



NATIONAL CRIME RESEARCH CENTRE

Fighting Crime through Research



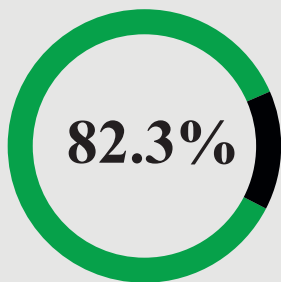
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SURVEY REVEALS SCALE AND RESILIENCE OF CRIMINAL GANGS IN KENYA

The National Crime Research Centre has released a Report of a Survey on the Proliferation and Resilience of Criminal Gangs in Kenya, revealing concerning insights into the spread, operations, and persistence of criminal gangs across the country.

The survey, conducted in 11 counties—Nairobi, Mombasa, Kilifi, Nakuru, Bungoma, Kwale, Kiambu, Machakos, Kisumu, Busia, and Garissa—explored the scale of gang proliferation, their operations, contributing factors, and the effectiveness of existing mitigation measures.

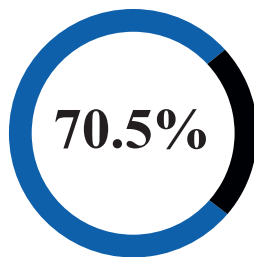


According to the findings, 82.3% of respondents reported a notable proliferation of criminal gangs in their localities, with visibility indicators including increased gang-related violence, intimidation, and recruitment of vulnerable youth. The gangs have become deeply entrenched in communities, especially in Kisumu, Busia, and Bungoma, which recorded the highest levels of spread.

The study mapped 309 active criminal gangs, with Gaza/Gaza Family, 42 Brothers, and Wakali Wao among the most prominent across multiple counties. Mombasa led with the highest number (73), followed by Nairobi (56) and Kilifi (47).

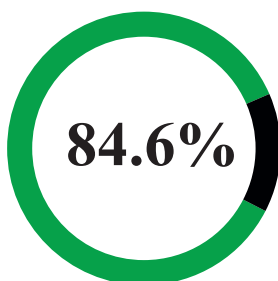


Criminal gangs were found to be active in at least 14 sectors, most notably in security (90.8%)



drug and narcotics trade (70.5%) and business and public transport.

They engaged in a wide array of criminal activities, including robberies, assaults, drug trafficking, burglary, murder, rape, and extortion, with many of these occurring frequently.



Their operations were often violent, involving weapons such as pangas and motorbikes (bodabodas) for mobility. Alarming, 84.6% of respondents noted community complicity as a significant factor enabling gang resilience—through fear, silence, or even cooperation.

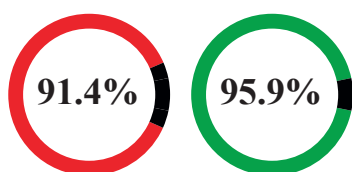
The survey paints a typical profile: young (18–34), male, unemployed or underemployed, school dropouts, and often substance-dependent. Recruitment strategies are multifaceted, leveraging peer pressure, financial incentives, protection promises, and social media.

Key factors behind gang proliferation and resilience include:

- Peer pressure and unemployment (91.5%, 88.5%)
- Drug availability (79.7%)
- Political interference (42.9%)
- Community tolerance and inadequate law enforcement

Despite suppression efforts, gangs continue to adapt and evolve.

While multiple interventions are in place—such as law enforcement patrols, public sensitization, and youth empowerment programmes—the report highlights significant gaps. Challenges include inadequate resources, lenient judicial processes, political protection, and poor community-law enforcement collaboration.



Although measures like intelligence operations (95.9%) and Chief barazas (91.4%) were considered generally effective, their overall impact has been constrained by structural and societal limitations.

The report issues a strong policy call for a multi-sectoral, evidence-based approach that includes:

1. Strengthening Law Enforcement – Enhance surveillance, patrols, judicial response, and witness protection.
2. Empowering Communities – Foster positive engagement, community policing, and civic education.
3. Addressing Socioeconomic Drivers – Scale up youth employment, education access, and social support.
4. Combating Drug Abuse and Trafficking – Intensify anti-narcotics efforts and rehabilitation programs.
5. Ensuring Political Accountability – Tackle political patronage and corruption within the justice system.
6. Leveraging Technology – Use digital tools for intelligence, crime mapping, and monitoring.
7. Expanding Rehabilitation and Reintegration – Support former gang members and crime victims.

NCRC CALLS FOR URGENT REFORMS IN COMMUNITY POLICING TO ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY

The National Crime Research Centre has released a study highlighting both the achievements and deep-rooted challenges of community policing across Kenya. The report, titled *Impact of Community Policing in Kenya*, provides an evidence based evaluation of the country's efforts to build safer communities through collaborative policing strategies.

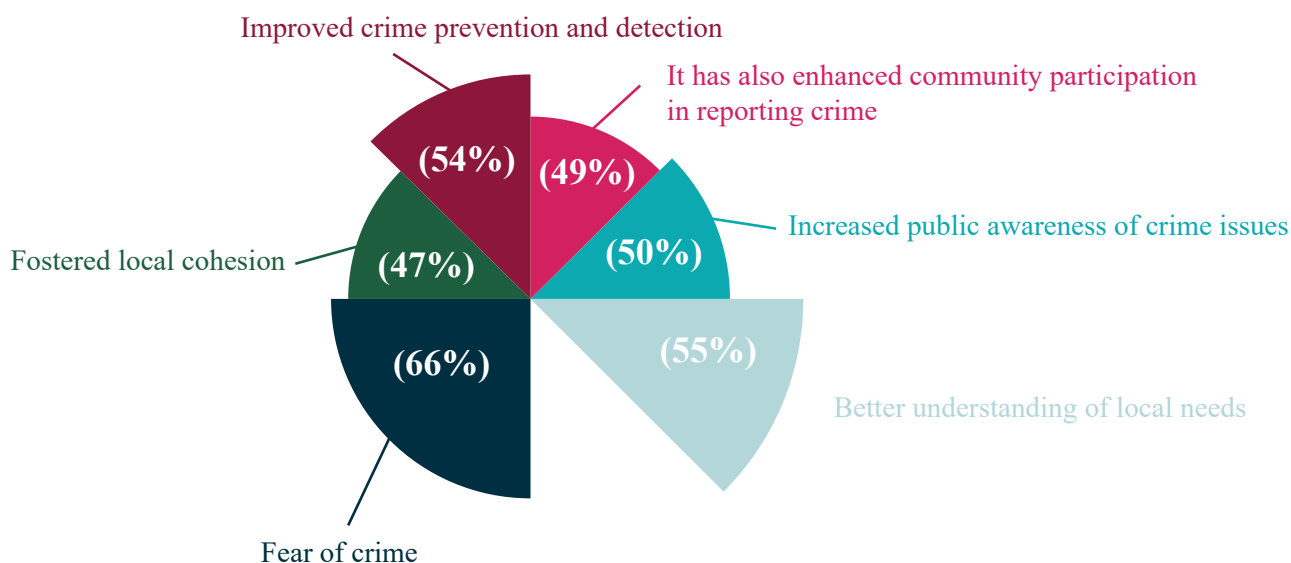
The study, conducted across 11 counties—including Nairobi, Kisumu, Mombasa, Garissa, and Turkana—sought to assess how effective community policing has been in reducing crime and improving trust between citizens and law enforcement.

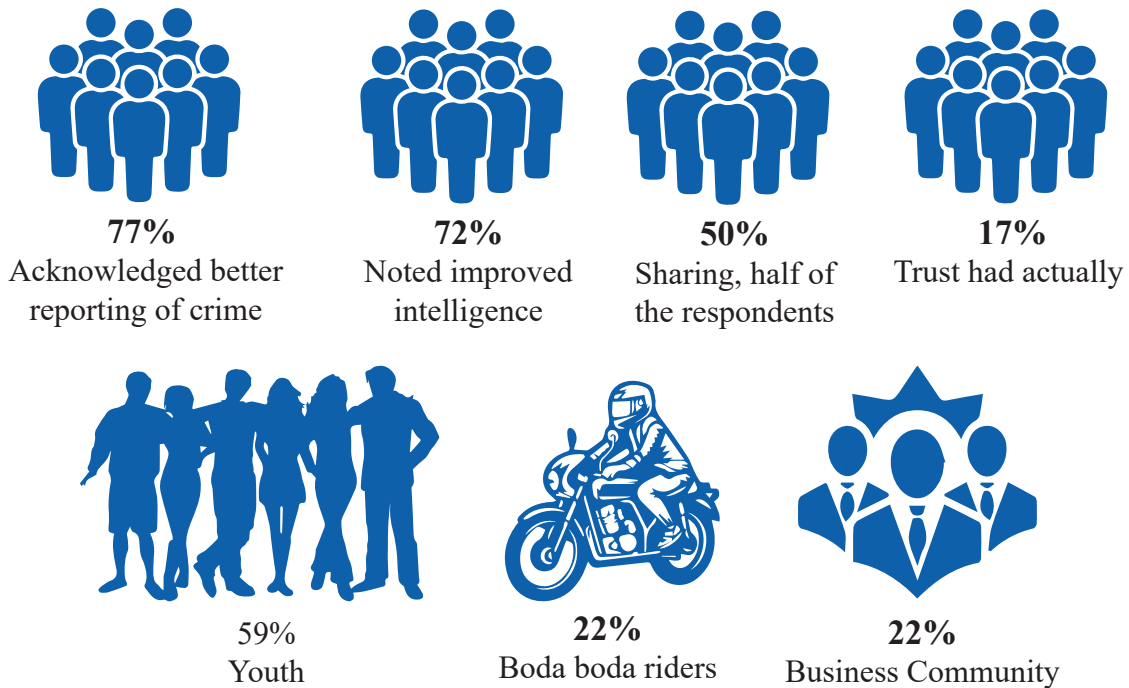
At the core of the research were four key objectives: to evaluate the impact of community policing in crime prevention and management; to examine perceptions and experiences of citizens toward the police; to identify gaps in implementation; and to propose actionable policy recommendations for strengthening community-police collaboration.

Although more than half (57%) of respondents said they felt safe in their localities, a significant portion (43%) still considered their communities unsafe. Their insecurity stemmed from various concerns: rising crime, police inaction, drug abuse, the growth of criminal gangs, and lack of infrastructure like streetlights. Many also cited fear of retaliation from gangs and dissatisfaction with how police respond—or fail to respond—to reports.

The study uncovered a major misunderstanding among citizens regarding the structure and function of community policing. While 56% claimed familiarity with community policing, most respondents confused the National Police Service-led model with Nyumba Kumi—a grassroots initiative focused more on neighbor-to-neighbor vigilance than on formal collaboration with law enforcement. Some even mistook unrelated government programmes such as Kazi Mtaani and environmental clean-ups as community policing.

Despite this confusion, the model has produced notable outcomes. Community policing initiatives have contributed to a reduction in the following;





Complaints ranged from harassment and unlawful arrests to human rights abuses and extortion. Implementation of the programme has also faced structural challenges, including limited resources (59%), low public awareness (59%), and lack of motivation or incentives for both community members and police (38%). Poor coordination, fears of reprisal, and misperceptions about the role of community members involved in security efforts were also flagged as major barriers.

Among the key recommendations put forth by the report is the need for the National Police Service to revitalize community policing as a central strategy for identifying crime hotspots and patterns. The report also urges the Ministry of Interior and National Administration to confront the systemic issues that continue to undermine public trust, including corruption, misconduct, and excessive use of force.

The report further recommends clarifying the blurred lines between Nyumba Kumi and police-led community policing, strengthening public awareness campaigns, and operationalizing County Policing Authorities as outlined in the National Police Service Act, 2011. County-level input, the report argues, is crucial in tailoring crime prevention strategies to local realities.

To rebuild trust, the report calls for addressing youth-police tensions and retraining officers in modern policing methods. It also emphasizes the importance of regular monitoring and evaluation to measure what is working and replicate best practices.

The study confirms that while community policing holds promise, its impact is diminished by systemic weaknesses that require political will, institutional reform, and greater citizen empowerment.

NCRC PENS A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH CHUKA UNIVERSITY



NCRC Director/CEO Dr. Mutuma Ruteere and Chuka University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Henry Mutembei exchange documents during the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding at the University's Main Campus.

The National Crime Research Centre and Chuka University have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that promises to deepen collaboration in crime research, academic mentorship, and practical legal training for university students. The two institutions formalized the partnership on February 11th during a ceremony held at the university's main campus. The event, attended by senior officials from both institutions, was presided over by NCRC Director/CEO Dr. Mutuma Ruteere and Chuka University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Henry Mutembei. The two leaders emphasized the need to strengthen collaboration between research institutions and academia to tackle emerging national challenges through evidence-based solutions.

As part of the partnership, NCRC delivered a public lecture attended by faculty, students, and university administrators. The forum provided a platform for critical conversations around some of Kenya's most urgent social issues, including the rising cases of femicide, the spike in abductions, and the recent High Court ruling that declared Section 226 of the Penal Code—criminalizing attempted suicide—unconstitutional.

In a further boost to student development, NCRC announced new mentorship and attachment opportunities for Chuka University law students. The initiative is designed to provide students with hands-on experience in the areas of crime research, legal analysis, and policy development.

Prof. Mutembei welcomed the collaboration, noting that the agreement aligns with the university's goal of producing well-rounded graduates equipped with both academic knowledge and practical skills.

As the partnership takes shape, both institutions expressed optimism about expanding joint research initiatives, organizing seminars, and sharing resources to enrich the approach to crime prevention and justice reform.

THE CENTRE PARTICIPATES IN THE 7TH PEOPLE DIALOGUE FESTIVAL AT UHURU PARK



Participation in the People Dialogue Festival NCRC staff engage festivalgoers at the Centre's exhibition booth during the 7th People Dialogue Festival at Uhuru Park, Nairobi.

The National Crime Research Centre was among the key institutions that participated in the 7th edition of the People Dialogue Festival (PDF), held from 5th to 8th March 2025 at Nairobi's historic Uhuru Park. The event, convened by the Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD-Kenya), attracted wide representation from political parties, government agencies, civil society organizations, academia, development partners, and the public.

Held under the theme “Building a Collaborative Democracy for Kenya’s Sustainable Future,” the 2025 festival offered a platform for dialogue on democratic governance, civic engagement, inclusion, and policy innovation. NCRC’s participation was anchored around showcasing its research work, promoting public understanding of crime prevention strategies, and engaging with stakeholders on policy-driven solutions to security challenges.

The Centre mounted an exhibition booth within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Village, where it highlighted its ongoing studies, recent publications, and digital knowledge platforms. The booth attracted hundreds of visitors over the four days, ranging from youth groups and students to civil society representatives, researchers, and county leaders. Many engaged with NCRC staff on topics including youth and crime, drug and substance abuse, gender-based violence, cybercrime, and community safety.

A key highlight of the Centre’s participation was a panel session it hosted on Friday, 7th March, titled “Building Partnerships for Crime and Violence Prevention.” The session brought together expert panelists from Clean Start Africa, Kariobangi Social Justice Centre, Usikimye and NCRC. Discussions focused on the need for strengthened collaboration between state and non-state actors in crime prevention efforts, especially at the community level.

Panelists shared experiences from various ongoing interventions across the country, highlighting the importance of co-designing safety initiatives, using data to inform decision-making, and investing in grassroots leadership. Participants also discussed challenges facing multi-agency coordination, resource gaps, and opportunities for policy alignment to support long-term violence prevention.

NCRC's participation in the 2025 festival comes at a time when the Centre is expanding its outreach and visibility efforts to ensure that its research findings are accessible and actionable across the criminal justice sector and beyond. The Centre has increasingly focused on embedding its work in community conversations, public education, and inter-agency dialogue—making the PDF a fitting platform for this engagement.

The festival, which also featured music, visual art, theatre, and interactive forums, created an inclusive and dynamic space for citizens to voice their views on governance and democracy. It was particularly notable for its strong youth and gender participation, with several sessions focused on economic empowerment, digital inclusion, and representation in political spaces.



NCRC HOLDS INDUCTION MEETING WITH INTERNS AND ATTACHEES



The Director/CEO of the National Crime Research Centre, Dr. Mutuma Ruteere, on Tuesday, 27th May 2025, presided over an official welcome and induction session for newly admitted interns and attachés at the Centre's headquarters in Nairobi. The session was designed to familiarize the new cohort with the Centre's core mandate, operational environment, institutional culture, and performance expectations.

Interns and Attachés Induction Dr. Mutuma Ruteere officially welcomes the newly admitted interns and attachés during the induction meeting held at NCRC Headquarters.

In his address, Dr. Ruteere officially welcomed the interns and attachés to the Centre and underscored the significance of their placement at NCRC. He emphasized that joining the Centre is not merely an opportunity to gain experience but a call to service in an institution that plays a central role in shaping Kenya's crime prevention policies and national security discourse.

He emphasized the importance of discipline, innovation, and professionalism in shaping future leadership, noting that NCRC provides a unique opportunity to learn from ongoing research and contribute to meaningful national development.

“You are not just here to observe, but to learn, grow, and actively support our mission,” he said.

Dr. Ruteere reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to nurturing talent, stating that NCRC views internship and attachment not as routine, but as a pipeline for building the next generation of ethical and competent public servants.

Speaking during the session, Mr. Ruwa welcomed the interns and attachés and reminded them that their presence at NCRC was not only an opportunity to learn but also to contribute meaningfully to the Centre's mission. He emphasized that all interns and attachés are regarded as part of the staff and are expected to uphold the highest standards of professionalism during their time at the Centre.

He took the group through the institution's Code of Conduct, which outlines the key values and behavioural standards expected in the workplace. These include integrity, confidentiality, courtesy, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. He also stressed the importance of punctuality, adherence to the official dress code, a clean working environment, and gender sensitivity in line with public service principles.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to establish leadership within the intern and attachee cohort. Dominic Etabo was nominated to serve as the Interns' Coordinator, while Michelle Nduuro was named the Attachees' Coordinator. The two will play a liaison role between the group and the Human Resource office throughout their attachment period.

The induction was marked by an atmosphere of anticipation and enthusiasm, with the interns and attachees expressing appreciation for the structured introduction to the Centre's work. Many are attached to departments including ICT, Research, Corporate Communications, and Administration.

Among those in attendance were Ms. Rose Weru from the ICT Department, nine interns deployed through the Public Service Commission, three from the Presidential Digital Talent Programme, and eighteen attachees drawn from various universities and technical training institutions across the country.

The meeting brought together over 30 young professionals placed at the Centre through national internship and attachment programmes.

The induction session laid a robust foundation for a productive and well-guided attachment period, in line with the Centre's commitment to mentorship, knowledge sharing, and public service development.

NCRC AND EQUALITY NOW CONVENES WORKSHOP ON FEMICIDE

In response to the alarming increase in killings of women across the country, the National Crime Research Centre in collaboration with international human rights organisation Equality Now, convened a workshop in Nairobi. The meeting brought together a wide range of stakeholders—including government officials, security agencies, civil society organisations, gender rights advocates, legal practitioners, researchers, and the media—to deliberate on the growing threat of femicide and the state's capacity to prevent, respond to, and eliminate violence against women and girls. Held against the backdrop of a worrying rise in femicide cases reported in Kenya in 2024, the workshop sought to unpack the root causes behind these killings and examine gaps in policy, enforcement, and accountability.

At the heart of the workshop were questions of whether Kenya's legal framework adequately recognizes femicide as a distinct and punishable offence, and whether institutions mandated to protect women and girls are fulfilling their roles effectively. Discussions focused on the disconnect between policy and implementation, challenges in gender-responsive policing, low conviction rates in cases of violence against women, and the broader social and cultural norms that perpetuate silence and impunity. NCRC Director/CEO Dr. Mutuma Ruteere highlighted the complexity of the crisis, urging for a data-driven response to effectively guide both policy and programmatic decisions.

“This is a complex issue which does not have a silver bullet solution. We must research and get the data and let the data inform both our policy and programmatic interventions if we are to effectively address the issue of femicide,”
he said.



Workshop on Femicide with Equality Now Stakeholders drawn from various sectors deliberate on femicide prevention strategies during a workshop jointly convened by NCRC and Equality Now in Nairobi.

The workshop also served as a platform for cross-sector collaboration, with representatives from the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, the National Police Service, the Judiciary, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and gender-focused NGOs sharing perspectives and identifying priority areas for action.

Key proposals included enhancing forensic capacity in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) cases, mainstreaming gender in policing and prosecution, strengthening survivor support mechanisms, and developing a national action plan to combat femicide.

Equality Now highlighted the importance of survivor-centred approaches, pointing out that fear of reprisals, stigma, and institutional inaction continue to hinder reporting and justice-seeking. They called for coordinated campaigns to educate communities about the rights of women and girls, shift harmful social attitudes, and empower women to speak out and seek protection.

The event concluded with a commitment by all stakeholders to work together in pursuit of concrete outcomes—including legal reform, improved institutional coordination, and greater investment in prevention and response mechanisms.

THE CENTRE PARTNERS WITH SGB & VIP PROTECTION UNIT AND STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY IN NATIONAL TREE GROWING

In a demonstration of its commitment to environmental sustainability and inter agency collaboration, the National Crime Research Centre on June 27th 2025, partnered with the SGB & VIP Protection Unit for a tree-growing exercise that saw the successful planting of 800 tree seedlings within Uhuru Camp, Nairobi.

The exercise formed part of the broader National Tree Growing and Restoration Campaign, a flagship government initiative aimed at planting 15 billion trees by the year 2032, in line with the Presidential Directive on climate action and environmental restoration. The campaign is a key pillar of the government's strategy to combat climate change, restore degraded ecosystems, and promote sustainable national development.

Leading the exercise, NCRC Director and CEO Dr. Mutuma Ruteere highlighted the role of environmental conservation in shaping peaceful, healthy, and secure communities.

“Environmental degradation is not only a climate issue but also a security issue. We must take proactive steps in restoring our environment as a foundational aspect of national development and crime prevention,” he said.

Dr. Ruteere reaffirmed the Centre's continued support for government-led environmental initiatives, noting that such exercises are directly linked to the Centre's Performance Contract targets on environmental sustainability. He further emphasized that greening efforts such as tree planting play a key role in promoting climate justice and resilience, especially for communities vulnerable to both ecological and security threats.

Representing the Commandant of the SGB & VIP Protection Unit, Deputy Commandant Ruth Ndinda, AIG, lauded the collaboration with NCRC and emphasized the Unit's longstanding commitment to environmental protection.

“This partnership is a testament to the power of inter-agency collaboration in advancing shared national goals,” she said. “As a security institution, we recognise that protecting the environment is also part of our duty to safeguard the wellbeing of all Kenyans.”



Tree Growing with SGB & VIP Protection Unit Officers from NCRC and the SGB & VIP Protection Unit plant tree seedlings at Uhuru Camp, Nairobi, in support of the national tree growing initiative.





The event brought together officers from both institutions and provided a platform for promoting environmental stewardship among law enforcement agencies. It also reflected the growing recognition that sustainable development and environmental restoration are integral to crime prevention strategies and social stability.

With 800 trees now rooted in the soil of Uhuru Camp, the initiative not only contributes to Kenya's tree cover restoration targets but also serves as a symbolic and practical reminder of the role every institution must play in greening the country and securing its future.

In a separate event, the Centre partnered with student leaders from Strathmore University's Environment and Sustainability Department for a tree planting exercise at the university's Sports Complex Field. The initiative saw the successful planting of 700 seedlings, underlining the significant role of youth engagement and academic collaboration in addressing climate change.

The students brought energy, innovation, and technical knowledge to the initiative, highlighting the capacity of academic institutions to drive sustainable development. Speaking at the event, NCRC's representative Mr. John Kipkoros emphasized the link between environmental degradation and social issues such as crime, resource-based conflicts, and forced migration.

Beyond tree planting, the event served as a platform for mentorship and knowledge exchange between students and professionals. Both NCRC and the university community committed to nurturing the seedlings, ensuring their growth and long-term contribution to climate resilience.

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