

Insecurity impacts, effects and implications for the tourism industry – a survey of selected incidences of terrorism, and safety issues during election years in Kenya

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Abstract

Over the years, the tourism industry has witnessed emerging issues that influence the business of travel. One of the most notable is the surge in global terrorism and insecurity. *While travelers can avoid risky destinations for safer ones, the repercussions of detrimental events on touristic destinations are ineluctable and can be profound with the resulting events causing a tourism crisis. This paper sought to theoretically, through systematic review, analyze terrorism/insecurity issues in Kenya over the past years to find correlates between insecurity incidences, its frequency and magnitude, and tourism numbers and trends in order to explore ways of coping with that.* From the review findings, it was found that there is a direct inverse relationship between insecurity and tourism trend in the country where a series of past insecurity incidences and fears have negatively affected the tourism and hospitality industry in Kenya. The research recommends a diversification of the Kenyan tourism product while engaging alternative source markets; employment of proactive strategies in dealing with insecurity; aggressive marketing by the department of tourism to rebrand the country as a much safer destination; and promotion of domestic tourism among local consumers.

Key words: Image, Perception, Safety and security, Terrorism, Tourism, Tourist destination, Kenya

1. Introduction

The annual growth rate of tourism corresponds to 1.3 times the growth in global Gross Domestic Product (UNWTO, 2007, 2008, 2018; WTTC, 2018). This industry, however, is vulnerable to shocks - terrorism and insecurity in this case, which shape the risk perception of destination countries (Bianchi, 2006; Larsen, Brun, Øgaard & Selstad, 2011; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005). This vice has opened up a new dimension of viewing tourism and travel and studies such as those done by Bassil (2014) and Pizam & Smith (2000) show that the effects are indeed warranted, especially the exogenous shocks on touristic demand.

Although decline in tourist arrivals occurs not only as a consequence of terror attacks and insecurity, greater are the impacts from attacks (or fears of attack) than from any other factor, affecting the countries hit, neighboring countries as well as global (Fuchs & Reichel, 2006). This is more so due to the heightened risk expectation from religious extremists (Jalilvand, Ebrahimi & Samiei, 2013; Moufakkir, 2014; Niyaz, 2010). After-effects of

terrorism and insecurity may vary among destinations. While certain countries such as Singapore can recover quickly due to simplified entry requirements, others like Malaysia suffer a sustained decline in tourist numbers as a result of follow-up fears and the niche tourists that visit the destination (Pizam & Fleischer, 2002). It's also worth noting that repeated terror attacks, however, can result in a lasting decline in tourist demand or wipe it out entirely.

While terrorism is highly concentrated in a small number of countries, especially in the Middle East, the number of countries which have had a terrorist attack has been in the rise (Global Terrorism Index, 2015; Juergensmeyer, 2017; LaFree, Dugan & Miller, 2014). In 2014, terrorism impacted more countries than ever before, attacks being recorded in 93 countries, up from 88 in 2013 (Global Terrorism Index, 2015). This continues the trend from 2011 with more countries experiencing terrorist attacks and deaths each year. Here in Kenya, terrorism and insecurity continues to rise with the country standing among the top 20 most affected countries at number 18 (Global Terrorism Index, 2015).

2. Methodology

A literature survey was conducted on the basis of relevance to the study subject (insecurity incidents and their effects on tourism), and geographic location (Kenya, East Africa). On these grounds, materials gathered were qualified as potentially addressing the question. A boolean search in Web of Knowledge was conducted using relevant key phrases from the title of study - TOPIC: ("insecurity" OR "terrorism") AND TOPIC: ("impacts" OR "effects") AND TOPIC: ("implications") AND TOPIC: ("tourism") Timespan: All years. Databases: WOS, BCI, BIOSIS, DRCI, KJD, MEDLINE, RSCI, SCIELO.

Literature was sampled and selected through an inclusion/exclusion criteria (Nelson et al., 2018). Additional information on insecurity and the tourism industry was acquired from grey literature databases - relevant government of Kenya websites, online data, and electronic records.

A basic literature search was also performed in google.com and scholar.google.com using key words from the title and with the documents found analyzed for their inclusion suitability. The study review was addressing the topic: Insecurity impacts and effects and Tourism and implications for the industry in Kenya.

3. Results

From the survey, a total of 20 articles were identified. 13 publications were excluded on the basis of their scope, study subject, and study area. The remaining 7 papers addressed the issue in question and were, therefore, considered relevant reference materials. Due to the low sample (n=7), all the remaining publications were studied. Kenyan government departments and ministry websites were also assessed. The following were found useful in answering the enquiry under investigation: the Ministry of Tourism, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), Kenya Tourism Board (KTB), and Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA). International Non-governmental Organizations used were: United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). Regional and International media sites also provided important insights - the BBC, CNN, Huffington post, Reuters, the Guardian, Bloomberg, Expert Africa, Institute for Economics and Peace (Global Tourism Index) among others.

The summary is as indicated in the table below;

Table 1. List of publications

Author(s)	Theme/topic addressed	Main study site	Literature type
Gimode (2001)	Crime, Safety, and insecurity	Nairobi, Kenya	Scientific
Laing (2013) – thetelegraph.co.uk	Terrorism and insecurity in Kenya	Selected areas in Kenya	Grey
Duggan, Karimi, & Narayan (2017) – cnn.com	2017 Post election unrest	Kenya in general	Grey
Roberts (2009)	2007 Post election violence	Kenya in general	Scientific
Lily (2017) - qz.com	Travel advisories amid elections	Kenya	Grey
Anderson & McKnight (2014).	Alshaabab in Kenya	Mombasa; Nairobi (Westgate) - Kenya	Scientific
Mäkinen & Wangu Kuiru (2008)	2007 Post election civil unrest	Selected regions in Kenya	Scientific
Whitaker (2008)	Safety uncertainties and terrorism; Trade policy issues	Kenya	Scientific
Mutiga (2015) - theguardian.com	Terrorism (the Alshabaab)	Kenya in general	Grey
De Sausmarez (2013)	2007 Post election crisis	Nairobi, the Rift valley and coastal regions - Kenya.	Scientific
Gridneff & Burite (2015) – skift.com	Tourism; Terrorism	Nairobi, Mombasa - Kenya	Grey
Sharma (2015)	2007 Post election violence	Kenya in general	Scientific

Expert Africa (2015) – expertafrica.com	Safety concerns in Kenya; Travel advisories	Kenya in general	Grey
Gridneff & Burite (2015). www.bloomberg.com	Terrorism (the Alshabaab)	Mombasa, Kenya	Grey
Wagner (2014) – huffingtonpost.com	Extremism, Risks, Corruption	Africa in general including Kenya.	Grey
Yackley (2016) – reuters.com	Refugees; Terrorism and insecurity tension/risk; Radicalization and extremism	Daadab and Kenya in general	Grey
Warner (2014) - National Public Radio, npr.org	Travel advisories/trade	Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kenya in general	Grey
Sandner (2014) – dw.com	Global terrorism	Nairobi and Kenya in general	Grey
The Daily Nation (2017) - nation.co.ke	Travel advisories; Trade; 2017 General election unrest fears	Kenya in general	Grey
The Daily Nation (2014)	Travel advisories; insecurity	Kenya in general	Grey

There were other key sources that we found key to this study, though from different insecurity prevalent regions. These were cited in –text in appropriate areas.

From the surveys, it is generally observed that there are shortcomings on tourist arrivals and revenue earnings from the tourism Industry in Kenya due to incidences of insecurity and terrorism over the past decade.

4. Discussions

Global Terrorism Inventory highlights that insecurity incidences and acts of terrorism in countries continue to increase (Global Terrorism Index, 2015; Juergensmeyer, 2017). This is mostly attributed to the rising intolerance among people and incidences of religious extremism by Islamist groups (Global Terrorism Index, 2015; Wagner, 2014).

The total number of deaths from attacks in 2014 reached 32,685, the highest level ever recorded and constituting an 80 per cent increase from 18,111 in 2013 (Global Terrorism Index, 2015). The significant majority of these incidences were prevalent in just five countries; Iraq, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria. In Africa, Nigeria and Somali among others like Libya and Egypt are the most affected (BBC, 2013). This can be attributed to the fact that most of these are Islamic countries where the radicalized groups have some authority (Burke, 2004). Further, there was a 120 per cent increase in the number of countries that recorded over 500 deaths with 2014 recording eleven countries, up from five countries in 2013 (Global Terrorism Index, 2015).

Locally, Kenya has seen various attacks attributed to terrorist elements starting in the 1980 where the Jewish-owned Norfolk hotel was attacked (Laing, 2013). In 1998, the US embassy in Nairobi was bombed, as was the Israeli-owned Paradise hotel in 2002 (Laing, 2013). In 2013, the militant group Al-Shabaab killed at least 67 people at Nairobi's Westgate Shopping Mall among other major attacks along the coast and in Garissa University in 2015. There have been scores of other numerous ancillary attacks whose incidences have mainly increased after the Kenyan army joined hands under AMISOM to fight in Somalia.

Tourism is a peace-sensitive sector that largely depends on availability of security (Wintersteiner & Wohlmuther, 2014), which when not guaranteed, governments advise their citizens to shun away from the risky destinations. Analysts have long noted that terrorism being a political endeavor seeks wide media coverage (Jetter, 2017; Nacos, 1996). This can easily be obtained free of charge by targeting international tourists (and thus international tourism). The media has been observed to give incidents of terror attacks and insecurity on foreigners a lot of attention which in one way or the other perpetuates terrorist networks motive (Nacos, 1996; Lewis, 2005; Weimann & Winn, 1994; Wilkinson, 1997). So is international tourism affected, leaving a trail of events that impact on the economy of the country in question. This is especially so because the current generation of travellers are abreast with technology and the internet (Krippendorf, 1986; Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014; Yoo, Goo, Huang, Nam & Woo, 2017).

In Kenya, this has been the case and has costed the country a great deal of resources in constructive marketing in view to regain the lost ground. The events costing the tourism industry in yesteryears are highlighted below;

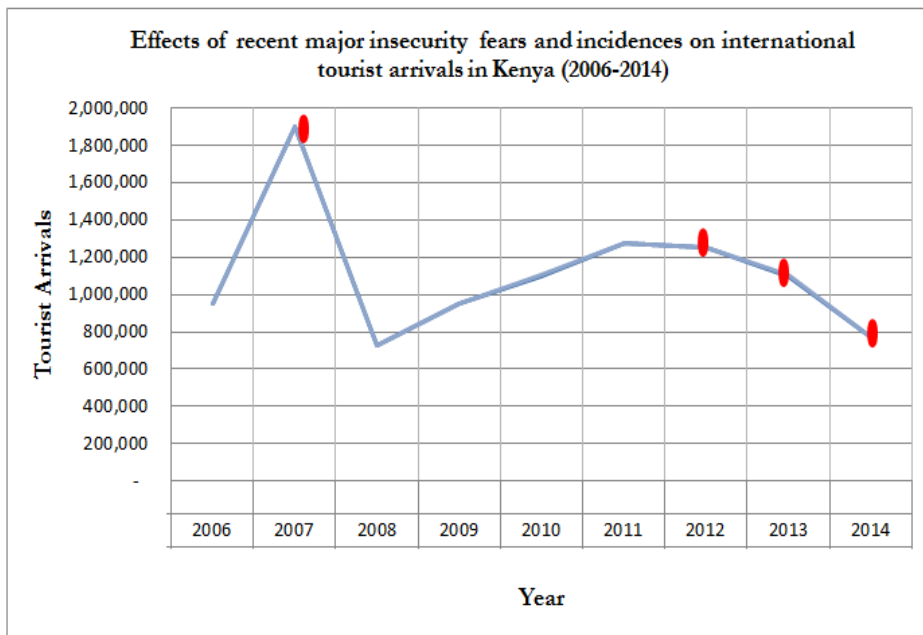
4.1 Election years

In Kenya, fears from incidences of political and civil unrest every five years during general elections exist (Duggan B., Karimi F. & Narayan C., 2017; The Daily Nation, 2017). This puts the country's tourism industry on the line (Daily Nation, 2017), so are the normal operations in the Country's key industries.

After a period of relative economic calm and prosperity, Kenya witnessed political violence between 2007 and 2008. The disputed general elections of 2007 brought the country to the brink of civil war. The country had plunged into instability undoing all the gains it had made in the previous years, leaving hundreds of thousands of people displaced, and more than 1,000 people dead (Roberts, 2009). Tourism as a sector was hard hit by the political turmoil leading to international flights cancellation, travel derails, withdrawal of tour operators from the Kenyan market and massive job losses of people working in the tourism and travel industry (Lily, 2017; Sharma, 2015) –see *fig. 1.0 below*.

Though select areas were affected by the violence, the international media through its endless coverage portrayed the country as falling apart which only aggravated the situation (Lewis, 2005; Mäkinen & Wangu Kuiru, 2008; Mutiga, 2015; Wagner, 2014). This was a double blow not only for the tourism sector but also on the business front due to travel advisories against the *Magical Kenya* and the portrayal of the country as unfit for investment (KIPRA, 2013). The same was observed in 2017 general elections where fears of unrest caused a slight change in tourist arrival numbers following travel advisories (Lily, 2017; The Daily Nation, 2017).

Figure 1. Effects of recent major insecurity incidences on Kenyan International Tourist Arrivals (2006-2014)



Adopted (*and modified*) from Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2015)

According to Figure 1.0 above, the number of visitor arrivals had a sharp fall in 2007, picked up from 2008 and reached peak 2012 then began reducing through to 2013 and further in 2014 (see red dots in fig. 1.0).

The deep fall in arrivals in 2008 was attributed to the post 2007/2008 election violence (KNBS, 2015). The reduction in tourist numbers in 2013 is mainly due to the Westgate attacks in Nairobi's Westgate mall and partially attributed to the 2012 General Elections that could have caused fears of civil unrest. The Mpeketoni attacks at the Kenyan coast in June, 2014 only exacerbated the problem by deterring even more prospective tourists.

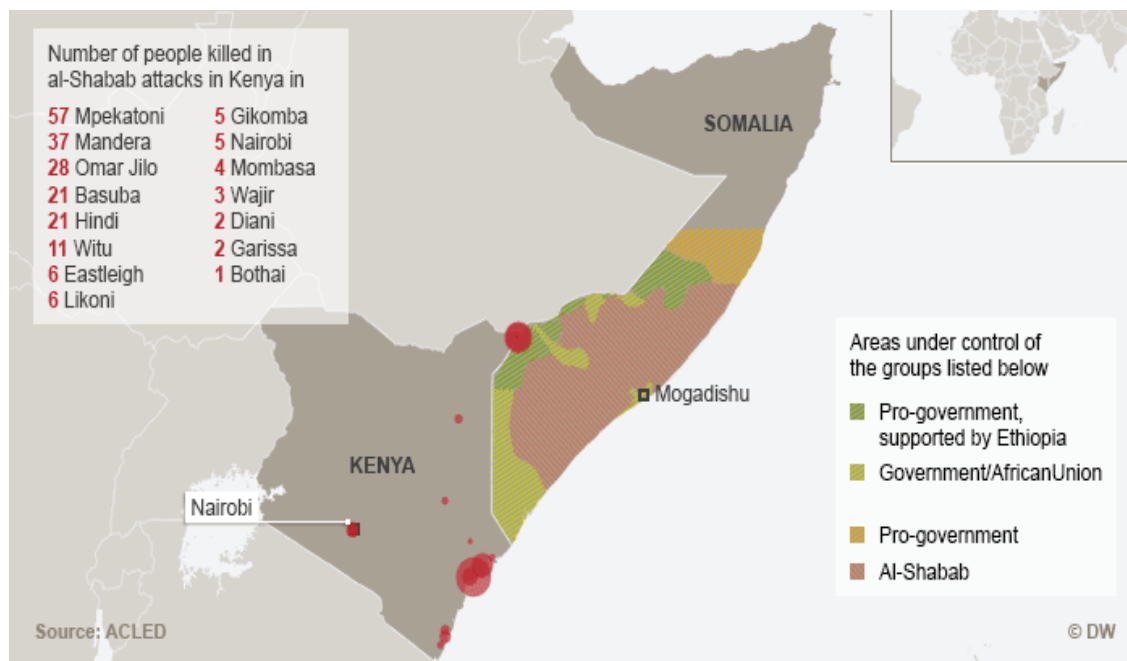
4.2 The Al-Shabaab

Configured in 2006, the Al-Shabaab is an Islamic extremist group meaning 'the youth' in Arabic (BBC, 2017; Pflanz M., 2015). The defect group of the Islamic Courts Union, Somalia's one-time rulers is armed and has been fighting the country's "Western-supported" government and its allies in a drive to foist the strict interpretation of

Islamic law ((BBC, 2013, 2017). Its control over home territory shrunk considerably, as a coalition of African Union won back large areas of land (BBC, 2013).

Since the strikes by the Kenyan Armed Forces, the country has been hit by a series of attacks by the group over the years (Anderson & McKnight, 2014). Most notably are the raids in Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall in 2013, several coastal towns in 2014 and Garissa University College in April, 2015. These attacks have claimed lives of both locals and internationals (Blair, 2013). The deadly terrorist attacks (and fears of a repeat) led a 25 per cent fall in visitor numbers and the insurgency continuously threatens and dents the country's tourism industry.

Figure 2. A map documenting the major Al-Shabab attack areas in Kenya and their facilities.



Source: Sandner (2014) (dw.com)

4.3 Travel Advisories

Travel advisories are alerts, warning issued by a Government to warn its citizen against travelling to particular destinations due to a variety of reasons such as terrorism, natural disasters, political unrest, wars, health emergencies and outbreaks of crime among others (Nwanna, 2004). They are intended to enable travelers make an informed decision about a particular travel destination, and to help them prepare adequately for negative experiences they may encounter on their trip (Smallman & Moore, 2010; UNWTO, 2005; Whitaker, 2008). Lately, Kenya has been a victim of travel advisories with the tourism Industry, on which so many Kenyans depends for their livelihood being on the receiving end as a direct result of travel advisories issued due to terrorist attacks, civil unrest and fears of these (Gridneff & Burite, 2015). Tourists have always been discouraged from travelling to certain areas and/or avoid all but essential travel to Kenyan destinations (Whitaker, 2008; Vitisia, 2015). This is especially because the attacks have been indiscriminate and target places where expatriates and foreign travelers gather (Bianchi, 2006), such as luxury hotels, shopping malls and coastal beaches. For instance,

the extensive sandy beaches and warm waters of the coastal resort towns of Kenya have attracted mainly western holidaymakers for decades and was a key target by the extremists (Gridneff & Burite, 2015) (see fig. 2.0)

Additionally, sustained spate of terrorism in Nairobi, Mombasa and areas bordering Somalia have seen the western nations move to enforce travel advisories (Bianchi, 2006), which has robbed the country of a huge amount of tourism revenue. The tourism sector had already lost over \$59 million following the cancellations announced and is struggling to recover from these through intensive marketing campaigns (Gridneff & Burite, 2015; Laws, Prideaux & Chon, 2007). The government was quick to criticize western nations that the advisories are uncalled for since the attacks were not on an alarming scale, referring to the visit by the then US President Barrack Obama in 2015) (Gridneff & Burite, 2015; Mutiga, 2015).

The low arrivals badly dented the industry, causing low business that affects the average bed occupancy in the hotels that in turn affects the local tourism related businesses (Vitisia, 2015). For instance, some hotels, such as the Twiga Beach resort in Malindi which hosted mostly Italian tourists, was forced to shut in March 2014 and fire 100 staff because its 65 rooms remained empty following terrorist attacks along the Coast (Gridneff & Burite, 2015). Travel Advisories are therefore a deterrent to Kenya’s Tourism competitiveness.

Table 2. Examples of selected travel advisories issued against Kenya in the recent past.

Issuing country	Affected region	Type of travel advisory	Reason
The UK	i) Lamu, Eastleigh, Watamu, Garissa, Wajir, Mandela, Malindi; ii) Areas in the bounds of 60km of the Kenya - Somali border	i) Advise against all but essential travel. This doesn’t include Kenya’s Safari destinations in the National parks, reserves & wildlife conservancies, including Maasai Mara, Laikipia, Aberdares, Shimba hills and Tsavo nor does it include the beach resorts of Mombasa, Kilifi, Watamu and Diani	ii) High terrorist threats, including kidnappings. Main threat from Al Shabab extremists
Australia	i) Nairobi, coastal areas from Lamu to the outskirts of Mombasa ii) A2 Highway from Isiolo to Moyale iii) Border regions with Somalia, South Sudan and Ethiopia	i) Exercise high degree of caution ii) Reconsider the need to travel iii) Do not travel	i) High threat of terrorist attacks ii) High level crime

The USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Nairobi region, ii) Along the coast and within the North Eastern region, iii) Crowded public places including clubs, shopping malls, bus stations, hotels and places of worship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Warning on the risks of travel to Kenya ii) Travelers to be extremely vigilant in regards to personal security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Information on potential terrorist threats focusing at westerners and their interests
Canada	150km of the Kenya-Somali border – Lamu, Tana river, Eastleigh and Mombasa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Against all travel ii) Non-essential travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Elevated threat of terrorist acts

Adapted (*and modified*) from Vitisia (2015)

4.4 Kenyan Politics, Travel decisions, and the media

Studies show that there is a direct relationship between politics and tourism (Bruce, 2001; Van Engeland & Rudolph, 2016). Politics is a major force in tourism (Burns, Burns & Novelli, 2007; Hall, 1994; Hazbun, 2008), and can be positive, neutral or dangerous depending on whose hands it’s in control. Governments can thus put a lot of pressure through tourism and use it as a promotional vehicle to convey a positive image for their countries or as a sanction against others. It is in this connection that Sharpley & Sharpley (2005) argue that it is every government's prerogative to issue travel advisories against countries it chooses, in response to political or environmental occurrences to protect its own citizens.

The fear of political division in Kenya, based on historical occurrences may cause tension and travel anxiety towards the destination, especially from the key source markets (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005). This is because an individual with negative attitudes toward the country due to destructive politics may exhibit high levels of concern for safety, and this is likely to result in a negative outcome for the travel decision (Korstanje, 2009). Media reports about these incidents influence tourism authorized travel advisories while recovery campaigns have an influence on tourists’ perceptions of the affected destination. These events intimidate tourists and affect flow of tourism activities. In some countries, it completely tarnishes the destination's positive image leading to travel advisories and subsequent tourism losses. According to Gartner & Shen (1992), these acts of tension happen rapidly, but attract instantaneous public attention through the media, especially with the wake of social media and powerful portable cameras in mobile phones. This can impede travel to affected areas and create an enduring barrier to international tourism.

4.5 The current situation in Kenya

In view of the foregoing, the tourism industry in Kenya has experienced slumps, sometimes forcing hotels to shut, and causing massive job losses. According to Morris (2015), for instance, statistics show that the arrivals in the

East African nation, popular for its *safaris* and sandy beaches, reduced by over 100,000 during the first four months of 2015 as compared to 2014. Specifically, the number of visitors from Britain, the biggest contingent, fell by 35% to 36,022 in the same year. Tourist arrivals from the United States dropped by 22% to 30,083. This is the ensuing consequence that the series of Islamist militant attacks has had on Kenya's tourism industry.

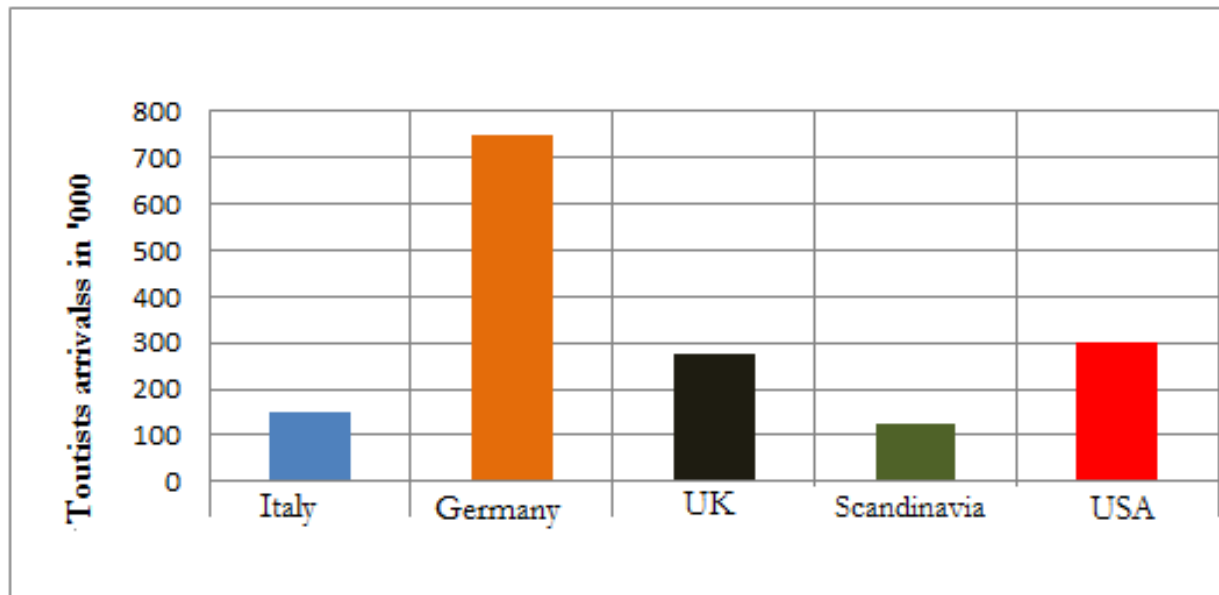
That being said, tackling insecurity decisively remains the top priority of the government's strategy to sustain the growth momentum of the tourism economy. Terrorist activities continue to tarnish the country's destination image, undermine the investment climate and contribute to the loss of jobs and declining activity in the other economic sectors. Proactive decisions and strategies by the relevant stakeholders need to be made especially after the 2017 general elections tension. The fears of upheavals every 5 years like those in the 2007/8 elections that left over 1,000 people dead remain an issue that is not fully resolved. With the government planning to close the Daadab refugee camp, the biggest in the world and which is thought to be a hub for the terrorists, orderliness will somewhat be maintained. A pertinent issue on the government agenda is to build public trust and brand image. For this, government spending has to be diverted from self-political gains and competition with other developing nations to current productive investment designed to promote growth, eradicate poverty and sustain tourism development.

4.5.1 Way forward, regaining a lost ground.

Promoting tourism and investment in the East African region with one single visa through the EAC Common Market Protocol was a great effort in promoting domestic/regional tourism in Kenya. Signed in 2010, the agreement allows for free movement of people, goods and services in the region in view to promote cohesion, trade, travel and tourism for residents and internationals.

Again, the Government's Tourism Recovery Taskforce created in 2011 (Kenya Gazette, 2011) to prepare and submit a strategy on reviving the once vibrant sector by end of December 2014 has been a proactive strategy to map the country again. Kenya is now venturing more in Conference tourism (MICE) to revamp the tourism industry. The current interest in Kenya by investors shows that they are looking beyond the present challenges, confident of a sector that will bounce back and flourish. Examples of conventions held in Kenya include Entrepreneurs summit 2016 that hosted over 800 global leaders, Global Water Leaders' summit 2016, Global Entrepreneurship Summit in 2015, among others. Others include the international Art Expo & Culture, Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), 10th Africa Export & Import Fair, Magical Kenya Travel Expo 2016 (MKTE), International Exhibition and Conference on Renewable Energy.

Kenya relies on the traditional source markets but perhaps it is time to explore and open up new source market in Asia and the Far East. There is particularly a rise in Chinese middle class with spending power and interest in leisure travel. Additionally, a large proportion of Kenya's tourism centers on safaris and tours of its great national parks and game reserves. While most tourists do visit for safari, there are other great aspects of the country to explore at the Coast, and mainland Kenya such as the Rift valley. Further, the nation has popular tourism products such as the beach – Sun, Sand, and Sex (3S's); nature; culture and business tourism that could attract large number of visitors from Europe and Asia each year.

Fig 3. Kenya's traditional tourists' source markets by 2014

Adapted from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2014)

The Chinese government with its policy of promoting “officially approved travel destinations” to its population as a means of rewarding friendly African governments is a good move that could increase the pool of tourist who come in for both leisure and business. Tourism revenues will increase if Kenya diversifies its tourism product (in addition to the beaches and safaris) by developing and opening new tour circuits to the counties with scheduled special events, give incentives to both domestic and local tourists such as price reduction in parking fees, and perhaps reduce the 16% VAT that was imposed on the sector in 2013.

Priority should also be given to conferencing tourism by having more convention centers with facilities of international standards besides Kenyatta International conference center (which now is threatened by Kigali Convention Centre in Rwanda). Kenya can revitalize the tourism industry if contingency plans to handle security crises are put in place along with well-coordinated efforts to regain trust from the international community. Security agencies of the Government should engage other private and public tourism sectors in proactive security information dissemination to tourist gate keepers such as Travel Agents, Tour Operators, Meeting Planners, and the media.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

In the contemporary world, tourism destinations and tourists have become easy targets for terrorists' activities worldwide - a more current incidence is the capture of an Italian volunteer by armed gunmen. It is now almost a question of when, where and how they will strike and most importantly, how prepared destinations are to handle such occurrences.

Over the years, Kenya has been a victim of repeat attacks that are threatening the very peace of the tourism industry. This has been especially so since the Kenyan military joined Somali under AMISOM to fight the Al Shabaab terror group. Without proactive and strategic focus to management, a serious tourism crisis will be unavoidable, putting the destination image at the crossroads. With such uncertainty, management of certain repeat crisis, therefore, calls for the relevant stakeholders (Kenya Tourism Board and the Ministry of tourism) to formulate strategies for continued business even after the unexpected fears and shocks from travel advisories.

It's also important that destination Kenya employs aggressive marketing of domestic tourism and diversifies her products in view to attract more local tourists when international tourists shy away from terror fears. This may enhance economic and employment capabilities on its prime industry. Terrorism takes advantage of poverty and youth unemployment, which provides an environment for extremists to operate in the communities. Government should address this real socio-economic imbalance in the society by creating favorable environment for employment and wealth creation through economic development programs. It's also important to engage in aggressive community awareness campaigns and policing to deter would-be terrorists from the community.

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