

DELIVERING IMPACT IN EAST & SOUTHERN AFRICA

In October 2022, the Strong Cities Network **launched an East & Southern Africa (ESA) Regional Hub** to offer cities a dedicated team of local experts to support city-led approaches to preventing and responding to hate, extremism and polarisation and connect cities across the region with human rights-based and gender-sensitive good practices from across the global network.

Key Figures

327

Individual Stakeholders Engaged

29

Member Cities

43

Mayors/Local Leaders Engaged



“It is the first time I have heard that there is a network of cities that work together on prevention. We feel our capacities as leaders can be built from such interactions.”

Renovat Sindayihebura Administrator, Mukaza Commune, Bujumbura, Burundi

Mapping City Needs and Good Practices

Building on a 2022 continent-wide mapping assessment, the Regional Hub regularly consults mayors and other local government officials to better understand their concerns, the threats they face, any existing approaches and resources, and their key needs when it comes to developing prevention capabilities. The Hub’s work has been shaped by the priorities cities have raised since its launch. These include:

- **Building awareness** of the key areas of practice in addressing hate, extremism and polarisation and building an understanding of the role of city leaders and officials in prevention and response.
- **Enhancing National-Local Cooperation (NLC)** by providing platforms for dialogue to better reflect local government concerns in national prevention frameworks and increase the ownership and involvement of cities in their implementation.
- **Engaging youth, women and marginalised and/or vulnerable groups**, in order to build trust and address local grievances that can fuel hate and extremist-motivated violence.



“After this workshop by Strong Cities, when I go back, I will never be the same and my city will never be the same again. I now know how to deal with issues of hate, polarisation and extremism.”

Cllr. Maximilian Iranque, Mayor of Arusha, Tanzania

Strengthening City-Led Prevention

The Regional Hub has supported cities to address some of the key gaps identified in the mapping assessment and during its inaugural workshop in Kenya in October 2022. This support has included leveraging resources from Strong Cities' Technical Support Fund, guidance from the Hub and advice/learning from peers across the Network and through the Strong Cities' Expert Pool. This support is delivering significant impact, including:

- In **Entebbe** (Uganda), the Hub convened the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other national government representatives as well as mayors and city officials to address gaps in prevention-related NLC. As a result, national officials committed to ensuring that local governments are actively involved in implementing the national P/CVE strategy, on which local officials had not previously been consulted.
- In **Bujumbura** (Burundi), as part of its ongoing outreach to local governments and other key stakeholders, the Hub held a roundtable on the role of cities in Burundi in prevention, bringing together more than 20 mayors and city representatives in a first-of-its kind convening.
- In **Cape Town** (South Africa), the Hub convened more than 50 representatives from South African cities in May 2023 to enhance peer learning on the role cities can play in prevention as part of wider city-led efforts to promote public safety, build resilience and enhance social cohesion.
- In **Johannesburg** (South Africa), the Hub convened more than 65 mayors and other city officials from across the region to share experiences in addressing hate, extremism and polarisation. Following the workshop, border cities including Busia, Koboko, Trans Nzoia and others formed a 'Border Cities Network' to support cross-city learning and sharing of best practices. After learning about Cape Town's newly established prevention framework, Busia city representatives visited Cape Town to learn more about their approach and have since drafted by-laws and a draft prevention framework.
- In **Nansana** (Uganda), the Hub worked with the mayor to identify priorities for youth engagement and design interventions to advance these priorities.

Elevating Local Voices

Strong Cities raises the voices, perspectives and needs of mayors and the cities they represent directly with national government, regional and multilateral partners to inform prevention policies and programmes at all levels.

- In March 2023, the Hub supported engagement of city leaders from seven counties in Kenya with representatives of the Council of Governors, County Assemblies Forum, National Counter Terrorism Centre and the National Department of Devolution to enhance NLC.
- In May 2023, the Hub supported the participation of the Mayor of Busia at the UN Counter-Terrorism Summit in New York to share local perspectives from a key border city.
- In September 2023, the Hub supported the participation of more than 15 mayors and local government officials from the region to participate in the Strong Cities Fourth Global Summit in New York.

Contact

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