Pyramids of Peace: Violent Participation, Uncivil Society, and Localized Peacebuilding during Kenya's 2007-8 Post-Election Crisis

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Daniel Solomon
Undergraduate Student
School of Foreign Service
Georgetown University

Introduction

In her analysis of political violence and international peacebuilding failures in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Severine Autesserre identifies a disparity between top-down, nationally-focused conflict resolution efforts and the local, community-based dynamics of violent conflict in the DRC's eastern Kivu provinces. According to Autesserre's account of international conflict resolution in the DRC, national- and regional-level efforts has often proven insufficient in addressing the micro-level causes and politics of local violence.[1] The narrative of international preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution, and reconciliation efforts to mitigate resurgent, violent mobilization by community organizations such as *Mungiki* provides a similar portrait of the failure of top-down international intervention in Kenya. As Jacqueline Klopp et al. note in a 2010 case study of internal displacement and community-based peacebuilding in the Kuresoi constituency, Kenya's national-level dispute resolutions frequently fail to achieve parallel settlements in local negotiations.[2] While international actors have facilitated robust political reconciliation and accountability processes in the aftermath of the country's disputed 2007 general election, the prospect of widespread violence following Kenya's 2013 poll remains significant.[3]

This case study assesses existing gaps in Kenya's national-level, post-election political reconciliation processes, particularly as pertains to international, regional, and national interactions with *Mungiki*, the Kikuyu ethnic revival movement, violent crime syndicate, and youth organization. The study views *Mungiki*'s violent mobilization surrounding the 2007 elections as a mechanism for political participation, rather than an apolitical clash of ethnic or land-based interests. *Mungiki*'s participatory violence in 2007-8 operated both locally, as a form of preference expression in a violent, democratic sphere, and nationally, where Kenya's Kikuyu elites seized *Mungiki* violence as a vehicle for political authority. Seen through this lens, *Mungiki*'s social role differs from mainstream categorizations of the movement as an unruly, disorganized collection of disaffected youth.[4] Instead, *Mungiki* functions as a form of *un*civil society within Kenyan politics, using formal, informal, and violent mechanisms of participation, association, and social service provision to organize constituencies and influence politics.[5]

This case study focuses on community-based mediation and dispute resolution efforts during and in the aftermath of Kenya's 2007-8 election-related violence. While international coverage and analysis of post-conflict reconciliation efforts has frequently focused on national-level processes, this study centers on local efforts to engage *Mungiki* participants and mitigate community violence surrounding the elections. The study highlights the work of Pyramids of Peace, a national network

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[1] Severine Autesserre, *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 128.

[2] Jacqueline Klopp et al., *Internal Displacement and Local Peacebuilding in Kenya: Challenges and Innovations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2010), 2.

[3] See U.S. Institute of Peace, *Prevention Newsletter: September 2011* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2011), 3.

[4] For example, see Jeffrey Gettleman and Marlise Simons, "International Court Seeks Indictments in Kenya Vote Violence," *New York Times*, 15 December 2010. "The police were sent to opposition strongholds 'where they used excessive force against civilian protesters,' and *Mr. Kenyatta and Mr. Muthaura deputized one of Kenya's most brutal street gangs, the Mungiki*, to 'organize retaliatory attacks against civilian' opposition supporters, the prosecutor contends." Emphasis added.

[5] Margaret Chemengich, "The Prospects of Civil Society Driven Change in Kenya," in P. Wanyande and M.A. Okebe, eds., *Discourses on Civil Society in Kenya* (Nairobi, Kenya: African Research and Resource Forum, 2009), 22.

of local peacemakers active in urban and rural communities throughout Kenya's post-election crisis.

In order to ensure the presence of local voices in conflict resolution and peacebuilding analysis, this study used online, open-source research resources and records, particularly Ushahidi, the crowd-sourced crisis mapping tool. These sources provide a grassroots perspective on local interventions in *Mungiki* mobilization activity, permitting a localized understanding of civil society interactions with *un*civil society actors during the post-election crisis. A case study analysis of local mediation efforts in post-2007 Kenya yields a number of lessons for international peacebuilding, dispute resolution, and reconciliation efforts in conflict-affected and post-conflict environments, particularly as pertains to the mitigation of participatory violence by uncivil society organizations. This analysis argues that, in addition to facilitating national processes for political reconciliation and institutional capacity-building, as well as localized civil society dialogues, successful conflict resolution requires formal and informal mechanisms for the inclusion of *un*civil society actors.

Conflict Background: Ethnic Politics, Local Mobilization, and International Intervention

The international community and certain spheres within the Kenyan government approached the December 2007 elections with an optimistic eye towards Kenya's political future. The country's 2002 general election had ushered in the decline of the Kenya African National Union's two-and-a-half decade hold over Kenyan politics, with relatively low levels of political violence. While Mwai Kibaki's National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) violated a power-sharing and constitutional reform agreement in the aftermath of the 2002 election, a government-sponsored constitutional attempt to institutionalize executive authority and centralized government control was resolved through democratic, constitutional means.[6] The resulting political divide, between Kibaki's Party of National Unity (PNU) and Raila Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) formed the basis for electoral contestation in 2007. In the lead-up to the 2007 polls, Uhuru Kenyatta, the son of Kenya's independence leader and Moi's appointed successor in 2002, left Odinga's coalition for PNU, bringing his Kikuyu constituency with him. Following the popular rejection of Kibaki's constitutional reforms, advocating a populist, pro-poor agenda of resource distribution and governance reform, and running double digits in opinion polls, Odinga and his affiliates anticipated a sweeping victory against the incumbent.[7]

When the elections arrived, ODM handily defeated PNU in parliamentary elections. The presidential contest was tighter, however; as Nic Cheeseman observed, an increased turnout by one percent could have been decisive for either candidate.[8] At the same time, electoral rigging by Kibaki's administration—at the constituency level, as well as by the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK)—was an evident characteristic of the electoral process.[9] While both PNU and ODM officials participated in electoral fraud, PNU-affiliated constituencies yielded the most significant discrepancies. When, on 30 December 2007, Kibaki's incumbent administration declared victory over ODM's insurgent opposition, it was in the face of unruly and mounting protests against

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[6] Daniel Branch and Nic Cheeseman, "Democratization, Sequencing, and State Failure in Africa: Lessons from Kenya," *African Affairs*, Vol. 108, No. 430, 1-2.

[7] International Crisis Group, *Kenya in Crisis* (Brussels, Belgium: International Crisis Group, 2008), 4.

[8] On the turnout data, see Nic Cheeseman, "The Kenyan Elections of 2007: An Introduction," *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July 2008), 169.

[9] International Crisis Group, *Kenya in Crisis*, 7.

allegations of electoral fraud. Kenya's government held the President's inauguration just hours later, in a "hastily arranged ceremony at [Kibaki's] official residence."[10]

Violent protests quickly swept across Kenya's major urban centers. Political elites used grassroots coalitions to spur protests and demonstrations against the election results, as well as counter-protests by supporters of Kibaki and Kenyatta's PNU. Approximately 50 people were killed in violent clashes in Nairobi's Kibera slum on 29 December 2007, and hundreds were reported killed across western Kenya in the first twenty-four hours of the security crisis. Luo militias, supportive of Odinga and his ODM coalition, began attacks on Kikuyu neighbors in Nairobi and other urban centers. *Mungiki*, which had been officially outlawed and repressed by government forces, began to mobilize in response to the outbreak of Luo violence. Kenyan security forces did little to control the immediate post-election violence in much of the affected area, but police crackdowns in the Western Province were "excessive and brutal," according to the International Crisis Group. In the weeks following the immediate post-election protests, violence swept across Kenya's Rift Valley, facilitated especially by *Mungiki* membership from the Valley's Kikuyu constituencies.[11]

Post-election violence reports have generally articulated a causal relationship between Kenya's contested, ethnicized 2007 electoral process and violence in western Kenya, the Rift Valley, and other affected areas. As Nic Cheeseman observes, however, Kenya's post-election violence comprised a variety of politically distinct disputes between communities, defined by "local understandings of citizenship, belonging, and exclusion." Placed in the context of the national electoral contest, localized violence intersected with and reinforced national schisms between political elites.[12] This local/national violence nexus was particularly characteristic of *Mungiki*'s post-election mobilization. While Kenya watchers differentiate between state-sponsored and facilitated *Mungiki* violence, and violence against local communities across the Rift Valley, both have their origins in the complex origins of *Mungiki*'s ethnic political participation.

International efforts to mediate an end to Kenya's post-election crisis began on 22 January 2008, by which point hundreds of Kenyan civilians had died as a result of local violence. The Panel of Eminent African Personalities, chaired by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, guided international mediation efforts, with sustained support from U.S. government officials and current African heads of state. Annan's mediation efforts began in late January, following a week-long delay as Annan recovered from a fever. Annan ensured the inclusion of civil society organizations in the mediation effort, including women's groups, members of the private sector, and faith-based leadership. While the mediation effort experienced significant delays on the establishment of a universally agreed-upon political solution, negotiations between Kibaki's PNU and Odinga's ODM progressed rapidly towards it final solution, the establishment of a "grand coalition" between the parties in dispute. The parties finally reached a resolution 41 days after the mediation effort began, on 28 February 2008.[13]

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[10] Cheeseman, "The Kenyan Elections of 2007," 166.

[11] See International Crisis Group, *Kenya in Crisis*, 9-10 for a comprehensive assessment of immediate post-election violence in western Kenya.

[12] Cheeseman, "The Kenyan Elections," 170.

[13] For an insightful narrative analysis of the international mediation effort surrounding Kenya's 2007-8 election crisis, see Elisbeth Lindenmayer and Josie Lianna Kaye, *A Choice for Peace? The Story of Forty-One Days of Mediation in Kenya* (New York: International Peace Institute, 2009).

Kenya's post-crisis government has proven remarkably durable in the years since its configuration in 2008. On 8 August 2010, 69 percent of the Kenyan electorate voted to ratify a new national constitution, which has initiated a robust process of political reform under the leadership of President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga. The constitution's primary provisions seek to prevent the reemergence of disorder and political breakdown in the aftermath of Kenya's 2013 general elections. The constitution provides for the devolution of power from the country's federal executive, ensuring the institutional oversight of the National Assembly in cabinet appointment processes and distributing central governing authority amongst Kenya's 47 counties. In order to ensure a sustained, institutionalized commitment to the rule of law, the Kenyan constitution also requires an independent review of chief judiciary and criminal justice officials, as well as an expanded bill of rights for Kenyan citizens.[14] Both historical case studies and Kenya's contemporary events, however, call into question the sustainability of institutional devolution as an approach to preventing local violence.[15] Political violence between local communities in the costal Tana River Delta region has recently resulted in hundreds of civilian casualties, which Kenyan security forces are unable to mitigate.

Beyond Kenya's domestic institutional efforts, international initiatives have had a limited impact on post-conflict peacebuilding. In the aftermath of the March 2008 settlement, Philip Waki's commission of inquiry investigated the origins and drivers of Kenya's post-election violence, including the chain of political accountability. Assessing national post-conflict justice efforts as insufficient, the Waki commission delivered a sealed list of perpetrators to the International Criminal Court's (ICC) prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, in 2009. The prosecutor presented the charges as two separate cases, splitting the investigation between supporters of Odinga's ODM coalition and Kibaki's national government.[16] If the ICC's prosecution, which has focused on four indicted perpetrators of political violence, has influenced Kenyan politics, its impact is scarcely apparent: two indicted officials, Kenyatta and William Ruto, are actively campaigning in the 2013 general elections.

While national and international institutions have made strides in ensuring the continuity of post-crisis political order, progress on local reconciliation and peacebuilding remains inconsistent. Ethnic politics remains locally salient, and ripe for exploitation by elite spoilers at the national level. Efforts to engage and incorporate marginalized and displaced local communities have been unsystematic, with little recognition for the crises of land access, citizenship rights, and political participation that continue to undergird local tensions.

Opposing Goals, Common Ground: *Mungiki* and Pyramids of Peace

Mungiki

Mungiki has its origins in the ethnic patrimonialism of Moi's governance in the late 1980s. Responding to and adjusting the favoritism of Kikuyu independence leader Jomo Kenyatta's post-colonial administration, Moi successfully manipulated Kenya's patronage networks to ensure

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[14] Joel Barkan, *Kenya: Assessing Risks to Stability* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2011), 9-10.

[15] Lahra Smith, "Explaining Violence after Recent Elections in Ethiopia and Kenya," *Democratization*, Vol. 16, No. 5 (October 2009), 867-97.

[16] Thomas Obel Hansen, "Transitional Justice in Kenya? An Assessment of the Accountability Process in Light of Domestic Politics and Security Concerns," *California Western International Law Journal*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Fall 2011), 1-35.

popular support, selective resource distribution, and state control.[17] In prioritizing the distribution of public services, resource revenues, and political access to non-Kikuyu constituencies, Moi's administration marginalized youth communities in urban and rural areas of Kenya's Central Highlands region. Kikuyu cultural revivalist movements began to emerge in rural districts, capitalizing on youth disaffection with the Moi government's economic, social, and political dislocation of Kikuyu constituents. *Mungiki* emerged as an ethnic solidarity movement among these Kikuyu youth populations, using the collective myth of Mau Mau resistance as a force for social, cultural, and historical legitimization.[18] Due to the purposeful rhetorical and cultural continuity between *Mungiki* and Mau Mau, many contemporary analyses have characterized contemporary Kikuyu political mobilization as a "neo-Mau Mau" movement.[19]

As Daniel Branch observes, the depiction of *Mungiki* as "Mau Mau revisited" does little to illuminate the local political origins of *Mungiki* mobilization in the late 1980s.[20] While *Mungiki* began as a cultural revivalist movement, the organization quickly became a disruptive and influential force in Kenyan politics. The Moi administration's transitional experimentation with multi-party politics in the early 1990s imbued Kenya's ethnic patronage with a grassroots façade. Tensions over land access and resource distribution came to characterize Kenyan political activity, facilitating competition between favored and marginalized ethnic groups.[21] The emergence of multi-party politics formalized the process of ethno-political competition, though informal state repression continued to limit the democratic mobilization of communities outside of the Moi administration's patronage system.[22]

Far from the image of unruliness that predominates international media depictions of Kenyan political violence, *Mungiki* maintains a cohesive, institutionalized membership structure. While organizational knowledge of *Mungiki*'s mobilization strategy remains limited, the Kikuyu movement adopted a decentralized cell structure, centered around a National Coordinating Committee. As of 2003, the organization maintained a constituency of approximately 1.5 to 2 million dues-paying members, a number which has likely dwindled as a result of increased international, national, and local attention on demobilization efforts.[23] Membership dues, in addition to the organization's participation in organized theft, racketeering, and private service provision in *Mungiki*-controlled areas, provide a steady revenue stream. Such revenues have provided for the establishment of social-service institutions in Kikuyu communities marginalized by the unequal distribution of public goods, including public health services and local dispute resolution mechanisms. While *Mungiki*'s political motivations ensure an inconsistent and limited

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[17] Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair*, 173-4.
[18] See Grace Wamue, "Revisiting Our Indigenous Shrines Through *Mungiki*," *African Affairs*, No. 100 (2001), 454 for a discussion of the relationship between Mau Mau's cultural influence over Kikuyu ethnic mythologies
[19] For example, see Awinda Atieno, "Mungiki, 'Neo-Mau Mau' and the Prospects for Democracy in Kenya," *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 34, No. 113, Imperial, Neo-Liberal Africa? (September 2007), 526-31. For an analysis of the persistent influence of Mau Mau's historical memory in contemporary Kenyan popular culture and politics, see Evan Mwangi, "The Incomplete Rebellion: Mau Mau Movement in Twenty-First Century Kenyan Popular Culture," *Africa Today*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (2010), 87-113.
[20] Branch, *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair*, 237.
[21] Loren Landau and Jean Misago, "Who to Blame and What's to Gain? Reflections on Space, State, and Violence in Kenya and South Africa," *Africa Spectrum*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 102.
[22] Peter Kagwanja, "Facing Mount Kenya or Facing Mecca? The *Mungiki*, Ethnic Violence, and the Politics of the Moi Succession in Kenya, 1987-2002," *African Affairs*, No. 102, 36.
[23] Ibid., 34.

application of alternative "social justice" initiatives[24], the organization's role in facilitating social cohesion and community development is apparent.[25]

Depictions of *Mungiki* frequently and understandably highlight the organization's prominent role in the 2007-8 post-election crisis, with little reference to the foundations for the organization's saliency in Kikuyu communities. Rather than viewing *Mungiki*'s social functions and its perpetration of political violence as mutually exclusive enterprises, this study analyzes *Mungiki* through the lens of *un*civil society—that is, as a mechanism for social cohesion, mobilization, and association within a democratic political sphere, but with sustained and structural commitments to violent, exclusive, or otherwise anti-democratic activity. These two functions often interfere, as during the destruction of property, infrastructure, and Kikuyu livelihoods throughout the 2007-8 post-election crisis. As a descriptive category, the uncivil society classification does not fit easily within the frameworks of liberal-democratic and associational civil society activity. However, as Bodil Frederiksen notes, Kenya's ethnic politics since the establishment of multi-partyism in the early 1990s, which has frequently been characterized by both individual and sustained incidents of political violence, necessitates a new civil society paradigm.[26]

Given *Mungiki*'s support for social services in Kikuyu communities and its participation in electoral politics, an artificial distinction between the organization's civil society roles and its violent activity fails to capture the social function of the organization's violence within Kenya's public sphere. Both structural and acute violence—between local communities, and between local communities and government security forces—define Kenya's post-colonial politics. Given violence's within Kenya's ethnic political configuration, particularly since the transition to multi-party rule, it is difficult to delink national and local political activity from the dynamics of political violence. A parallel decline in political violence has not accompanied Kenya's democratization; if anything, Kenyan democracy has been notable for the persistence of violence by national and grassroots actors. On the national level, civil conflict between affiliates of political elites, particularly surrounding the 1992, 1997, and 2007 elections, has served as a vehicle for state capture and the assertion of political authority.[27] Localized political violence can also be seen in the context of Kenya's violent politics. *Mungiki*, as one among many similar uncivil society configurations active in Kenya's public sphere, has married its participation in Kikuyu associational life and democratic politics with political violence. Accordingly, given the dual functions and the nature of competitive politics in Kenya, it is possible to envision *Mungiki*'s violence as a form of participatory mobilization.[28]

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[24] Ibid., 37-8.

[25] David Anderson, "Vigilantes, Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Kenya," *African Affairs*, No. 101 (2002), 547. Anderson provides a valuable analysis of the gap between public perceptions and the reality of public goods provision by *Mungiki* and similar groups: "Many of Nairobi's citizens undoubtedly view the vigilantes as a legitimate form of 'community policing'. But, as Kenya Police spokesperson Peter Kimathi lamented following the violence at Kariobangi, the Nairobi public has no clear understanding of what is meant by community policing."

[26] Bodil Frederiksen, "Mungiki, Vernacular Organization and Political Society in Kenya," *Development and Change*, Vol. 41, No. 6 (2010), 1071-2.

[27] Mwangi Kimenyi and Njuguna Ndung'u, "Sporadic Ethnic Violence: Why Has Kenya Not Experienced a Full-Blown Civil War?," in Paul Collier and Nicholas Sambanis, eds., *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2005), 147.

[28] In his anthropological analysis of political violence during the Sierra Leonean civil war, Danny Hoffman offers a similar explanation for the micro-politics of violence in civil conflict, albeit absent the democratization context: "No mere repetition, these narratives [of violence] are original even as they are always told in a new context and shape both the moment of their narration and the lives of those who tell

Pyramid of Peace

Recognizing the localized nature of militia mobilization throughout Kenya's post-election crisis, a coalition of Kenyan nonviolence advocates, supported by Andrius Kulikauskas, organized Pyramid of Peace[29] as a mechanism for peacebuilding and local conflict mitigation. Using SMS-based text-messaging, Ushahidi's crowd-sourced crisis mapping platform, and a faith-based community of volunteers, Pyramid of Peace created a community of peacebuilding practice through mobile phone technology and grassroots organizing initiatives. Pyramid of Peace's activities began within days of the first outbreaks of violence in western Kenya, and quickly mobilized throughout the Rift Valley.

Pyramid of Peace's volunteers filed reports from the field, using mobile communications to transmit information concerning incidents of violence, affected communities, and local peacebuilding efforts. Online wiki platforms and Kulikauskas' public Yahoo! email group offer a valuable, first-hand account of Pyramid of Peace activities. According to a 12 February 2008 email message by Kulikauskas, Pyramid of Peace comprised "100 peacemakers and about 1,000 volunteers who have helped enemies embrace enemies in Naivasha, Eldoret, Nakuru, Kibera, Kuresoi, Nandi Hills, Burnt Forest and some thirty locations," all of which were among the most significantly affected by post-election violence. The group served as a coalition-building operation in the midst of the country's election violence, "[embracing] the Kalenjin fighters, the *Mungiki* gangsters, the Catholic Bishop Cornelius Korir of Eldoret, and women and youth and refugees." In addition to their local reconciliation efforts, Pyramid of Peace "[organized] a network of peace centers which include ICT [information communication technology] education and work programs for displaced people."[30]

Pyramid of Peace "Commander-of-Operations" Rachel Kungu's local peacebuilding intervention in Naivasha, Rift Valley Province, demonstrates the organization's localized peacebuilding strategy, which provided a mechanism for the expression of grievance through reconciliatory dialogue and community cooperation. Kungu leveraged a team of Kikuyu peacemakers to facilitate initial outreach and reconciliation with *Mungiki* members in Naivasha, who had established a roadblock near the town. A few days prior to Kungu's visit, clashes between *Mungiki* members, and Luo and Kalenjin militias killed approximately ten people.[31] Kungu and her "team of Kikuyu peacemakers" traveled to the town on motorbike on 30 January 2008, and had a successful dispute resolution dialogue with their *Mungiki* interlocutors:

> Soon [the peacemakers] were talking with the local youth, and afterwards with the real Mungikis, a clique known for their violentness…They spoke with more than thirty people, many of whom were key Mungiki leaders, and received excellent

them…It is to suggest that along with any other mode of storytelling, the violent event is scripted by those who imagine themselves as lead characters, telling their own stories." In Danny Hoffman, "West-African Warscapes: Violent Events as Narrative Blocs: The Disarmament at Bo, Sierra Leone," *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (Spring 2005), 349.

[29] Pyramid of Peace, "Pyramid of Peace: January 1, 2008 to February 29, 2008" [http://www.pyramidofpeace.net], accessed on 1 December 2011.

[30] Andrius Kulikauskas, "Safaricom and Pyramid of Peace" [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/holistichelping/message/2340], 12 February 2008, accessed on 1 December 2011.

[31] "Violence in Naivasha" [http://kenya.ushahidi.com/reports/view/2859], 27 January 2008, accessed on 1 December 2011.

cooperation. They agreed that they would each speak further with five or ten people and invite them all for the great public meeting they will organize in the next two days along with Rachel and her team. They do not want to deal yet with the police in the area because they accuse them of much harm to their people, including their women, but at the meeting they will invite the local head of the police.[32]

In an email to his Yahoo! message group following Kungu's peacebuilding intervention at Naivasha, Kulikauskas described the *Mungiki* contingent's favorable response to Kungu's deliberative outreach with the Naivasha representatives, reinforcing Kungu's Ushahidi report:

> They will organize a large meeting in two days or so to meet with leaders from the Catholic church and with the local head of the police. Afterwards, they wish to meet with the Kalenjins for dialogue. They are ready for a permanent peace upon three reasonable conditions: 1) that Kalenjins and others stop fighting and free the roads as well, 2) that the opposition leaders tell their people to stop fighting, 3) that the youth be involved in the decisions affecting them.

Case Study Results: High Aspirations, Scalable Impact

Mungiki's favorable reception of Kungu's peacebuilding intervention offers an effective model for localized reconciliation and mediation interventions as a mechanism for conflict resolution. In addition to facilitating the dismantling of *Mungiki*'s Naivasha roadblock, Kungu and her peacebuilding colleagues allowed *Mungiki* participants to channel their participatory mobilization towards inclusive dialogue and localized political reconciliation. An analysis of *Mungiki*'s expressed demands to Kungu demonstrate the localized nature of Kikuyu political concerns in Naivasha; while the second demand perceives a relationship between national elite activity and local militia mobilization, the third demand demonstrates the interaction between social dislocation, political marginalization, and local political violence. In facilitating local reconciliation between community leadership—the Pyramid of Peace accounts of the peacebuilding intervention specifically note the Kikuyu affiliation of Kungu's colleagues—and *Mungiki* members, the peacebuilding organization provided a tangible outlet for uncivil society participation in nonviolent politics. Accordingly, the use of violence as a mechanism for political participation lost its potency as a driver of *Mungiki* retaliatory mobilization.

A scalable replication of Pyramid of Peace's *Mungiki* case relies on two components of the effort's success. Pyramid of Peace successfully engaged *Mungiki* members as participant actors in political violence, detaching organizational grievances and community voice from the framing context of political violence. In similar contexts—central Nigeria's Jos conflict, for example—mediators should incorporate perpetrators of political violence as equal participants in social mobilization and community participation, while acknowledging their responsibility for violence. Pyramid of Peace also succeeded in mobilizing international communities of peacebuilding practice for local, community-based interventions. The organization's emphasis on the local training of Kikuyu peacemakers enabled practitioners within conflict-affected communities, allowing for more salient peacebuilding interventions. Peacebuilding practitioners should take this model to heart, looking to local actors to drive local solutions to political violence.

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[32] Pyramid of Peace, "Reaching out to the Mungiki" [http://legacy.ushahidi.com/incident.asp?id=181], Ushahidi, 1 February 2008, accessed on 1 December 2011.

While there were no measurable unintended consequences from Pyramid of Peace's local peacebuilding intervention, the limited scope of the initiative reflects the challenges of widespread reconciliation and dialogue initiatives with uncivil society participants. Outside the scope of formalized peace negotiations, few international actors are willing to support efforts to engage and incorporate uncivil society actors into political processes. Pyramid of Peace's Naivasha intervention functioned well as an ad-hoc response to a high-casualty incident of political violence; however, successful mobilization necessitated the deployment of approximately thirty peacebuilding volunteers of Kikuyu origin, who, in the midst of localized ethnic violence, may be difficult to recruit without a significant financial incentive. Accordingly, given the degree of international and national financial commitment to national-level political reconciliation, investment flexibility for localized peacebuilding initiatives may be limited.

Conclusion

Pyramid of Peace's localized intervention in Kenya's post-election crisis, as well as similar initiatives surrounding local dispute resolution and reconciliation, demonstrates the importance of grassroots initiatives to facilitating conflict resolution. While the long-term sustainability of Pyramid of Peace's efforts will not be tested until the period surrounding Kenya's 2013 elections, the possibility of political dialogue and engagement proved a successful short-term mechanism for conflict mitigation. The grassroots nature of Pyramid of Peace's political reconciliation and outreach allowed the organization to address concerns of political marginalization among *Mungiki* adherents, therefore creating an alternative to the Kikuyu militia's participatory violence.

Additionally, Pyramid of Peace's peacebuilding intervention underlines the value and necessity of reframing conflict resolution paradigms about violent, community-based organizations like *Mungiki*. Frequently, international conflict interventions do not adequately engage local perpetrators of violence, for logistical, political, and ethical reasons. Grassroots civil society engagement with uncivil society actors encourages the mitigation of violent activity and nonviolent participation in democratic politics. *Mungiki* and similar organizations play an important social role as mechanisms for community cohesion, mobilization, and organization; to marginalize their role in political processes, particularly in conflict-affected environments, is to perpetuate the dislocation of communities and constituencies they claim to represent. Grassroots initiatives can provide avenues for peaceful dispute resolution, and facilitate post-conflict political participation in a way that international and national interventions cannot provide.

Critical Questions for Further Discussion

Localized reconciliation and dispute resolution efforts in the aftermath of Kenya's 2007 elections raise a number of important moral, political, and social questions regarding the international, regional, national, and local inclusion of uncivil society actors in conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding processes:

- Given limited financial resources directed towards local reconciliation and dispute resolution initiatives, how can international and national actors work through civil society actors to ensure the resolution of local conflict dynamics?
- What are the moral and ethical barriers to civil society engagement with violent actors like *Mungiki*? It is possible to circumvent such organizations and still address local grievances, motivations for violent mobilization, and outstanding political issues? Why or why not?

- What are the risks of engaging uncivil society actors in conflict resolution efforts, including ethnic associations, localized insurgencies, and militia groups? How can international, national, regional, and local actors work to mitigate these risks, as well as affiliated unintended consequences?