

TAMING ROGUE POLICE FORCES IN PEACEFUL AND POST CONFLICT SITUATIONS: Lessons from Liberia

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SYNOPSIS

With guns and powers to arrest, detain and control movement of people, trucks and goods, police officers become easily prone to abuse of power. In African countries, the not so rewarding terms of service for police tempt them to seek gratification for services rendered or for refraining from rendering services due to the state. In the absence of strong and effective institutions of good governance and accountability, some police officers are likely to get involved in corrupt transactions even in times of peace. In times of conflict their behaviour is likely to go beyond transactional corruption if institutions of governance become weakened. They may tend to engage in anti-social behaviour through activities that are utterly unjust and in violation of citizens' dignity and rights or completely subversive and inconsistent with the expected behaviour of public officials within established norms. This type of corruption incapacitates legitimate authorities from protecting citizens and subverts systems of governance making them wholly corrupt. Many cities both in the developed and developing countries have gone through waves of such subversive behaviour arising out of the deterioration of police services. Brazil, India, Mexico Northern Ireland and Tanzania for example, have experienced this decay in times of peace and have found it an uphill struggle to bring their police forces back on track. Liberia and Sierra Leone have experienced the decay of their police systems during war times.

This paper focuses on efforts made by the United Nations (UN), the Liberian Government and its development partners to turn what had become a rogue police force into a professional, ethical and functional body after the war. Most important, the paper presents how the police force was gravitated away from human rights violations characterized by rape, assault and child abuse, to become once again, a dependable and respectable force in the country. The key message is that in times of peace or war, it is necessary to undertake capacity building reforms focusing on human security.

The key lessons: Reforms become successful if there is visionary and professional leadership, clear conceptual understanding of human security and gender issues, of building confidence and self-esteem among the police. Other factors include: creating and nurturing good relations between police and communities based on existing community institutions and leadership structures, equal partnership and openness in information sharing with communities. What made reforms possible in some of the countries discussed in this paper and especially in Liberia include the following: partnerships with communities, civil society and private sector organizations; good relations with and substantial support from local and international development partners and systematic vetting of recruits to ensure preservation of ethical standards and proper technical professional training.

The main recommendation: Reforming police force behaviour should be a continuous process and that Liberia has good lessons that can be learnt by countries seeking to do so, especially those emerging from conflict.

1. Introduction

The integrity of police forces in Africa has increasingly become questionable in the last three decades in spite of a spate of continuous reforms. With the rise of corruption in many countries in the last few decades, police forces have gone up in the charts among institutions most corrupt on the continent. A 2015 study by Afrobarometer established that of the 30 countries worldwide where police are seen as the most corrupt institutions, 20 are in Africa (Wambua 2015). In fact, 75% of the respondents in six African countries were of the perception that police were the most corrupt, followed by members of the judiciary (Ibid). Wambua also indicated that across the 34 countries surveyed, 42% of those interviewed were of the opinion that most and even all the police officers were corrupt.

Since the colonial times, corruption among state officials in Africa in general and among the police in particular, has been persistent. Every regime has tried to manage it but without noticeable success. The Afrobarometer report found that the highest rates of police corruption are in Nigeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Cameroon, Tanzania, Liberia, Ghana, Burundi and South Africa in that order. Over 50% of the interviewed citizens in these countries thought the police were very corrupt. In Botswana, Senegal, Tunisia, Mauritius, Cape Verde and Algeria in that order, less than 30% of interviewees were of the opinion that police were very corrupt. (Wambua 2015).

Linked to the increase in police corruption has been the rise in crime rates on the continent. An earlier study by van der Spuy and Röntsch (2008) indicated that between 1963 and 2005 crime rates had been on a steady rise leading to very high levels of insecurity and fear of crime among citizens. In this study, an average of 25% of the citizens in Kenya and 59% in Nigeria had no confidence in their police officers, while in South Africa's biggest cities, 62% of the residents in Johannesburg, 55% in Durban, 54.6% in Pretoria and 49.6% in Cape Town had been victims of crime between 1993 and 1997 (Ibid). For South

Africa the situation got worse after the 2008 study (Faull 2011). Corruption in many cities and rural areas is so rampant in Africa that Alex Munyoro once remarked, 'The day when corruption is stopped in Africa will be the very day that we shall wave goodbye to poverty, wars, AIDS, crime etc.' (BBC World News 2004 online). However, it should be noted that police corruption or other types of corruption are not only confined to Africa (Tiscomia 2011:1). Tiscomia argued that, 'When it comes to corruption, there is no North-South divide. Neither is it a problem of the centre versus the periphery or the poor versus the rich (ibid). Police corruption remains a big challenge to the developed and developing countries alike. It is a matter of degrees and the capacity of systems of governance to ensure transparency and accountability of law enforcement agencies (Ivković and Haberfeld 2015). As we shall see in the main text of this work, many countries have had problems with their police forces becoming corrupt or engaging in gross breaches of human rights.

2. Objective of the paper

This paper seeks to examine the problem of corruption among the police forces leading to anti-social behaviour and violation of citizen rights. It reviews examples and case studies from a number of countries including Mexico, Northern Ireland and Tanzania to show how good governance managed to restore professionalism among the police after it had systematically deteriorated in times of peace. It then focuses on Liberia whose police force had become completely corrupt and perennially involved in violations of human rights especially the rights and dignity of women and children during the civil war between 1989 and 2003 (UN 2010). The study covers the dimensions of the problem, the actors and measures that were taken to restore professionalism and public trust in the National Liberian Police. The lessons learnt can be of use to many countries grappling with rogue police forces but specifically for countries emerging out of conflict in which the law enforcement systems may have broken down.

3. Methodology

This study is based on secondary sources that come in the form of existing articles, books and reports that have been prepared on the subject. It is purely qualitative and did not involve any field research or surveys

4. Selected successful police reforms in times of peace

There comes a time in the existence of a state when the lack of innovation leads to institutional decay. Lack of innovation may be due to the lack of effective systems of control by legislative bodies over the executive and the absence of effective mechanisms for accountability and incentives or sanctions against poor performance by public servants. It may also be due to continued dominance by the same actors over a long time without an opportunity for them to learn from other systems on how to change ways of doing things. In Africa for example, decades of neglect of Tanzania's police force led to its deterioration as it became too closely related to and protected by the ruling party from any criticism by the public or the press (Scher 2009). The police began concentrating on only the protection of the state and its officials and became less involved in protection of the citizens (Ibid). A survey by Afrobarometer in 2005 indicated that 34% of the citizens in Tanzania had lost confidence in the police (ibid, p.3). It took the Inspector General of Police, Mr. Saidi Mwema appointed in 2006 three years to reform the force and restore public confidence in it. However, in spite of his efforts, the police force began deteriorating again after he retired in 2011. Before we analyse police reforms during and after conflict situations we will examine the case of Mexico City and see how its leaders managed to tame rogue police forces after they had become completely corrupt. The aim is to show how difficult it is to reform corrupted police forces during times of peace which will help us to understand the importance of Liberia's success following the civil war.

Parts of Mexico were taken over by criminal gangs who organized robberies, kidnapping, and extortion and engaged in acts of rape, assault, burglary and

other serious crimes in the 1980s and 1990s making these parts of the city ungovernable. But following the election of a Mayor by the name of Manuel López, who was determined to take the city back from the criminals, in a short span of not more than five years, the city was pacified and peace restored. Mayor López succeeded because he was elected on the agenda of police reforms and he prepared his reform strategy very carefully. The first thing he did was to look for committed persons, especially politicians who had an excellent record of fighting corruption in Mexico (Jackson 2014:2). He chose one of them who was very prominent, to head the Secretariat for Public Security. Then immediately he began weeding out dead wood from the force. He retired most of the old guards and set up a new team that helped him to develop the General Plan for Developing Mexico City covering the period 2001-2006. The main pillars of this plan were, among other things, preventive policing, citizen participation in crime prevention, strengthening technical capacity among the police and strengthening crime monitoring systems (Ibid). His vision was that in order to restore law and order and reform the police force, he needed a comprehensive strategy backed by the security administration and the influential business interests, a high performing reliable team, a new theory of change, knowledge of what had worked elsewhere and a clear identification of major ingredients of change. These included in his view information gathering, accountability mechanisms, citizen engagement, good relations between citizens and the police and more efficient smaller police units (ibid).

From Jackson's study, fourteen measures that were taken by Mayor Manuel López which made it possible for his government to take back the city from criminal gangs can be identified. *First* he adopted a strategy, *horizontal networking* by engaging all top officials in a strategy aimed at 'making his concerns everybody's concern (Jackson 2014). On the basis of this philosophy he organized cabinet meetings about public security every morning at which cabinet members and top officials exchanged information on programmes on public

security. The *second* measure was *vertical networking* under which he invited 22 other agencies to engage with the cabinet and linking issues like safety and service utilities and their contribution to human security. *Third* was *imaging* which was attained by these high profile meetings of top government officials as they were used to show the public that something was being done on public security and to show the police that the government was watching and following up their activities. The *fourth* was *improvement of tools and equipment*. In order to improve efficiency it was deemed necessary to go digital. *Fifth* was *citizen engagement*. This was done right from the start.

A Consultative Council for the Rescue of the Centre of Mexico was formed. Prominent business people, community leaders and heads of civil society organization (CSOs) constituted its membership which included members of the community who suffered more frequently from extortion and crime. *Sixth* was *openness* which was encouraged at all levels including with the media which was assured that criticism was welcome to enable the systems to work better. *Resources mobilization* was his *seventh* strategy. He mobilized local resources from local business people who together managed to contribute US\$ 4 million which was used to hire Rudy Guilian's company to advise Mexico City on security reforms. The *eighth* measure was *goal setting*. He set the goal of reducing crime by 10% every year (Johnson 2010:6). The *ninth* measure focused on *motivation* under, which the mayor hired an expert to develop an incentive scheme under which police would get better pay, improved working conditions and training. Apart from these collective incentives, the *tenth* strategy was to *introduce individual incentives*. These were aimed at behaviour change. To encourage police who seized illegal guns from colluding with and taking bribes from owners or selling them to other illegal buyers, bonuses higher than the price of guns were given for each gun seized and handed over to the authorities. According to Johnson this strategy helped police to get back a lot of illegal guns and ammunitions (Ibid).

The eleventh measure was the *gradual replacement* of police officers. As the City could not get rid of all veteran police officers at a go, those who reached retirement age were allowed to go and to avoid ill feelings among veteran officers because of pay differentials between them and the new better qualified and better paid recruits, those willing to go on early retirement were given a golden handshake. *Twelfth*, the city was *divided into 70 sectors* and all sectors began forming mini security cabinets in the form of coordinating committees which brought together the police, prosecutors and officials from the Mayor's Office in daily meetings to share information on progress and problems and coordinate security activities. *Thirteenth* was *building better police-community relations* by ensuring patrols were interactive and neighbourhood police units were formed to make sure communities are fully involved in their own security. Finally there was *popularization of technology* and making the police less reliant on information systems exclusively based on paper files and all types of documents. These fourteen measures were the major ingredients of change that managed to turn around policing in the central district of Mexico. Studied carefully, these measures can help other countries facing similar challenges to change the nature of their police forces.

The key lesson which can be drawn from the case of Mexico is that to control armed gangs and restore professionalism among the police, it is imperative for the latter to establish firm working relations between the police and communities. We have seen how that philosophy worked very well for Mayor López in Mexico City. The same philosophy was used to reduce election violence in Londonderry, Northern Ireland in 2005. Michael Scharff (2010) has given an incisive account of how that happened. Northern Ireland was caught up in some of the most vicious cycles of election violence after the partition of Ireland in 1921, but mainly between 1968 and 1998 during which about 300 people died in Londonderry alone. After the 2004 elections it was realized that police presence at polling stations contributed to the violence. According to Scharff

(ibid), after this realization, it was decided to form committees that would bring together political party leaders, activists and police. It was agreed that police would reduce presence at polling stations and only manage check points to such stations. They would use helicopters to monitor movements and processes and gather data that would be shared with the committees and they would only carry out inspection of elections premises for bombs and guns at least two hours before the commencement of polling. Political parties agreed to jointly exercise vigilance outside the polling stations and watch out for trouble makers. This arrangement helped to produce the most peaceful elections in Londonderry and other cities of Northern Ireland during the 2005 elections and there has been peace during elections thereafter (Ibid).

Community engagement and visionary leadership helped restore law and order in Mexico City and Londonderry and other parts of the world including Bihar State in India after 2005 following years of turmoil and control of cities by criminals and the countryside by insurgents (Mukherjee 2009). Community engagement also helped the post conflict government in Sierra Leone (Friedman 2011).

5. Police and security reforms with a gendered agenda: the case of Liberia

In Liberia, taming a police body that had been reduced to a rogue force by the civil war (1989-2003) whose members were alongside the rebels committing crimes against civilians, took a more systematic turn worth analysing and perhaps emulating in post conflict situations. The reform further had a gendered agenda since during the atrocities, mainly rape, assault, kidnapping, extortion and all forms of imaginable corruption were bore by women and girls. Laura Bacon (2012) in her piece 'Building an Inclusive, Responsive National Police Service: Gender Sensitive Reform in Liberia' provides insights into what a gendered police and security reform agenda could entail. In the next subsections, the strategies highlighted were used by

the post conflict government in Liberia which was supported by the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), other UN Agencies and development partners.

5.1. The plight of women and children during and after the war

Liberia was described by the Secretary General of the United Nations as the 'epicentre of continuing endemic instability' due to the civil war that engulfed that country between 1989 and 2003 (UN 2003). While all citizens were traumatized by that war, women bore the brunt of the conflict. More than half of them were women sexually assaulted and the assaults were so brutal and inhuman that they left most if not all the victims and also the witnesses traumatized (Lamp and Trif, 2009, Bacon 2012). After the Accra Comprehensive Agreement, a UN peace keeping force of 15,000 soldiers and 1,115 civilian police was sent to the country as part of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UN 2003). One of the main assignments of the police team was to train members of the Liberia National Police on professional policing and handling gender based violence. The government of Liberia under Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf joined forces with the UN Mission and together they developed an agenda to restore law and order and address gender based violence. The interventions are clustered into seven categories covering policy, institutions, organizational reforms, confidence building, recruitment, and training, building responsiveness, role modelling, changing cultural norms, outreach and managing stigma.

5.2. Policies, institutions and pillars of the reforms

The support for Liberia's gendered police reform agenda came from UN Resolution 1325 of 2000 which urged all Member States of the UN to include and increase the number of women in peace keeping forces (UN 2000). On the ground in Liberia, the Liberian National Gender Policy was promulgated immediately after the new government took power. It set up a gender unit in the Ministry of Gender and Development specifically to address the problems and issues of gender based violence. This was complemented by the enactment of a new criminal

law by Parliament in 2005 which expanded the definition of rape to include among other things, assault by spouses and prescribed very harsh penalties for sexual offences. In addition President Sirleaf appointed women into top positions in the Police Force including the first female Inspector General of Police Ms. Munah Sieh and Ms. Asatu BahKenneth as her Deputy in 2007. Both the UN Mission and the Government set a target of raising the number of women in the police force from 2% in 2005 to 20% by the year 2014 (UN 2004). Development partners also put emphasis on gender mainstreaming and while implementing these policies the Government formed the Rule of Law Implementation Committee comprised of officers from the Ministry of Justice, the police and the judiciary. This committee decided that there should be intensive training for the police; there should be a recruitment drive; standards in policing should be raised and recruits should be strictly and carefully vetted. These policies and appointments laid firm foundations for implementing the reforms with gendered lenses. In Bacon (ibid. p. 11), in 2009 the Ministry of Justice established a special court aimed at fast tracking cases on sexual assault. The hearings of this court took place in front of the *camera*. The Ministry also established the Sexual and Gender Based Violence Crimes Unit whose task was to counsel and protect victims of sexual assault (UN 2010, Bacon 2014:11).

5.3. Restoring public confidence in the police

Over a long period of time, the culture of blaming the victim in cases of assault and rape was deeply engrained during the war. The public lost trust in the police and as a result very few victims of gender based violence reported incidents to the police (UN 2010, Bacon 2014). Investigating such offences was made hard by lack of trained and committed officers, lack of confidentiality, social taboos and stigma. Under the pretext of culture, even community leaders did not help a lot. Averagely only about 12.5% of the women raped reported to the police and more often than not, no action was taken (Bacon ibid. p.4). Traditionally the Liberian Police Force was

male dominated and attempts to recruit women into the force faced numerous challenges including limited number of skilled women interested in police jobs (UN 2010).

5.4. Reorganizing the police force

Reorganization began with deciding on the size of the police force. In 2005 it was decided that by 2007 according to available resources there should be at least 3,500 officers and that 20% of the force to be females by 2014 (UN 2004 a). It was also decided that recruitment and training had to go hand in hand but police had to be separated from the military. As a result of this decision the UN Mission took over the police stations from the military. Police presence in the communities was intensified and to prevent big companies such as Firestone forming and maintaining their own security forces, the police took over security in such enterprises. These measures were also accompanied by the demobilization of rebel forces and demobilization camps were set up. As a result the ex-rebels were removed from the police stations which they had taken over and taken into camps (Pugel 2006, Jennings 2007).

Other measures that were decided upon were to ensure the policing and training standards were harmonized with those in other West African States. To ensure these standards are internalized, study tours were organized for trainers and senior officials to neighbouring countries. To handle the issues of gender based violence, juvenile sexual assault and domestic violence, units were formed and immediately started carrying out public campaigns led by senior female police officers on the need to combat sexual offences. A Community Policing Unit was also formed which organized weekly community briefings and discussions on how to report crimes and preserve evidence. It also focused mainly on gender based violence and published, among others, a brochure titled 'Sexual and gender based Pathways' instructing victims on what to do when assaulted and never to pay bribes to law enforcement officers.

5.5. Recruitment and vetting

One key decision that was taken by the Implementation Committee was to deactivate all former police officers and ask them to apply afresh. Those who applied had to agree to give up their former ranks, go through a vetting process and undergo training. This decision was based on the feeling that some of the genuine police officers may have fled the country during the war and that some of those who remained were likely to have worked closely with the rebels (Lamp and Trif 2009). In the process of implementing the decision, the UN Restructuring and Recruitment Section conducted the vetting. About 9000 applied but only 756 i.e. almost 25% qualified for recruitment. Recruitment was therefore a continuous process (UN 2004 a). Campaigns were organized at community forums and schools and door to door. Emphasis was on increased applications and opportunities for female police cadets. Vetting was aimed at uncovering possible past involvement of potential recruits in abuses of human rights. As the minimum qualification was completion of a high school diploma course, vetting was also used to ensure those recruited had such qualifications. In the vetting process, certificates submitted were presented to the West African Examination Council for verification and names of those selected were posted in local newspapers for a week before they were admitted to enable any members of the public with knowledge about past conduct of those selected to come forward with a possibility to disqualify them (Bacon *ibid.* p.6).

5.6. Training and professionalization

From the various UN Reports (2003 to 2005) and other documents (Bacon 2014, Hull 2008, UN 2010), four principles used in the training and restoration of professionalism among the police contributed to the success of the police reforms in Liberia. First was *damage control*. The authorities had to drive a clear message to the society that they were establishing a new and different police force from the one they had experienced in the thirteen years of war. This was done through the community, school and other

forums including loud speaker announcements using helicopters. Second was *building on past practices institutions* before the war. The values of the public service that had existed before the conflict were revived and veteran police officers who were vetted and found to be subscribing to them were retained. In this vein high standards were set for recruitment: high school certificates, physical fitness, good reputation within the community and a good record free of war crimes. In addition during interviews, applicants were asked about their motivation to join the force and about loyalty to their country. Third was the belief that it was essential to build a *victim centred approach* in the training to make the police trainees focus on victims rather than people who had influence in society some of who may have been collaborators of rebels. Fourth was gender balance and this was implemented through intensive campaigns for women to join the force and the promotion of women to senior positions in the administration and the Police Academy. Fifth was the *principle of broadening* which was implemented by focusing most of the training on sexual and gender based offences and trainees were prepared with the view to deploy them in the juvenile, sexual assault and domestic violence units, which were being established in the whole country. Training covered skill formation in key areas of police work especially investigation, writing reports, follow up on investigation and ethics. Training methods included mentoring provided by experienced senior police officers, guidance through practical exercises, class rooms training and field work.

5.7. Changing cultural norms

The police reform process in Liberia focused mainly on changing the behaviour of police officers. The Women and Children Protection Unit noting that cultural norms and practices encouraged gender based violence, as many people including women did not think rape in general and marital rape in particular were reportable and actionable by police. In addition most victims and potential victims did not know how to deal with evidence related to these crimes. The Unit organized awareness campaigns

using media, billboards, poster and broadcasts through which they let everyone know about sexual crimes and for the victims where to go for help. With the support of UNICEF, UNMIL and NEPAD the unit also opened seven hostels for victims which were built between 2005 and 2007 (UN 2010, Bacon ibid p.10).

6. Assessing the success of reforms in Liberia

Jonathan Friedman (2011:12) has indicated that during a short period from 2005 to 2011 the percentage of women in the police force went from 2% to 17% while in the army it was still only 5%. In Friedman's account, the police force became dependable and in some rural areas police officers were the only public officials citizens could expect to be available when needed. The use of an integrated mission approach combining disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration, known as DDRR (UN 2004 b) helped to address peace and resettle ex-combatants thereby keeping them away from crime. It gave those who voluntarily surrendered a chance to be resettled and to secure jobs in the army, police and the public service if vetted. (Hull 2008, Jennings 2007, Pugel 2006). If it were not for high levels of poverty caused by a prolonged war, the effects would have been bigger (Ford and Tlehaara 2010). On the 14th January 2016 when the UN announced it was ready to hand over police and security matters to the government of Liberia, there were mixed feelings as many in the country still feel the police force is not ready to take full responsibility. There have been instances of police misconduct and involvement in acts of corruption. Responding to these fears the Police Spokesperson said in an interview with Voice of America, 'Yes we do have bad police officers, but we are weeding them out of the police on a daily basis. We have suspended people, we have sacked people, we have sent officers for prosecution. Some of them are in jail for 10 to 15 years for getting involved in acts unbecoming of police officers' (Collins 2016).

It is undeniable that turning around a police in times of peace is very difficult but most difficult in post

conflict situations. In the case of Liberia even Jacobson (2012) who believes there have been more failures than successes in the UN peacekeeping activities, has listed Liberia among his small list of success stories. He has attributed success to an integrated mission approach and the involvement of African leaders and neighbouring countries in the whole process. Similarly Nvukiiyehe and Samii (2010) have attributed this success to the legitimacy of the United Nations Mission in Liberia emanating for a general acceptance of this role by the people of Liberia across the board. The Liberian experience is very important for countries emerging out of conflict such as South Sudan and others at the verge of conflict such as Burundi. Noteworthy also is the experience of Mexico City which though not involved in a fully-fledged civil war was in a situation where criminals had taken over the central district almost irretrievably. The multi-staged interventions that helped to restore law and order in these two situations provide a recipe for effective police reforms in any country whether in peace or at war.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

It is clear that the most effective ingredient in all kinds of reforms is visionary leadership. The commitment of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to the police reforms and her commitment to end or effectively reduce gender based violence involving the police, led to rapid results in stabilizing Liberia. This restored the rule of law and order thereby safeguarding the liberty and dignity of the most vulnerable sections of Liberian society. We can conclude from the Liberian experience that the second most effective tool for reform is capacity building largely around sound policies and effective policy implementing institutions. It was the policies which preceded the reforms that charted the path to success. The third is change and change management. Liberia changed the players at all levels and changed the institutions. The new players involved people who were committed to change especially in this case women and people who had served elsewhere and had a lot of experience on change management. The same factors played a big

role in the reforms that restored rule of law and order in Mexico City as we saw earlier. The fourth is training in new techniques. Some of the reforms which were not equally successful used the same trainers and reproduced the same old techniques. The short story about Tanzania is a case in point. The fifth is setting up processes that lead to transformation. In Liberia it was achieved through weeding out dead wood and deactivation of all the police officers, requiring them to apply afresh and vetting them all. This helped to ensure there was no old wine in new vessels. Finally, community engagement remains a key factor too. Many police forces claim to have community policing policies.

However most of these are based on unequal relations in which the community leaders are used to spy on their communities. Such policies easily lead to community leaders being incorporated in the police system and if it is corrupt they lead to the transfer of police corruption to the communities. In the case of Mexico and Liberia, community engagement was based on equal partnership between leaders of various communities and police. There were visible and functional committees constituted of members of the police and these communities. There was joint policing and weekly meetings at community level to assess progress and success. Short of such partnerships, community policing easily becomes a self-serving rhetorical gimmick. Finally, motivation of the police through better working conditions, decent pay and effective tools and equipment lead to better results. In the light of these conclusions it is strongly recommended to the governments in the region to:

- Mount a new wave of security reforms that address issues of gender based violence as a separate threat to democracy and human rights in African countries.
- Adopt policies that make security reforms a continuous process because of the changing needs of the African economies and the rise in corruption among law enforcement agencies prompted by increasing prosperity and opportunities in the region.

- Institute critical, analytical and technical studies of security reforms in general and police reforms in particular and develop common curricula that can be shared by all police training institutions.
- Address issues of gender based violence and mount courses and awareness programmes for law enforcement officers on comparative practices across the continent and beyond.
- Consider possibilities of reducing the involvement of police in election processes and organize research and exchange of knowledge and experiences on how police can be involved in overseeing elections without being involved, which in some cases causes election violence.

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