Research Article

EXPLORING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AS AN EMERGING THREAT TO HUMAN SECURITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA USING A HERMENEUTICAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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A B S T R A C T

Violent extremism has emerged as a major security threat in Southern Africa. Violent extremism has led to humanitarian crisis, causing widespread displacement of people, loss of life, and damage to infrastructure, and threatens to destabilize the region. The Southern African Development Community is a regional economic community comprising 16 member states in Southern Africa with a mandate to promote peace, security and stability in the region. However, the organisation faces several challenges in handling violent extremism in the region. The challenges include limited financial resources, weak institutional capacity, porous borders, political instability, and socio-economic challenges, particularly, poverty, inequality and unemployment. These challenges create fertile grounds for radicalization and violent extremism to thrive. To address these challenges, SADC needs to prioritise collaboration and coordination among Member States. This includes sharing information and intelligence, developing joint strategies and action plans, and implementing coordinated measures to address the root causes of violent extremism. SADC should further focus on mobilizing resources and technical assistance to support Member States in addressing violent extremism. Member states on the other hand should address the root causes of violent extremism, including poverty, unemployment, marginalization, and discrimination. This includes promoting inclusive economic growth, providing education and vocational training, and ensuring that marginalized groups have access to basic services and opportunities

INTRODUCTION

Southern Africa has a complex history with regard to peace and security. The region has experienced a range of conflicts and challenges over the years, including civil wars, political instability, and economic hardship. At the same time, there have also been efforts to promote peace and security in the region, through a range of initiatives and efforts by governments, international organizations, and civil society groups (SADC, 2019)

One of the key challenges to peace and security in southern Africa has been the legacy of colonialism and apartheid. The region has a history of racial segregation, discrimination, and economic exploitation, which has contributed to social and economic inequality and has fueled conflicts in some cases (Leaning and Arie, 2000).

In recent years, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has played an important role in promoting peace and security in the region. The SADC is a 16-Membr States regional organization that aims to promote economic development, political stability, and regional integration in Southern Africa.

The SADC embraces the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s definition of human security contained in the Human Development Report (1994). The report defines human security as an approach to security that is people-centered rather than state-centered. It recognizes that people's safety and well-being are ultimately dependent on the protection of their rights and freedoms. Human security involves protecting people from a range of threats, including physical, economic, social, and environmental threats, and promoting their rights and freedoms. It encompasses a wide range of areas, including peace and security, health, education, food security, human rights, and environmental protection (UNDP, 1994).

Statement of the Problem

Countries in Southern Africa are not only dealing with the existing threats, there are emerging security threats arising from weak institutions and new pandemics such as Ebola and COVID-19, (Etim, 2020). The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and SADC do not extensively cover all the existing and emerging challenges. Chekol (2019) further asserts that SADC allots further consideration to martial or military features of security in the outlay of other security

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threats such as diseases, environmental degradation, drug trafficking and piracy, disaster management, post-conflict reconstruction and broader governance issues.

According to Williams (2019), in the implementation of the Regional Early Warning Systems (REWS), COMESA, ECOWAS and IGAD early warning systems were the only systems to have made significant progress. Debial (2020) observes that the early warning system under SADC lacks adequate staffing and funding to cover the vast region and the numerous issues to be reported on human security. Franke (2015) in his work, stated that SADC lacks the aptitude to efficiently analyze the data collected. So, its capabilities as an effective early warning system are yet to be comprehended. For example, Malan (2012) reports that under the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), there is adequate evidence of indicators of state failure and the likelihood of conflict in countries such as Zambia and Zimbabwe, but there is clear lack of early and well unified preventive efforts by regional mechanisms.

Etim (2018) further reports that there is no synchronization between immediate and short-term crisis with long-term capacity building programs such as the African Standby Force (ASF) and the REWS.

Based on the foregoing, SADC does not appear to extensively address the emerging security threats to peace and human security in the region which, if left unchecked, has the potential to destabilize efforts aimed at maintaining stability within the region and beyond. Therefore, the need to explore violent extremism as an emerging threat to peace and human security in Southern Africa and how RECs serve as key institutions in addressing it becomes imperative.

Purpose of the Study

It is hoped that the results generated from this study will provide required information necessary to address violent extremism as an emerging threat to peace and human security in Southern Africa and thereby add to the body of knowledge. Results from this study may also serve as a motivation to the RECs in managing other emerging threats to peace and human security in Southern Africa, Africa and beyond. Results from this study may act as a basis for further discussions and debates in the area of peace and human security in Southern Africa.

It is further hoped that the study can help to identify the root causes of violent extremism and insecurity in the region, as well as the factors that contribute to the maintenance of peace and human security. This can provide valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working to address these issues and promote more stable and secure societies.

Finally, it is envisaged that the study can help to highlight the ways in which peace and human security are interconnected with other important issues such as economic development, social justice, and human rights. By understanding these interrelationships, it may be possible to develop more holistic and effective strategies for addressing violent extremism

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by three (3) theories: Cooperation, Rational and Constructivist. The three theories provided a basis for selecting the appropriate research design and methodology. They also helped to identify the key variables, constructs, and relationships that needed to be investigated in the study. In so doing, the rigor of the research was enhanced by providing a theoretical basis for the study. By demonstrating that the research has been grounded in established theories and concepts in the field, the study's credibility was enhanced.

Cooperation Theory

The cooperation theory was proposed by the early anthropologist Edward B. Tylor and further elaborated by Leslie White and Claude Lévi-Strauss. M. Deutsch theorized that in cooperation, persons perceive their goal attainments as positively related; in competition, persons perceive their goals as negatively linked; in individualization, persons perceive their goals as unrelated. Cooperation demonstrates the ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse people or teams, make compromises, build consensus in decision-making, assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value the opinions and contributions of individual team members, from a position of firm self-identity (Gurr, 1970).

Rational Theory

The theory of rational choice institutionalism is the toughest response ever given to the neoclassical economics, by challenging the perfect rationality of the individual, rather than the principle of rational choice itself. Under the new institutionalism and inspired by the American doctrine of social sciences in the 70s, rational choice starts from a different approach of the institutions and their role in the economy (Ivanica, 2019, p. 28). Thereby, the actors act to maximize their utility and the institutions play an important role in solving the collective interests. Ronald Coase named this phenomenon as the "disembodied blood circulation" (Coase, 1998, p. 6, in Ingram and Clay, 2018, p. 525). In their turn, institutions are artificially created by the actors, who have freedom to amend them, in the idea of facilitating future success just through them. At SADC level, there are many limitations and regulations. And yet, the actors act free, but are constrained by the rules. As in any game, the rules must be complied, substituted when they are not working or give rise to blockages, and the players are aware that only through these rules can they achieve benefits.

Constructivist theory

According to Philips (2004), it is in this more fluid global context that constructivism has matured as a distinctive approach to the study of global politics. He further advances that constructivists are defined by their emphasis on the socially constructed character of actors' interests and identities and by their concomitant faith in the susceptibility to change of even the most seemingly immutable practices and institutions.

Research Methodology

The study used a qualitative research approach as it is concerned with gaining an in-depth understanding of how SADC is addressing violent extremism as an emerging threat to peace and human security in Southern Africa. Qualitative research aims to gather rich, descriptive data related to the phenomenon in question in efforts to get an enhanced understanding of the phenomenon. The approach permitted the use of various data sources for the investigation of a particular

phenomenon within a given setting, which allowed for a broader outlook and an assortment of lenses through which researchers explored numerous facets of the phenomenon. Triangulating data from a variety of sources ensured the credibility and reliability of the study. Qualitative research necessitated spending a lot of time in the field, collecting data to ensure a wide-ranging viewpoint from relevant participants (Baxter, 2008). In this study, participants who had intimate knowledge of the emerging security threats to peace and human security in Southern Africa were targeted for investigation.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

The phenomenological approach to research emerges as a response to the radicalism of what is objectifiable. It is based on the study of life experiences, regarding an event, from the subject's perspective. This approach is based on the analysis of the most complex aspects of human life, of what is beyond the quantifiable aspects. According to Husserl (1998), it is a paradigm that tries to explain the nature of the things, the essence and the veracity of the phenomena. The aim is to understand the complexity of the lived experiences. This understanding is in turn aimed at raising awareness and finding the meanings surrounding the phenomenon. In order to conduct research under this approach, it is indispensable to know the conception and principles of phenomenology, as well as the method to approach a field of study and the mechanisms for the search of meanings. Knowing the experiences through stories and anecdotes is fundamental because it allows us to understand the nature of the context dynamics and even transform it.

Study Sample

A total of 34 individuals were interviewed for the study, with 16 representing SADC, 10 from the African Union (AU), and 8 from other institutions working closely with SADC: funding organizations, Zambia Police, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Zambia and civil society groups. The selection of the participants was based on recommendations from the SADC interviewees, with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Sampling Procedure

In this study, the selection of participants was influenced by the extent to which they could provide comprehensive, relevant, and expressive contributions and explanations related to the study. Rather than relying on random selection, the researcher employed purposive sampling, a type of non-probability sampling, to choose information-rich participants who possessed the ability and willingness to communicate their experiences and opinions effectively. The selection of interview participants was based on their knowledge of the topic and included individuals from African Union CEWS, SADC REWS, SADC Desk Officers, Liaison APSA Officers, and SADC Programs/Operations officers. Additionally, the snowballing technique, a referral technique where participants suggest other individuals who could provide valuable insights, was also used. As a result, all interviewees were directly relevant to the study, ensuring that the research gained a broad range of data and perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation.

Data Collection

The study used a combination of face-to-face meetings, WhatsApp, and email interviews to collect primary data using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. The purpose of this method was to gain an in-depth understanding of violent extremism as an emerging threat to peace and human security and how SADC was addressing it. Before every interview, the participants were informed of the research's purpose, and that the interviews were based on informed consent. To ensure that no valuable information was missed during the interviews, a voice recorder was used to record the participants and the researcher also took notes during the conversation. The use of these instruments ensured that the data collected was accurate and reliable.

Findings: Violent Extremism

Violent extremism refers to the use or threat of violence as a means of promoting a political, ideological, or religious cause. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "violent extremism refers to the beliefs and actions of individuals or groups that advocate for the use of violence to achieve political, ideological or religious goals." (UNODC, 2017).

Extremists that promote or utilise violence to further their ideologies, religions, or political agendas are considered violent extremists. This covers acts of terrorism and various types of community and politically driven violence. Radicalization is the process through which someone's opinions shift from being largely conventional to radical and they demand a significant social change. This does not essentially require that they will start acting violently, nor is it necessitated to be harmful. Violent extremism, on the other hand, is when an individual or group considers that using fear, terror, or violence to bring about ideological, political, or social change is acceptable and then behaves in accordance with that decision. Violent extremism comes in a variety of forms. There are many different reasons why people do things, and many of them usually have something to do with specific philosophies (such as how political groups or religious beliefs should be interpreted), problems like the economy or the ecology, or cultural or separatist causes. Furthermore, multiple issues can motivate a person.

When ethnic groups have historically are denied the chance to engage in democratic structures, there is a noticeably larger danger of conflict in countries that are more inclusive (World Bank, 2018)

Violent extremism can take many forms, including terrorism, insurgency, and armed conflict. It can be motivated by a variety of factors, including political, ideological, or religious beliefs, and can have serious consequences for individuals, communities, and societies. Efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism often focus on addressing the underlying drivers of violence and providing alternative narratives and approaches to resolving conflicts and achieving goals as one of the participants from SADC stated:

> *"Explanations of why individuals resort to violent extremism or terrorism frequently stress the "root causes," "structural factors," or "underlying conditions" that allegedly drive this phenomenon. Among these "underlying conditions," in turn, social*

and economic ones (e.g., large-scale poverty and unemployment, inadequate government services, and insufficient economic opportunities) often receive a disproportionate level of attention. Although perhaps to a lesser extent, political factors (such as bad governance, government repression, and/or the existence of ill-governed or poorly governed areas) also frequently loom large in "root causes" explanations. What typically is downplayed, particularly in the development-assistance community, are other types of "underlying conditions," such as those that revolve around cultural and ideological issues" – SADC Participant.

Violent extremism is a significant issue in Southern Africa, as the region has experienced a number of violent extremist incidents in recent years. According to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), "Southern Africa has experienced a rise in violent extremism in recent years, with attacks on civilians, military, and government officials by extremist groups and individuals." (USIP, 2017)

In Mozambique, for example, the country has faced a spate of violent attacks by extremist groups in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, resulting in thousands of deaths and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. (UNODC,2017). This was further confirmed from a SADC participant when they stated:

"Let's take for example the current ongoing violent extremism in Cabo Delgado in the oil-rich Northern part of Mozambique and the DRC which threatens the whole region. It's complex in that, not only does it have an ethno-religious aspect to it, but it also brings into the picture the socio-economic dynamics. Over and above that, it entangles the whole region, and it poses problems in terms of what the region should do." – SADC Participant

In Mozambique's northern Cabo Delgado province, violent extremism has wrought havoc. Terrorism has increased in Mozambique in recent years. Al Shabab, an ISIS offshoot, has carried out many assaults throughout Cabo Delgado, a region in the country's north. Multiple individuals have been killed in the terrorist attacks, and numerous tens of thousands have been affected across the nation. The widespread international alarm for these terrorist activities is prompted, in part, by the repercussions on the country's mineral and natural gas sectors, which have attracted huge investments from multinational corporations. The Al Shabab collective's connection to existent criminal organizations in the region adds to the complexity even more. In Mozambique, since October 2017, there were 858 incidents of organized violence, claiming 2,811 lives, and more than 750,000 citizens forcibly displaced (SADC, 2019).

Efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism in Southern Africa have focused on addressing the root causes of violence and providing alternative narratives and approaches to resolving conflicts and achieving goals. For example, the ISS report highlights the importance of "promoting social cohesion, enhancing dialogue and mediation mechanisms, and addressing economic and social exclusion" in addressing violent extremism in the region. (ISS, "Countering Violent Extremism in Southern Africa," 2018). The effects of violent extremism have also been felt in the DRC as illustrated by SADC.

"In the DRC, ADF was responsible for internally displacing more than 4.5 million people in Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu provinces leaving more than 6,000 people dead between 2008 and 2016" – SADC Respondent

The ADF is a Ugandan militia that moved to eastern Congo in the 1990s. From 2014, the ADF is said to have massacred thousands of innocent civilians and numbers of troops in DRC, and the violence has uprooted several hundred thousand individuals. As of late 2021, the DRC had over 6 million war refugees, one of the world's highest tolls; approximately a million additional Congolese are refugees or seeking asylum in neighboring nations. In 2021, the ADF killed approximately 1,300 people, nearly 50 percent greater than in 2020. The ADF has been accused of human rights violations and war atrocities by UN officials, including civilian massacres, kidnappings, and the recruitment of children in armed conflict. (UNHCR, 2021)

Conflict frequently has its roots in social unrest. When a group mobilises, they may choose to combat social injustice by violent or peaceful means. In grievances studies, quantification does seem to be a basis of conflicting results. While research results in social psychology demonstrate that inter - group levels of inequality are more likely to spur joint action, a large portion of research that finds no effect of deprivation on political mobilisation quantifies deprivation either in absolute terms (e.g., a country's poverty rate) or in terms of interpersonal inequality. The "horizontal disparity" between geographical, cultural, or religious groups has thus begun to receive more attention in more recent research on dissent and aggression from the grievance viewpoint than the "vertical inequality" between people. These horizontal disparities can take many different forms, including those related to political engagement, economic circumstances, or social circumstances regarding access to essential services (Stewart, 2002).

According to a SADC participant:

"Oil-rich Nigeria the Niger Delta serves as an illustration of how socioeconomic injustices and grievances can encourage individuals to endorse upheaval against the state and other groups with divergent views and beliefs. The Delta has experienced a rise in violence and instability over the past few decades, which has been fuelled by poverty, financial disparity, and unmet expectations. Vertical and horizontal disparities include things like a lack of political rights, socioeconomic discrimination based on race or religion, and experiencing injustice. Social issues have developed in the Niger Delta because of the unequal distribution of oil money and the destruction of livelihood options"

DISCUSSION

Depending on the environment in which it develops, violent extremism can take a variety of shapes and manifest itself in various ways. Extreme violence is a complex phenomenon with no obvious description. It is neither brand-new nor unique to any one country, ethnic group, or religious tradition.

Conflict, armed conflict, and violent extremism have always had costs that go well beyond the innocents killed. Violent extremism produces long-lasting impacts on the economy and society, most of which are felt in developing nations. These implications include increased health care expenses and a decline in trade and tourism. Additionally, substantial improvements in militaristic security measures can syphon money from growth.

The emergence and activities of violent extremist groups have an impact on opportunities for employment and food security, particularly in the most underdeveloped regions where open borders and the lack of a centralised state make it easier for these groups to form, move around, and cross-pollinate as well as for the organised trade in the firearms, controlled substances, and other items that are necessary for their survival. Youthful individuals are in danger of further marginalisation from influence and authority which puts them at risk for enlistment, because of the repercussions, which have a particularly detrimental impact on educational chances and employment prospects for children and youth. Up until now, militarised counterterrorism responses have largely been used in reaction to extremist groups' actions. Such a strategy might momentarily stop the most extreme forms, but it has shown itself unable to address the intricacies underlying the causes of extremism. The relationship between impoverishment, conflict, and violent extremism necessitates that development agencies clarify how reconciliation, economic modernization, and the deterrence of violent extremism are related.

The purpose of peace and human security is contested by constructivists. In the two most recent cases, there are socially marginalized ethnicities that need to be guarded and protected, such as Tutsis in the case of Rwanda and apartheid system in the other case. Insecurity and marginalization for the different or external class could equate to security and safety for the included or internal group. How to determine the party that must be safeguarded and what happens to the party that isn't safeguarded are the key issues. Securitization renders theoretically the entire, the population in its entirety unsafe by establishing the class of peril, threat, and mortality as ordinary, but reality affects only margins (Bigo, 2008).

Therefore, security is a social concept that depends on power dynamics between players and their various discourses as well as on space, time, and other factors. The broad ability to securitize objects, according to postmodernists, can endanger weaker cultures. Dependent on how the constructs are expressed by the dominant institutions or cultures, each ideology can be an origin for a securitizing discourse. Duffield (2008) noted that in the post-cold war era, industrialization has become securitized by the global community to counter extremism. This securitization is predicated on global risks including socioeconomic disintegration, unmanageable population increase, and systemic poverty.

This can be viewed as a sign of the global community's commitment and bipartisan cooperation in helping the communities in the underdeveloped countries. It might also have other ideas, though. According to Duffield (2008), the global community is in control of the fundamental economy and social function of the countries under this unity. This could be taken to mean that foreign governments are meddling in the domestic affairs of another nation. According to

Duffield (2008), the fight against violent extremism has included discussions about poverty alleviation, which has turned into a contradiction of the liberal security framework. Supporting societies in developing nations as they face security issues might, on the one hand, be seen as a good because it can lessen poverty. As a result, it may lessen the opportunity for transnational organized crime and violent extremism recruitment (Duffield, 2008).

One example of violent extremism in Africa is the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Boko Haram is a jihadist group that has been active in northeastern Nigeria since the early 2000s. The group has been responsible for a series of deadly attacks on civilians, including suicide bombings, kidnappings, and mass shootings (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). The underlying causes of the Boko Haram insurgency are complex, but scholars have identified several factors that have contributed to the conflict. These include socioeconomic marginalization, political corruption, and the erosion of traditional religious and cultural values (Uzodike, 2016).

Another example of violent extremism in Africa is the Al-Shabaab insurgency in Somalia. Al-Shabaab is an Islamist militant group that has been active in Somalia since the mid-2000s. The group has been responsible for a series of deadly attacks on civilians and government targets, including suicide bombings, assassinations, and mass shootings (BBC, 2021). The underlying causes of the Al-Shabaab insurgency are similarly complex, but scholars have identified factors such as clan politics, state weakness, and foreign intervention as contributing to the conflict (Menkhaus, 2010).

A third example of violent extremism in Africa is the ongoing conflict in Mali. Since 2012, Mali has been embroiled in a complex conflict involving a range of armed groups, including jihadist groups, separatist movements, and criminal networks (Council on Foreign Relations, 2021). The underlying causes of the conflict are multifaceted, but scholars have identified factors such as ethnic tensions, political instability, and socioeconomic marginalization as contributing to the conflict (Fofana and Manchuelle, 2018).

In conclusion, violent extremism is a significant challenge in the Southern Africa context, and the examples cited above are just a few of many that could be used to illustrate the depth and complexity of the problem. By understanding the underlying causes of these conflicts, policymakers and scholars can develop more effective strategies for promoting peace and human security in Africa and beyond.

CONCLUSION

Violent extremism is a significant threat to peace and human security in Southern Africa. It is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive and coordinated response from governments, civil society, religious leaders, and communities. To effectively address violent extremism, it is important to understand and address the root causes of the problem. Poverty, unemployment, marginalization, discrimination, and a lack of economic opportunities can create a fertile ground for the recruitment and radicalization of vulnerable individuals. Strengthening security institutions, developing national strategies, and enhancing regional cooperation are key to countering violent extremism. It is essential that responses are consistent with human rights and the rule of law, and that communities are actively engaged in

prevention and response efforts. Addressing violent extremism as a threat to peace and human security in Southern Africa requires a holistic and collaborative approach that prioritizes prevention, intervention, and response. By working together, governments, civil society, and communities can help to build resilience and promote inclusive and peaceful societies that are resistant to the lure of violent extremism.

Recommendations to SADC on addressing violent Extremism as an Emerging Threat to Peace and Human Security in Southern Africa

1. Strengthen efforts to counter violent extremism by working with civil society organizations and local communities to address root causes, such as poverty, marginalization, and political grievances. SADC should identify and address these root causes to prevent individuals from joining extremist groups in the first place.
2. Invest in education and social programs to promote tolerance and inclusivity and to provide alternative opportunities for youth who are vulnerable to extremist ideologies
3. Address the issue of foreign fighters and border security to prevent the spread of violent extremism across borders.
4. Enhance regional cooperation: SADC should enhance regional cooperation on security and counterterrorism issues, including sharing intelligence and coordinating efforts to prevent the cross-border movement of extremist groups and their resources.
5. Counter extremist messaging: SADC should develop effective strategies to counter extremist messaging, both online and offline. This includes working with civil society, religious leaders, and media organizations to promote positive messages and narratives that challenge extremist ideology.
6. Strengthen community resilience: SADC should work with communities to strengthen their resilience to violent extremism. This includes promoting social cohesion, tolerance, and respect for diversity, as well as providing education and economic opportunities.
7. Engage with civil society: SADC should engage with civil society organizations, including youth groups, women's groups, and religious organizations, to promote inclusive and participatory approaches to addressing violent extremism.

Recommendations to SADC Member States to address Violent Extremism as an Emerging Threat to Peace and Human Security in Southern Africa

In addressing the violent extremism as an emerging threat to peace and human security, it is crucial for SADC Member States to recognize the interconnections between violent extremism and its relationship to poverty and inequality. Therefore, it is recommended that Member States prioritize inclusive and equitable social and economic policies and investments in education, healthcare, and job creation to reduce poverty and inequality, which can help to prevent and mitigate the likelihood of sections of the population engaging in violent extremism. Additionally, cross-border collaboration and intelligence-sharing among SADC Member States should be enhanced to address the transnational nature of violent extremism. The following recommendations are to individual SADC Member States to address the violent extremism as an emerging threat to peace and human security:

1. Develop national strategies: Member states should develop comprehensive national strategies to address violent extremism, considering their own unique contexts and circumstances. These strategies should focus on prevention, intervention, and response, and should involve a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society, religious leaders, and youth groups.
2. Develop community-based programs to promote social cohesion and religious tolerance, which can reduce the recruitment of individuals into extremist groups.
3. Enhance cross-border collaboration and intelligence-sharing among SADC Member States to prevent the spread of violent extremist groups and combat their activities.
4. Invest in education and job creation initiatives to empower young people and prevent them from becoming vulnerable to extremist ideologies.
5. Strengthen security institutions: Member states should strengthen their security institutions, including the police, military, and intelligence services, to better respond to the threat of violent extremism. This includes providing adequate training and resources to security personnel, as well as ensuring that their actions are consistent with human rights and the rule of law.
6. Address root causes: Member states should address the root causes of violent extremism, including poverty, unemployment, marginalization, and discrimination. This includes promoting inclusive economic growth, providing education and vocational training, and ensuring that marginalized groups have access to basic services and opportunities.
7. Counter extremist propaganda: Member states should develop effective strategies to counter extremist propaganda, both online and offline. This includes developing counter-narratives that promote peaceful and inclusive values, as well as monitoring and responding to extremist content on social media and other online platforms.

Ethics Statement

The study involving human participants was reviewed and approved by The University of Zambia Ethical Clearance Committee

Author Contributions

The author conceived the study as part of a Ph.D. Thesis of The University of Zambia under The Institute of Distance Education.

Funding

The author declares that this study was done using personal funds.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest. This research article contains my original work, has not received prior publication, and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. The author is aware and has approved the manuscript being submitted. The views expressed are

personal. The author is solely responsible for the content and writing of the paper

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