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

Objective- To establish the prevalence of the crime of kidnapping by type

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: Kidnapping was a major security problem in Kenya (88.2%) and in all the counties (60.7%). Majority (98.9%) of the respondents had heard of persons who had been kidnapped in other areas in Kenya, while the (76.8%) of the respondents had heard of persons who were kidnapped in their counties. The most prevalent types of kidnappings were: kidnapping committed by a stranger (68.9%); kidnapping committed by an acquaintance (48.3%); being kidnapped and forced to withdraw money from an Automated Teller Machine (41.1%); inside kidnapping (35.7%) and kidnapping committed by a family member (29.0%); virtual kidnapping (27.1%). Kidnapping committed by a stranger was more prevalent in Murang'a County (96.7%) followed by Kirinyaga (92.1%) and Migori (88.7%). Kidnapping committed by acquaintance was more prevalent in Kirinyaga (89.5%) followed by Murang'a (88.3%) and Nyeri (82.1%). Being kidnapped and forced to withdraw money from ATM was more prevalent in Nyeri County (92.5%) followed by Nairobi (88.9%) and Murang'a

(78.3%). Nairobi County was leading in inside kidnapping (86.7%) followed by Nyeri (80.6%) and Nakuru (74.6%). Kidnapping committed by a family member was more prevalent in Nyeri (65.7%), Kirinyaga (61.8) and Nairobi (58.9%). Virtual kidnapping was more prevalent in Nairobi (72.2%), Nyeri (68.7%) and Kirinyaga (56.6%).

Conclusions: Kidnapping is increasingly being witnessed in many parts of the Kenya. It is therefore important to fight kidnappings through sensitization and awareness creation among the public; stiffer penalties for convicted kidnappers; collaboration among all stakeholders in the fight against crimes; strengthening community policing; creation of job opportunities for youths; deployment of adequate public security agents; curbing corruption in agencies dealing with crime; creation of special security units to deal specifically with kidnapping crimes and improvement of intelligence gathering, sharing and utilization.

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