying large, shallow pots balanced on their heads. The woman on the left is wearing a dress with a geometric pattern in shades of blue, green, and yellow. The woman on the right is wearing a dress with a more complex, multi-colored pattern. In the background, there are several traditional huts with thatched roofs made of dried grass or straw. Some huts have corrugated metal roofs. A large, leafy tree stands behind the huts. The sky is blue with some white clouds. The overall scene depicts a rural, possibly coastal, community.

EXCLUSIVE

BRINGING JUSTICE
CLOSE TO THE
MINORITY AND
MARGINALIZED

VOICES FROM THE MARGINS

EXPLORING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS, GRASSROOTS SOLUTIONS, AND LIVED EXPERIENCES OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN ACCESSING JUSTICE — ESPECIALLY IN COASTAL KENYA AND SIMILAR CONTEXTS.

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Editor Notes

Violent extremism (VE) in Lamu is a complex phenomenon characterised by inter-communal conflicts; cross-border VE related tensions and general insecurity. One of the key drivers of recruitment and radicalization in Lamu is the poor relationship between the youth and security agencies stemming from years of deep seated mistrust and suspicion. Mismanagement and inconsistent policy around the management of the marine border has crippled trade and fishing rendering many youths idle and unemployed. The majority of the attacks in Lamu county have been orchestrated by terror groups such as al-Shabaab who have capitalised on current and historical grievances. The county has experienced a youth bulge in the last decade who are largely idle and unemployed making them susceptible to recruitment and radicalization. Substance abuse to escape their realities has exacerbated vulnerability to VE recruitment.

The justice needs of Kenyans are growing and becoming more complex and several factors hinder access to justice for Kenyans, particularly poor and marginalised such as Kiunga and Basuba who have been marginalised since independence on both development and access to justice with both wards being served by only one police station



Basuba and Kiunga are remote wards has a history of limited access to justice, network, and basic services, faces significant socio-economic challenges leading to the increment of issues such as Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Violent Extremism (VE), child labor, negligence cases and early marriages. The isolation of this wards, coupled with underdeveloped infrastructure, scarce resources, and minimal employment opportunities, has created a fragile environment where these harmful practices thrive. Women, in particular, face heightened vulnerability due to the lack of safe and accessible avenues to report GBV incidents or seek support, leaving many silenced and trapped in cycles of abuse. Additionally, harmful cultural practices like early marriages and FGM continue to disproportionately affect young girls, depriving them of their rights, education, and opportunities for a better future.

Protection of human rights is the core purpose of Faza Youth Action Group as an organisation. Moderating terrorism and radicalization is an issue that has been at the forefront of the nation's agenda. FYAG, leveraging its significant past experience with initiatives has enhanced and expanded its operations in Basuba and Kiunga wards. These regions particularly struggle with pervasive issues of poverty and limited access to justice, gravitating risks such as GBV, radicalization, and extremist recruitment.

The organization implemented a multifaceted empowerment program consisting of entrepreneurship skills training and economic empowerment to bolster the social capital of youth and GBV survivors. This strategic approach reduced vulnerability to negative influences by providing them with practical skills for income generation coupled with psychosocial support and build their resilience.

JAFFAR

MASOUD

Voices Against Violence



“Beyond the Shadows: Reclaiming Peace Through Dialogue”:

Violent extremism is more than just a security concern in Kiunga and Basuba; it is a phenomenon that has slowed community growth and development for years. Fear, mistrust, and instability have affected livelihoods, disrupted education, and weakened the social fabric of these coastal communities.

For many families, violent extremism has meant restricted movement, reduced economic activity, and limited opportunities for youth. Fishing and trade, the backbone of Kiunga and Basuba, have been crippled by insecurity. At the same time, the presence of extremist narratives has created mistrust between communities and security agencies, fueling cycles of suspicion and tension.

To confront this challenge, the Deriswanaag Project, implemented by FYAG, has taken a proactive approach fighting extremism not with fear, but with dialogue and education. The project has brought together community leaders, religious figures, women, and youth in open talks to address the roots of violent extremism.

These conversations highlight the economic, social, and psychological toll extremism has placed on communities, while also empowering residents to become advocates for peace and cohesion.

Educating for Change

Beyond dialogue, the project invests in community education sessions, helping people understand how violent extremism thrives and what can be done to resist it. Youth are given platforms to voice concerns, women are encouraged to take leadership roles, and stakeholders work together to design solutions that put community safety and growth first.

A Community Standing Strong

Through the Deriswanaag Project, Kiunga and Basuba are learning that resilience comes from unity. By speaking openly, educating widely, and confronting extremism collectively, the community is reclaiming its right to peace and progress.

Today, the message is clear: violent extremism has no place in Kiunga and Basuba's future.



Voices Against Violence

Cutting the Roots of GBV and Extremism

In Kiunga and Basuba, the echoes of gender-based violence (GBV) and violent extremism have long shaped the lives of women, youth, and families. Yet amidst these challenges, a new movement has risen, Voices Against Violence, an initiative by the Faza Youth Action Group (FYAG) that seeks not only to respond to violence but to uproot its very causes.

FYAG understands that violence thrives where there is silence, poverty, and lack of opportunity. To counter this, the organization has taken bold steps shifting from short-term responses to long-term solutions that build resilience and independence.

One of the most impactful strategies has been training youth, especially young women, in finance and business skills. By equipping them with tools for entrepreneurship, FYAG has turned survivors and at-risk youth into agents of their own economic freedom. Skills in savings, bookkeeping, small business management, and cooperative leadership have helped young women move beyond dependency to dignity.

In both Kiunga and Basuba, FYAG has supported the creation of women-led groups. These groups serve as safe spaces where members share experiences, pool resources, and advocate against harmful practices like early marriages and domestic abuse. They are also becoming hubs of innovation exploring opportunities in the blue economy, small-scale trade, and sustainable livelihoods.

By organizing collectively, these young people amplify their voices, making it harder for communities to ignore the realities of GBV and extremism.



Faza youth action Group .

Faza Youth Action Group (FYAG) is a youth-led community organization committed to transforming lives in Lamu County. Beyond its work in education, entrepreneurship, and the blue economy, FYAG is breaking barriers in access to justice.

Access to justice is a constitutional right in Kenya, yet for many residents of remote areas like Pate Island, Kiunga, and Basuba, this remains out of reach. Courts are far away, legal processes are costly, and reliable information is scarce.

FYAG is changing this narrative. By bringing legal awareness to the grassroots, creating safe spaces for survivors of gender-based violence, and linking communities with justice sector actors, the group ensures that justice is not a privilege for the few but a right for all.

Through community forums, creative arts, and simplified legal information, we empower people with knowledge of their rights. Information is shared in Swahili and local dialects, ensuring everyone from women to youth and minority groups can understand and engage with the justice system.

The organization documents cases of injustice and advocates for fair treatment of marginalized groups. By amplifying community voices, Faza Youth pushes for reforms that make justice delivery more inclusive, affordable, and responsive to local realities.

Beyond legal aid, Faza Youth promotes peacebuilding through dialogue, mediation, and reconciliation. The group also invests in youth and women empowerment initiatives, addressing the root causes of injustice such as poverty, GBV, and early marriages.



FYAG handing over laptop to police stations in Lamu East for Online Court.





A Center for Mobile Courts

In a historic milestone for Pate Island and the wider Lamu community, Faza Youth Action Group (FYAG) has officially launched its headquarters office an innovative space designed to bring justice, protection, and hope closer to the people.

The new headquarters is not just an office; it is a multi-functional justice and support hub that addresses some of the most pressing challenges facing marginalized communities in the region.

In line with Kenya's modernization of the judiciary, the headquarters is equipped with facilities for online court hearings and digital case reporting. This innovation not only reduces delays but also expands access to justice for remote communities that were previously cut off by geographical and infrastructural barriers. It positions Faza Youth at the forefront of integrating technology into community-based justice systems.

For years, residents of Pate Island and surrounding villages faced enormous barriers in accessing the justice system. The nearest courts in Lamu town are expensive and time-consuming to reach, leaving many cases unresolved. The new FYAG headquarters is now home to mobile court sessions, allowing judges and magistrates to travel to the community and deliver justice right at people's doorstep. This has already begun to bridge the gap between citizens and the justice system, ensuring fairness is no longer a privilege of the few.



Kadhi Court in FYAG's new office

Access to Justice to minority and marginalized communities.



In the deep dark shadows of Boni forest and Kiunga the windswept borderlands of Kenya and Somalia, justice is not just delayed it is often denied. Here, communities live in isolation, caught between insecurity, poverty, and silence. For many, the idea of “access to justice” feels distant, abstract like a promise written in a language they were never taught.

But justice is not a courtroom. It is not a lawyer in a suit. Justice is the right to be heard. The right to walk without fear. The right to speak without punishment. It is the mother in Kiunga who demands answers when her son disappears. It is the young girl in Basuba who demands to know when will her dreams come true after early pregnancy, It is the elder in Milimani who says, “We are citizens too.”

Kenya’s Constitution guarantees every person the right to equality, dignity, and protection under the law. Article 48 promises access to justice without discrimination. Article 50 ensures fair trial. Article 27 protects against unequal treatment. These are not just legal codes they are lifelines.

But in places where roads end and silence begins, these rights are often buried under fear, bureaucracy, and neglect.



BUILDING BRIDGES

WHEN DIALOGUE BECOMES THE FIRST STEP TOWARD JUSTICE

On 14th August 2024, when the organization convened an initial consultation forum with Lamu county security committee .

The gathering was more than a routine meeting, it was a moment of courage and a test of vision. The security committee led by the County Commissioner, walked into the room with authority, questions, and perhaps some skepticism. They were not only there to approve or disapprove of a project proposal; they were there to gauge whether our dream could realistically bridge the long-standing gap between government institutions and a community that often feels invisible.

A COMMUNITY UNDER PRESSURE

Kiunga, the focal point of the conversation, is not an ordinary town. Situated along a sensitive and heavily monitored border zone, it is a community where the rhythm of daily life is dictated by checkpoints, restricted movement, and heightened suspicion. Development projects rarely thrive here; instead, residents live with the weight of insecurity, isolation, and limited access to justice.

For many in Kiunga, government interventions have historically carried the language of control rules, orders, and enforcement rather than support, opportunity, or empowerment. This dynamic has fostered mistrust, creating a social environment where collaboration between communities and state institutions often feels out of reach.

Basuba Ward in Lamu County is more than a coastal settlement it is a community of resilience living under constant threat of violence and terrorism. Daily life is often disrupted, with families navigating fear, displacement, and the absence of reliable services.

Development in Basuba faces steep barriers. Roads remain deserted, investments are scarce, and social services are limited by the realities of insecurity. For many, government presence has been experienced less as support and more through restrictions, commands, and security operations. This has fostered mistrust and left collaboration between the community and state institutions fragile.

Yet, despite these challenges, Basuba's people continue to hold on to hope. They yearn for inclusion, empowerment, and opportunities that go beyond survival pathways that lead to dignity, trust, and sustainable peace.

FYAG'S BOLD STEP

Against this backdrop, FYAG's decision to bring county officials into an open forum was a bold one. The organization laid its vision on the table: justice not as a distant, intimidating process, but as a shared responsibility. It was a declaration that local communities deserved to be partners in shaping solutions, not just passive recipients of government decrees.

The forum created space for candid dialogue. Administrators listened to FYAG's approach programs centered on legal empowerment t, gender-based violence awareness, youth inclusion, and peacebuilding. In turn, community representatives spoke about the lived realities of insecurity: young people denied opportunities, families navigating constant tension, and women disproportionately affected by both violence and silence.

Inception Meeting: A New Dawn for Kiunga Communities”



INCLUSIVITY AT THE CORE

Perhaps the most transformative element of the day was its inclusivity. Communities that rarely interact with government officials or judicial officers were not only present but actively contributing. For the Awer and Somali residents, it was a moment of recognition. Their struggles such as the high cost of traveling to Lamu courts, cultural stigmas around reporting GBV, and limited access to legal aid were no longer whispered in isolation. They were heard, acknowledged, and integrated into the project roadmap.

This openness reshaped the tone of the meeting. It became clear that the initiative would not be imposed from the outside; rather, it would be built around the lived experiences of those most affected.

Just three days after the consultation with county administrators, on 17th August 2024, Kiunga once again became a stage for history. This time, the spotlight was not only on government officials, but on the very people who make up the fabric of the community. The inception meeting symbolized something profound: this was not a project for the people, but a project with the people.

The room was alive with diversity. Twenty-five stakeholders filled the hall, each carrying with them a unique story, perspective, and aspiration. Representatives of the Awer community of Basuba, long isolated and forgotten in national dialogues, were present and determined to make their voices count. Members of the Somali community from Kiunga, who live with the realities of marginalization and restricted opportunities, also came forward.

They were joined by officials from the judiciary and county administration, seated not apart but side by side with fishermen, youth, and respected elders. For once, uniforms and titles carried less weight than the collective vision of making justice accessible, affordable, and fair.

adding to this collective spirit , the office of the MCA was present representing the county leadership and reaffirm its role in sharpening policies that directly impact the lives of the people.

THE BIRTH OF A NEW ERA

By the close of the day, participants left with more than meeting notes they left with a renewed sense of hope. The inception meeting marked the birth of a new era in Kiunga and Basuba, an era where justice could be shaped by the very people it was meant to serve.

For community members, it signaled recognition: their voices matter. For administrators and officials, it underscored that sustainable justice is not about authority alone, but about partnership, empathy, and shared responsibility.

As the sun set on Kiunga that evening, the gathering left behind more than a plan. It left behind a declaration: that justice, in its truest form, begins when people come together, listen to one another, and dare to hope for a better tomorrow.



“EQUIPPING LOCAL HEROES WITH LEGAL KNOWLEDGE”

The article includes insights from regulatory authorities and financial analysts, providing a nuanced view of the regulatory challenges and opportunities in the fintech ecosystem.

When injustice strikes in remote areas like Basuba or Kiunga, the silence can be deafening. Courts are hours away, police stations are under-resourced, and formal legal aid is almost unheard of. For years, victims of abuse, exploitation, or violence have had nowhere to turn. Their voices were muted not because they lacked courage, but because they lacked access.

That changed in August 2024, when the Faza Youth Action Group (FYAG) introduced a groundbreaking initiative: the training of 18 community paralegals. These were not lawyers in suits or judges in robes. They were ordinary men and women teachers, youth leaders, and members of FYAG’s rapid response unit who chose to step forward as their community’s first line of defense in matters of justice.

Learning to Stand for Justice

The training was anything but symbolic. Over two intensive days in both Kiunga and Basuba, participants were immersed in the principles of paralegalism, gender-based violence response, and human rights monitoring. But beyond theory, the sessions emphasized practice. Trainees learned how to draft statements, document violations, accompany survivors to medical facilities, and follow up on cases that too often get lost in the maze of bureaucracy.



“Turning the Tide: Men Leading the Fight Against GBV”



“In Kiunga and Kiangwe, men are stepping up to end GBV. From silence to action, fathers, brothers, and sons are now champions of dignity and justice.”

When Men Become Voices for Change

On 21st September 2024 in Kiunga and later on 28th September in Kiangwe, a quiet revolution began. Sixty men fathers, brothers, uncles, and sons came together not to defend harmful traditions, but to challenge them. They had been chosen to become Male Champions Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

Why men? Because in many households across Kiunga and Basuba, men remain the most influential figures. They are often the perpetrators of GBV, but they also have the power to stop it. FYAG recognized that engaging men directly was the missing link in tackling violence and silence.

During the trainings, participants 33 youths and 27 adults were exposed to realities they could no longer ignore: the trauma of survivors, the myths that fuel abuse, and the cultural misconceptions that sustain practices like FGM. They were taught not only how to recognize GBV but how to intervene, advocate, and transform conversations in their own circles.

One youth champion shared: “I used to think GBV was just a women’s issue. Now I see it’s about us too. If we keep quiet, we are part of the problem.”

These men are now frontline advocates. They identify and report GBV cases, challenge stereotypes in barazas, and encourage families to protect rather than silence their daughters. By turning potential perpetrators into defenders, FYAG has planted seeds of change in spaces where women’s voices often go unheard.

For Kiunga and Kiangwe, the rise of male champions represents hope that the fight against GBV is no longer a women’s struggle alone, but a community-wide commitment to dignity and justice.



BRIDGING TRUST: POLICE– COMMUNITY DIALOGUES IN KIUNGA AND KIANGWE

Across Kenya, strained relations between police and civilians have long been a stumbling block in building safe and just communities. In many areas, mistrust runs so deep that victims of crime including survivors of GBV avoid reporting cases altogether. Communities fear harassment or dismissal, while police officers struggle to work with half-truths and silence. The result? Delayed responses, unchecked violence, and fertile ground for violent extremism.

On 6th December 2024 in Kiunga and later on 22nd December in Kiangwe, something remarkable unfolded. For the first time in years, law enforcement officers sat face-to-face with community members religious leaders, women, youth, human rights organizations, and minority groups in structured dialogue forums.

At first, the tension was unmistakable. Years of suspicion and hostility hung heavy in the air. But as conversations deepened, the walls began to crumble. Officers listened to accounts of harassment, profiling, and fear. In return, community members heard officers explain the risks, limitations, and dangers that come with policing remote, high-risk regions like Lamu.

This exchange opened the door to something Kenya desperately needs: trust. Both sides recognized that security cannot thrive without community cooperation, and cooperation cannot exist without dialogue. Crucially, participants agreed that information-sharing is the lifeline of prevention especially in curbing gender-based violence (GBV) and the spread of violent extremism. The absence of trust had meant that many cases went unreported, allowing perpetrators to act with impunity and extremist recruiters to exploit frustrated, voiceless youth.

A Human-Rights–Based Reset The dialogues ended with a joint commitment: to reduce victimization, embrace human-rights based policing, and build stronger channels for reporting cases of abuse or suspicious activity. It was a small step, but one with profound implications for the future of Kiunga and Kiangwe.

The forums represented more than a meeting. They were a reset button a chance to reimagine what police–community relations could look like if built on respect and mutual understanding. In a country where fear has too often silenced victims, the Bridging Trust dialogues offered a glimpse of hope: that one conversation at a time, Kenya can rewrite its story of security, justice, and dignity for all.



“Bringing Justice to the Doorstep”

Legal Aid for All

On 26th December 2024, Kiunga witnessed a remarkable moment of change. Eighty-eight participants from Kiunga and Ishakani villages gathered for a legal aid clinic that brought justice closer than ever before.

Accessing Justice for the First Time

For many residents, this was their first opportunity to receive free legal services, counseling, and rights education. Survivors of GBV, women without marriage certificates, and families facing inheritance disputes finally found the guidance they had long been denied.

The absence of legal documents especially marriage certificates had left many families locked out of basic protections and recognition. At the clinic, several residents were assisted in initiating documentation processes, ensuring they could access protections under the law.

Recording Cases, Issuing Certificates, Educating Families

Through the collaborative efforts of FYAG, legal officers, and the Children’s Office, the clinic achieved tangible impact:

- GBV cases were recorded, giving survivors a safe channel to seek justice.
- Marriage certificates were issued, granting families long-overdue legal recognition.
- Residents were educated on children’s rights and the laws protecting them, empowering parents to safeguard their children’s future.



Justice Brought Closer

By the end of the day, the message was clear: justice does not always require a trip to distant courts in Lamu town. Sometimes, it can be delivered right to the heart of the community accessible, immediate, and empowering.

The Kiunga legal aid clinic was more than just an event; it was a promise of dignity and rights restored, showing that even in the most remote villages, justice can be within reach.



ADR—JUSTICE THE COMMUNITY WAY

In January 2025, the people of Kiangwe and Kiunga were introduced to a concept that was both familiar and transformative: Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). For communities often left on the margins of Kenya's justice system, ADR represents more than just a method of conflict resolution it is a pathway to dignity, harmony, and accessible justice.

In remote regions like Lamu East, accessing courts is often costly, time-consuming, and intimidating. Many families cannot afford legal fees, and traveling to Lamu Law Courts can take days. This reality has left disputes to fester, sometimes escalating into cycles of violence or deep family rifts.

ADR changes this equation. By offering quick, affordable, and peaceful solutions, it ensures that justice is not reserved for the wealthy or the well-connected. It restores fairness in places where formal legal processes feel out of reach.

The significance of ADR lies not only in resolving conflicts but also in preserving relationships. Through dialogue and reconciliation, neighbors in conflict can rebuild trust, families can avoid painful divisions, and minor disputes can be solved before they spiral into bigger crises.

For communities like Kiunga and Basuba, where cohesion is a survival tool against economic hardship and insecurity, ADR strengthens the social fabric by turning disputes into opportunities for understanding.

Bridging Tradition and Formal Justice

The ADR structures formed during the January trainings were annexed to the Lamu Law Courts, creating an innovative bridge between traditional community dispute mechanisms and Kenya's formal justice system. This means community-led resolutions now carry legal weight, ensuring fairness while respecting cultural practices.

A Justice System That Feels Human

For marginalized communities, ADR is more than a technical tool it is a promise of justice that feels close, accessible, and human. It empowers ordinary people to seek solutions without fear, delays, or prohibitive costs.

As one participant put it during the training: "ADR doesn't just solve the problem it keeps us together as a community."

By anchoring justice in dialogue, empathy, and accessibility, ADR is giving marginalized communities a chance to claim their rights while protecting their relationships. It is, quite simply, justice that works for the people.

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**NEVER MISS
AN ISSUE!**



we believe change is built by one conversation, one action, and one empowered voice at a time. Together with you .our community we will continue to confront GBV, strengthen trust, and stand firm against extremism. The journey is long, but united, we are unstoppable.



VOICES FROM THE MARGINS

At its heart, the magazine tells how Faza Youth Action Group (FYAG) is bringing justice closer to people who have long been excluded by distance, poverty, insecurity, and silence.

It weaves together different but connected narratives:

- Access to Justice: Mobile courts, legal aid clinics, and issuance of marriage certificates give people recognition and rights they never had before.
- Fighting GBV: Training male champions, empowering women, and supporting survivors shift harmful norms and protect families.
- Youth Empowerment: Skills in finance, business, and grants for groups break cycles of dependency and open doors to opportunity.
- Preventing Violent Extremism: Dialogue, education, and the Deriswanaag Project strengthen unity and resilience against extremist recruitment.
- Police–Community Relations: Building trust between law enforcement and residents opens space for cooperation, information-sharing, and safety.
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR): Offering affordable, peaceful, and culturally grounded ways to solve disputes while preserving relationships.

Overall, the story is about marginalized communities reclaiming their voice, building trust, and proving that justice is not only found in faraway courts but can be nurtured right at the community's doorstep.

Would you like me to draft a one-paragraph editorial introduction for the magazine that sums up this story and sets the tone for readers?