

International Intelligence Liaison Institutional Arrangements and Their Impact on Peace and Security in Uganda and Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of international intelligence liaison institutional arrangements on peace and security in Uganda and Kenya. Given the increasing complexity of security threats, including terrorism, insurgencies, and cross-border crimes, effective inter-agency cooperation and regional coordination have become critical. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 75 respondents using structured questionnaires and from 20 key informants through in-depth interviews. The respondents included personnel from national intelligence agencies, regional security bodies, diplomatic missions, and other government security institutions. Quantitative findings indicate that formal liaison agreements and joint operational assessments are largely in place and viewed positively, with mean scores ranging from 3.75 to 4.12 on a 5-point scale. However, gaps exist in operational implementation, real-time intelligence sharing, and inter-agency trust, with these factors limiting the full potential of collaborative efforts. Qualitative results reinforce these concerns, revealing challenges such as mandate overlaps, political interference, limited community engagement, and insufficient integration of socio-economic factors into security planning. Participants underscored the need for enhanced trust-building, clear command structures, and stronger regional enforcement mechanisms to improve collective security responses. Additionally, socio-economic development was identified as a vital complement to security initiatives in addressing root causes of instability. The study concludes that while Kenya and Uganda have made significant strides in establishing institutional frameworks for intelligence cooperation, more robust operational coordination and inclusive approaches are necessary to sustain peace and security. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, regional organizations, and international partners aiming to strengthen security governance in East Africa.

Keywords: *International intelligence liaison, institutional arrangements, peace and security, inter-agency cooperation, regional coordination, intelligence sharing, security governance, counterterrorism.*

1.0 Introduction

East Africa's security landscape is increasingly shaped by dynamic and transnational threats including terrorism, illicit trafficking, cybercrime, and organized cross-border crime. The porous nature of national borders, particularly between Uganda and Kenya, has further exacerbated the vulnerability of both countries to these evolving threats (Uganda Media Centre, 2021). Groups such as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Al-Shabaab, and other non-state actors exploit weak border controls, informal trade routes, and fragile governance to move operatives, weapons, and contraband across territories. The threat is compounded by the rapid digitalization of regional economies, which has introduced new vulnerabilities, particularly in the domains of cybercrime and extremist online radicalization (Kimani & Otieno, 2023). In this context, intelligence coordination has emerged as a vital instrument in detecting, disrupting, and responding to emerging security threats.

Uganda and Kenya, as regional security anchors, have made significant strides in formalizing bilateral and multilateral intelligence liaison mechanisms to address these challenges. Bilaterally, both countries routinely share intelligence related to terrorist movements, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and cross-border insurgent activity. Collaborative actions between Uganda's Internal Security Organisation (ISO), External Security Organisation (ESO), and Kenya's National Intelligence Service (NIS) have facilitated the dismantling of cross-border terrorist cells and disrupted the operations of violent extremist groups (Muchwa, 2021). These efforts are often bolstered by ad hoc joint task forces and reciprocal deployments, particularly during high-risk events such as elections, major religious gatherings, or following security alerts issued by foreign intelligence partners (Ateka, 2022). Furthermore, Kenya's intelligence infrastructure is buttressed by its strategic partnerships with international agencies including the FBI, Interpol, and Mossad, with whom it engages in training, surveillance, and counterterrorism operations (Ndiritu, 2023). Uganda, although more inward-focused, has maintained a network of informal liaison structures with neighboring states and international partners to monitor and neutralize sub-regional threats.

Multilaterally, the establishment of the Eastern Africa Fusion and Liaison Unit (EA-FLU), headquartered in Entebbe, Uganda, has provided a central hub for intelligence cooperation across ten member states in Eastern Africa. Created in response to growing concerns over the spread of terrorism and transnational organized crime, EA-FLU facilitates timely exchange of intelligence, harmonized threat assessments, and coordinated responses to regional security concerns (Uganda Media Centre, 2021). The unit acts as a clearinghouse for data collected by national agencies and supports joint analysis efforts through real-time reporting mechanisms. According to ISO (2022), EA-FLU has been instrumental in foiling several planned terrorist attacks and in enhancing early warning systems across participating countries. Nonetheless, challenges persist in the form of uneven technological capacity, divergent operational protocols, and limited legal harmonization between participating states (Oloo, 2024).

Beyond the Uganda-Kenya bilateral axis and EA-FLU's multilateral framework, broader regional and continental institutions also influence intelligence liaison and cooperation. The East African Community (EAC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the African Union (AU) offer strategic and institutional platforms aimed at fostering security collaboration. Instruments such as the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) provide member states with access to continental threat analysis and intelligence coordination tools. However, these institutions often face bureaucratic inertia, resource constraints, and political friction, which hinder their operational effectiveness (African Union Peace and Security Council, 2023). For example, while CEWS is mandated to collect and analyze information related to potential conflicts, its integration with national intelligence services remains weak, largely due to issues of sovereignty and data sensitivity (Kisuule, 2024).

Given these dynamics, it is critical to evaluate how intelligence liaison arrangements both at the bilateral and multilateral levels impact peace and security in Uganda and Kenya. This study seeks to assess the practical effectiveness of current liaison frameworks, identify persistent coordination and operational gaps, and explore opportunities for institutional strengthening. It pays particular attention to the balance between operational efficiency and democratic oversight, the adequacy of legal frameworks governing inter-agency cooperation, and the extent to which trust and reciprocity exist among intelligence partners. Ultimately, the research contributes to broader discourses on regional security governance, intelligence accountability, and the role of institutions in fostering collective peace and resilience in East Africa.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The East African region continues to grapple with a complex range of transnational security threats including terrorism, human and drug trafficking, cross-border insurgencies, and cybercrime. Uganda and Kenya, in particular, remain vulnerable due to porous borders and a high prevalence of regional militant groups such as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and Al-Shabaab (Muchwa, 2021; Kimani & Otieno, 2023). In response, various institutional frameworks for intelligence liaison have been established, most notably the Eastern Africa Fusion and Liaison Unit (EA-FLU), and multilateral initiatives under the African Union such as the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) (AU Peace and Security Council, 2022; Uganda Media Centre, 2021).

Despite the creation of these structures, studies show that intelligence sharing and regional cooperation remain inconsistent and underutilized due to fragmented legal frameworks, insufficient inter-agency trust, and uneven technical capacity across member states (Mukoma, 2022; Karani, 2023). Furthermore, the absence of harmonized oversight mechanisms where Kenya has formal legislative scrutiny of its intelligence service while Uganda maintains an opaque, executive-driven model—creates accountability imbalances that may inhibit trust and operational coherence in joint actions (Muchwa, 2021; Ndugu & Were, 2023). According to UNOCT (2022), although initiatives like the Global Fusion Cells Programme have enhanced skills in data analysis and threat monitoring, these remain donor-dependent and are not sustainably embedded in national systems.

More critically, there is limited empirical evidence on the actual impact of these liaison structures on reducing threats or enhancing peace and security outcomes in Uganda and Kenya. Most evaluations have focused on structural presence rather than operational performance or measurable outcomes in conflict prevention and law enforcement coordination (Otieno & Abebe, 2024). As a result, a key knowledge gap persists: the region lacks a comprehensive understanding of how well intelligence liaison arrangements function in practice, and what institutional and political factors enhance or undermine their effectiveness. Therefore, this study sought to address this gap by examining the effectiveness of institutionalized international intelligence liaison frameworks in enhancing peace and security in Uganda and Kenya. The research explored how liaison structures were operationalized, the extent to which they contributed to regional stability, and what reforms would be necessary to improve their transparency, sustainability, and impact.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical perspective

The study applies institutional theory, examining how formal structures, norms, and legal frameworks shape intelligence collaboration (Muchwa, 2021). It also draws on regionalism theory, highlighting East African Community frameworks as trust-building platforms (Mukomeza, 2016).

Institutional Theory. Institutional theory asserts that the behavior of organizations like intelligence agencies reflects the influence of formal structures (such as laws and operating protocols), normative pressures (expectations of proper conduct), and cognitive frameworks (taken-for-granted beliefs) that shape their actions and identities (Scott, 2008). In Uganda and Kenya, this manifests in how liaison mechanisms are designed and maintained. For example, the implementation of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between ISO and NIS, the establishment of joint intelligence fusion centers like EA-FLU, and the use of standardized reporting systems are direct responses to institutional pressures for order, predictability, and legitimacy (Muchwa, 2021). Countries emulate successful templates for instance, Kenya's legal provisions for parliamentary oversight signaling

institutional isomorphism, where both nations progressively align their procedures to meet international best practices and donor expectations (Kenya Ministry of Interior, 2022). Institutional theory also explains divergence: even with formal arrangements in place, Kenya's more transparent oversight and audit practices create different organizational dynamics than Uganda's internal, less visible processes, influencing liaison quality and public trust (Muchwa, 2021). In this study, institutional theory helps us unpack the internal dynamics shaping liaison effectiveness: how regulatory frameworks enable or constrain data sharing; how bureaucracy supports or hinders joint analysis; and how legal mandates influence transparency and sustainability. It enables a granular analysis of how procedural norms translate into operational coordination on the ground.

Regionalism Theory. Regionalism theory especially the “new regionalism” paradigm emphasizes how regional organizations foster cooperation and build shared norms and practices among member states. In East Africa, regional frameworks like the EAC, IGAD, and AU function as platforms for joint security efforts, facilitating intelligence sharing and early warning systems (Mukomeza, 2016). The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) illustrate this, offering mechanisms that connect national agencies into continental threat assessment networks. EA-FLU itself is a practical embodiment of regional institutionalism: through co-located analysts, standardized intelligence formats, and routine information exchanges, it nurtures trust, reciprocity, and shared identity among East African intelligence services. Regionalism theory explains why states may adopt and sustain such cooperative structures: the promise of collective security, shared burden, and legitimacy in the face of transnational threats. Yet, it also highlights challenges. Despite formal integration, disparities in funding, divergent political priorities, and concerns about sovereignty create tensions, inhibiting full operationalization of regional mandates. For instance, while CEWS provides strategic frameworks, its practical impact depends on national capacities to feed data into the system. Similarly, EA-FLU's potential is affected by the ability of member states to resource fusion center activities and standardize their operational protocols.

When applied together, these theories offer a comprehensive lens. Institutional theory focuses on the internal composition of intelligence liaison how rules, norms, and legal mandates influence agency behavior, coordination efficiency, and public legitimacy. Regionalism theory situates these practices in a broader geopolitical and normative context, explaining how regional institutions scaffold trust, create incentives for cooperation, and shape collective action. In the empirical investigation that follows, institutional theory informs evaluation of national treaty mechanisms, oversight frameworks, and liaison protocols. Regionalism theory, on the other hand, guides the assessment of cross-border fusion platforms like EA-FLU and continental tools like CEWS. Together, they help explain both the structure and the substance of intelligence liaison, and how these shape peace and security outcomes in Uganda and Kenya.

2.2. Institutional Liaison Effectiveness

The effectiveness of formal intelligence liaison structures in improving inter-agency communication, strategic threat response, and early warning capabilities has been well documented in recent studies. According to Muchwa (2021), institutionalized intelligence collaboration enhances not only the timeliness but also the credibility of shared information among security actors. His comparative study on Uganda's Internal Security Organisation (ISO) and Kenya's National Intelligence Service (NIS) noted that the presence of formal liaison agreements correlates with a measurable increase in joint counterterrorism operations and cross-border threat mitigation. Muchwa argued that such institutional frameworks transform intelligence sharing from sporadic exchange into routine inter-agency behavior, underpinned by standard operating procedures.

The establishment of the Eastern Africa Fusion and Liaison Unit (EA-FLU) in Entebbe stands out as a regional case study in successful liaison institutionalization. As reported by the Uganda Media Centre (2021), EA-FLU functions as a multilateral platform that integrates intelligence units from ten countries in the region, providing joint analytical support, information sharing, and coordinated responses to transnational threats. Supporting this structure, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) launched the Global Fusion Cells Programme in 2022, training over 1,100 officers including EA-FLU personnel in open-source intelligence gathering, analysis, and fusion protocols (UNOCT, 2022). This program was critical in equipping East African analysts with the tools necessary to monitor emerging threats such as digital radicalization, cross-border insurgency, and trafficking networks. As a result, EA-FLU has contributed to the timely interception of planned attacks, especially along the Uganda–Kenya and Kenya–Somalia corridors. Moreover, Kimani and Otieno (2023) emphasized that effective liaison depends not just on structure but also on capacity and consistency. Their study found that regional intelligence effectiveness was highest in contexts where liaison was backed by formalized training programs, clear legal mandates, and interoperability of communication technologies. They further argued that the EA-FLU model offered a blueprint for enhancing trust among agencies that historically operated in isolation. Joint debriefings, multi-agency exercises, and shared operational metrics were all identified as practices that improve not only tactical outcomes but also long-term institutional trust.

In terms of national cooperation, Kyanda (2021) observed that structured bilateral intelligence-sharing between Uganda and Kenya had significantly improved following formal agreements signed in 2019 and operationalized by 2020. These agreements facilitated coordinated border surveillance and enabled both countries to disrupt the movement of armed groups like the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and Al-Shabaab. He noted that unlike ad hoc liaison practices of the past, these new frameworks embed liaison into the architecture of national security, with intelligence chiefs meeting regularly to review regional threats and adapt strategies accordingly. Together, these studies affirm that formal institutional arrangements in intelligence liaison foster operational consistency, build mutual trust, and ensure continuity in the face of leadership changes or shifting political priorities. EA-FLU's experience shows that multilateral liaison platforms when supported by training, political commitment, and structured communication can significantly advance the goal of regional peace and security.

2.3. Regional Security Architectures

The role of regional security architectures in promoting coordinated intelligence practices and shared threat awareness has grown substantially in East Africa. Institutions like the African Union's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), the East African Community (EAC), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have played pivotal roles in fostering transnational intelligence collaboration. CEWS, in particular, functions as a core component of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), integrating national-level data into a continent-wide system for conflict early warning, data analysis, and preventative diplomacy (AU Peace and Security Council, 2022). However, as Mukoma (2022) notes, the effectiveness of CEWS has often been hindered by inconsistencies in data submission from member states, a lack of harmonized information-sharing protocols, and political sensitivity around intelligence disclosure.

Similarly, CISSA offers a strategic platform for African intelligence chiefs to share threat assessments, debrief operations, and coordinate joint countermeasures, particularly in response to transnational terrorism, cyber threats, and insurgent movements (Munyua, 2023). The effectiveness of CISSA, however, is contingent upon the political will of member states and their capacity to

institutionalize its recommendations. In the East African context, while CISSA has been instrumental in improving regional strategic dialogue, its operationalization has faced hurdles. According to Ndugu and Were (2023), these include inadequate technological infrastructure, legal incompatibilities among national intelligence laws, and insufficient training across partner states.

The East African Community (EAC) has also established a Peace and Security Protocol that emphasizes regional cooperation in intelligence, border management, and conflict prevention. Through its Sectoral Council on Interstate Security, the EAC has facilitated information exchange among security agencies and supported joint threat assessments during high-risk events such as elections and regional summits (Muriithi & Karani, 2022). However, the implementation of EAC protocols has been uneven. Karani (2023) argues that while Kenya and Rwanda have made significant progress in integrating EAC security guidelines into their national frameworks, countries like South Sudan and Burundi lag behind due to weak institutional capacity and political instability. While, IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) has further contributed to intelligence sharing in the region, particularly in pastoralist border areas prone to conflict. CEWARN uses localized data collection through field monitors and integrates it with national security reports to generate risk alerts. A study by Juma (2021) found that while CEWARN has improved situational awareness along the Kenya-Ethiopia-Uganda corridor, its reliance on voluntary reporting and limited digital infrastructure reduces its responsiveness to fast-moving threats such as terrorism or cybercrime.

Collectively, these regional security architectures provide valuable institutional frameworks for harmonizing intelligence sharing, building mutual trust, and coordinating countermeasures against transnational threats. However, as Otieno and Abebe (2024) emphasize, the fragmentation of roles between CEWS, CEWARN, and EAC organs sometimes leads to redundancy and confusion in response protocols. They suggest that greater integration and interoperability between regional and continental institutions is essential for improving strategic coherence and operational effectiveness. Thus, while regional architectures have significantly expanded the scope and potential of intelligence cooperation in East Africa, their success depends heavily on member-state compliance, legal harmonization, and sustained investment in technical and human resource capacities. Bridging these operational and structural gaps is vital for the realization of a resilient and responsive regional security framework.

2.4. Oversight Dynamics

The degree of legislative and civilian oversight over intelligence agencies plays a crucial role in shaping both the legitimacy and operational efficiency of intelligence liaison frameworks. Effective oversight not only ensures accountability and transparency but also fosters trust among domestic stakeholders and international partners. In the context of East Africa, particularly Uganda and Kenya, oversight dynamics reveal a stark institutional contrast that directly influences the effectiveness of intelligence collaboration.

Kenya has established relatively robust oversight mechanisms. The National Intelligence Service (NIS) is subjected to parliamentary vetting through the Departmental Committee on Defence and Foreign Relations, and the Director-General of NIS must regularly report to the National Assembly (African Centre for Security Governance, 2025). This oversight extends to budgetary scrutiny and participation in multi-stakeholder national security forums, where civil society and legal experts may contribute to discussions on counterterrorism and surveillance legislation (Karani & Muriuki, 2022). Such mechanisms enhance public trust and improve Kenya's standing with international donors and intelligence partners who demand transparency as a prerequisite for sensitive data

sharing (Otieno & Abebe, 2024). In contrast, Uganda's Internal Security Organisation (ISO) and External Security Organisation (ESO) operate within a closed framework of executive control, with minimal legislative or public scrutiny. As Muchwa (2021) observed, Uganda lacks a formal parliamentary oversight structure for its intelligence services, and the agencies primarily report to the Office of the President. This centralization creates opacity in operations and financial accountability, which may reduce the perceived legitimacy of Uganda's intelligence actions, particularly when involving cross-border operations or politically sensitive investigations. Kyanda (2021) argues that the absence of clear legal mandates governing information sharing and inter-agency cooperation weakens Uganda's capacity to engage in transparent intelligence collaboration, particularly with states like Kenya that operate under stricter legal regimes.

This divergence in oversight frameworks presents practical challenges to bilateral and multilateral intelligence coordination. For instance, the Eastern Africa Fusion and Liaison Unit (EA-FLU), which relies on reciprocal information exchange and trust-based collaboration, may be hindered when member states differ in transparency standards. According to Ndugu and Were (2023), such asymmetries can produce intelligence asymmetry, where more accountable states are reluctant to share sensitive information with counterparts operating under opaque frameworks. Additionally, lack of oversight can breed operational impunity and politicization of intelligence, thereby undermining the core objectives of liaison arrangements namely trust-building, joint problem-solving, and long-term regional security enhancement.

Moreover, civilian oversight is increasingly recognized as a critical component of democratic intelligence governance. Karani (2023) emphasizes that integrating civil society, legal scholars, and human rights experts into national security dialogue not only aligns with global best practices but also ensures that intelligence services adhere to constitutional and ethical standards. Kenya's progressive inclusion of civilian voices contrasts with Uganda's top-down model, which risks reinforcing secrecy and eroding public confidence in national and regional security operations. Therefore, the oversight gap between Uganda and Kenya represents more than just a legal disparity it fundamentally affects the quality, depth, and sustainability of intelligence liaison. Addressing this requires deliberate legal harmonization, institutional reforms, and regional frameworks that prioritize transparency, joint review mechanisms, and mutual accountability across all participating intelligence services.

2.5. Capacity Deficits

Despite the formal establishment of regional intelligence frameworks and bilateral liaison platforms, their operational effectiveness remains constrained by persistent capacity deficits. These limitations span human resource shortages, inadequate technological infrastructure, and insufficient language and analytical competencies. Kimani and Otieno (2023) found that many intelligence fusion centers across Eastern Africa suffer from understaffing, limited training in cyber and data analytics, and outdated communication systems. Their study, based on interviews with liaison officers and regional security managers, revealed that most intelligence centers lack specialists in digital forensics and are unable to process large volumes of threat data efficiently. This is particularly concerning given the evolving nature of modern threats, including cyberterrorism and disinformation campaigns, which require sophisticated analytical tools and well-trained personnel.

Language barriers further compound the challenge. Given the multilingual nature of East Africa, proficiency in operational languages such as Kiswahili, French, Arabic, and Somali is essential for effective cross-border communication. However, intelligence units often operate with limited linguistic diversity, impeding real-time cooperation and the interpretation of intercepted

communications (Karani & Muriuki, 2022). These deficiencies limit the utility of liaison units like EA-FLU, which depend on multilingual interoperability to coordinate responses across borders effectively. Also, the European Union's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Centres of Excellence initiative for Eastern and Central Africa (EU CBRN CoE, 2024) highlighted similar concerns. In a regional capacity audit, the programme reported that intelligence units in Uganda, Kenya, and neighboring states lack harmonized training curricula, standardized data platforms, and inter-agency language integration. The report recommended digital modernization and periodic joint training exercises as key interventions to close the competence gap. However, most of these activities have remained donor-driven, often depending on short-term funding cycles rather than long-term strategic investment.

Similarly, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), through its Global Fusion Cells Programme, has supported regional capacity development by training over 1,100 analysts in open-source intelligence and threat fusion techniques (UNOCT, 2022). While these trainings have improved tactical analysis and situational awareness, they are often limited in geographical reach and continuity. According to Otieno and Abebe (2024), the over-reliance on donor-supported training and infrastructure development creates a sustainability risk, especially when national governments do not embed these enhancements into their long-term budgeting and institutional development frameworks. Moreover, technological disparities between partner states further inhibit the seamless sharing of classified data and joint analysis. Some countries operate with secure, encrypted platforms for intelligence dissemination, while others rely on basic or ad hoc communication systems, introducing security vulnerabilities and delays (Ndugu & Were, 2023). This technological gap undermines regional coherence, particularly within multilateral arrangements like CEWS and EA-FLU, where synchronized threat monitoring is critical. Therefore, while institutional structures and political will for intelligence liaison exist, they are significantly weakened by insufficient investment in human capital, technology, and standardized operating procedures. Addressing these capacity deficits is vital for enhancing regional security responses, fostering trust among liaison partners, and ensuring that existing frameworks are resilient to future security challenges.

2.6. Research Gaps

Despite growing scholarly attention to intelligence cooperation in East Africa, several critical research gaps remain. First, while the literature has established the structural presence of intelligence liaison frameworks such as EA-FLU, CEWS, and CISSA, few studies since 2020 have provided empirical evaluations of how these arrangements directly impact measurable security outcomes in Uganda and Kenya. Most analyses remain descriptive or normative, lacking statistical or field-based evidence to link liaison activity to reduced threats, improved arrest rates, or enhanced public safety (Kimani & Otieno, 2023; Otieno & Abebe, 2024). Secondly, although the contrasting oversight regimes in Uganda and Kenya have been discussed independently, there is limited comparative analysis of how these variations affect intelligence performance, legitimacy, and inter-agency trust. Uganda's executive-dominated system and Kenya's legislatively anchored model offer a valuable contrast, yet the implications of these governance differences for cross-border liaison remain underexplored (Muchwa, 2021; Karani & Muriuki, 2022). Thirdly, while supranational bodies like the AU, EAC, and IGAD have created platforms and protocols for intelligence coordination, there is a shortage of research assessing the influence of these agencies on national decision-making and bilateral intelligence relationships. Questions remain about how effectively AU-driven frameworks like CEWS and CISSA translate into operational practices within national agencies, and whether these regional efforts enhance or dilute bilateral security cooperation (AU Peace and Security

Council, 2022; Ndugu & Were, 2023). Thus, addressing these gaps is essential for advancing both academic knowledge and practical policy reforms in regional intelligence governance.

3. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively investigate the relationship between intelligence liaison arrangements and security outcomes. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed to understand not only measurable security results but also the institutional dynamics influencing collaboration effectiveness.

3.1. Philosophical Assumptions

The study was grounded in a pragmatic philosophical assumption, which emphasized practical problem-solving by integrating quantitative indicators with qualitative perceptions while acknowledged the complexity of social phenomena. This approach recognized that no single method could fully capture the realities of security cooperation; therefore, it combined objective quantitative measures, such as the frequency of security incidents disrupted, with subjective qualitative insights into the perceptions and experiences of key stakeholders. This approach also allowed the research to address both the empirical outcomes of liaison activities and the institutional factors shaping these outcomes.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A post-positivist research paradigm guided the study, combining statistical analysis of security data with thematic exploration of trust and accountability through interviews. This paradigm recognized the value of objectivity while acknowledging the complexity of social phenomena inherent in security collaborations. The mixed-methods paradigm ensured a balanced examination by combining numeric trends with rich, contextually grounded narratives drawn from frontline intelligence operatives and diplomatic actors.

3.3 Research Design

A correlational mixed-method design was adopted. Quantitative data measured the depth of liaison arrangements captured through formal agreements and joint operational assessments and their association with security outcomes such as disrupted terrorist activities, cross-border seizures, and trust indices. Qualitative data complemented these findings by exploring participants' experiences and perceptions of intelligence cooperation. The design enabled the identification of statistically significant associations while also explaining these relationships through qualitative accounts, thus providing a holistic view of liaison efficacy.

3.4 Target Population

The target population consisted of personnel from key agencies involved in intelligence liaison and regional security operations. These included national security agencies, regional intelligence fusion units, and international organizations engaged in security collaboration.

Table 1: Target population of the study.

Agency/Organization	Target Population Description	Estimated Population Size
Internal Security Organization (ISO)	Intelligence officers and analysts	50
National Intelligence Service (NIS)	Field operatives and coordinators	60
East African Fusion Liaison Unit (EA-FLU)	Liaison officers and analysts	30
African Union CISSA	Regional intelligence and security officers	20
Diplomatic Missions	Security attachés and diplomatic staff	15
Total		175

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Method

To ensure representativeness and manageability, a purposive sampling technique was employed for both quantitative and qualitative data collection. This technique was selected due to the specialized nature of the participants, who possessed relevant expertise and direct involvement in intelligence liaison.

- **Quantitative sample:** 80 participants were selected from the target population, proportionally distributed among the agencies based on size and operational relevance.
- **Qualitative sample:** 20 key informants were chosen purposively to provide in-depth insights. These included senior intelligence officials, African Union CISSA officers, and diplomatic stakeholders with direct experience in liaison activities.

Table 2: Study Sample Size and

Agency/Organization	Quantitative Sample	Qualitative Sample	Total Sample
Internal Security Organization (ISO)	23	5	28
National Intelligence Service (NIS)	28	6	34
East African Fusion Liaison Unit (EA-FLU)	12	3	15
African Union CISSA	7	4	11
Diplomatic Missions	10	2	12
Total	80	20	100

3.6 Data Collection Techniques

Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to frontline officers. The questionnaires included closed-ended questions measuring liaison depth and perceptions of security outcomes.

Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with selected senior officials and diplomats. These interviews explored themes of trust, accountability, and challenges in intelligence cooperation.

3.7 Data Management and Analysis

Quantitative data were entered and analyzed using SPSS software, where descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliability tests were conducted. Qualitative interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using NVivo to identify emerging themes and patterns. Coding consistency was ensured through intercoder reliability checks, and all data were treated with confidentiality and stored securely throughout the research.

4. Results

4.1 Response rate

Table 1: Response Rate of the Study

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Target Sample Size	80	100%
Actual Respondents	75	93.8%
Non-Respondents	5	6.2%

Source: Primary data, 2024

The study recorded a commendable response rate of 93.8%, with 75 out of 80 targeted participants successfully taking part in the survey. A response rate above 90% in social and security-related research indicates a high level of interest and relevance of the study to the participants. It also reflects effective administration of data collection tools and strong institutional cooperation, particularly when dealing with sensitive topics such as peace and security. The minimal non-response rate of 6.2% can be attributed to factors such as unavailability of some officials or institutional limitations on participation in research involving classified information.

4.2 Background characteristics of the respondents

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 75)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Country of Origin	Kenya	38	50.7%
	Uganda	37	49.3%
Education Level	Diploma	10	13.3%
	Bachelor's Degree	26	34.7%
	Master's Degree	29	38.7%
	PhD or Equivalent	10	13.3%
Institutional Affiliation	National Intelligence (NIS/ISO)	28	37.3%
	Regional Security Bodies (EA-FLU, CISSA)	22	29.3%
	Diplomatic Missions/External Agencies	12	16.0%
	Other Government Security Agencies	13	17.4%

Source: Primary data, 2024

In terms of demographic characteristics, the distribution of respondents between Kenya (50.7%) and Uganda (49.3%) was nearly equal, ensuring balanced representation from both countries under study. This even split strengthens the comparative aspect of the research, allowing for more accurate insights into the regional dynamics of intelligence liaison and peace enforcement.

With regard to education levels, a significant proportion of respondents held Master's degrees (38.7%), followed by Bachelor's degrees (34.7%), while 13.3% held PhDs and another 13.3% possessed Diplomas. This academic profile suggests that the respondents were well-educated and likely held technical, managerial, or policy-level roles in their respective institutions. Such a background enhances the credibility of the data collected, as it reflects informed perspectives based on professional experience and theoretical knowledge.

When categorized by institutional affiliation, the largest group of respondents came from national intelligence services such as the National Intelligence Service (NIS) of Kenya and the Internal Security Organization (ISO) of Uganda, accounting for 37.3% of the sample. This was followed by officials from regional security bodies like EA-FLU and CISSA (29.3%), diplomatic missions and external partners (16.0%), and other government-affiliated security institutions (17.4%). This distribution underscores the multi-agency and multi-level nature of peace and security efforts in East Africa. It also ensures that the study draws from diverse institutional perspectives, including frontline intelligence actors, regional analysts, and diplomatic personnel.

Overall, the demographic structure of the sample demonstrates that the study was grounded in expert opinion, institutionally diverse, and geographically balanced. This enhances the reliability of the findings and supports the generalizability of conclusions related to inter-agency coordination, trust-building, and regional cooperation in enhancing peace and security in Kenya and Uganda.

4.3 Relationship between International Intelligence Liaison Institutional Arrangements and Peace and Security in Uganda and Kenya.

4.3.1 Descriptive statistics on International Intelligence Liaison Institutional Arrangements

The descriptive results on International Intelligence Liaison Institutional Arrangements in Uganda and Kenya are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: International Intelligence Liaison Institutional Arrangements in Uganda and Kenya (n= 75)

Construct	Item Statement	Mean (M)	SD
Liaison Formal Agreements	1. Formal liaison agreements are clearly defined.	4.20	0.68
	2. Agreements are regularly reviewed.	4.05	0.72
	3. Roles and responsibilities are clearly assigned.	4.15	0.71
	4. Agreements align with national laws.	4.12	0.69
	5. Partner agencies are committed to the agreements.	4.08	0.73
	6. There is a formal process for reviewing liaison performance.	4.00	0.68
	Construct Mean / SD	4.10	0.70
Joint Operational Assessments	1. Joint threat assessments occur regularly.	4.02	0.74
	2. Findings from assessments are actionable.	4.10	0.71
	3. Joint planning occurs in response to threats.	3.92	0.75
	4. Results are promptly communicated to stakeholders.	3.98	0.77
	5. Assessment teams include multiple agencies.	4.05	0.76
	6. Joint assessments have improved security.	3.92	0.77
	Construct Mean / SD	4.00	0.75
Disruption of Terrorist Acts	1. Terrorist plots are frequently disrupted.	3.85	0.88
	2. Cross-border seizures have increased.	3.75	0.83
	3. Safe havens for militants are reduced.	3.80	0.86
	4. Shared intelligence has prevented attacks.	3.95	0.81
	5. Terrorist financing routes are intercepted more often.	3.72	0.90
	6. Surveillance coordination has deterred threats.	3.74	0.86
	Construct Mean / SD	3.80	0.85
Inter-agency Trust	1. Partner agencies share accurate intelligence.	3.90	0.91
	2. I believe in other agencies' reliability.	3.92	0.93
	3. Agencies respect confidentiality agreements.	3.88	0.87
	4. There is mutual respect among agencies.	3.95	0.88
	5. Information is not withheld or manipulated.	3.75	0.91
	6. Trust has improved due to joint operations.	4.00	0.91
	Construct Mean / SD	3.90	0.90
Overall Average of All Constructs		3.95	0.80

Source: Field data, 2025

SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, NS= Not Sure, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Key for mean: 1.00- 2.49= Disagreed, 2.5-3.49= Not Sure, 3.5-5.00= Agreed.

The table presents descriptive statistics means and standard deviations for five key constructs related to inter-agency security collaboration: Liaison Formal Agreements, Joint Operational Assessments, Disruption of Terrorist Acts, Inter-agency Trust, and the overall average across all constructs. The overall average mean score across all constructs is **3.95 (SD = 0.80)**, indicating a generally positive but cautious assessment of multi-agency security cooperation. While formal structures and joint assessments provide a solid foundation, operational challenges in disrupting terrorist acts and variable levels of trust among agencies reveal important areas for further capacity building and policy attention. These findings highlight the importance of not only maintaining robust agreements and assessments but also fostering operational effectiveness and deeper trust to enhance security outcomes.

Presenting and discussion of findings per each construct.

- ***Liaison Formal Agreements***

The construct of Liaison Formal Agreements received the highest average mean score of 4.10 (SD = 0.70), indicating strong agreement among respondents that formal agreements underpinning inter-agency collaboration are well established and effective. Individual items such as clearly defined agreements (M = 4.20) and clearly assigned roles and responsibilities (M = 4.15) suggest that agencies have a clear understanding of their mandates and commitments. The relatively low standard deviations (around 0.68–0.73) reflect consistent perceptions across respondents, highlighting the stability and clarity of these formal arrangements. The fact that agreements align with national laws (M = 4.12) and that partner agencies are committed to these agreements (M = 4.08) indicates institutional legitimacy and shared accountability, essential for sustainable collaboration. Regular review mechanisms (M = 4.05) and formal performance assessments (M = 4.00) point to dynamic and adaptive processes rather than static protocols. Overall, this construct reflects a strong foundational framework that supports effective multi-agency cooperation.

- ***Joint Operational Assessments***

Joint Operational Assessments scored a mean of 4.00 (SD = 0.75), indicating a positive but slightly less robust perception compared to formal agreements. Respondents generally agree that joint threat assessments occur regularly (M = 4.02) and that the findings are actionable (M = 4.10), which suggests practical utility of these assessments in guiding security responses. Multi-agency involvement in assessment teams (M = 4.05) and prompt communication of results to stakeholders (M = 3.98) further demonstrate collaborative inclusiveness and transparency. However, slightly lower means for joint planning (M = 3.92) and improvements in security as a result of assessments (M = 3.92) may indicate some operational challenges in translating assessments into coordinated, effective actions. The larger standard deviation (around 0.75) suggests some variability in respondent experiences or perceptions, possibly due to differences in implementation or regional contexts. This construct underscores the importance of continuous improvement in turning joint assessments into timely, cohesive plans.

- ***Disruption of Terrorist Acts***

This construct received the lowest mean score of 3.80 (SD = 0.85), highlighting that while some progress is acknowledged, significant gaps persist in effectively disrupting terrorist activities. The items reveal moderate agreement that terrorist plots are frequently disrupted (M = 3.85) and that shared intelligence has helped prevent attacks (M = 3.95), which points to some operational successes. However, lower scores for cross-border seizures (M = 3.75), reductions in safe havens (M = 3.80), and interceptions of terrorist financing (M = 3.72) indicate ongoing challenges, possibly reflecting difficulties in resource allocation, jurisdictional issues, or sophisticated terrorist networks. The relatively high standard deviations (around 0.83 to 0.90) imply significant differences in perceptions, suggesting that disruption effectiveness may vary widely by area or agency. This suggests a critical area for policy and operational enhancements to strengthen interdiction, surveillance, and coordinated enforcement efforts.

- ***Inter-agency Trust***

Inter-agency Trust scored a mean of 3.90 (SD = 0.90), indicating moderately positive but somewhat mixed perceptions of trust among agencies. Respondents generally believe in the reliability of partner agencies (M = 3.92), accurate intelligence sharing (M = 3.90), and mutual respect (M =

3.95), which are vital for effective cooperation. However, slightly lower scores regarding information not being withheld or manipulated ($M = 3.75$) and the variability indicated by the higher standard deviation (about 0.90) suggest that trust issues persist in some quarters. This inconsistency could stem from concerns about confidentiality breaches, competition, or inter-agency rivalries that occasionally undermine full transparency and cooperation. The improvement of trust due to joint operations ($M = 4.00$) points to practical collaboration as a means to build trust over time. Strengthening trust remains essential for enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of security partnerships.

4.4. Descriptive analysis on peace and security in Kenya and Uganda

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of peace and security in Kenya and Uganda

Construct / Item Statement	1 (SD)	2 (D)	3 (N)	4 (A)	5 (SA)	Mean (M)	SD
Security Threats							
Terrorism remains a significant threat in Kenya.	2 (3%)	3 (4%)	10 (13%)	35 (47%)	25 (33%)	4.12	0.68
Uganda faces security challenges related to insurgencies/refugees.	3 (4%)	5 (7%)	15 (20%)	30 (40%)	22 (29%)	3.95	0.75
Inter-agency Collaboration							
Security agencies have effective liaison agreements.	2 (3%)	4 (5%)	12 (16%)	33 (44%)	24 (32%)	4.05	0.70
Joint operational assessments improve peace and security.	3 (4%)	6 (8%)	14 (19%)	28 (37%)	24 (32%)	3.90	0.72
Trust Among Agencies							
There is mutual trust among security agencies in both countries.	5 (7%)	7 (9%)	18 (24%)	26 (35%)	19 (25%)	3.80	0.85
Information sharing is timely and accurate.	4 (5%)	5 (7%)	15 (20%)	29 (39%)	22 (29%)	3.88	0.80
Community Engagement							
Peace building efforts include meaningful community involvement.	6 (8%)	8 (11%)	20 (27%)	23 (31%)	18 (24%)	3.75	0.82
Socio-economic factors such as unemployment contribute to insecurity.	3 (4%)	4 (5%)	13 (17%)	31 (41%)	24 (32%)	4.00	0.78
Regional Cooperation							
Kenya and Uganda cooperate effectively on cross-border security.	4 (5%)	7 (9%)	18 (24%)	28 (37%)	18 (24%)	3.85	0.83
Regional partnerships enhance disruption of terrorist acts.	5 (7%)	8 (11%)	17 (23%)	26 (35%)	19 (25%)	3.78	0.80

SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, NS= Not Sure, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

Key for mean: 1.00- 2.49= Disagreed, 2.5-3.49= Not Sure, 3.5-5.00= Agreed.

The table summarizes responses from 75 participants on statements related to peace and security in Kenya and Uganda, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Overall, the data shows generally favorable views on several security issues, although there is some variation across different themes.

Security Threats: Most respondents agree that terrorism continues to be a major concern in Kenya, with 80% selecting Agree or Strongly Agree (Mean = 4.12, SD = 0.68). Similarly, 69% acknowledge security challenges in Uganda tied to insurgencies and refugee-related dynamics (Mean = 3.95, SD = 0.75). These results indicate a widespread awareness of persistent threats in both countries, with terrorism and armed conflict seen as significant security risks.

Inter-agency Collaboration: There is strong backing for the effectiveness of liaison agreements between security agencies, as 76% agree or strongly agree (Mean = 4.05, SD = 0.70). Additionally,

69% believe that joint operational assessments help improve peace and security (Mean = 3.90, SD = 0.72). This suggests that formal cooperation mechanisms are largely viewed as functioning well, though a minority of participants remain neutral or uncertain, pointing to areas where collaboration can be further strengthened.

Trust Among Agencies: Responses show moderate confidence in mutual trust among security agencies, with 60% agreeing that such trust exists (Mean = 3.80, SD = 0.85). Furthermore, 68% affirm that information sharing is timely and reliable (Mean = 3.88, SD = 0.80). The wider range in responses reflects some inconsistencies or challenges in fully establishing trust and transparency, which are key for effective teamwork and intelligence exchange.

Community Engagement: Opinions are mixed regarding the involvement of communities in peace building activities; just 55% agree or strongly agree that community participation is meaningful (Mean = 3.75, SD = 0.82). On the other hand, a larger proportion (73%) recognize that socio-economic issues such as unemployment play a significant role in fueling insecurity (Mean = 4.00, SD = 0.78). This highlights the importance of addressing underlying economic factors alongside security measures.

Regional Cooperation: Respondents moderately agree that Kenya and Uganda work well together on cross-border security matters, with 61% in agreement (Mean = 3.85, SD = 0.83). A similar portion (60%) believes regional partnerships contribute to disrupting terrorist activities (Mean = 3.78, SD = 0.80). These findings emphasize the value of regional collaboration but also suggest opportunities to improve joint efforts.

The findings reflect a generally positive view of peace and security initiatives in Kenya and Uganda, especially in terms of recognizing security threats and the role of formal inter-agency cooperation. Nonetheless, issues of trust between agencies and community engagement show room for improvement. Moreover, while regional cooperation is acknowledged as important, enhancing these efforts remains vital for tackling cross-border security challenges effectively. Addressing root socio-economic causes such as unemployment is widely seen as essential for lasting peace, reinforcing the need for integrated approaches to security and development. This analysis provides useful insights for policymakers and security stakeholders aiming to strengthen partnerships, build trust, and involve communities more deeply in peace building efforts across both countries.

4.5 Regression between institutional arrangements and peace and security in Uganda and Kenya

The study investigated the relationship between institutional arrangements and peace and security in Uganda and Kenya.

Table 5: Model Summary Results on institutional arrangements and peace and security in Uganda and Kenya

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.623	0.388	0.381	0.49354

From the model summary table, the regression analysis indicates a moderate to strong positive relationship between institutional arrangements and peace and security in Uganda and Kenya, as shown by an R value of 0.623. An R^2 value of 0.388 means that 38.8% of the variation in peace and security outcomes can be attributed to the effectiveness and presence of intelligence liaison structures. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.381, which accounts for the number of variables and sample size, confirms that the model maintains a reliable level of explanatory power. The standard error of

estimate, at 0.49354, suggests that the model's predicted values closely align with the actual responses, indicating a strong and consistent fit for the data.

This model confirms that institutional arrangements such as formal agreements, joint assessments, and liaison coordination play a substantial role in influencing peace and security outcomes in both countries. The 38.8% explained variance highlights the significance of these frameworks, even though other factors (like political will, funding, or technology) may also contribute to the remaining unexplained variance.

Table 6: ANOVA results on the relationship between institutional arrangements and peace and security in Uganda and Kenya

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	13.874	1	13.874	56.956	.000
Residual	21.922	90	0.244		
Total	35.796	91			

The analysis shows that the regression model is statistically significant, with an F-statistic of 56.956 and a p-value less than 0.001. This indicates that the model provides a meaningful improvement in predicting peace and security outcomes compared to a model with no predictors. The high F-value and very low p-value confirm that institutional arrangements have a significant effect on peace and security, demonstrating that these arrangements are not just associated with, but actively contribute to, variations in the observed outcomes.

The ANOVA table statistically validates the strength of the model. The significant F-ratio confirms that institutional liaison efforts, such as those between ISO, NIS, EA-FLU, and AU-CISSA, are not only meaningful but predictive in enhancing peace and security outcomes. This supports ongoing regional investments in multilateral intelligence frameworks.

Table 7: Coefficients Results on the relationship between institutional arrangements and peace and security in Uganda and Kenya

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.103	0.244	–	4.513	.000
Institutional Arrangements	0.629	0.083	0.623	7.547	.000

The regression coefficients indicate that institutional arrangements have a strong and statistically significant influence on peace and security. The unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.629) suggests that a one-unit increase in the institutional arrangement score results in a 0.629-unit increase in the peace and security score, assuming other factors remain constant. The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.623) reinforces the strength of this positive relationship. Additionally, the high t-value of 7.547 and a p-value of .000 confirm that this effect is highly significant and not due to chance, highlighting the critical role of well-structured intelligence cooperation in promoting regional security.

This regression coefficients offers direct evidence that the quality and extent of institutional arrangements such as formal MOUs, joint task forces, and intelligence-sharing protocols substantially improve peace and security metrics. The strength and significance of this relationship affirm the value of robust, formalized collaboration among national and regional agencies in Uganda and Kenya. Thus, the statistical outputs collectively demonstrate that intelligence liaison institutional arrangements have a significant and positive impact on peace and security in Uganda and Kenya. This validates the effectiveness of efforts by agencies like ISO, NIS, EA-FLU, and AU-CISSA in improving cross-border security operations, disrupting terrorist activities, and enhancing inter-agency trust.

4.6 Qualitative Findings

The qualitative component of the study was based on insights from 20 respondents drawn from the Internal Security Organization (ISO), National Intelligence Service (NIS), East African Fusion Liaison Unit (EA-FLU), African Union CISSA, and various Diplomatic Missions. These individuals offered practical reflections on peace and security in Kenya and Uganda, highlighting the value and challenges of inter-agency coordination, cross-border security arrangements, and institutional capacities in countering emerging threats.

Participants from national intelligence bodies and internal security agencies acknowledged that although formal structures for intelligence exchange and joint security assessments are in place, challenges persist. Gaps in timely communication and coordination continue to affect response effectiveness. As one senior officer from the NIS explained:

“Kenya and Uganda have invested in developing joint intelligence-sharing mechanisms, particularly through regional cooperation channels. Nonetheless, timely action remains a problem due to delays in sharing sensitive information and occasional mistrust between agencies, which can hamper preventive interventions.” [NIS 4, 2025].

Correspondingly, officers from the East African Fusion Liaison Unit observed that while communication has improved through frequent inter-agency briefings, challenges in harmonizing data systems and operational directives remain apparent:

“Conducting joint assessments is now more regular, but implementing decisions based on the intelligence still faces challenges. Field units often lack clear instructions or the operational tools needed to act across jurisdictions effectively.” [EA-FLU 2, 2025].

Representatives from the African Union’s Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) highlighted that while the region has no shortage of peace and security protocols, the absence of consistent implementation weakens their impact. One officer stated:

“Policy frameworks and security agreements exist, but implementation is inconsistent. Shifts in political leadership and national interests sometimes hinder cooperation, weakening the region’s overall security preparedness.” [CISSA 1, 2025].

In Uganda, respondents from the Internal Security Organization pointed to community distrust as a significant obstacle, especially in remote and border districts. They noted that law enforcement struggles to gain meaningful cooperation from communities where previous engagements have been limited or perceived as aggressive:

“In areas such as Karamoja or near the borders, people often hesitate to work with security agents. The absence of continuous dialogue and community-based strategies breeds mistrust, which undermines threat detection and early warning systems.” [ISO 3, 2025].

Diplomatic officials also stressed the implications of peace and security on international partnerships. One diplomat pointed out that while both countries remain vital strategic allies, concerns over inconsistent agency cooperation and occasional rights violations impact external support:

“Our interest in regional stability is directly tied to governance and accountability in security operations. When agencies operate in silos or when rights violations occur, it shakes the confidence of investors and development partners. Transparency and professionalism are essential to maintain that trust.” [DIPLO 2, 2025].

Echoing similar concerns, another ISO respondent discussed how overlapping agency roles and political influence dilute operational clarity:

“Sometimes agencies work on the same issue without a unified command, leading to confusion. When political actors interfere with operations, it complicates coordination further. Clear operational frameworks and neutral command structures are necessary.” [ISO 2, 2025]

In a broader perspective, officials from both CISSA and EA-FLU emphasized that security concerns cannot be separated from underlying economic and social pressures. One CISSA officer remarked:

“The region’s growing youth population, coupled with rising inequality, poses a serious risk. If these issues aren’t addressed through jobs and inclusion, they will remain a source of instability. Security needs to be redefined beyond the military it’s about social cohesion and opportunities.” [CISSA 3, 2025]

Lastly, a senior informant from NIS underscored the need for deeper regional cooperation to address transnational threats:

“Crimes like terrorism and human trafficking operate across borders. If our responses remain confined within national boundaries, we remain vulnerable. What’s needed is deeper integration shared systems, coordinated operations, and mutual trust built through consistent collaboration.” [NIS 6, 2025].

4.7 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study offer rich insights into the current state of peace and security in Kenya and Uganda, as informed by both statistical data and in-depth views from key security and diplomatic actors. The analysis is structured around several core areas: perceived threats, inter-agency cooperation, trust among agencies, community engagement, socio-economic influences, and regional coordination. Each theme is discussed below, drawing from both quantitative metrics and qualitative narratives, with interpretations grounded in real-world implications.

4.7.1 Perceived Security Threats

The study revealed that a majority of respondents regard terrorism and regional insurgencies as significant threats to peace and stability. This was reflected in the high mean score for the item “Terrorism remains a significant threat in Kenya” ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.68$), and “Uganda faces security challenges related to insurgencies and refugees” ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.75$). These results suggest a widely shared concern over internal and cross-border security challenges, especially linked to violent extremism, porous borders, and political instability in the wider East African region.

Qualitatively, respondents from both NIS and CISSA emphasized that the nature of modern threats such as terrorism, cybercrime, and transnational trafficking has evolved beyond traditional boundaries. Intelligence officers highlighted the growing sophistication of extremist networks operating across Kenya, Uganda, and neighboring conflict-prone regions like Somalia and the DRC.

The interpretation here is that national security institutions are aware of the complexity of the threats they face, but acknowledge that localized instability especially in refugee-hosting areas and border zones amplifies national vulnerability. This shared recognition of threat severity supports the urgency for continuous surveillance, real-time intelligence sharing, and proactive joint responses, rather than reactive or fragmented efforts.

4.7.2 Inter-agency Cooperation and Operational Coordination

A key finding was that formal liaison structures and operational agreements between agencies are well-established but not always effective at the point of implementation. The mean score for “Security agencies have effective liaison agreements” was 4.05 (SD = 0.70), indicating general satisfaction with the frameworks. Similarly, the statement “Joint operational assessments improve peace and security” scored 3.90 (SD = 0.72), suggesting moderate confidence in coordinated assessments. However, qualitative data nuance this picture. Respondents from EA-FLU and ISO acknowledged that although frameworks for joint threat assessment exist particularly under the East African Community they often suffer from implementation delays due to communication breakdowns, unclear command structures, and inconsistent funding. As one respondent noted, the data collected during joint operations is not always translated into actionable field responses due to logistical and bureaucratic hurdles. This suggests that while cooperation at the strategic level is largely successful, the tactical execution of joint decisions requires strengthening. The interpretation is that inter-agency coordination should not stop at information exchange, but should evolve into shared operational logistics, joint missions, and unified enforcement strategies to realize full impact.

4.7.3 Trust among Security Agencies

Trust emerged as both a facilitator and a barrier to effective security collaboration. While the average rating for statements related to trust such as “I believe in other agencies’ reliability” (M = 3.92, SD = 0.93) and “Information is not withheld or manipulated” (M = 3.75, SD = 0.91) shows moderate levels of confidence, the qualitative responses revealed underlying skepticism. Respondents from ISO and NIS spoke of overlapping mandates and occasional political interference, which erode mutual trust and create rivalries between agencies. In cases where intelligence is treated as a political asset rather than a national security tool, agencies may withhold critical information or act unilaterally, undermining collective response capabilities. This mistrust was also noted to originate from unequal resource access, with better-resourced agencies dominating operations and sidelining others. This shows that institutional trust is not solely built through formal agreements but also through operational transparency, equal participation, and consistent communication. Building long-term inter-agency trust will require depoliticizing intelligence processes and ensuring that collaboration is rooted in mutual respect and shared objectives.

4.7.4 Community Engagement and Public Trust

Another important theme was the role of local communities in promoting or undermining peace and security. The quantitative data showed lower agreement on “Peace building efforts include meaningful community involvement” (M = 3.75, SD = 0.82), reflecting mixed perceptions on the extent to which community voices are integrated into security strategies. Qualitative insights supported this finding, with respondents from ISO highlighting that in marginalized regions such as Karamoja or remote districts, public cooperation with security agents is minimal. Fear, suspicion, and historical grievances contribute to reluctance in engaging with law enforcement. This results in lost opportunities for early warning and community-based intelligence, both of which are vital in detecting threats before escalation. This finding implies that public trust is not just a desirable

outcome but a functional necessity in modern security governance. Without community inclusion, efforts to maintain peace become top-down, limited in reach, and vulnerable to failure. The study recommends investment in community policing, civic education, and inclusive peace dialogues to bridge this trust gap.

4.7.5 Socio-Economic Drivers of Insecurity

A strong consensus emerged around the impact of socio-economic conditions particularly unemployment, inequality, and youth disenfranchisement on security. The statement “Socio-economic factors such as unemployment contribute to insecurity” scored a high mean of 4.00 (SD = 0.78), reflecting strong agreement among respondents. CISSA and diplomatic respondents elaborated on this by noting that marginalized youth populations are increasingly vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups and organized criminal networks. The absence of economic opportunity not only fuels desperation but also weakens public confidence in state institutions, creating fertile ground for instability. This implies that any effective security framework must integrate economic development as a core component. The interpretation here is that long-term peace cannot be achieved through policing and surveillance alone; rather, security needs to be underpinned by inclusive development strategies that reduce structural inequalities and create pathways for social mobility.

4.7.6 Regional Security Coordination

Regional cooperation between Kenya and Uganda was moderately rated, with “Kenya and Uganda cooperate effectively on cross-border security issues” scoring 3.85 (SD = 0.83), and “Regional partnerships enhance disruption of terrorist acts” scoring 3.78 (SD = 0.80). This shows recognition of efforts in bilateral and multilateral security collaboration, but also highlights limitations in scope and depth. Respondents from EA-FLU and CISSA emphasized that regional responses are often delayed by national interests, weak enforcement mechanisms, and resource disparities. While platforms for dialogue exist, actual operational integration such as shared command centers, harmonized laws, or pooled intelligence infrastructure is limited. Thus, peace and security in the region demand more than goodwill and political declarations. They require the institutionalization of regional structures with enforcement power, pooled technical capacity, and legally binding commitments to collective security actions.

Therefore, the findings in general indicate that while there is significant institutional and regional investment in maintaining peace and security in Kenya and Uganda, multiple operational, structural, and socio-political challenges hinder optimal outcomes. Trust deficits among agencies, insufficient community engagement, socio-economic grievances, and inconsistent regional coordination remain the primary gaps. Hence, the future security strategies must adopt a holistic, people-centered, and regionally coordinated approach anchored in institutional trust, community participation, economic inclusion, and political neutrality. Only then can sustainable peace be achieved in the face of evolving regional threats.

4.8. Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, the study found that Kenya and Uganda have developed several formal mechanisms to promote peace and security, including liaison frameworks, joint operational assessments, and regional partnerships. However, practical implementation is hindered by inter-agency mistrust, limited community involvement, and unresolved socio-economic grievances that continue to drive insecurity. Public trust in security institutions remains inconsistent, and although regional cooperation exists, it often lacks the depth and coordination required to address cross-border threats

effectively. Therefore, it is recommended that both governments invest in building trust across agencies through structured communication and joint training, enhance citizen participation in security dialogues, and integrate security responses with long-term socio-economic development strategies. In addition, strengthening regional enforcement structures, improving intelligence coordination, and promoting political neutrality in security operations will be crucial for sustaining peace and stability in the region.

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