Issue Brief on Emerging Crimes: The Case of Kidnappings in Kenya Report, 2017

Objective- To identify the victims and perpetrators of kidnappings

Methodology – The study adopted a descriptive research design. The study was carried out in twenty (20) counties which were randomly and purposively selected. 1326 (727 males and 599 females) sample respondents (members of public) were conveniently sampled. Key informants were drawn from Judiciary, National Police Service, Office of Public Prosecution, Probation Services, Children Services Department, Civil society organizations interacting with issues of kidnappings and in general Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the data. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used in this study. Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences and the information was presented in frequencies, percentage tables and figures. Qualitative data was analyzed by way of interpretation of responses obtained from key informants, victims, kidnappers and reporters from the institutions addressing kidnappings. The data was presented thematically as per the objectives.

Counties of study: *Nairobi, Nyeri, Muranga, Kirinyaga, Mandera, Wajir, Bungoma, Kisii, Siaya, Machakos, Embu, Meru, Nakuru, Migori, Laikipia, Baringo, West Pokot, Turkana, Kwale and Lamu*.

Findings: The survey established that (78.1%) majority of victims of Kidnappings were children and juveniles aged below 18 years which formed. Females accounted for 55.1% of the victims. Kenyans formed the majority of the victims at 86.0%. It was also established that 95.0% of the victims are children of wealthy families; 48.0% were business persons; 19.6% were government officers and tourist formed 17.2%.

Majority of the kidnappers were the youth aged between 18-35 years, of which 71.0% were males of Kenyan nationality. 53.8% of the kidnappers were found to be not averagely stable economically. It was also found out that the perpetrators of kidnappings were mainly strangers forming 89.0%; friends and acquaintances 79.9%; criminal gangs and militia 72.0%; romantic partners 61.9%; family members and relatives at 60.8%.

Conclusions: From these findings, it is evident that the victims of kidnappings are mainly children. The perpetrators ranged from strangers, organized criminal and street gangs, romantic partners, family members, and security agents among others. In light of the findings, there is need for the national intelligence service and national police service to enhance intelligence gathering, sharing, detection and investigations of kidnappings. In addition, there is need to strengthen child protection units, properly train and equip the security agencies, undertake public awareness creation and sensitization, and ensure water-tight prosecution of kidnapping cases.

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