



**GLOBAL
INITIATIVE**
AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL
ORGANIZED CRIME



Resilience to organized crime at the community level

ASSESSMENT MATRIX

KISAUNI

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APRIL 2022

INTRODUCTION

Kisauni is one of the six sub-counties of Mombasa, Kenya. Mombasa is a coastal city and popular tourist destination, although it is marred by land disputes, in which residents and police clash over resettlement cases.¹

The proliferation of gangs is a major concern. There are 12 well-known gangs, some with multiple offshoots that respondents referred to as a 'family tree'. Gangs in Mombasa, as elsewhere in the country, are linked to local politicians and the election process, receiving support that includes some training, help with organization and protection from arrest after the election. Mombasa politicians have been linked to the creation of gangs, and some had served as representatives in Kisauni. Gang violence is not only linked to the election cycle but also to post-election periods when they lose their cyclical patronage and attack the public for money.² Violent extremism is another concern. Kisauni is a recruitment area for al-Shabaab, targeting youth in the same areas where gang activity is prevalent.³

Mombasa is a trafficking region for heroin, which has also generated a local market. Mombasa and the coastal provinces now have the highest rates of drug use in the country. As noted in GI-TOC's 2020 report, 'The politics of crime: Kenya's gang phenomenon', the market is supplied by low-level dealers, with product coming from neighbouring Tanzania, rather than higher volume elite-led trafficking. The report notes, 'The youth gangs in Mombasa that inspire the most fear in the public for their muggings and market raids do not appear to be their foot soldiers.'⁴ Human trafficking connected to sex work and child labour takes advantage of children from local poor communities, upcountry Kenya and neighbouring countries through networks that can include relatives or family friends.⁵

The following analysis is based on over twenty interviews and focus groups carried out in Kisauni. Interviews were held with human rights defenders, directors of community-based organizations, non-governmental organization officials, religious leaders, student leaders, Nyumba Kumi officials and security officers (Nyumba Kumi is a government-led community-policing security initiative that was set up in 2013 to fight terrorism and crime). Focus group discussions captured the views of key partners in the county.



PART 1:

THE SITUATION IN THE COMMUNITY

Criminal markets and organized criminal groups	Respondents
<p>What would you define as 'illegal markets' or 'organized criminal activity' in the community?</p>	<p>'Criminal groups' were defined as groups that undermine general community peace and security and are born from political and socio-economic affiliations. Respondents mostly focused on the gangs. They also zeroed in on the financial backers of these gangs, namely businessmen and politicians, especially during the election period.</p> <p>Criminal activities include sex, organ and child trafficking and smuggling, money laundering, drug trafficking, pornographic trade, carjacking, homicide, murder for hire, and rape. Two women referred to 'groping' as a crime that gangs commit.</p> <p>Respondents said that illicit markets exist, but it takes a keen eye to identify them. 'You have to be a security investigator to notice it. They are very difficult to identify.'</p>
<p>What types of groups would you consider criminal groups in your community?</p> <p>What illegal activities do they do?</p>	<p>The gangs are not limited to any geographical locations but operate across Kisauni. Respondents named over 13 criminal groups, including some juvenile gangs. 'They are def so many that I cannot remember all of them.'</p> <p>Ninety per cent said that gang members are mostly locals who had moved from different parts of the country and settled in Kisauni. Several reported that gang members are a mix of locals and foreigners, with some coming across the border from Tanzania and others affiliated to the Islamic militia group al-Shabaab. Respondents pointed to links between gangs in Kisauni and Likoni (a neighbouring town) both hotspots for organized crime in Mombasa County.</p> <p>Some of the gangs migrate to other parts of the continent, especially South Africa, where they start new outfits. This is often organized by their leaders, who ensure they are placed in gangs once they land in the destination country.</p> <p>The role of politicians in the proliferation of gangs is a major concern. The gangs have political influence and are heavily financed by senior politicians, particularly during election periods, due to political patronage. Respondents also pointed out that most of the gangs begin as sports associations initiated by politicians.</p>
<p>Is the activity considered illegal by community members? Is there a parallel legal trade? Is it socially acceptable?</p> <p>Is there local demand, or is your area primarily a transit area?</p>	<p>The community considers activities illegal only if they are against their principles and do not work in their favour. Given the significant Muslim population, illegal markets such as the sex trade are not socially acceptable. The respondents felt that there is a local demand for drugs and sex, both of which are readily available. There is also a lot of loose cash due to the influx of tourists.</p>
<p>How easily can groups access weapons? Do gang members carry arms openly?</p> <p>What kinds of arms do groups use: knives, handguns, automatic weapons or small arms?</p>	<p>All respondents admitted that gang members access crude weapons and carry them openly in some areas. Some said that gang members keep weapons on their waist and flash them when they want to attack while others said they are discreet or at least conceal their weapons in daylight on normal days. When they are high on drugs, they may start a raid in broad daylight, often taking out their weapons and attacking residents.</p> <p>The weapons mentioned included guns, especially for people with licences, knives, razor blades, pangas, machetes, bicycle spokes, pepper (masala), homemade handkerchief sedatives, whips, clubs, sticks, stones, rungs and heavy metal objects.</p>



Criminal markets and organized criminal groups	Respondents
<p>Is a particular age/gender/ethno-linguistic group impacted more than others?</p>	<p>The age of people affected by gangs cuts across all ranges, but the respondents argued that children are the most affected. This includes the disruption of their social system when children, some as young as nine, drop out of school to join gangs and are heavily involved in gang activities. The youth often find themselves branded as gang members. Girls become sex slaves to the gangs and their leaders. This has led to a lot of restrictions on children raised in the area.</p> <p>‘Young girls are not allowed outside, hence their freedom of movement is limited due to the fear of them being attacked by gangs.’</p> <p>Businesswomen, who are often the victims of the gang attacks, were also flagged out as being heavily affected. Other groups mentioned were old people and tourists.</p>
<p>Is there a livelihood (or other) benefit from engaging in the criminal market?</p>	<p>There was a consensus that children join gangs as a source of income or because of peer pressure. Most respondents said that meeting basic needs is a major benefit, as gang members are promised food and housing if they do whatever they are told.</p> <p>Respondents also agreed that many go to gangs for a sense of belonging, recognition and appreciation. Gangs offer a safety net for their members: most feel safer and more protected in the gang. Some of them are lured by the lucrative prospect of going abroad.</p> <p>It is important to note that the respondents view the activities that gang members carried out for their livelihood as separate from activities in criminal markets like the protection and drug business, paid assassinations, selling stolen goods and monetary incentives from political leaders.</p>
<p>To what extent do the groups control territory or the local economy?</p>	<p>There was no strong opinion about whether the groups control territory but their impact on local businesses and politics was noted:</p> <p>‘The groups offer security to various business premises. People who have not enlisted their services end up having their businesses raided.’</p> <p>‘They control how businesses are operated. For you to be protected you must pay up a certain rate. When they strike, there is a lot of animosity.’</p> <p>‘They are used during elections and campaign for different candidates. In some cases, they are used to cause chaos in different rallies.’</p>

GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

The respondents defined illegal markets and organized criminal activity as gang activity across the area. They mostly focused on the criminal groups themselves – the gangs. They described gangs by pointing out what crimes they were involved in, citing illegal drugs, kidnapping, human trafficking and smuggling, destruction of property and killings.

Women looked at why people get involved, pointing out that it was mainly because of the lack of jobs or desperation. They were also quick to identify illicit markets that affect women, such as sex trafficking. Women reported that the gangs act superior, as if they ‘own’ or are in charge of the community. They have a ‘don’t-care attitude’, are rowdy and rude, and shout at people. The women uniquely mentioned masala (a homemade chilli or pepper spray), bicycle spokes, handkerchiefs with sedatives, and tasers as weapons used by gangs. They said that gangs attack gatherings and felt that there was a pattern where women are targeted.

Men noted economic impacts of gang activity and flagged vandalism, especially of vehicle parts that can be sold. Men felt that gang members are camouflaged: they collect garbage and run car washes, keeping under cover until it is time to attack. Several spoke about gangs creating roadblocks and demanding money to use the road.



Impact of the criminal market	Respondents
<p>What is the overall impact of the criminal groups on the community?</p> <p>Has it caused problems or divisions among community members?</p> <p>Is a particular age/gender/ethno-linguistic group impacted more than others?</p>	<p>In terms of overall security, all respondents pointed to deaths (often as a result of gang fights), general fear, high levels of insecurity, general anxiety and poor economic growth as the impact of criminal groups.</p> <p>All respondents admitted that economic development is low in the areas where gangs operate, due to high levels of insecurity that force investors away from long-term projects there. 'Businesses must close early and open late. People avoid the areas considered risky'.</p> <p>Some women flagged depression and suicide as the ripple effects of people losing their children to gangs or being victims of gang violence. People have been displaced from the community fleeing gang attacks. The introduction of hard drug markets is also seen as an impact of gangs.</p> <p>All respondents felt that divisions occur in the community when family members cover up for their kin who are gang members. This breaks down interactions between neighbours. In addition, local fights among gangs and community members are rampant. According to one respondent, gangs channel this 'power' as a means to hold authority as they probably have no voice at home. Rumours that the gangs come from a certain community breed mistrust.</p> <p>The respondents all agreed that the gangs cause high levels of insecurity, characterised by great fear. This in turn leads to a lot of mistrust among community members, especially since some of their kin are involved in these activities.</p> <p>'Community members hate each other based on linkages and knowledge of acquaintances with gangs.'</p>
<p>What are the greatest risks to you and your community?</p>	<p>Most respondents cited murder as their greatest risk. High levels of insecurity related to sudden or unexpected violence mean that people do not feel safe outside their community. Convincing the gangs to stop crime can be dangerous.</p> <p>'It is advisable that they are not confronted, as they are lethal'.</p> <p>'The gangs attack based on religion and tribe but mostly anyone. However, the exception is cases where the gangs know you. They only attack you if you do not interact with them regularly.'</p> <p>Respondents said the gangs do not fear attacking security officers, citing attacks on National Youth Service bases and police offices. Community attempts to instil fear are not effective as the gangs are still protected by powerful persons.</p> <p>Trafficking, especially in sex tourism, is now seen as a major threat to the community. Half of the respondents felt that the sex trade is so normalized, it is not part of a criminal market.</p> <p>Petty crime by gang members is another major concern, including theft and vandalism of existing infrastructure, including road signs, network cables and fences that can be sold for cash.</p> <p>With violent extremism and radicalization on the rise, community members choose not to interact and barely have faith in each other. At the same time, respondents did not focus on extremism in their interviews.</p>
<p>How do these groups behave in the community?</p>	<p>Gangs here are generally unfriendly and antisocial. They shout, insult and threaten people, given any opportunity. However, a great percentage live in their parents' houses, camouflaged as garbage collectors and car-wash traders. Most spend time in hideouts called <i>maskani</i>.</p> <p>'They behave as the heads of the communities.'</p> <p>Two women said the community relates with the gangs to make a safer space for themselves.</p> <p>Half of the respondents claimed that gangs are easily identifiable through their dress, shoes and language. The other half said that, in some areas, it is very hard to identify them as they interact with the community on ordinary days. Their operations are very discreet, according to one of the key informants in the interview process.</p> <p>Gang members manipulate members of the community into thinking that they are helping them and their children – especially when they are on a recruiting spree – which brings the whole family under the gang's influence. In this way, they are integrated into the community with no alarm.</p> <p>'Residents opt to stay outdoors to keep watch against them and the people in the area live with so much tension.'</p>



<p>How much and in what way do the criminal market and groups contribute to local violence and conflict?</p>	<p>Most of the respondents said the gangs create civil unrest and chaos across the area. However, some said that the gangs tend to avoid conflict so as not to raise an alarm and get caught.</p> <p>‘Some of the gangs steal for survival. For example, Wakali Kwanza steal to sustain themselves.’</p>
<p>What is the environmental impact of the criminal market (if applicable)?</p>	<p>Respondents mainly pointed to the ‘pollution’ and trash that come with the sale and use of hard drugs. Syringes and condoms are strewn everywhere, along with cans and bottles of the energy drinks that users rely on. Bang and cigarettes can cause a fire. Dead bodies are left abandoned.</p> <p>Some of the gangs move to dumpsites for territorial control.</p>
<p>Is there corruption linked to local criminal activity? Are bribes to public officials common? At what level of government?</p>	<p>There are high levels of corruption among the local government structures, including the chiefs, police officers and senior people in government, including leading politicians.</p> <p>Parents of gang members bribe police officers when their children are arrested, and arrested gang members often are forced to pay a bribe to be released. Some respondents said that key gang leaders pay police officers to not interrupt gang activities.</p> <p>One respondent felt that there should not be a blanket condemnation of government security agencies, saying, ‘There are moral cops and immoral ones.’</p>
<p>Do local communities have a sense of local responsibility to combat organized crime?</p>	<p>Most respondents agreed that communities do have a sense of responsibility. Communities host discussions to figure out how to deal with organized crime and report crimes to the authorities.</p> <p>Peaceful coexistence in some communities is disrupted by small fights that escalate to gang wars.</p>

GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

When asked about the greatest risks to them and their family, the respondents all pointed to fear and insecurity, but men and women had slightly different perspectives. On environmental impact, both genders spoke of the dumping of waste and trash.

Men said that, overall, crime has a big effect on the economy as it interferes with infrastructure and investment opportunities. Criminals control how businesses operate and demand payment for protection.

Women interviewed said it creates tension and fear in the community and diminishes the quality of life. Some mentioned depression and death as part of the overall impact. Women cited loss of property, insecurity, the possibility of violence and hatred as the greatest risks. They also expressed concern about what these illicit markets mean for future generations.



PART 2: BUILDING BLOCKS FOR COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Building Block 1: Effective state support

General	Respondents
<p>How effective is the state in responding to challenges in your community caused by the criminal markets?</p> <p>What challenges would you like the state to respond to? Is it doing so?</p>	<p>Respondents had different opinions on the state's response, with some stating that the state went 'all in' while others said that they showed 'less interest and inefficiency'. There was consensus that the state has made many attempts to 'eradicate' gangs, through civilian officers and also by using force. For instance, respondents cited that the police apply a lot of force, including subtle threats like walking the streets with guns and tear gas.</p> <p>In contrast, respondents claimed that the security forces sometimes get it right, leading to the arrest and prosecution of gang members.</p> <p>'There are departments in various ministries that work with the community to help keep the criminal gangs at bay and also hold them accountable in case of any attacks.'</p> <p>There was a general feeling that the state should take adequate measures to understand the root causes of the gang problem, to use the education system to instil core values, and to listen to young people. Employment opportunities for youth and the rehabilitation of gang members and the street children who join them would also help to eradicate gangs in the community.</p> <p>The police force could be improved through measures such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vetting current officers to root out the corrupt ones • creating awareness of citizens' rights and the duties of the police, including the protection of life and property – which they seem reluctant to do • partnering with like-minded organizations to eradicate the gang problem • fully investigating the gangs operating in their areas • boosting security by arresting people involved in criminal activities, dismantling the illegal groups, holding parents accountable for crimes committed by their children and intensifying police patrols. <p>Respondents also wanted the state to respond faster to alarms and to ensure CCTV coverage and good street lighting across the area.</p> <p>One respondent focused on human trafficking, calling for policies to counter human trafficking and programmes for safe migration and for victims of trafficking. He also said that criminal bond terms should be reviewed, given that most international traffickers can afford to pay the bond and leave the country.</p>
<p>Does the state response protect or threaten community members? In what ways?</p>	<p>Respondents generally said the state protects community members to some degree through regular police patrols, setting up policies to protect citizens, investigating cases and bringing culprits to book, 'neutralizing' disturbances and ensuring justice for victims of crime.</p> <p>However, they all admitted that the state's performance is sluggish and inefficient. In some cases, the state threatens people with a jail term or death. One respondent said that police are known to steal from crime scenes.</p> <p>One respondent felt that the police 'are just people who have a particular mandate. They should not surcharge but protect.' Another said that protection and threat depended on the department and officials involved.</p>



GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

Men felt that the state responds to the issues of organized crime in the city, but it is mostly irrelevant because people in high places control the organized gangs. They also proposed rehabilitation for gang members and suggested that the state should work with the private sector and other stakeholders to understand the root cause of the problem. In addition, they suggested that the education system should instil core values in learners, and thought that parents should be held accountable for the behaviour of their children. Men said actions such as regular police patrols and posting civilian police helps the community. However, they raised concerns that cases are not fully investigated. In particular, the men flagged the ‘neutralization’ process, whereby the state allegedly kills suspects.

Women reported that the state does respond but not as expected, and shows little interest in trying to counter activities as they happen or beforehand. They felt the state responds after crimes are committed, but also indicated that efforts like bringing in various specialized police departments were clear signs that the government is fighting organized crime. Women said that most victims – men and women -- do not report crimes because they may end up dead, locked up or never come back. They suggested that the state should listen to young people, as some are victims of circumstances. A few had faith in their local government, pointing out that it provided a listening ear to the youth and to their own problems. Some women spoke of the need to create spaces where girl children can walk freely.

Political leadership and governance	Respondents
<p>To what degree do people have faith in their government – national and local?</p>	<p>Most of the people interviewed have faith in their county government, but little in national government</p> <p>The national government is not heard much of. They issue directives about the way forward and are trying to combat organized crime by deploying police into departments based on their specialization. Respondents said that the national government is open to creating partnerships and creating dialogues with the youth.</p> <p>Many said that it is hard to get quality leadership. Women were more inclined to say there has been a lot of community leadership.</p> <p>The Office of the County Commissioner was said to be open and approachable. Another approach is the <i>Wazee wa Mtaa</i>, village elders who report to the chiefs about children involved in gangs in their area. The state was generally perceived as reactive and responding only after the gangs act.</p> <p>Respondents said that the government provides as best as it can in terms of structures and that policy implementation is satisfactory. However, there is a lot of political interference. This could be solved by creating an independent legal system that is free from the influence of local national leadership.</p>
<p>How open is the state to fostering and promoting a strong and independent civil society sector, including the media?</p> <p>What is the level of collaboration between government agencies and NGOs and private citizens?</p>	<p>Collaboration between civil society organizations is very high, according to all the respondents, but not between the government and CSOs.</p> <p>Respondents felt that NGOs tend to collaborate more and bring progress to the community.</p>
<p>Does the community have access to resources, basic services?</p> <p>Is their distribution fair?</p> <p>Does the community have power to influence distribution?</p>	<p>Generally, there is access to basic resources like water, but at a very high cost. It often comes only through knowing people in authority. The community is generally unaware of how to push for better distribution, despite having the power to do so. Being a coastal town, fresh water is very expensive, and most people in Kisauni cannot afford it. Private-sector service providers take advantage of this and create a livelihood by selling water.</p> <p>‘Service providers may not have the efficiency to create the favourable way for the distribution. Moreover, people need to be more compassionate when they have to understand those in need.’</p>



Political leadership and governance	Respondents
	The community presents a united front when it comes to demanding services. However, they admitted that the distribution of some resources can be influenced, and some cannot. More literacy and education are needed to empower them in this.

GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

Most men and women expressed faith in the local government, especially at the grassroots levels where *Wazee wa Mtaa* (village elders) report to the chiefs. They also pointed out many parents will not report that their children have a problem because they don't want them to go through the correctional process.

Men hailed the national government for establishing policies but also pointed out that the politicians involved have different political interests and deliberately mess up some processes. Men said that the resources are there but are not fairly distributed. Availability depends on communal relations such as the chief and members of the county assembly. Also, a lack of information prevents people from agitating for fair distribution. There is a feeling that the government provides as it can. The community has little influence because of poverty: they prefer to work hard rather than lead protests or fight for their rights.

Women cited the local government's openness to creating partnerships and having open engagements with the youth. They said that there was access to resources such as health centres, police stations and Nyumba Kumi. Most women felt helpless to control and push for access to basic services.

Education system	Respondents
<p>How strong is the local education system?</p> <p>What is the average educational attainment?</p>	<p>Most respondents had passed through the education system. Kenyan primary education is free but, as one woman noted, 'Coast people do not love education.'</p> <p>They generally appreciated the system but deemed the quality to be low. There is also no development in the schools, and the infrastructure is poor. Some wards have no public schools and there is no international school. However, it remains the only system that most people have access to.</p> <p>Many children do not attend primary school or drop out to fend for their families. Many more drop out in Form 2, the second year of secondary school. The main reasons include the inability to pay school fees and girls' pregnancies.</p> <p>One respondent expressed appreciation, saying 'At least I can now speak English. The new curriculum is better.'</p>
<p>Is there investment in early childhood education and care (ECEC)?</p>	<p>All respondents felt that investment in ECEC is low. Classrooms are very crowded, with close to one hundred children in a class.</p> <p>Parents who fear that their children might not get a good education can transfer them to private schools that are more expensive. If they cannot afford the private schools, the child misses out on their slot in the public school.</p> <p>Many parents send their children to Islamic madrassas before joining a primary school.</p>

GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

Women described the education system as available, but of low quality. Others praised it, citing that many people do go through school. They reported that parents generally do not take their children to nursery school, starting them directly in Class 1.



Men said they had benefited from the system, although one said he had to go to another region to study and later came back to his community. Basic education, like learning how to speak English, was seen as a direct benefit. But they also felt that being 'street smart' is more beneficial in practical terms. Importantly, they spoke of the expenses demanded by school administrators that make it hard to attend, despite the fact that education is free under Kenyan law. They also flagged the issue of land grabbing by key people in government: 'In these wards, the government says there is no land to build the schools and then proceed to grab it.'

Justice system	Respondents
<p>What is the local justice system like? Do local courts or dispute mechanisms address the criminal activity outlined above? In what ways?</p> <p>Do community members view the legal response as helpful? Ineffective? Harmful?</p>	<p>There were differences of opinion on the local justice system. Some respondents admitted that the system was efficient but very slow while others said it was marred by corruption. The majority had some experience with the justice system and claimed that cases are handled depending on how much cash one has.</p> <p>Many cases do not get to court. Criminals do not care because they believe that, if caught, they can bribe the police officer and go free. After paying bribes, people fail to appear in court in the first stages. Corruption becomes culture. Statements like 'Officials are very easy to bribe' resonated across most of the interviews.</p> <p>There was a general feeling that the justice system is a no-go zone and people lack knowledge. Respondents said that the system is difficult, but a person needs to be persistent.</p> <p>Some community members are not pleased with bonds, even though it is done through legal channels: they perceive it as bribery and feel it is unfair that one can buy one's way out without consequences. A respondent said that a person who is acquitted might not get the best services without money [for bonds]. However, bonds do allow some international criminals to flee the country.</p> <p>On the positive side, the courts help boost the community's confidence and reassure the public. People recognized reforms are taking place, and the courts try to deliver justice.</p> <p>Most respondents found the system oppressive to the poor. Another strong response related to the killing or disappearance of people who are to appear as witnesses against gangs. 'People fear the person after being released on bond and often the government does not come in to offer for protection to them.'</p> <p>Overall, there is an urgent need for the Kenyan judiciary to create public awareness of its processes. People depend on civil society organizations – for example, Kituo Cha Sheria, a local NGO that provides paralegal training – which may not have the resources needed to meet the demand. Public engagement workshops should be provided.</p>
<p>Is informal justice provided by criminal groups?</p>	<p>'Informal justice' was largely interpreted as retaliation by gangs. For instance, 'One of the most wanted criminals said that he was also placing the officer who was hunting him on his list, too, and ended up killing him.'</p>
<p>Has local government developed measures that address victim care and, if so, how effective are these measures? To what degree do witness protection programmes exist?</p>	<p>Most respondents indicated the non-existence of a witness protection programme. According to them, the fact that people disappear and are never heard from again is evidence of this.</p> <p>However, one respondent did praise the protection of victims of trafficking.</p>

GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

Men said the justice system is efficient but slow. They suggested that most people don't know the system and rely on NGOs, pointing to the need for public workshops to create awareness of the role of the judiciary and its processes. There is the general belief that the country is run by a higher power than themselves: 'The country has its "owners"'. Men also pointed to a lot of reforms taking place.



Women felt that there is efficiency in the judicial system, but it is greatly affected by corruption. A person might not get the best service without money. They said that community members often do not welcome people who are out on bond, claiming that they bribed their way out. This stems from a general lack of awareness of the judicial process. People are afraid when someone is released and the government will often not come in to protect the accuser or victim.

Law enforcement	Respondents
<p>What type of law enforcement exists in the community – military, civilian police, community-based armed groups, a combination?</p> <p>Has local law enforcement been adequately resourced?</p>	<p>Police, community police and community-based armed groups respond to violent attacks. They also shield young men who may become targets of the community and police after such attacks.</p> <p>Civilian police and community policing are the most popular. Police deployment across the region is low. Participants said that, although they find a lot of officers on 'normal' days, they are slow to respond when called. The community members work with the civilian police to find gang members.</p> <p>Police also conduct civic education and peer-to-peer learning.</p> <p>The civilian police are often accused of using excessive violence when dealing with the community. For instance, 'If they get to a scene, they could beat up the people there to get information after the criminals have left.'</p>
<p>What is the relationship between these groups and the community?</p>	<p>Respondents felt that the relationship between the police and community members is very poor and unhealthy, especially for those who are less empowered. The relationship between police and youth is also wanting. The community finds the police unapproachable.</p> <p>In some cases, there is a lot of hostility between the civilian police and the community. They allegedly coordinate with the illegal groups.</p> <p>Others said there were normal social interactions. Because most people are related by blood and through friendships, relationships are complex.</p> <p>'Probably because of being a member of the legal fraternity, police harassment and brutality might not be rampant around me. There is an okay relationship in the community.'</p>
<p>To what degree is law enforcement trusted and seen as reliable by local communities?</p>	<p>Most respondents see the police as part of the problem.</p>

GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

Some of the men enjoy special privileges through their positions. Men reported that there is a lot of hostility towards the community and gangs, and both parties "hunt" for each other.

Women feel that police intimidate and harass, which sometimes takes the form of subtle threats, like walking with tear gas canisters and guns. However, the gangs retaliate. Women spoke of an incident where a policeman was killed while trying to arrest a gang member. The police responded with gunfire to kill them, creating a lot of tension in the area.



Building Block 2: Social capital

Community cohesion	Respondents
Is the community culturally or ethnically diverse or homogenous? Are there tensions along specific ethnic or social lines?	Respondents noted a diverse community, with lots of integration of people from different cultures. The original inhabitants, the Swahili, are more accommodating to other people, although there are visible social lines. There is no tension among the Swahili. However, one respondent pointed out that this is an election year and the differences might be noticed and more pronounced in the coming months.
Have there been any major changes in the local population (inflow, outflow)? If so, has this impacted the community?	There has been a lot of intermarriage in the community. However, the population is changing because people are moving away due to insecurity.
What is the sense of belonging in the community? What is the level of trust within the community?	There is a very low level of trust between people because of the tension caused by the gangs, rising crime, terror, radicalization and violent extremism. The community is hesitant to receive help or embrace new opportunities for fear of being scammed. There is little intergenerational dialogue, which would be key in fighting organized crime. The youth lack mentorship and advice from the older generation.
Is the community able to respond to crises in ways that strengthen community bonds and capacity to cope?	'In the case of crisis, the people tend to be highly individualistic.'

GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

Both men and women highlighted how trust in the community decreases as elections approach.

Men attributed the diversity of the community to the inflow of people coming to seek jobs. The men in particular reported that people retreat to tribal cocoons during election years and turn against their neighbours.

Women spoke of the community as coexisting with each other, with intermarriage helping people work together. They also spoke of the community's hesitance to receive help after being duped by 'well-wishers' who take advantage of the poverty in the area, and recruit young people into gangs or extremist groups.

Building Block 3: Community capacity

Community capacity	Respondents
What is the ability of the community to self-organize? What are the means for this?	The general feeling is that the community can come together to do things, but implementation must be well planned as things crumble once they begin. Self-organization is not strong.
What types of social networks among groups and individuals exist within the community? For instance: political organizations, volunteerism and civic organizations, religious organizations, women's groups or youth groups.	Respondents listed a rich mix of social networks that reach out to members of different communities. These include religious organizations, artists, investors, civil society and non-governmental organizations (e.g. Kenya Human Rights Commission, Haki Africa, Human Rights Agenda), youth groups, local county government, political organizations and volunteering programmes (e.g. Community Health Volunteers).
Which of these groups respond to the harms caused by the activity explained in Part 1? In what ways?	Various groups help in counselling and raising awareness about organized crime issues. They create community watchdogs and facilitate conversations.



Community capacity	Respondents
	Groups come together to help empower community members or rehabilitate them or create better spaces. They organize sports events and seminars to address the gang issue.
<p>Are their safe spaces for women, men and youth at risk? Please explain.</p> <p>Does civil society engage in treatment and victim support activities? (e.g. running drug treatment facilities)</p>	<p>All respondents agreed that there are no designated safe spaces for people at risk. Activists use churches and mosques, Constituency Development Fund offices, youth-friendly centres and police stations as safe spaces – but these are not necessarily safe. Most respondents mentioned the presence of several drug treatment centres in Kisauni.</p> <p>'Even in these safe spaces like religious centres, there are taboo topics that cannot be talked about in front of women and all other rules, so it is not really safe.'</p>

GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

Men pointed to civil society organizations as the first respondents in terms of organized crime. They attempt to help people at risk but work incognito for fear of being harassed, victimized and intimidated.

Women said that religious organizations were the first to respond to crime. Their approach is both preventive and reactive. They help community members from recruitment into gangs through awareness meetings and campaigns. They also speak up in response to attacks, condemning both the perpetrators and the law enforcement agencies that end up harassing victims. The women also said that religious organizations provide safe spaces for community meetings, which helps in capacity building, but they still do not feel free to speak openly in such meetings.

Local media	Respondents
<p>Are there strong local media?</p> <p>Do local media provide a voice to both state and non-state actors combatting organized crime?</p>	<p>All respondents identified mainstream media as the main media, but the community does not support it as they do not trust it. 'Media is part of the problem as they do not highlight these injustices.' One respondent felt that KBC, the state broadcaster, is widely popular, but it controls the narrative by only showing what it wants people to see. Independent media houses close after a while, according to several respondents.</p> <p>Respondents felt that media is heavily biased in favour of the government and stakeholders. Some also resent the media's blanket condemnation of their community: 'not all the young people in Kisauni are bad as portrayed by the media'.</p> <p>Social media are the most popular platforms for highlighting issues around organized crime. Popular blogs are now more trusted than television and newspapers. Mainstream media are accused of delaying delivery of the news and focusing more on the negatives.</p> <p>'I believe in social media. If something happens and I post it on Twitter, it will be worked on before the next day. But with local media, some news dies in the newsroom.'</p>
<p>Are there attacks against journalists or media houses, or other civil society activists (e.g. environmental defenders), by criminal groups or the state? Have there been deaths?</p>	<p>Respondents said that journalists are attacked, but not seriously, such as attacks where cameras are broken. Threats on journalists depend on the topic, the person of interest and the people covered. Journalists are attacked when they start to query government spending or highlight serious issues such as the use of COVID-19 funds.</p> <p>Government officials involved in organized crime have made threats. While respondents said there are cases of death, disappearances and kidnappings, no one pointed to a certain instance. (Disappearances are equated to death, as they are never seen again.)</p>



GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

Men said that mainstream media were not strong and that residents often rely on social media, especially blogs that reach many people. They said there have been threats against journalists, but there are no recorded deaths.

Women stated that the media are part of the problem as they do not highlight issues that are raised and are more interested in the politics at play. Most people in the area opt for social media due to its timeliness. They said that journalists have been threatened, and some have disappeared, especially when they start questioning key issues. However, they could not pinpoint cases of death.

Obstacles to community responses	Respondents
<p>Do groups – besides identified criminal groups – negatively impact community resilience?</p> <p>Which factors act as obstacles to building community resilience to organized crime?</p>	<p>A major obstacle to community resilience is family dynamics and structures that oblige people to protect their own. For example, relatives of gang members protect them, decreasing willingness to fight organized crime. If aggrieved, most people prefer to be given monetary compensation than follow legal channels.</p> <p>Poor leadership and political influence also play a major role, with a failure to deliver on measures and policies cited as an issue. All respondents thought that politically connected gangs have a negative impact on community resilience.</p> <p>Police officers hinder efforts to build resilience by harassing people involved. It was suggested the security agencies should involve the community in the fight against organized crime. They should approach them without stigmatization and emphasize cooperation.</p> <p>Respondents said that civil society organizations do not support each other and there are too few that promote peace or directly address the issues of organized crime.</p> <p>There is a lack of awareness among youth, who can be idle and not engaged meaningfully. They are not involved in key structures and committees and the projects for them are not created by them.</p>
<p>To what extent do local responses to organized crime possibly marginalize certain individuals or groups such as women, refugees, etc.?</p>	<p>Respondents reported that local responses are often unbiased. Individuals are unlikely to be marginalized as organized crime affects everyone.</p>

GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

Men were concerned with the youth being left out of decisions made around fighting organized crime, as well as the corruption of key security officers.

Women pointed to the lack of proper systems and the well-established sectors of organized crime. They also flagged indiscipline, high unemployment, idleness and family dynamics as issues in community resilience to organized crime.



Building Block 4: The role of women in community responses

Political and economic power	Respondents
<p>What type of authority do women hold in the community?</p>	<p>Overall, the respondents said that women's voices are now better heard than a few years ago. There are more women leaders, at both county and national levels, with political power. They are very vocal.</p> <p>Kenya's 2010 Constitution states that 'not more than two-thirds of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender'. This gender quota has greatly increased women's space in the community.</p> <p>Women have organized to build better facilities for the community and to come together to support each other. They are viewed as the backbone of the community, although they do not have a voice traditionally.</p> <p>Women are considered homemakers and play the role of housewives. In some areas, they act as mother figures and hold no power at all. They also play low-key roles: for example, cleaning the environment in conjunction with the youth or helping disabled persons.</p> <p>Gender-based inequality of income is clearly present but considered a minor issue. To counter this, women have formed <i>chamas</i> – associations for table banking and women's empowerment – to boost their financial status. There has been a rise in the number of businesswomen in the area.</p> <p>With regard to organized crime, some girls are child brides to gang members and may be used to trap other men. There is a gang led by women who commit attacks.</p>
Women as organizers	Respondents
<p>How do women organize in the local community?</p>	<p>Women have been empowered and are trying to stand out. They are taking advantage of the political space that has opened up, as well as encouraging young girls. There are women representatives, members of parliament and ambassadors. At the ground level, the government has appointed community leaders (<i>wanawake wa mtaa</i>).</p> <p>Another example of women-led organizing is Maendeleo Ya Wanawake, a national organization that raises awareness about women's rights. It also pushes for spaces for women in leadership circles and has faced a lot of criticism and backlash.</p> <p>'Women have a lot of information and knowledge is power. They have power to mobilize and are very informed.'</p>
<p>Are there women's groups that counter the negative impacts of organized crime? What do they do?</p>	<p>There has been a rise in women's organizations that counter organized crime, such as Sauti ya Wamama (Womens Voices) and Sisters4Justice. Respondents expressed the general feeling that women are the best people to talk to children in the gangs.</p> <p>Women have been instrumental in reporting crime to authorities and human rights groups, creating awareness programmes and empowering the youth to keep them out of gangs. They also educate people on organized crime and how to keep away from it, advocate for change in the justice system, and support the rehabilitation of youth in gangs.</p> <p>Some said that most mothers choose to 'nurture'. They provide guidance, support and knowledge.</p>

GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

Both men and women recognized a role played by women in addressing gangs, saying women have taken up leadership positions and are at the forefront of fighting organized crime, in the form of gang activity. They also recognized a wide range of roles played by women in society, from business owners to politicians.

A number of men recognized the role played by women in addressing gangs, one noting that women are best placed to take to young people about gangs. Several men referred to them in their traditional roles as nurturers, counsellors and



cooks carrying out traditionally assigned roles in the families. Some men claimed that women have very low self-esteem and only rise when they are pushed by the people around them to take up leadership positions. They also said that women receive a lot of criticism when they start fighting organized crime.

Women viewed themselves as key to fighting organized crime, including their reporting of criminal activities and their advocacy for justice and change. They empower each other and the youth.

Building Block 5: Economic capital

Economy of the community	Respondents
<p>What types of businesses and jobs exist in the community? How diverse is the local economy?</p>	<p>The local economy includes small and medium enterprises, domestic work, white-collar jobs, NGOs and government agencies. Most people are self-employed. Private companies are diverse. Most formal jobs are in tourism and logistics.</p> <p>Work is generally menial and informal. There are few white-collar jobs. The respondents listed jobs such as shopkeeping, fishing, peasant farming, work in offices, hotels and cafes, garbage collection, car washing, M-Pesa services (mobile money transfers) and <i>mikokoteni</i> (cart-pushing), as well as selling fruit and vegetables, street food, <i>mali mali</i> (small household goods), <i>makuti</i> (thatching material made from coconut leaves) etc.</p>
<p>Are there foreign companies? What is their industry and what is their impact on the local community?</p>	<p>Different respondents cited the presence of foreign companies in the mining, construction, import and export, and transport sectors.</p> <p>The positive impact of foreign companies includes: creation of employment or employment opportunities: for example, Uber, Glovo, Jumia, Watu; development; skilled and semi-skilled jobs, such as in clearing and forwarding agencies, low-interest loans offered by financing companies; education and skills training for women and youth, such as starting and running a business</p> <p>The negative included: some engagement in illegal activities or taking over local industries.</p>
<p>What is the local employment rate (compared with the national level)? How are income levels compared with the national average?</p> <p>What portion of the community face food insecurity?</p>	<p>The area has low employment. Residents seek work for pay rather than try to find enjoyable jobs. There are opportunities, though for people with skills.</p> <p>There is access to food, but this does not negate the fact that some people get but one meal a day. People noted there can be access to food, but people may not have money to buy it.</p> <p>'A lot of people have no food. Some go to bed hungry.'</p> <p>'Some of those who applied for food aid when coronavirus broke out did not receive food.'</p>
<p>Can youth find jobs? What do they do if not?</p>	<p>Youth cannot find jobs. Respondents noted that youth are often semi-skilled or not equipped for work. When they cannot get jobs, some youth try to create jobs or venture into other work, such as farming. If they fail, they eventually resort to illegal activities like stealing or joining gangs. Some end up depressed. Some idle around the villages, and some do volunteer work. They can be manipulated and end up as victims or conduits of illegal gangs.</p>

GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

The men spoke of traditionally masculine casual work, including garage work, cart-pushing, peasant farming and car-wash attendants. They indicated the dominance of foreign companies in the export processing, transport and textile industries.

The women referred to SMEs, food kiosks, shopkeeping running M-PESA outlets and casual labour in the textile industry as employment opportunities for people in the area. They said that the lack of jobs leads to depression and hopelessness, and to illegal activities like joining gangs or engaging in the illicit drug trade.



Infrastructure	Respondents
<p>Is there access to food, electricity and water?</p>	<p>There is generally limited access to resources, with rationing of water and electricity. Not all homes are connected to electricity. Respondents said that water is expensive and they are overcharged.</p> <p>Communities have access to resources based on their location. Those in more developed centres have easier access to basic services and resources. Health centres, police stations and Nyumba Kumi offices sometimes offer food distribution.</p> <p>In election season, people get incentives such as food and money from politicians, but afterwards, they go back to 'normal hustling'.</p> <p>The community has little influence on distribution because of poverty, but they have power through public participation.</p>
<p>What are the local communications networks? Is there access to mobile phones, internet?</p>	<p>Respondents have access to mobile phones and the internet, although they are expensive to use. Those with smart phones access the internet at cheaper rates. Sim cards are easy to buy.</p>
<p>Do people feel safe outside their homes?</p> <p>Are the streets safely lit, open spaces safe and accessible?</p> <p>Are there many empty buildings, unused spaces?</p>	<p>Most people do not feel safe outside their homes. Residents, including those born in the area, fear walking after eight in the evening. Most streets are lit but inner roads are not. Sportsgrounds are lit and security is provided, but access is limited.</p> <p>Many buildings are empty or incomplete and abandoned. They are the scene of rapes, drug-related activities and gang meetings.</p>
<p>What are the natural resource base and environmental conditions (local food supplies, energy use, water access)? Has climate change impacted livelihoods?</p>	<p>Natural resources include the Indian Ocean coastline and farms in neighbouring counties that provide vegetables. However, the area is most reliant on food aid.</p> <p>Climate change has dried out the land and sea, reducing both food and employment. Farming and irrigation have become difficult, given that Mombasa is a dry place. Farmers invest a lot, but still, their stock die. One farmer lost 200 cows at Kinango. Because of pollution, fish are rare and expensive. 'If the climate was conducive, we could probably have access to food.'</p> <p>Other people cut down trees that are up to 10 years old and burn them for charcoal, which goes for approximately KES 600 per bag – thus endangering the future for meagre returns.</p> <p>Mangrove trees and other sea vegetation are cut down to brew <i>chang'aa</i>, the local beer. They are not replanted, although the trees take more than 15 years to grow. The rivers dry up and cause erosion.</p>
<p>How is access to transportation – personal transportation access and public options?</p>	<p>There is access to transport services. Public options are more common, as few people own cars. Many opt to buy a motorbike and venture into business. Three-wheeled tuk-tuks are also common.</p> <p>The roads deplete rapidly because of poor drainage and repairs and maintenance are poorly done.</p>

GENDERED PERSPECTIVES

Men noted that those near town have access to basic facilities but people in rural areas do not understand public participation and are kept in the dark. They explained that most empty buildings were abandoned midway through construction as investors feared being attacked by marauding youth. Regarding environmental issues, many said they cannot go back to fishing to generate income because of the reduced fish population due to overfishing.

Women said that access to food and other necessities comes at a heavy cost. Water, electricity and internet access are expensive. Many prefer the 'third-wheelers' for public transport. There is also a lot of insecurity and most women do not feel safe outside their houses.



Notes

¹ Philip Muyanga and Brian Ocharo, Kenya: Kisauni, Likoni the land hotspots in Mombasa, AllAfrica, 13 July 2021, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202107140180.html>.

² Simone Haysom and Ken Opala, The politics of crime: Kenya's gang phenomenon, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC), November 2020, p. 37, https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/The-politics-of-crime-Kenyas-Gang-Phenomenon_GITorganizedcrimeESAObs.pdf.

³ Mohamed Ahmed, Kenya: Parents agonise as their children join al-Shabaab, AllAfrica, 13 January 2021, <https://allafrica.com/stories/202101130274.html>.

⁴ Simone Haysom and Ken Opala, The politics of crime: Kenya's gang phenomenon, GI-TOC, November 2020, p. 38, https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/The-politics-of-crime-Kenyas-Gang-Phenomenon_GITorganizedcrimeESAObs.pdf.

⁵ Onyango Ochieng, Child sex trafficking still high in Coast – IJM, *The Star*, 29 November 2021, <https://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/coast/2021-11-29-child-sex-trafficking-still-high-in-coast-ijm/>.





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This project was funded by UK aid from the UK government; however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.