



Issue Brief on State of Organized Criminal Gangs in Kenya, 2018

The state, trend and proliferation of organized criminal gangs in Kenya has been evolving in unprecedented rates and measures, thus giving security and law enforcement agencies the difficult task of remaining vigilant and containing the situation. On the other hand, the public live in fear of potential attacks, business is disrupted and the country image and reputation is damaged. The menace of organized criminal gangs is also turning out to be a ‘crime industry’ with a significant interaction with political undertones (NCIC, 2017; NCRC, 2012; 2016; 2017). The following summaries points to the magnitude of this challenge:

- i. Organized criminal groups in the country have increased from the 33 which were banned in 2010 to 326 groups identified by research in 2017 thus indicating an exponential growth of 897% within 7 years or 128% growth per year.
- ii. Gangs that appear to be spreading fast and widely in the country comparing their presence in 2010 and 2017 are 28 in number and include Sokoni Youth, Shymbo 12, Alshabab, Mungiki, criminal groups of *Boda boda* transport operators, Chinkororo, Gaza, Young Turks, Wakali Kwanza, Wakali Wao, Wakali Kabisa, Sungusungu, 40 brothers/thieves, 7 Brothers, Kaya Bombo, 42 Brothers, Mombasa Republican Council, South Gang, Syria and Manambas/Touts which are in at least 1 out of 5 counties. Routine gazettement, publication of names of organized criminal groups, organized crime kingpins, politicians, business people and wayward government officials who support the groups should be a **standing agenda** in the County security and intelligence committee meetings.
- iii. Research findings shows that the leading counties each with at least 10 groups are: Nairobi (52), Mombasa (43), Nakuru (25), Bungoma (23), Kisumu (19), Kakamega (16), Kwale (15), Kilifi (14), Siaya (12), Kisii (12), Busia (11), Narok (10), Homabay (10), Isiolo (10), Garissa (10) and Nyeri (10). County Commissioners and their line officers together with other security agencies in these Counties need to make the issue of organized criminal gangs a **standing agenda** in their security committees meeting.
- iv. Majority (75.8%) of the organized criminal groups (that is, 25 out of the 33 groups) that were banned in 2010 were still operating in 2016 and 2017 majorly because of economic and political support factors.

- v. Based on the criminal groups that were banned in 2010 and 2016 and those that have been identified by studies up to 2017, majority (81.8%) were not in the radar of security agencies in 2010, while 77.2% and 62.6% were not known to most of public officials in the criminal justice system in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

Prediction

- i. It is predicted that in the next four (4) years there is a **high risk** more organized criminal groups will emerge and spread as the country approaches the 2022 General Elections period. If measures to address the risk factors around the emergence, spread and crimes of organized criminal gangs must be effectively addressed in the period before the election. It is predicted that more of the existing organized criminal groups will persist because of the link between criminal gangs and politics.
- ii. Findings point to general awareness of organized criminal groups in the country over the last 7 years by law enforcement agencies. What is worrisome is the **prevalence, resilience and criminal severity** of organized criminal gangs. Measures must be put in place to bring to the full knowledge of specific activities of the organized criminal gangs in Kenya.
- iii. A link exists between proliferation of organized criminal groups and inadequate cooperation between the community and law enforcement agencies especially with regard to reporting of crime. There is **high risk** around the unreported crimes committed by organized criminal gangs. The role of Citizen Participation in Security (Nyumba Kumi Initiative) should play a leading role in improved community-police relations. Particular attention must be directed towards a significant **minority of Kenyan youths** who have been recruited into criminal gangs.

Our response

We disseminate research findings and recommendations to government agencies concerned with the administration of criminal justice for purposes of policy planning and formulation.

What you can do to help

You can help prevent organized criminal gangs in Kenya by reporting to the Police, NCRC website (<http://crimeresearch.go.ke/report-crimes/>) and NCRC Mobile Phone Crime Reporting/Monitoring tool from mobile phones operating systems: Google Play Store, App Store and Windows Store (Free Service)