# Effects of Violent Crimes on Economic Welfare of Slum Dwellers: Kenyan Perspective

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### Abstract

Crimes within and across borders of a given state, constitutes a serious threat to national and global development and stability and are not limited to only international war and conflict, but also civil violence, terrorism and violent crimes. It is on this basis this paper sought to assess effects and strategies of violent crimes on economic welfare of slum dwellers in Narok town, Kenya. The research design for the study was survey research design. The target population for this study was all adults aged 18 years and above and living in Majengo slum in Narok town. The study sample was 120 respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guide. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics with aid of Statistical package for Social Sciences and presented by use tables, pie charts and graphs. The study established that violent crimes led to loss of income due early closure of business because of fear of burglary and extortion from the criminals. The study further revealed that violent crimes led to wastage of resources through increased investment in security apparatus. The study established the most effective strategies in curbing incidences of violent crimes in order of merit as enhanced lighting, installation of alarm systems, coming home early, employing guards and finally community policing. The study concluded that the number of violent crimes were increasing as new ones were being formed which implied need for increased surveillance and increased investment in violent crime strategy prevention. Hence, the study recommended good cooperation between police, County government and community to increase police effectiveness and community's confidence about police.

Key words: Economic Welfare; Strategies; Slum Dweller; Violent Crimes;

## **1. Introduction**

Different scholars have defined crime differently. Mushanga (2005) defines crime, as the act committed or omitted that must be harmful either to the state, to an individual or both. Siegel (2009) says, crime is a violation of societal rules of behaviour as interpreted and expressed by a criminal legal code created by people holding social and political power. Stavrou (2012) argues

that violent crime does not happen spontaneously but it grows out of an unequal and exclusive society, and out of a lack of institutional and social control. Ndikaru, (2011) observes that increase in urban population in slum areas has had a disastrous implication concerning violent crime and other social problems. UN Habitat, (2013) have reported incidences of crime to be high in the urban areas specifically slum areas compared to rural areas. Stavrou (2012) noted such incidences of crime have been occurring mostly in slum areas because the residents of such areas have inadequate resources to cater for their basic needs. Some cities, especially the slum areas in Africa, are struggling with high levels of violent crime that undermine the very foundations of the economic and social development of the entire population (UN-HABITAT 2007).

Some of these slum areas have deteriorated into "no-go zones" that undermine the overall governance of the area and trap the poorest population in a dangerous cycle of poverty and violent crime (Davis, 2006). Many studies have reported violent crime to have a very significant negative influence on economic welfare of people (Cárdenas, 2007; Peri, 2004; Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2008), whereas others noted that the effect not to be clear (Goulas & Zervoyianni, 2012; Burnham et al., 2004) or even absent (Mauro & Carmeci, 2007; Ray et al., 2009). Ndikaru (2011) notes violent crime to be mainly associated with the young people who have no employment.

In the context of limited employment opportunities, vigilantes, gangs, militia, and for hire, private security groups have emerged to fill the gaps left by under resourced police forces. Also due to declining public confidence in governance and formal police and judicial systems in certain contexts has led to a growth in informal and privatized responses to urban insecurity (UN-HABITAT 2007). However, the strategies employed to mitigate the violent crimes vary in the level of coercion applied. For example, in Los Angeles, inter-agency interventions focus on the arrest and deportation of members (Tita et al., 2013a). In several northern Nigerian cities, militant Muslim groups supplanted police functions by vigorously enforcing *sharia* law (Florquin and Berman, 2005). In Medellín and Bogotá, both guerrilla and paramilitary groups impose 'taxes' on local business as a form of protection, while in Cape Town vigilante groups such as *People Against Gangsterism and Drugs* regularly execute gang leaders to 'cleanse' the

streets. As such, the militant groups and gangs in the inner cities and shantytowns across the world have are institutionalized and internationally connected (Hagedorn, 2005; Moser and Rodgers, 2005). Hence, it is against this background this study sought to establish the effects of violent crimes on economic welfare of slum dwellers of Majengo, Narok town, Kenya.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Much of the conventional wisdom on urban violent crime outlines a particular scenario. For instance, the rapid growth of cities could lead to chaotic formation of slums in which overcrowding and competition for scarce resources combined leading to weak state security presence fostering criminality and violent crime (Buvinic and Morrison 2010; Naudé , 2006). However, literature available does not provide proper explanation, justification and economic implications of violent crime among slum dwellers. For example, UN-Habitat report (2013) on challenge of Slums observes that the notion of high crime in slum areas is not always universal. This paper therefore, sought to examine the effects violent crimes on economic welfare of slum dwellers in Narok town, Kenya.

#### 2.0 Literature Review

Finklea (2010) notes that in the past several decades violent crimes has been evolving and taking on an increasingly transnational nature. He further noted that crime stretches far beyond the Italian mafia, encompassing Russian, Asian, Balkan, Middle Eastern, and African syndicates. Ackerman, (2004) observes that in many of the world's industrialized countries crimes rates recorded by the police has increased two to three times of those of 30 years ago.

In Africa's urban areas, higher trends of crimes rate is most pronounced particularly in the slums and townships (Livingston, 2013). He further noted that both governments and Africa continent as a whole pay much attention to violent rebellious and extremist groups while overlooking violent crime in slum areas. Adewumi and Omoniyi (2012) noted that the African media for instance, devoted a significant proportion of time or space to reports of murder and theft. The announcement concerning murder, rape, burglary and stolen vehicles among others were daily features on the news and national dailies. As a result, lives and property no longer seemed safe in most African countries. Over time, as crimes has become epidemic and its effect more pervasive, social and environmental scientists have become interested and involved in the nature, causes and consequence of crimes (Jayamala 2008). Studies have shown that the impact of the increase in population and more so poor people living urban areas than ever before in African continent has and will have disastrous implication violent crime and other social problems (United Nations Population Division, 2012; UN-Habitat, 2013; Teresia, 2011).

The question of crimes and insecurity in Kenya has become paramount towards development (Keriga ad Bujra, 2009). According to the Kenya Poverty reduction Strategy Paper (2013) insecurity is one of the key issues identified by many Kenyans communities as a source of poverty. In support of this statement, the Kenya Economic Recovery Strategy for Employment (2013-2007), indicates that addressing safety, insecurity and rule of law are fundamental if economic growth. National Crimes Research Centre (2012) notes that a country that witness a substantial level of political and economic instability has result to increase in crimes and disorder in the society. Makokha (2008) note that crimes trends in Kenya are evolving in unprecedented rates and measures, thus giving law enforcement agencies the difficult task of remaining vigilant and containing the situation. Kenya police crimes report (2013) has indicated that the security situation of the country as characterized by a significant increase in all categories of crimes except in robberies, criminal damage, traffic offences and offences involving tourists.

According to Global Corruption Barometer Report (2010), at least 92% of Kenyans perceive the police force as the most corrupt institution of the state. This has been indicated by people complain of police failures in assisting slum residents but instead asking them to fuel their vehicles so as to go to the crime scene, or buy them airtime to call their seniors (Kenya Urban Bribery Survey, 2011). Consequently, people have resorted to gangs to provide security and other social services in the slums. However, most people view gangs as a group of young people with negative attributes, operating illegally, and engaged in predatory practices like extortion, violence and human rights abuses (Kagwanja, 2008; Rodgers & Gareth 2006). Recognizing the centrality of organized gangs, Kenya Police Crime Report (2010) notes that organized criminal gangs primarily pose threats to national security. UN Press Center (2006) regrettably notes that police responses to gangs and gang-related violence have sometimes led to extrajudicial killings of youth suspected to be members of the outlawed groups.

A lack of trust and faith in the criminal justice system has led to these high approval ratings for the extrajudicial executions of suspects (Kantor and Persson, 2011). Nevertheless, the killings have not translated into lower levels of crime or the demise of gangs. World Bank (2009) has reported violent crime to have a strong negative impact on economic development as it drastically reduces the economic growth of a country by producing long-lasting detrimental social impacts. For instance in Guatemala in 2005, the direct costs of violent crime estimated to \$2.4 billion, which was 7.3 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This figure is more than double the damage caused by Hurricane Stan in the same year and more than double the combined budget for the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and Education in 2006 (UNDP 2006). In 200, the Mexican government estimated the urban crime and violence to \$9.6 billion from lost sales, jobs, and investment in 2007 alone (Simpson 2006). Given the above effects, violence clearly is inherently disempowering for both the affected communities and the broader city. In most cases, the areas of the town that are most blighted by violence also happen to be the poorest (Winton 2004; Briceno-Leon and Zubillaga 2012).

#### **Strategies Used Against Violent Crimes**

Many organizations in Kenya, both in government and in civil society, are engaged in activities to reduce violent crimes (Muchembled 2008). Bilchik (2008) noted Early Childhood Development program as one of the key elements of effective strategies of combating violent crime as the program includes supporting parents in learning positive discipline and communicating with their children. In the program in the United States on following high-risk individuals who had attended the preschool the study found that the ages 27 and 40 to have committed fewer crimes and to have been arrested fewer times than a control group (Schweinhart e.tal, 2005). Another program of Child-Parent Center, on comprehensive education, health, and family support to economically disadvantaged children from preschool to third grade in Chicago's inner city, demonstrated that Child-Parent Center program participants had significantly higher rates of educational attainment and lower rates of juvenile arrest than a control group (Reynolds and others 2004; Reynolds e.tal, 2008).

According to Richards (2011), putting youthful offenders behind bars may not deal with the kind of factors, which caused their recorded crimes. In most cases, it becomes a mere removal of

these youth from their dwelling areas. Employment opportunities by both the government and private entities for employable youth ages can help reduce the rise in the number of the young people involved in criminal activities. However, these people must learn to accept whatever work and not yearn for white-collar employment. The society should also provide ready professional guidance and counseling services in schools, particularly at adolescence to counter the evil impact of the peer pressure that influence these young into crime and delinquency (Richards, 2011).

Positive Parenting Program is another effective program, which supports parents by providing parental skills training to build a safe, stable, and nurturing relationship with their children (WHO, 2009). A child's feeling of connectedness to her or his school has also shown to be one of the most important protective factors against that child's violent behavior (World Bank, 2008). Schools thus are key violence intervention sites. A child's building a social connection with his or her school obviously relies on that child's school attendance.

Programs such as First Things First and Skills, Opportunity and Recognition in the United States, which train teachers and parents to engage children with their schools, also have shown increases in students' school attendance and reduce antisocial behavior and delinquency (World Bank, 2008). After-school programs offer another school-based entry point for prevention. According to the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 15 youth often engage in risky behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use, during the afterschool hours. After-school programs offer a mixture of academic, cultural, and recreational activities for young people in supervised environments. These programs create alternatives for youth, serving as effective youth violence intervention strategies. Instead of engaging with risky behaviors, youth can improve their academic achievement, and develop teamwork skills and positive relationships with their peers through playing sports and other recreational activities. After-school programs typically include academic assistance (tutoring, homework assistance and language classes), drug and alcohol prevention, leadership building, volunteer and community service opportunities, cultural activities (arts and music), life skills training, computer training, mentoring, and counseling (Reno and Riley 2010). Providing structured activities and offering multiple learning opportunities, help ensures children's continued growth and development.

Quality and adequate staffing and involving families in the program also are key components to having successful after-school programs. A good example of an after-school program is Brazil's Open Schools launched by UNESCO in partnership with the Brazilian Ministry of Education. The program offers weekend sports, cultural, arts and leisure activities, and initial work training. The evaluations have shown its success in reducing the levels of violence registered in schools and their surroundings. In São Paulo, between 2013 and 2006, the Open Schools Program, known locally as the Family School, were implemented in 5,306 schools, resulting in criminal acts being reduced by 45.5 percent (World Bank, 2008 & UNESCO, 2007).

In Argentina, the government passed a provincial law on school mediation in 2013, establishing school mediation programs in 42 municipalities (ICPC 2008). In the Chaco province of Argentina, school mediation trainings were given to teachers so that they can apply conflict resolution techniques in school conflicts. In Chile, Colegio Mayor of the Municipality of Pente Alto, Santiago has implemented a school mediation program targeting preschool children age up to five years old. Experiences during the first five years of life strongly influence social and psychological behavior later in life. The program teaches small children conflict resolution techniques through socialization in the school environment. During the first year after implementing the program, disagreements among children in the school dropped by 50 percent, and physical aggression among children also dropped a strong 60 percent (Reno and Riley 2010).

In Sierra Leone, the nongovernmental organization, *Timap for Justice*, has trained paralegals to assist citizens in accessing the justice sector (Maru, 2005). As trained paralegals, the people can advocate within the formal justice system. However, they often also use traditional dispute mechanisms, such as community elders. These alternative programs have had important successes in increasing access to justice and in resolving disputes outside of traditional courtrooms. Nevertheless, their use remains constrained primarily to informal and community levels, and to nonviolent, mostly petty, crimes. One important limitation in applying ADR in the justice sector is domestic violence cases percent (Morrison and Grunfeld, 2010).

Second-chance programming intends to reintegrate young people either who have had conflict with the criminal justice system as criminal offenders, or whose circumstances put them at high risk of perpetrating violence. Second-chance programs often target youth who have dropped out of school and help them learn. The parents must also take responsibility over their children up to the time when they would be in the position to stand on their own. This involves providing for their children's material needs and giving them moral guidance. Many parents have forfeited the former role and have left it to the movies and advertising agencies to run their children's lives (Maru, 2005).

Religion has a positive impact as a social control measure (Odegi- Awoundo, 2009). Therefore, religious leaders should work extra time to reach out for the youth and involve them in religious activities, a god fearing young adult will not get into criminal activities since this is a sin before God. Education and training have a role in youth criminality as observed earlier; subsequently, the Kenyan government deserves every support from local and international organizations as well as individuals to sustain the constitutional free basic education, and ensure its quality (Odegi- Awoundo, 2009).

Parents and guardians must also co-operate by not only directing their children to schools but making preparations to take over this responsibility from secondary to colleges. Uneducated person would not know what is required of him and yet ignorance is no defence in law. Finally, the communities must help their governments to reduce the number of youthful offenders because as Boss (1967) recommends "The society must strive to reclaim adolescent offenders at an age when positive correction is possible before criminal career is developed, this is the age success is most likely. The differential treatment of all the youthful offenders is a prudent policy".

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to gathered data on effects and strategies of violent crime on economic welfare slum dwellers of Majengo slums of Narok town. The target population for the study was both male and female adults aged above 18 years of age and residing in the study area who were estimated at 17,505 of which 8,998 were males and 8,507

(Kenya National Census, 2009). The study sample was 120 respondents. Convenience sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to collect data from the respondents. Purposive sampling was used to collect information from key informants who included the Officer commanding Narok Police Station, community gate keepers for example estate elders and "Nyumba kumi" initiative leaders. The questionnaire collected data from the residents while interview guide collected data from key informants who included police officers, "Nyumba Kumi Intiative" leaders and Majengo estate elders. Before collecting data, the researcher got a research permit from the National commission of Science, Technology and innovations. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics by use of frequency tables and percentages. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis based on respondents' information on effects of violent crime on economic welfare slum dwellers. The Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) software aided in data analysis.



# 4. Results and Interpretations

In order to determine the gender of the respondents, a question was posed to indicate their gender. The responses gathered are as shown in Table.1:

## **Table 1: Gender of the respondents**

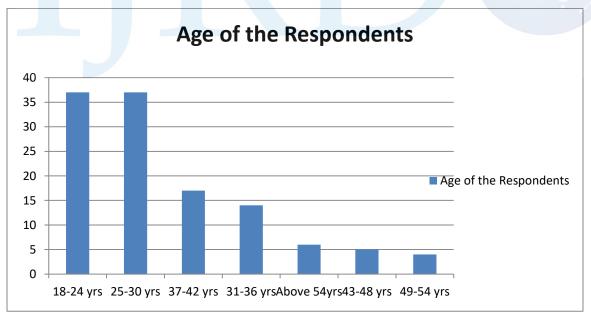
Gender	Sample	Percentage (%)	
Male	73	60.8	
Female	47	39.2	
Total	120	100.0	

## Source: Field Survey (2015)

From the study findings, majority 73 (60.8%) of the respondents were males, while only 47 (39.2%) were female. This indicated a fair representation of the all gender of people of Majengo slums hence representative information.

The age bracket of the respondents probed in this study was between 18 years to 54 years and above. Figure 1 shows the distribution of the ages of the respondents.

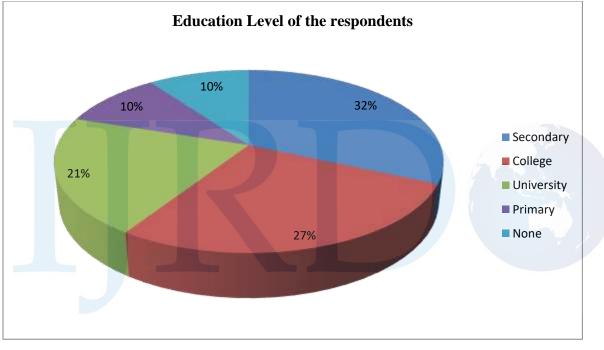
Figure 1 Distributions of the Ages of the Respondents



From figure1, cumulatively, 61.6% (n=74) of the respondents were in the age bracket of 18 to 30 years, followed by those in age bracket of 37 to 42 years accounting for 14.2% (n=17). Only 3.3% (n=4) of the respondents were between 49 to 54 years. The study showed that all the ages

above eighteen years were likely to be involved in violent crimes although the big number is in the age groups of 18 years to 30 years.

The education level of the respondents captured the level of formal education that the respondents had achieved or are currently pursuing. Figure.2 shows the distribution of education level of the respondents.



**Figure 2 Distribution of Education Level of the Respondents** 

The findings represented in the Figure.2 show that most 32% (n=38) of the respondents had acquired secondary school education, followed by 27% (n=33) who had attained college education and 21% (n=25) who had attained university education qualification. Finally, the study showed that only 10% (n=12) of the respondents had primary and no education respectively. This indicated a true picture of a slum area where its members are less educated due to social and economic conditions of the place.

The study further sought to establish effects of violent crimes on economic welfare of Majengo slums residents. The result from the respondents is illustrated in Table 3.

Statements	SD	D	UN	Α	SA	Res %	Mean
Increased insecurity in the community	1.7%	2.5%	1.7%	68.3%	25.8%	82.8%	4.14
Loss of lives	3.4%	5.9%	3.4%	55.1%	32.2%	81.4%	4.07
Increased fear among the residents	4.2%	8.4%	5.9%	52.9%	28.6%	78.7%	3.93
Loss of income as businesses close early	2.5%	14.2%	11.7%	48.3%	23.3%	75.2%	3.76
Instability within family setup	2.5%	16.0%	11.8%	52.9%	16.8%	73.1%	3.66
Waste of resources and time in addressing the matter	5.0%	19.2%	17.5%	41.7%	16.7%	69.2%	3.46
Increased investment in security apparatus	12.5%	24.2%	20.0%	33.3%	10.0%	60.8%	3.04
Overall Mean Response	4.5%	12.9%	10.3%	50.4%	21.9%	74.4%	3.72

Table 3: Effects of violent crimes on the welfare of Majengo Slums Dwellers

According to the respondents, violent crimes increase security in the community as indicated by a mean response of 4.14 (82.8%). In particular, majority (68.3%) of the respondents agreed, 25.8% strongly agreed while only 1.7% strongly disagreed on this aspect. The findings also revealed that violent crimes lead to loss of lives, as indicated by a mean response of 4.07 (81.4%). More specifically, majority, 55.1%, of the respondents agreed, 32.2% strongly agreed while 3.4% strongly disagreed.

When asked whether violent crimes lead to increased fear among the residents, 52.9% of the respondents agreed, 28.6% strongly agreed while 42% strongly disagreed. In overall, the respondents agreed that violent crimes lead to fear among the residents of Majengo slum as indicated by a mean response of 3.93 (78.7%). The study also revealed that violent crimes result into loss of income as businesses close early, with an agreement rating of 3.76 (75.2%). Violent crimes also leads to instability within family setup as indicated by a mean response of 3.66 (73.1%). This is in agreement with Winton (2004), Briceno-Leon and Zubillaga (2012) who

observes that the resulting climate of insecurity weakens urban governance by limiting mobility and creating fear and distrust among community members.

The study further revealed that violent crimes lead to wastage of resources and time in addressing the matter in courts or before village elders. This is indicated by a mean response of 3.46 (69.2%) by the respondents. In particular, 41.7% of the respondents agreed, 16.7% strongly agreed while 5% and 19.2% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. According to the respondents, violent crimes lead to increased investment in security apparatus as indicated by a mean response of 3.04 (60.8%). This supported by World Bank (2009) that violent crime has strong, negative impacts on economic development by drastically reducing growth and producing long-lasting detrimental social impacts.

Overall mean was computed to obtain the overall rating of various statements regarding effects of violent crimes in Majengo slums. From the findings, majority, 50.4%, of the respondents agreed that various highlighted statements indicated effects of violent crimes in Majengo slum, 21.9% strongly agreed, 10.3% were undecided while 12.9% and 4.5% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. With an overall agreement rate of 74.4% (with a mean response of 3.72), the study reveals that the respondents agreed that the statements indicate the effects of violent crimes in Majengo slum.

The study further sought to establish the strategies employed by the residents of Majengo slum of Narok town to cope up with the incidences of violent crimes. The results are shown in Table 4 **Table 4: Strategies to Prevent or to Reduce Violent Crime** 

Statements	SD	D	UN	Α	SA	Res %	Mean
Community policing	4.2%	6.7%	4.2%	50.8%	34.2%	80.8%	4.04
Enhancing lighting	4.2%	9.2%	1.7%	49.6%	35.3%	80.5%	4.03
Installation of alarm systems	2.5%	11.7%	5.0%	48.3%	32.5%	79.3%	3.97
Installing closed circuit TV	5.0%	15.1%	7.6%	44.5%	27.7%	75.0%	3.75
Coming home early	7.6%	35.3%	6.7%	31.1%	19.3%	63.9%	3.19
Employing guards	11.9%	28.0%	2.5%	45.8%	11.9%	63.6%	3.18
Call for police assistance	20.8%	20.0%	5.0%	35.8%	18.3%	62.2%	3.11
Burglar proofing premises	15.3%	27.1%	9.3%	31.4%	16.9%	61.5%	3.08
Keeping dogs	19.2%	39.2%	6.7%	32.5%	2.5%	52.0%	2.60
<b>Overall Mean Response</b>	10.1%	21.4%	5.4%	41.1%	22.1%	68.7%	3.44

When asked to indicate their level of agreement on whether community policing is used by the residents as a coping strategy, 50.8% of the respondents agreed, 34.2% strongly agreed while only 4.2% strongly disagreed on this statement. Overall, this aspect had the highest agreement rating of 4.04 (80.8%). The respondents also indicated enhanced lighting (indicated by a mean response of 4.03 (80.5%)), installation of alarm systems (indicated by a mean response of 3.97 (79.3%)), coming home early (indicated by a mean response of 3.19 (63.9%)), employing guards (indicated by a mean response of 3.18 (63.6%)) are some of the coping strategy employed by the residents to preclude the cases of violent crimes. Overall mean was computed to obtain the overall rating of various statements regarding various strategies used to reduce or to prevent violent crimes in the Majengo slums. From the findings, 41.1%, of the respondents agreed that various highlighted statements are used as coping strategies against violent crimes in Majengo slum, 22.1% strongly agreed, 5.4% were undecided while 21.4% and 21.4% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. With an overall agreement rate of 68.7% (a mean response of 3.44), the study revealed that the respondents had different strategies of reducing or preventing violent crimes in Majengo slum.

#### 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Violent crimes are pressing issues and high levels of deprivation among the communities living in Majengo slum because of low levels of education, lack of employment and other incomegenerating opportunities. Hence, this paper concludes that most slum dwellers in Majengo slum do not have access to basic services such as education, health care and water, which make them envy those who have.

The results indicated that violent crimes occurred mostly in the streets and often during the evening hours. This paper therefore, concludes that most incidences violent crimes in Majengo area were because of inadequate lighting along the streets and in secluded areas.

Mistrust of the police in the event of a crime was an obstacle of the slum dwellers in accessing the formal justice. Hence, this study concludes that most of incidents of violent crimes of slum dwellers are generally resolved through non-state traditional systems of justice and that is why violent crimes prone in slum zones.

Generally this paper concludes that a number of violent crimes were increasing as new ones were being formed or had broken from existing ones which implied need for increased surveillance, increased investment in violent crime prevention and continued research into conditions that generate their growth.

### Recommendations

Addressing unemployment will not resolve violent crime. However, it is important because it sends a clear message to communities that the state is interested in addressing what they perceive to be the main problem. Hence, this paper recommends the stakeholders to develop an integrated program to deal with menace, like integrating the working of police, vigilante groups and community leaders and representatives in coming up with homegrown solutions for crime prevention.

Most residents involved in the study say police are corrupt and ineffective but would like to see a strong police presence. This suggests that residents like to see a type of policing involving a more trusting relationship with the community. Therefore, this study recommends that the relationship between police and community need some improvement. For example, community-policing initiatives can be one way to increase police effectiveness and build confidence with communities.

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