

The Impact of the National Defence College-Tanzania on Its Alumni: My Personal Testimony

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The National Defence College (NDC)-Tanzania was established to facilitate high-level education, training, and professional development of national security leaders. It is the highest strategic learning and the principal training institution of the Ministry of Defence and National Service. NDC is also set as a centre of excellence for conducting unique and comprehensive National Security Studies. It has been established and mandated to run the Security and Strategic Studies Course for senior officers from the Defence, Security Organs and the Civil Service. It aims to equip defence and government policymakers with requisite economic, political, military, scientific, international relations and national organizational knowledge necessary for understanding national security in its internal and external dynamics.

In 2015, after returning from my abroad diplomatic service, I was among the few privileged and selected to join a 47-week course for the Fourth Course since its inception. I say that I was among the privileged because I knew many colleagues in the diplomatic service had wished to join this exceptional course. At first, when I received the appointment letter to join the NDC-Tanzania, many questions lingered on my mind. I perceived 47 weeks as a century of being away from my routine diplomatic life. It is normal and indeed human to be suspicious about something new that comes in between your usual undertakings. However, after reporting at the college and beginning the program, I could attest that the 47 weeks turned into days.

I met and made new friends across the spectrum of countries that had sent their officers to participate in the Fourth Course. It was a new beginning that saw all of us sail through daily discussions, seminars, lectures, simulations and field practical understanding of our national security architecture. This was the beginning of military life, as most colleagues from both Tanzania and abroad came from the military background. The experience is worth telling.

This opportunity provided us both military and civilian equivalents from governmental institutions with a platform to further develop networking and performance at the highest executive levels in national and international assignments, particularly by prioritizing national security interests. This course provided an understanding of the contemporary regional issues while also providing opportunities to strengthen and sustain a comprehensive network among course members.

Protecting the security of our nation, our people, territory, and way of life—should be the foremost mission and constitutional duty of every citizen. As citizens and beneficiaries of the course, we have an unprecedented opportunity to make our country safer and more prosperous. We have the duty to sense, monitor, and report any security threats that we detect from our daily undertakings. Our security and military forces cannot be everywhere; hence, we need highly

trained personnel to filter any threat, thereby improving the prospects for political stability, peaceful conflict resolution, and greater hope for Tanzanians and the rest of the world.

At the same time, the complexities of the dangers we face are unprecedented. Ethnic conflicts and outlaw states threaten regional stability. Terrorism, drugs, organized crime and proliferation of small arms are global concerns that transcend national borders. As an alumnus of the National Defence College-Tanzania, I acquired vital skills from this crucial course. These skills have made me more conscious of matters related to defence and security. In 2020, during Tanzania's general elections, through the Centre for International Policy (CIP), we were fully engaged in observing the elections. The general principle that guided us during such a demanding moment was putting the country first. We agreed to send out the message to all stakeholders, including the political parties, that there was life after the elections, and we ought to uphold our security above all other things.

During the course, I was involved in drafting Tanzania's National Security Strategy (NSS). One of the core functions of any government is to provide for the security and safety of its citizens. Moreover, security is a precondition for sustainable investment, job creation, and development; these are the preeminent priorities of many African governments. Security is, therefore, central to the confidence and trust that the citizens have in their government. Yet, most African countries do not have an overarching national security strategy. This exercise of drafting Tanzania's National Security Strategy informed and equipped me with key skills that the lack of a grand strategy inhibits prioritization of security threats, effective coordination and resource alignment.

Without a national security strategy, there is no shared understanding of national security vision and objectives or national leveraging partnership assistance. Consequently, in most African countries, security does not serve public good. Therefore, given the excellent training at the National Defence College, it is worth mentioning that National Security Strategy Development is a policymaking process to deliver better state and citizen security. As such, it provided me with the opportunity to understand the critical need for protecting national security and being aware of any threats therein. By so doing, it forges a new social contract between the government and its people.

Through this understanding, some of us have been involved in research to analyze the ongoing security threats in the southern part of Tanzania and northern part of Mozambique, particularly Cabo Delgado. Tanzania is a country considered 'at risk' of increased levels of violent extremism in the region and particularly in connection with the emergence of the Mozambique crisis, due to the porous nature of borders in the region and the prevalence of common drivers and enablers of extremism. Therefore, urgent interventions should be undertaken by multiple stakeholders to compliment national support and efforts for preventing and responding to violent extremism in Tanzania. In May 2022, I was among the security analysts who were asked to research and analyze the situation in southern Tanzania.

The study assessed the radicalization and recruitment of youths in their localities, the extent and effectiveness of non-state actors' engagement in PVE initiatives, the extent and effectiveness of governments' responsiveness to PVE and recruitment initiatives, the extent and effectiveness of states' engagement with non-state actors and the community around VE/PVE,

the effectiveness of state and non-state collaboration in designing and implementing strategies and initiatives on PVE and recruitment, and finally, make recommendations for possible solutions to violent extremism challenges and preventions of recruitment within their localities. To undertake this important task, we relied on the knowledge acquired from the National Defence College. Undoubtedly, my colleagues and I, who had the privilege to study at the National Defence College, continue to contribute immensely to strengthen our National Security Strategy, addressing the challenges of Tanzania's national security threats.

We are not left out in following up the outcome of the Kenyan general elections which were held on the 9th of August, 2022. Elections are widely thought to be a major source of internal conflicts, which may have spill over effects beyond borders, particularly in Africa. As professionally trained security analysts from the Tanzania National Defence College, we see the role of our analysis so that we can provide possible predictions in protecting our national security. In this vein, on the 26th of August 2022, I will be participating in an online debate on *Lessons for Tanzania from Kenyan elections*. All these emanate from the skills acquired from the National Defence College-Tanzania.

Lastly, I wish to seize this opportunity to thank the National Defence College-Tanzania for having accepted me as one of their Fourth Course Member. I thank all my Fourth Course Members, who through their cooperation, we exchanged ideas on national security matters. I thank the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, especially through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, which fully funded my studies at the NDC.

I highly recommend that the NDC increases the intake of more Course Members so that we can have more security analysts in the country. Without security, there will be no development; without development, there will be no security. Let us create more *Strategic Leaders, For Strategic Development*, in line with our 2016 Course Members' Motto.

AKHSANTENI SANA!