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**THE INFLUENCE OF TERRORISM ACTIVITIES ON MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN
RELATIONS IN GARISSA COUNTY, KENYA, 1998-2015**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism is no doubt a global problem of the 21st century and it is causing a major international security distress. In Kenya, terrorism is among the things affecting the Muslim-Christian relations. Despite vast literature on terrorism and interreligious relations, there are limited researches on the influence of terrorism on Muslim-Christian relations in Garissa County, hence this study. The main objective of the study was to examine the influence of terrorism on Muslim-Christian relations in Garissa County, Kenya. The study's specific objectives were to: examine the teaching of Islam on Jihad, identify and discuss the causes of terrorism in Garissa County, assess the effect of perpetrator characteristics on Muslim-Christian relations in Garissa County and finally recommend the suitable approaches of Muslim-Christian relations in Garissa County. The main theories that guided the study were; the Game and Religious Utility theories. The study employed both the descriptive and explanatory designs. The target population for the study was 199,469 residents from Garissa County from whom a sample of 384 respondents consisting of Muslim and Christian clerics, youths and security officers was obtained. Data was collected from primary sources using questionnaires, interview guides and focus group discussions as well as secondary sources which included books, journal publications and internet sources. The findings revealed that, Islam provides teachings on Jihad and war. It teaches that Jihad is not equivalent to war. It mainly refers to Muslims' daily obligations of accomplishing Allah's commands such as praying, paying zakat etcetera referred to as the greater jihad. There is also a lesser jihad, mainly a defensive form with a strict code of conduct. Further, the study revealed that terrorism is caused by: religious misconceptions and ideological beliefs, weak systems within the Islamic institutions, unemployment and poverty, invasion of the Kenya Defence Forces into Somalia, marginalization, corruption and negligence among the security personnel, presence of refugees and long porous borders. Besides, terror perpetrators erroneously use Islam and the concept of Jihad as a legitimizing tool to wage war against innocent people. Moreover, it was established that, terrorists' selective attacks on Christians have created suspicion and mistrust among the Muslims and Christians in the study area. The study concludes that unless the misunderstanding of the concept of Jihad is demystified, the Muslims-Christians relations will be significantly affected, since the terrorist will continue to propagate their attacks as an Islamic concept. The study recommends that; Muslim leaders should demystify the concept of Jihad in order to improve Muslim-Christian relations. Also, the government security agencies, the civil society and the religious leaders should continually organize awareness campaigns in the region to create alertness about the terrorists' schemes. Additionally, the government in collaboration with Islamic bodies such as Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) should create a centralised system that oversees the management of Islamic learning institutions in the county so as to avert the infiltration of these institutions by terrorist elements. It is hoped that, this research would be useful in supporting security stakeholders in their efforts of tackling the terrorism threat.