EUI SCHOOL OF TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

STG Policy Papers

POLICY BRIEF

CRIME PREVALENCE AND THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY POLICING ON HUMAN SAFETY AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

Author:

Umar Kabanda

School of Transnational Governance

ISSUE 2022/07
FEBRUARY 2022

EUI SCHOOL OF TRANSNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Crime undermines human safety and security by destroying trust relations between citizens and police systems in Africa. While all the 55 Countries on the continent are characterised with households that vary in income levels, religious or ethnic groups, this has continued to demand policing systems that can engage with all categories of residents, to reduce the prevalence of crime and increase law and order compliance. It also remains to be a precondition to safeguard domestic security through reduced lawlessness and criminal violence against crime victims. This paper introduces insights on how police forces in African Union member states, in collaboration with residents, can introduce crime prevention measures to reduce the likelihood of crime and its impact on victims at the grassroots level. The author develops policy implications regarding how people-driven initiatives can reform policing systems to guarantee safety and security for all. Furthermore, the Crime Preventer Models and Neighbourhood Watch Models are both advanced as approaches to community policing that can facilitate mutual working relations between citizens and police forces in pursuit of human safety and security on the continent.

Author and acknowledgements:

Umar Kabanda | Policy Leader Fellow, EUI School of Transnational Governance

The author would like to thank his Policy Writing Group (Manjusha Mukherjee, Yasasmin Kaviratne and Fergal Treanor), Megan Gethin for her insightful reviews, the staff of the EUI Library for their research assistance and Fiona Wong for preparing the policy paper for publication.

Views expressed in this publication reflect the opinion of individual authors and not those of the European University Institute.

1. INTRODUCTION

Of half-a-million homicides committed globally in 2017,[1] it was estimated that only 4.7% occurred in Europe while 35.1% occurred in Africa, just lower than the Americas' 37.4%. Homicide among other crimes such as consumer fraud, robbery, theft of livestock, domestic violence, child abuse, corruption, sexual assault, kidnapping, and burglary are prevalent among African countries, although to varying degrees. Yet still police engagement of residents in localities to reduce the occurrence of such crimes is minimal. Thus, demanding police systems in Africa to increase citizen involvement in policing, is a priority.

In recent times, globalisation and the expansion of trans-national crimes such as; terrorism, human and drug trafficking global networks and actors have expanded their reach and also made it easier for individuals to commit crimes locally, while being coordinated and directed via the internet, from many miles away.

There is limited active engagement by people with the police to curb crime through informal structures. Also, the police have limited avenues to engage with citizens. Therefore, African Union member state police forces need to increase citizen engagement through community policing, as an ideology and strategy of wider police engagement.

2. FRAMEWORKS FOR HUMAN SAFETY AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

The quest for human safety and security in Africa is envisioned in the continental peace and conflict management initiatives that have been instituted by the African Union Commission, among them the Peace and Security Council (PSC) which operates as an African Union standing decision-making body for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts. It furthermore provides collective security and early warning systems to facilitate a timely and efficient response to any security threats or crises arising in Africa. The PSC functions as a key pillar of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and stands out as an overall strategy to promote peace, security, and stability in Africa. In the implementation of the architecture, there are other various structures, namely: the Panel of the Wise, the Commission the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF) and the Peace Fund. In addition to the interaction of the Pan-African Parliament and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and civil society organisations, these all facilitate the realisation of peace, security and stability in Africa.

The PSC protocol invites partnerships between the African Union and other relevant international stakeholders to support the African Peace and Security Architecture. Among them is included the United Nations[2] partnership that has contributed to peacebuilding, advancement of post-conflict reconstruction and community development. Also, the European Union, through its Global Europe thematic programme on Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention has entered into partnerships with the African Union Commission to build capacities for conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and crisis preparedness in addressing global, trans-regional and emerging threats.

In more detail, the African Peace Facility (APF) serves as a pillar underpinned by the AU-EU relationship. 'The strategic objective has not only remained that of ensuring a peaceful, safe, secure environment' but also to 'foster political stability and effective governance, while enabling sustainable and inclusive growth across the continent.'

However, there are very few initiatives to help disseminate citizen involvement in policing. This necessitates the African Peace and Security framework to consider the function of national police forces through promoting people-centred policing initiatives. Though the introduction of the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) as a technical institution promises such a possible police cooperation among member states, it has also continued to lack a clear continental guideline

1 UNODC, (2019) Global study on homicide-Homicide: extent, patterns, trends and criminal justice response for 2017, Vienna, Retrieved from Microsoft Word - Booklet1_Draft_for_Layout_clean¬_12july (unodc.org) on 24/02.2022 at 17.14 pm.
2 United Nations Security Council, (2021). Strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including on the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union, Report of the Secretary-General.

for people engagement to participate in policing. This has continued to deprive pan-continental police cooperation of greater engagement with communities.

3. SAFETY AND SECURITY NEEDS FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN CRIME VULNERABLE SOCIETIES

The mechanism to fulfil the enjoyment of rights for all citizens in Africa requires innovation in implementing a human rights-based policing approach. This approach also demands citizen engagement to increase participation in support of the formal justice system. If police forces build citizen trust to participate in policing, this increases citizens' active collaboration for improved policing services. Such an informal policing system can engage citizens in diverse ways.

- Encouraging responsive actors to prevent potential crimes that would otherwise not be prevented by the formal policing system. This also facilitates a mutual working relationship with police officers to increase the reach of policing services to all people in all localities. However, the lack of active citizen support is likely to prohibit a positive public perception of policing and the citizens role in ensuring human safety and security.
- Encouraging citizens to be engaged in reporting safety threats and monitoring the security needs in localities. This can be in the form of citizens participating in criminal investigations, conflict mediation, intelligence gathering, and providing the police with advice on specific neighbourhoods. This practice also opens the local dimension to police forces, so that they can better understand the causes of crime, the actors involved, and the victims, through engaging with residents as a source of information on local crime.[3]
- Encouraging citizens to be active in supporting victims suffering from negative impacts of crime. This is possible through community self-defence groups and psycho-social schemes that can be instituted by African state police forces in collaboration with residents across localities.

The challenge, however, is that men and women are not equally involved in dealing with crime-prone societies. This may be evident in the limited efforts of police forces to integrate more women into police administration and the unwillingness of women to participate in policing activities in Africa. Both may reduce the potential influence of women in shaping activities that meet their needs in different places. This is also likely to lead to a lack of attention to the needs of victims of crime and to a further increase in gender-based violence and assault in Africa. However, women suffering from gender-based violence are also unlikely to receive support from female officials if the majority of those who design and decide on community policing activities are men.

4. COMMUNITY POLICING AS A STRUCTURE AND STRATEGY IN AFRICA

Community policing introduces an approach that can boost the structures and strategies within the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) to engage citizens in policing. The approach has a high potential to enable citizens to prevent, mitigate and report crime to police stations in Africa. In some instances, the approach can also reduce the impact of culturally rooted crimes such as female genital mutilation and cattle rustling which are crimes that can't easily be managed without full support of the community.

In one of the initiatives spearheaded by GIZ under its project that aimed at supporting the African Union (AU), the AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) and Regional Economic Communities and Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) focused on improving policing structures among selected countries in Africa. Among these countries were Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal. This initiative's overall objective was that of firstly, building and strengthening the **police structures**, capacities for peace support

3 Howes, LM and Watson, D and Newett, L, (2020). Police as knowledge brokers and keepers of the peace: perceptions of community policing in Tuvalu, Police Practice and Research, 22, (1) pp. 745-762. ISSN 1561-4263

and special operations and the focus was on improving;

- Standard procedures, including the recruitment and training of police officers, development of databases for reference and reform in police services,
- Coordination between the various government institutions to support the varying police work needs in localities, and
- Formulating framework documents on policing in Africa and organising workshops for African Unions' regional initiatives to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Furthermore, **as a strategy**, community policing can provide clarity regarding;

a. Why do the police need to engage with communities? This is important, in order to integrate community members in managing social ills and reducing the hesitation to report crime in their localities. In Nigeria, the practice of engaging citizens in policing was reported to have contributed to the reduction of crimes such as kidnappings, robberies, and deaths.
b. Who should the police engage with in communities? Local leaders, elders, morally upright residents can be engaged as key community actors with whom the police could collaborate with, to first identify appropriate resources or other actors in localities. This provides an entry-point to policing strategies which could be applied to the whole community.
c. How might the police best engage with communities? Through forming Community Police Forums (CPFs) and rolling out comprehensive training programmes on community policing. This provides the knowledge required for police and citizens to embrace and participate in local level policing.

5. FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE COMMUNITY POLICING IMPLEMENTATION

In practice, community policing is a process rather than a product, which relies on organisational decentralisation. It can also be a re-orientation of outreach to facilitate a two-way communication between the police and the public.[4] Furthermore, it can be perceived as a drive which aspires to establish partnership between the people and the police towards ensuring the safety and security of localities. However, this practice faces varying challenges across societies in Africa.

5.1. Influence of state politics in domestic policing

The specific political culture of each country has a strong impact on all processes; from enacting laws concerning public security and order, to the selection of decision makers in policing. Politics may influence policing based on the choices made by the state. This can be manifest in three styles of policing;

- Firstly, the legalistic style of policing that puts emphasis on violations of law and relies on threats of arrest or actual arrests. In this style officers follow the enforcement approach to crime-related situations,
- Secondly, the 'watchman' style, where officials place emphasis on maintaining order through informal methods by resolving disputes but not pro-actively preventing crime. This style of policing is characterised with the practice of arresting those identified to be a threat to law and order in society,
- Lastly, the community policing service style. This is a style of policing orientated towards emphasising community engagement and participation of residents in policing across localities.

Besides the politics and choice of policing by the ruling regimes in African states, the police operations bylaws at the local administration level and police staff professionalism can also

4 Trojanowicz R & Bucqueroux, B. (1998). Community Policing: how to get started, 2nd edition. Cincinnati: Alderson publishing co.

facilitate and enable accountable policing in each locality.[5]

5.2. Diversity of localities

African society is diverse in culture, ethnic composition, religion, education and income levels and the choice of community policing model deployed is dependent on how inclusive the policing initiatives can be. In addition, the characteristics of affordability, ease of police service access and ability to accommodate the diverse cultural way of life of all people, requires that the community policing strategy matches the characteristics of the community itself.

5.3. Inadequate safety strategies and corruption

Evidence from DRC Congo report suggests that the Congolese Police Force lacked a strategic action-plan and this led to misappropriation of funds which were allocated for local security needs. While in Kenya, corruption was reported as the key challenge to effective policing. It was furthermore established that this has increased the apathy of the Kenyan public with regard to support for policing activities and fundraising for local policing needs.

6. POTENTIAL COMMUNITY POLICING MODELS FOR HUMAN SAFETY AND SECURITY

The progressive models of community policing, such as neighbourhood watch and the use of crime prevention officers, are underpinned by Sir Robert Peel's Policing Principles. These state that the police should promote crime prevention. The models have been tested in Uganda[6] and Kenya and can also be adapted to the specific political and cultural context of different African countries if residents are appropriately involved in designing and adapting activities to local conditions.

6.1. Neighbourhood watch model

Neighbourhood watch is the practice of structuring policing services where the police partners with households and organises them to practice vigilance activities through organised schemes.[7] Furthermore, as a strategy, this introduces new tasks, such as the following:

- Peer-to-peer sensitisation of neighbourhoods on community safety
- Intelligence gathering for police by neighbourhoods
- Reporting of crime threats in neighbourhoods to police
- Watching over community safety needs in neighbourhoods
- Participating in neighbourhood meetings to find solutions to local insecurity
- Mitigation of crime impacts among neighbourhoods.

6.2. Crime preventers deployment model

The crime preventers model is a structure of policing aimed at crime prevention and involves the police recruiting morally upright residents and deploying them in a locality with high rates of crime to make patrols. As an approach, it increases the penetration of policing across localities in an informal arrangement while benefiting from localities participating to reduce the likely impact of crime.[8] Besides, as a strategy Crime Preventers Deployment reduces crime opportunities that are expected to arise from the routine of everyday life in localities. However, for the resident to support this model, for the case of Uganda[9] and Kenya they heavily rely on these factors:

- Trust of crime preventer operations by residents
- Absence of corruption among crime preventers patrolling localities
- Professionalism among crime preventers when arresting offenders.
- Assistance to crime victims when found in the patrol zones by crime preventers
- Willingness to share crime prevention skills with residents in need

5 Stucky, T. D. (2005). Local politics and police strength. Justice Quarterly, 22(2), 139–169.
6 Uganda Police Force Strategy for Community Policing, 2017
7 Forrester, D. (1990), Neighbourhood Watch (In) Husain, S., and J. Bright (eds) Neighbourhood Watch and the Police. Crime Concern, Swindon.
8 Australian Institute of Criminology available at http://www.aic.gov.au accessed on 4 Jan 2021 at 2:00 pm.
9 Uganda Police Force Strategy Op. Cit., p. 16

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESIDENTS' SAFETY AND SECURITY NEEDS

Community profiling is essential in understanding the diversity of neighbourhoods and the choice of model to apply. The initial process of creating neighbourhood profiles forms a significant phase of the engagement process among all neighbourhood teams. The process also permits police administrators to determine which of the two models to apply, given the locality. If properly done, it opens the policing strategists to understanding relevant factors, including;

- The complexity of localities and the selection of residents who could be suitable to support the police initiatives in each locality.
- Develop a strategy that describes where, when, and how the adopted model would apply and what method to follow to monitor its efficiency in contributing to the safety and security of a specific locality.
- Proactively anticipating, with residents, likely sources of future crime, and adapting the model to each locality.
- Devising a communications strategy to facilitate the information flow from the residents to the police and vice versa, regarding safety and human security needs in each locality.

However, several reforms[10] are needed to ensure the safety of the inhabitants in Africa. These reforms include:

- African states must limit the impartiality of police forces in political activities with the incumbent regime. This could be challenged by the continued interest of the ruling regimes to use police forces to manipulate citizens against the political opposition.
- African police forces need to assert their capacity for citizen-led policing, exercising discretionary powers, empowering communities on security issues and building capacity that is proactive, participatory in decision-making and focused on problem-solving approaches. This could be challenged by the entrenched approaches to law enforcement already in place in the armed forces.
- The introduction of police collaboration with the private sector (businesses and civil societies) to fund people-centred crime-fighting activities is needed. This could be challenged by the risk of corruption and low trust if funds are collected and mismanaged.

7.1. Deployment of neighbourhood watch in urban estates and rural communities

Households in established localities (as distinct from informal or slum neighbourhoods) usually have residents who are permanent. This guarantees social networks that develop among residents in homes located in estates or rural areas. This also produces effective social cohesion for neighbourhood policing.[11] The social cohesion and permanent residence of people in such localities in Africa enables members in such localities to know the crime history of the area and the nature of crimes experienced. This therefore facilitates an easier police-resident collaboration through developing neighbourhood schemes.

7.2. Deployment of crime preventers Model in slums located in less structured localities

Households in less structured localities usually have residents who are mobile and often shift to new locations. In such situations, the application of neighbourhood watch is inappropriate due to the lack of trust and continued mobility of residents in such neighbourhoods. Furthermore, the limited community knowledge reduces residents' reliance on each other to facilitate collaboration due to the lack of knowledge or history of crime. However, deployment of crime preventers who remain in the same locality promises a stable safety and security policing system, even with the change in residents in less stable communities.

10 Rauch, J and Van der Spuy, (2006). Police reform in post-conflict Africa: a review. Safety and Security Programme of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa

11 Sampson, R. J. (2004). Networks and neighborhoods: the implications of connectivity for thinking about crime in the modern city. Network Logic: London: Demos.

8. POLICY IMPLICATION OF MODELS ON SAFETY AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

This section highlights how a people centred policing approach, that is bottom-up in nature, might affect the overall citizens' safety and security at continental and national level.

8.1. Continental police initiatives

At the continental level, the introduction of people-centred policing through the African Union Police Cooperation Mechanism is likely to change policymakers' perceptions of the role of budgets in curbing cross-border insecurity and promoting security in different places on the continent. The community policing approach is inclusive and enables citizens to support continental efforts to keep people safe. On the other hand, policy makers in the fight against crime will begin to appreciate the pluralistic nature of African society and rethink policing to support the African Union's new mechanism for police cooperation through these initiatives:

- Improving public confidence in the continental peace initiatives through policing.
- Guaranteeing the legitimacy of police actions in the eyes of the public across African Union member states.
- Determining the profile, and priorities of communities which are most prone to civil wars, to support the conflict prevention and management mechanisms of African Union.
- Introducing a continental framework to improve on the efficiency and effectiveness of policing across localities.
- Supporting the early warning system with people involvement of citizens for peace sustainability through policing.

8.2. National police force

The implementation of the progressive models by the national police forces can provide a social basis for the realisation of a functional synergy between the police and the citizens by promoting a bottom-up approach in the African Union Member States. It will help national police forces:

- Gather information and identify the security needs of different localities.
- Improve services for the security of people on the ground.
- Reduce risks, threats and harm to residents.
- Identify, together with beneficiaries, the strategies and measures that will best meet local security needs in each country.

8.3. Citizens

Citizens will enjoy an accountable and people centered police force through improving community life at the grassroots. Furthermore, the local leaders and residents would be motivated to collaborate and enable police to;

- Identify community problems and priorities for their safety and security.
- Provide details of crime experienced in their localities.
- Develop a sense of oneness in contributing to law and order, despite the heterogeneous nature of the societies.
- Support victims of crime by reducing the risk, threat, vulnerability, and harm by supporting victims in absence of police in the locality.

9. CONCLUSION

Introducing the Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Prevention models can help increase the participation of men and women at the grassroots level in the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). While it is important to include both genders in the models, special attention must be paid to ensure that the needs of women, who head most households and are most vulnerable to gender-based violence, are adequately addressed. This can be done by promoting programmes that empower local people to use their skills to ameliorate crime-related problems in their neighbourhoods, or through group activities that promote household human security initiatives with the support of a strengthened national police force in Africa.

In addition, the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) must be funded and given the necessary political support by the African Union to draft and implement a continental code of ethics for citizen policing in member states. This will promote the sharing of policing experiences among African Union member states and drive new reforms needed to keep communities safe from new crimes committed by transnational organised crime networks, which require joint intergovernmental action.

Furthermore, when implemented by national police forces, the models will promote a bottom-up approach where communities benefit from the initiatives and actively participate in crime prevention and conflict management across the continent. This should combine the existing top-down framework for peace and security in Africa under the African Union with a bottom-up approach to grassroots policing to engage people in promoting human security.

The School of Transnational Governance (STG) delivers teaching and high-level training in the methods, knowledge, skills and practice of governance beyond the State. Based within the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence, the School brings the worlds of academia and policy-making together in an effort to navigate a context, both inside and outside Europe, where policy-making increasingly transcends national borders.

The School offers Executive Training Seminars for experienced professionals and a Policy Leaders Fellowship for early- and mid-career innovators. The School also hosts expert Policy Dialogues and distinguished lectures from transnational leaders (to include the STG's Leaders Beyond the State series which recorded the experiences of former European Institution presidents, and the Giorgio La Pira Lecture series which focuses on building bridges between Africa and Europe). In September 2020, the School launched its Master-of-Arts in Transnational Governance (MTnG), which will educate and train a new breed of policy leader able to navigate the unprecedented issues our world will face during the next decade and beyond.

The STG Policy Papers Collection aims to further the EUI School of Transnational Governance's goal in creating a bridge between academia and policy and provide actionable knowledge for policy-making. The collection includes Policy Points (providing information at-a-glance), Policy Briefs (concise summaries of issues and recommended policy options), and Policy Analyses (in-depth analysis of particular issues). The contributions provide topical and policy-oriented perspectives on a diverse range of issues relevant to transnational governance. They are authored by STG staff and guest authors invited to contribute on particular topics.

School of Transnational Governance
European University Institute
Via Camillo Cavour 65, Firenze, FI 50129
Email: stg.publications@eui.eu

www.eui.eu/stg

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission supports the EUI through the European Union budget. This publication reflects the views only of the author(s), and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC-BY 4.0) International license which governs the terms of access and reuse for this work. If cited or quoted, reference should be made to the full name of the author(s), editor(s), the title, the series and number, the year and the publisher.

doi: 10.2870/755815
ISBN:978-92-9466-166-1
ISSN: 2600-271X
QM-BA-22-007-EN-N

© European University Institute, 2022