

# **THE POOR AND INFORMAL POLICING**

## **IN NIGERIA**

**A Report on Poor Peoples' Perceptions and Priorities on Safety, Security and Informal Policing in A2J Focal States in Nigeria.**

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**Written by Professor Etannibi E.O. Alemika and Innocent C. Chukwuma at the Center for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN), Lagos.**

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## GLOSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A2J	Access to Justice
CLEEN	Centre for Law Enforcement Education
FC	Focus Community
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FS	Focal State
GRA	Government Reserved Area
IPS	Informal Policing Structures
LG	Local Government
LGA	Local Government Area
LR	Lead Researcher
NPF	Nigeria Police Force
PAR	Participatory Action Research
RA	Research Assistant
SJA	State Justice Adviser
TOR	Terms of Reference

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ACTION POINTS

Debates about how to improve safety and security for urban communities and rural dwellers in Nigeria are beginning to pay increasing attention to informal policing structures (IPS), which are set up by people living in poverty in response to the apparent inability of the formal police to adequately protect them from crime.

However, there is a dearth of literature on the types of informal policing structures that exist, the reasons and rationales underpinning their establishment, the nature of their activities and community perceptions of their work. Extant literature on IPS focuses often on documenting the experience of the victims of vigilantism (which is one typology of IPS) and examining the fidelity of their methods of operation to international human rights norms and standards. Hence, the hitherto ambivalence and uncertainties on the functions of the IPS and the role they could and should play in the poor peoples' quest for safety and security.

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to provide documented evidence to inform programme development on the subject. It also fills the observed gap in the literature by providing a comprehensive understanding of the expectations, priorities and perceptions of people living in poverty in Nigeria with respect to safety and security in general and informal policing structures in particular.

The research was undertaken in the four focal states of Access to Justice (A2J) in Nigeria: Benue, Ekiti, Enugu and Jigawa States. The methods of data collection used were a mixture of quantitative and qualitative, comprising interviews and focus group discussions.

Caution is advised on the use of the findings of the study to generalize on perceptions of people in poverty on issues of safety, security and informal policing in the four states, given the small sample size studied and the exploratory nature of the research. However, the study provides substantial information and insights that have not been provided or analyzed elsewhere.

### **Perceptions of Safety and Security**

The study found that the poor had capacity to identify and explain their safety and security concerns even though they might not be fluent in the language(s) used by policy makers. Their understanding of these concepts went beyond protection from criminal victimization as they saw safety and security as very vital to their ability to sustain their livelihoods as well as to the development of their communities as a whole. This was nicely articulated by a participant in the focus groups:

Safety and security are very important in our communities ... It affects aspects of our health, family coexistence and our lives and properties... It affects everything! Without safety and security, everything would get spoilt.

With the possible exception of Enugu State where the respondents feeling of safety was very low (36.6 %), the majority of respondents in Ekiti (96.6 %), Jigawa (81.7%) and Benue States

(66.6%) felt safe. However, in spite of the relatively high level of feeling of safety and security in Ekiti, Jigawa and Benue States, a pervading fear of crime was reported in all the four states of study. Across the four states, at least three-fifth of the respondents expressed some fear of criminal victimization. However, the intensity of the fear varies across the states, with respondents from Enugu State being the most fearful (73.3 %).

The responses of the participants in the study indicated that their priority safety and security concerns around which they expect assistance were:

- Personal safety from criminals, especially armed robbers;
- Protection from harm associated with political thuggery;
- Prevention of violent conflicts;
- Eradication of police corruption and brutality; and
- Security of property from theft and destruction.

### **Perceptions of Informal Policing Structures (IPS)**

Apart from the police, participants to the study identified a total of 16 types of informal policing structures that were established in their communities to deal with crime. The groups were called different names and were differentially related to the traditional practices and authorities of the community. Most of the terms used for this group in local languages translate to vigilante, though more appropriately as guards. When asked of the names by which the informal policing groups in their communities are called, respondents overwhelmingly chose the term vigilante (70.4%) among other choices on the questionnaire (e.g. neighbourhood watchers (8.2%), community guards (1.0%); traditional police (3.1% and others (17.3). In Ekiti state, the term vigilante was not often used as only 41.7% of the respondents identified the groups with the term, compared to Benue (96.4%), Enugu (71.4%) and Jigawa (68.0%).

The methods of operation of IPS identified include traditional divining methods, traditional protection methods, praying and fasting, and mob action (17.85%). There was also a fairly significant entry of 'don't know' and 'others', which suggests that the methods used by the groups are diverse and not well known by members of the public. Furthermore, the use of traditional divining methods and protection devices, especially in Ekiti and Jigawa states, point to the traditional roots of some of the groups. Majority of the respondents supported the methods used by the groups. In Enugu state, where mob action and 'others' were widely identified as the methods used by the community policing groups, 94.7% supported the use of those practices.

A significant proportion of the respondents said that they used the services of informal policing groups in order to protect their neighbourhoods from criminal's attacks; to provide speedy safety and security services which the formal police were unable to offer, and because they were closer to the people than the formal police. They are particularly more widely used in Ekiti (88.9%) and Jigawa (62.5%) where they are more culturally rooted than in Benue (36.7%) and Enugu (38.1%) states.

## **Problems Faced by Informal Policing Groups**

The informal policing groups in the four states studied face a number of problems and shortcomings, which require assistance from government and donor agencies in Nigeria in addressing them. Some of the problems, which were identified by the participants include:

1. Lack of Funding by government, except in Ilejemeje LGA, Ekiti State, where the Council authority recently placed the members of IPS in the locality on monthly salary;
2. Harassment and extortions by the police when carrying out their duties, often over their use of locally made guns;
3. Lack of Basic operational equipment, such as flashlights, warm clothing, rain coats and boots, whistles, uniforms, identity cards etc.
4. Lack of recognition by local government authorities in some of the LGAs.

Other shortcomings of the IPS observed by the researchers in some of the LGAs studies included: multiplicity of the organizations, poor screening of new members, lack of representation of women and non-indigenes in their structures and poor accountability by the non-traditional informal policing groups. However, the most worrying concern about some of the IPS is their possession of locally made weapons outside the purview of the state. The extent to which such groups contribute to the widespread cases of ethnic, religious and communal violence in Nigeria needs to be investigated, because many well-known vigilante groups such as OPC, Bakassi and Egbesu boys operate as ethnic militias. Nevertheless, among the groups that derived their existence from the community traditions and culture, there appears to be some degree of accountability and discipline.

## **Action Points**

The following action points are recommended for a follow-up on the study and to address the priority needs of the research community in relation to safety, security and informal policing structures in particular.

### **1. Establishment of Community Safety and Security Forums**

- For the improvement of community perception of safety, security and relationship with the police, there is a need for periodic and predictable community interaction with the police, through the establishment of community safety and security forums at the LGA level. The local government should be encouraged to play a key role in such structures either as convener or host. The local councils' halls have always served as venues for all kinds of community meetings and could serve as the venue and secretariat for the forum. The importance of taking the hosting or organisation of the forum away from the police is to encourage partnership in crime prevention rather than paternalism, where the community members are treated as mere informants. Participants in such a forum should

include representatives all stakeholders in crime prevention in the community including women, non indigenes and IPS.

## **2. Regulation of IPS Activities**

- Holding of meeting(s) with traditional authorities and elders in the localities (such as the 8 LGAs in the study) where A2J might consider carrying out a pilot project on standardization of IPS procedure to identify groups that do not bear arms, other lethal weapons or resort to mob justice in their activities. Such traditional authorities and elders could be made to sign undertaken, which would be deposited to the police, vouching that the groups they recommend do not bear arms or resort to jungle justice.
- Coordination of the groups through holding of periodic meetings involving all the certified IPS and the police authorities within an LGA. This meeting could serve as a clearing house for information exchange, peer review, standardization of procedures, screening of members, registration and improvement of their relationship with the police.
- Advocacy for the enactment of by-laws by LGAs to regulate the activities of IPS subject to police supervision. This could be made a pre-condition for the establishment of IPS standardization and assistance project in a locality. A2J could also commission the drafting of model legislation for the regulation of the establishment and methods of operation of IPS at the LGA level.

## **3. Accountability of IPS to the Community**

- Accountability of the IPS to the community they serve should be encouraged by the introduction of report back mechanism where members of the IPS would made to appear before the local community to give periodic account of their steward. Such gathering should include representatives of women. Even if women are not allowed to participate directly because of the risk involved, they could at least provide important information that may prove invaluable to the IPS.

## **4. Reward Mechanism**

- A reward mechanism for groups who play by the rule should be introduced to encourage them. This could take the form of supplying them with simple and non-lethal items such as rain-coats, booths, flash-lights etc. USAID/OTI tried this in Lagos State with the neighbourhood watch associations, though not sustained because of their pulling out from Nigeria in 2001.
- Non governmental organizations working on issues of safety, security and access to justice should also be encouraged to invite members of IPS in their education and training programmes on human rights to enable them appreciate the importance of respecting the due process safeguards of suspects in stead of waiting for the IPS to commit rights violations for them to document.
- Progressively, a data base for the documentation of their activities and best practices learnt could be introduced in an effort to share lessons learned and avoidance of repeat of pitfalls experienced elsewhere.

## 5. General Recommendations

- The issues of improving police capacity to curb crime, substantial reduction of police corruption and brutality against the poor, which were identified by the participants to the study as major contributors to their lack of confidence in the police, should be addressed seriously by the authorities. NGOs working on monitoring, documenting and campaigning against such vices should be supported by A2J, especially in the focal states.
- The high level of unemployment among the youths, which the participants identified as a major contributor to crime, should be addressed by the governments at various levels in the states. A2J should also consider some pilot projects that could engage the youths and get them off the street under some kind of social crime prevention programme.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A significant percentage of the respondents and participants in the study asked for arms and ammunitions to enable them defend themselves and their communities from criminal attacks. An action point was not formulated out of this request because it would require an amendment of the Armed Robbery and Firearms Act, which criminalizes possession of firearms except those licensed for hunting purposes. For details of this refer to appendix 5 dealing with full report of the focus group discussions.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

A fundamental element of accessible justice is that all people are able to reach and use justice sector institutions without fear of bias or corruption on the part of justice system officials (DFID Programme Document, 2001). In the year 2001, however, 95 percent of Nigerians held the view that some members of the Nigeria Police Force are involved in corruption. Out of this figure, 66 percent saw all police personnel as involved in corruption (Afrobarometer, 2001). Similarly, 92 percent of the people perceived some corruption among judges and magistrates (Afrobarometer, 2001). 58 percent of the people expressed no trust at all for the police. Further, although 58.3 percent of Nigerians reported feeling safer in 2000 than they did five years prior, roughly 40 percent of people knew someone who had been a victim of crime within the previous two years (IFES, 2000).

The World Bank's 2001 report, *Nigeria: Voices of the poor* showed that poor people perceive poverty to be a denial of the right to an enabling and empowering quality of life, not simply the non-availability of materials resources. Poor people are subject to risk, insecurity and vulnerability due to their exposure to danger, victimization or violence and their inability to access justice when wronged.

Many citizens around the country have responded to widespread perceptions of personal insecurity and vulnerability by forming community-based groups – commonly referred to as vigilantes or informal policing organizations. These groups work in a variety of ways – sometimes hand-in-hand with the official police and sometimes not – to confront local crime and insecurity problems.

Much more systematically collected data about what people expect from law enforcement – both official and in the form of informal policing structures is vital. Such information should disclose whether people perceive informal Policing groups as necessary in a democratic dispensation, how people perceive them in relation to the official police, how the activities of these groups affect peoples' sense of safety and security, and what they actually want and expect from official law enforcement. Such information would supplement the available knowledge on the contexts of modern day policing in Nigeria as well as enrich the findings of victimization surveys by revealing underlying expectations and needs (with respect to safety and security) of the public. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the expectations, priorities and perceptions of people living in poverty in the Access to Justice's focal states, with respect to safety and security in general and informal policing structures in particular.

These issues form the focus of the following chapters. Chapter two reviews the literature on why poor people patronize informal policing structures (IPS) and the types of IPS that exist. Chapter three presents the anticipated output of the research. Chapter four discusses the methods of data collection and analysis. Chapter five relates the findings of the study on poor peoples' perceptions and priorities on safety and security. Chapter six discusses the types of informal policing structures identified by research participants, reasons why the poor patronize them and

their level of satisfaction with the services of the IPS. Finally, chapter seven concludes the study and outlines some action points that could be considered by A2J in responding to the opportunities and needs of the poor in relation to safety and security, which were identified in the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

Extant literature on informal policing in Africa has centred essentially on the South African experience, especially since the inauguration of multiracial democracy in that country in 1994. The focus has been on one typology of informal policing structures - vigilantism.<sup>2</sup> Emerging studies in the field in other parts of Africa, often commissioned by human rights bodies<sup>3</sup>, have not only followed the narrowness of the mainstream South African discuss but has also used 'right-based' approach in their analysis, which further restricts the use of the rich but diverse information that are often excavated. The major limitation of these studies is that since their focus is often on documenting the experience of the victims of vigilantism and examining the fidelity of the activities of the groups to international human rights norms and standards, they hardly provide much information that may be useful to an exploratory study of this nature, which seeks to provide an understanding of the different types of informal police structures and what poor people expect from them. This chapter tries to piece together bits and pieces of information buried in extant but narrow literature on informal policing, in an effort to try and answer two questions that arise from reading them:

- Why do the people patronize informal policing structures
- What types of informal policing structures exist

#### **Why People Patronize Informal Policing Structures**

In a study on Violent Justice, Vigilantism and State Response in South Africa carried out by the Pretoria-based Institute of Security Studies in 2002, several reasons on why people patronize informal policing structures could be identified. These include perceived rise in crime, poor perceptions about the ability of the criminal justice system to respond to the needs of the victims of crime and inadequacies of the formal police service (Sekhonyane, 2002:1). This view is supported by other scholars who generally argue that informal policing or what Scharf (2000) calls 'community initiated policing' arise out of a perceived failure of the state to provide citizens with the protection they require (Scharf 2000; Shaw 2000; Abrahams 1998; Findlay 1993; Huggins 1991).

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<sup>2</sup> Exception to this general trend can be found in the studies arising out of the work of the Community Peace Foundation, Cape Town and the important article written by Prof. Wilfred Scharf on Community Justice and Community Policing in Post-Apartheid South Africa, in which he raised many pertinent questions on informal justice systems.

<sup>3</sup> Some of these studies include two carried out by the Human rights Watch in Nigeria, with the title "The Bakassi Boys: The Legitimation of Murder and Torture" and The O'Odua Peoples Congress: Fighting Violence with Violence. The report on the Bakassi Boys was carried out by Human Rights Watch and the Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN).

Of the three reasons adduced for the patronage of informal policing structures, the strongest in the literature appear to be rise in crime and perceived inadequacies of the police in the provision of safety and security to the citizens, especially the poor. The perception that crime is on the rise and that the police are not coping very well with the demand for protection by the citizens is acute in countries undergoing dramatic transformation in the economic and political spheres (Shaw, 2002). Providing the socio-political context in which crime appears to be increasing in transitional societies, Shearing and Kempa (2000: 33) argues:

The time of political transition from a repressive authoritarian state to a more open democratic society is ... associated with a high degree of crime and disorder that comes with any attempt to break with established repressive modes of policing.

A number of countries can be included in the list of societies in transition that are experiencing increasing citizen concerns about the level of crime. In Latin America these include Brazil, Argentina and Chile; in Africa, South Africa, Nigeria, Namibia and Mozambique; and in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Republics, Russia, Ukraine and Poland (Shaw, 2002). Writing on the South African experience, Sekhonyane (2002: 1) argues:

South Africa's high crime rate and inefficient criminal justice system cause many people to feel at best, insecure and at worst held to ransom by both criminals and the government. As a result, public confidence in the police and the courts has decreased in the last few years. Many people have turned to self-help safety measures or have sought assistance outside of government for protection against crime.

Relating the experience of Nigeria, Jemibewon (2001: 30) states:

When Nigeria eventually shifted from autocratic military rule to democratic rule on 29 May 1999, Nigerians heaved a collective sigh of relief, so to speak, at the development as it guaranteed them the full exercise of their fundamental human rights. Regrettably, our new-found democracy has to some extent, become a source of insecurity and lawlessness, as these rights were misconstrued and exercised without restraint. The past year under this administration has therefore seen an increase in crime waves in various parts of the country.

Lack of confidence in the police appears to be the most important reason found in the literature on why citizens embrace informal policing structures. In many societies in transition the police are viewed as ineffective by the citizenry (Shaw, 2000) and the list of community grievances against the police include corruption, incompetence, brutalisation of citizens and institutional failure. In the words of the Del Buono (2003: 7):

The police along with the military ... are said to be among the three most repressive institutions in society. At best, the police are reported as "largely inactive" in their policing roles; at worst, they actively harass. In all countries, minority or "socially excluded" groups were particularly vulnerable to police extortion and harassment. When the institutional checks and balances on police action disintegrate, the police force is capable of immense repression and exploitation.

The following section reviews types of informal policing structures identified in the literature

### **Types of Informal Policing Structures**

As was argued in the introduction to this section, most of the studies on informal policing available for review focus essentially on the structures and activities of vigilante groups, which is a typology of informal policing structures. However, a closer examination of the modes of operation and structures of some of the groups that are referred to as vigilantes reveals that not all of them fits the classical understanding of the phenomenon of vigilantism as a bunch of death squads that mete out jungle justice on their victims, since many of the groups are rooted in their communities and often work in close collaboration with the formal police (Chukwuma, 2002: 11). This was pointed out by Shaw (2000: 48) who argues that “care must be taken not to generalize on the subject of vigilante groups. Some seek to provide ‘due process for arrested criminals’ in the absence of any viable state institutions in many areas.” Some of the groups that have been labeled as vigilante groups range from neighborhood watches, communal guards, age grades, masquerade cults to hunters’ guilds.

However, in the absence of any extant studies that try to disaggregate all the informal policing structures that have been bundled together under the term vigilante groups in the literature, the term is used loosely here as a generic term in describing the different types of IPS that have been identified in the literature. At least four typologies of vigilantism can be identified. These are religious vigilantism, ethnic vigilantism, state-sponsored vigilantism and neighborhood or community ‘vigilantism’ (Chukwuma, 2002 11-12). This classification is by no means rigid or exclusive, since one type of the groups could combine the features of two or more. Nevertheless, it is helpful in substantiating the argument that an attempt could be made to differentiate between the group that employ mob justice and crudity in their operations and others that could work and have in fact been working under close police supervision.

Religious vigilantism refers to a typology of vigilantism in Africa that first sprang up in South Africa in the middle of the nineties with the establishment of the new democracy (Shaw, 2002) and has since spread to Nigeria with the introduction of sharia laws in parts of Northern Nigeria in year 2000 (Chukwuma, 2002). The best example of this type of vigilantism could be found in an Islamic group that operated or perhaps still operate in Western Cape in South Africa, known as People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD). According to Scharf (2000: 14), “Their (PAGAD) vision of law and order is more extreme than the constitutional order and they are prepared to break the law in order to achieve their preferred state of being.”

In Nigeria, religious vigilantes that were formed with the introduction of Sharia are known as the *Hisbah* groups. They have made it their duty to enforce such sharia laws as ban on sale and consumption of alcohol, indecent clothing (wearing of trousers and skimpy dresses by women) and arresting of petty thieves, often without authorization by the sharia court. They often impose the punishments for such “offences” on their own without taking the suspects to the designated sharia courts for trial (Chukwuma, 2002).

The second typology is ethnic vigilantism. As the name suggests this refers to groups that organize along ethnic or tribal lines to defend their narrow interests and sometimes carry out crime control functions (Chukwuma, 2002). The best example of this type of vigilante group is the Odua's Peoples Congress (OPC) active in Southwestern part of Nigeria. The OPC, as they are popularly called in Nigeria started out as a self determination group for the Yorubas in 1994 and made incursions into vigilante activities in 1999 (Tertsakian, 2003). Their activities go beyond crime fighting to include agitation for ethnic autonomy. Their motto seems to be "by any means necessary" as their methods of operation include street procession, protest marches, brutality, robbery, torture, lynching and *necklessing* of both criminal suspects and opponents during inter-ethnic conflict (Tertsakian, 2003). They too have on occasions been victims of police brutality and extra-judicial killings under a government policy banning their activities and hunting down their operatives (Tertsakian, 2003).

The third typology of vigilantism is state-sponsored vigilantism and refers to a more insidious type of vigilante phenomenon, which operates with the support of governments or state agencies. The emergence of this type of vigilantism is again traceable to South Africa during the apartheid era. According to Scharf (2000: 14):

Broadly speaking the apartheid era vigilantism took the form of specialised police or military units trying to destabilise and intimidate the political opposition (Pauw, 1991), and by sponsoring civilians with an interest (pecuniary, personal or political) to do the same (Haysom, 1986). That form of vigilantism seems to be at a low level at the moment, although there are police investigations in progress at the moment which reveal current police complicity in arms trading to gangs and police complicity with restaurant bombings in Cape Town during the last few years.

In Nigeria, the group that best approximates this typology of vigilantism is the "Bakassi Boys" that were active in three eastern states of Abia, Anambra and Imo States. They began as an initiative of traders in Aba, the commercial city of Abia State, who were worried about high rate of violent property crimes in their markets. But the Bakassi Boys were later hijacked by state governments, which added partisan political ends in their objectives and armed with dangerous weapons including firearms without police check (Tertsakian, 2002). They make routine public spectacles of some of the criminal suspects they capture, who were often paraded naked on the streets, body parts chopped into pieces and later burnt to the cheering of surging and urging crowds (Chukwuma, 2002).

Finally on typology of vigilantism, you have another group, whom for want of a better term, could be called neighborhood or community vigilantes (Chukwuma, 2002). In the words of Chukwuma (2003: 3):

These are groups of people that are organized by street associations in the cities or villages in the rural areas, to man street entrances or villages' gates as the case may be, at night. They also carry out foot patrols at night to reassure members of the community that some people are watching over their security. They do not carry weapons but rather armed with whistles, which they use in arousing the neighborhoods if there are unwholesome "guests".

## **Conclusion**

From the foregoing literature review it is clear that knowledge about the different typologies of informal policing structures that exist is limited, apart from vigilantism, which is only one type. It is also clear that many community groups and crime prevention initiatives that cannot be said to be associated with vigilantism have been lumped together under the term with the negative connotations that it implies. It is therefore necessary for this study to identify the different types of informal policing structures that have been established by the poor and their activities in responding to poor peoples' search for safety and security. This was underscored by Scharf (2000: 20):

In each country ...it is important to get a picture of the range of non-state forms of policing/ordering: Crime prevention within the law but without working with the state to achieve the goals; crime prevention partnerships with state institutions; vigilantism for a particular vision of order differing from the state's expressed or implied vision of order; private armies belonging to political parties, religious or ethnic groups, specific organisations (such as the taxi hit-squads in SA) or warlords and shacklords.

The next chapter presents the anticipated output of the research.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ASSIGNMENT TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### **Purpose**

The study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the expectations, priorities and perceptions of people living in poverty in the A2J's focal states, with respect to safety and security in general and informal policing structures more specifically.

#### Anticipated out of the Research

The following outputs were anticipated from the research:

1. A clear identification of the safety and security issues that were noted as being important by interviews and focus group participants.
  2. A rank ordering of the safety and security priorities of poor people as revealed by the research.
- An analysis of peoples' expectations, perceptions and priorities for safety and security as revealed through the interviews and focus group discussions.
  - Suggestions for ways to address issues raised by the research participants during the main phase of the Access to Justice Programme.
  - Description of and rationale for the strategy for recruiting in-depth interview and focus group participants.
  - Detailed description of the training of interviewers.
  - Description of participants including but not limited to: gender, age, marital status, family size, family composition and family living arrangements, housing type, number of years and type of education, occupation, sources of income, religious affiliation, customs, attitudes, previous exposure to the justice system.
  - Copies of all questionnaires and focus group materials (such as exercises and discussion themes/topics).
  - Comprehensive bibliography of all reference materials used. Find attached in appendix I, the complete terms of reference agreed between the consultant and the Access to Justice.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH STRATEGY

#### **Introduction**

The principal methods of data collection used in this study were interview and focus group discussions. These methods of data collection were chosen in order to ensure effective participation of the research subjects and also because the study was an exploratory one and needed flexible methods of data collection that would permit probing of respondents and participants in order to appreciate the underlying assumptions and beliefs that inform their views on the subject matter (Gilbert, 1993; Jupp, 1989). However the interview schedule used for the interviews contained closed-ended questions, which permitted quantitative analysis of the views of the respondents. What follows are a discussion of the sampling strategy and size; training of interviewers; questionnaire pre-test, conduct of in-depth interviews and focus groups, ethical issues and problems encountered; analysis and data limitation.

#### **Sampling Strategy and Size**

The study took place in the four focal states of Access to Justice Programme (A2J) in Nigeria, namely: Benue, Ekiti, Enugu and Jigawa States. In each state, the two Local Government Areas for study were chosen by the State Justice Adviser (SJA), research assistants for the focus groups Discussions (FGD), in-depth interviewers and their supervisors, on the basis of two major criteria.

- That the chosen LGA should have some measure or experience of informal policing activities
- That one LGA should be predominantly rural and the other urban, so as to capture a range of different experiences and to facilitate rural-urban comparison.

Within these broad criteria, 8 LGA, and a particular focal community within each LGA, were selected mainly in light of practical and logistical considerations. These included, most importantly, the local research assistants' familiarity with them. The selected LGAs were:

- Ushongo (rural), Gboko (urban) – Benue State
- Ileje meje (rural), Oye (urban) – Ekiti State
- Nkanu East (rural), Enugu east (urban) – Enugu State
- Babura (rural), Hadejia (urban) – Jigawa State

The sampling method used for the in-depth Interviews was quota sampling. The advantage of this method is that “there is no need for call-backs, and traveling distances and times are much more reduced (Gilbert, 1993: 76)”. The universe of enquiry was poor people, aged fifteen and above, who were living in the selected local council areas in the four focal states of A2J at the

time of the research. The sampling population was split into sub-classes and quotas were assigned to them. The variables used were geography, gender and age.

8 focus group discussions were organised with a total of 76 participants, comprising a broad spectrum of community members in the 8 LGAs where the study took place. The objective was to capture a range of different perspectives on policing, safety and security in the states. In each focal community, participants were thus selected from:

- Local women's organisations
- Youth associations
- Occupational groups
- Community development associations
- Religious groups
- Traditional/customary groups
- Market women
- Age groups
- Cooperative societies
- Farmers
- Road transport workers.

The mode of enquiry adopted for the in-depth interviews was face – to – face interview, using an interview schedule consisting pre-coded and open-ended questions. The advantage of this method of questioning over other methods such as postal or telephone surveys 'is that it is more flexible, has a higher completion rate and when used by skilled interviewers could extract more information than a postal survey (Newell, 1993: 97)' Furthermore, given the high level of illiteracy in Nigeria<sup>4</sup> and low tele-density, any attempt to use postal or telephone survey method in conducting the interviews would automatically exclude the majority of the people, thus calling to question the validity of the findings.

A total of 16 persons, made up of 11 males and 5 female were recruited and trained for the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Out of this number twelve were for the in-depth interviews, comprising 8 interviewers and 4 supervisors. The other 4 making up the 16 were for the focus group discussions. They were trained by the research director and two research coordinators – the coordinator for the focus group component and that of the in-depth interviews. The training comprised of explanation of the purpose of the research; discussion of the phenomenon of informal policing in Nigeria and the poor; qualitative research methods and breakout session for practical discussions on the measurement instruments. Other issues dealt with during the one-day included discussions on the quality control, role of the researchers and supervisors and other administrative details. Find attached in appendix II, the full report of the training.

A pre-test of the interview schedule used in the study held in Enugu State in July 2003 in the two local government councils selected for the study in the state. The objectives were to gauge respondents understanding of the interview schedule, attitude to the study and to find out the

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<sup>4</sup> Over fifty percent of Nigerians are illiterate, according to the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index, 1991.

average time for concluding an interview and other issues the research team should be a way of in relation to the study. The pilot established that some of the respondents found the interview schedule lengthy and some of the questions repetitive. They also had problems differentiating between the words 'safety' and 'security', when translated into their local languages.

In redrafting the interview schedule to reflect the field observations, efforts were made to reduce the number of questions in the questionnaire from 85 to 79. To make the questions less repetitive, 'don't know' answers were introduced in the structured questions. This necessitated the introduction of skip instructions to the interviewers to enable them jump to other questions if the interviewee answered 'don't know'. Furthermore, in the questions on perceptions of safety and security, feeling of safety was defined to mean personal safety from violence or intimidation, while security was defined to mean security of property from theft or damage. Find in appendix III, the interview schedule used for the in-depth interviews.

During the main in-depth interview, a total of 120 respondents were interviewed at the ratio of 30 per state and fifteen per local government. The interview schedule was divided into four sessions. The first section, which was close-ended, contained questions on the descriptive profile of the respondents. The second section focused on perception of safety and security. The third section was on respondents' perception of informal policing structures. Section four dwelt on perception of the formal police. The close-ended component of the interview schedules were filled, while the open-ended section were recorded on audio tapes and transcribed after each day of interview.

The focus groups were initially guided by a loose topic guide, which 'translated' the research questions into topics for discussion and exploration. With successive group discussions, and emerging insights into salient themes and issues, the topic guide was refined into a more structured 'question guide', which comprised a set of key questions and allowed for a more focused data collection. Apart from guiding the group discussions, the topic and question guides provided a measure of consistency across groups, and constitute a publicly available document for discussion and scrutiny (Richie and Lewis, 2003). All the FGD topics or questions for discussion were put to the participants in an open manner, encouraging them to relate, discuss and jointly reflect on and interpret their experiences and views. The sequence in which questions or topics were discussed often varied between groups, depending on the nature and direction taken by participants' accounts. For further details on methodology used for the FGD, refer to appendix IV.

After the field phase of the research the data from the in-depth interviews and focus groups were transcribed and analyzed. The answers to the close-ended questions in the in-depth interview questionnaire were computed and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate frequencies, percentages and contingencies (cross-tabulation). Thematic framework reflecting the main sections of the interview schedule was drawn up to generate cross-cutting themes and patterns from the respondents' answers to the open-ended questions.

The process of data analysis for the FGD proceeded in two successive stages (one in-field and one *post hoc* phase) geared towards the inductive generation of themes, patterns, concepts and understandings from participants' accounts. As typical for qualitative research, data analysis did

not follow a fixed protocol, but was custom built and evolved during the study (Creswell, 1998). The process began in the field, where it went hand in hand with, and progressively guided data collection; continued after return from the field (Huberman and Miles, 1994; Spencer, Ritchie and Connor 2003). In the post-hoc data analysis stage, thematic frameworks were developed to facilitate the sorting and grouping of evidence, and thus to provide structure for the interpretation of data. These frameworks reflected both the main areas for exploration specified in the topic/question guides, as well as key recurrent themes or concepts emerging in the successive conduct of focus group discussions.

The analyzed data from the two methods of data collection used in the study (in-depth interviews and focus group discussion) were interpreted using percentages and narratives. For further details on the methodology used for the focused group research refer to appendix 5 for the full report.

### **Ethical Issues**

A number of ethical issues arose in the course of data collection. These included the confidentiality, anonymity and consent of the respondents and focus group participants. On confidentiality, they were assured that whatever they disclosed or admitted in the course of the interviews and discussions would be held in strict confidence and not revealed to anybody, including their close or loved ones. It was easy to make this pledge and keep to it, because the respondents and participants were not asked if they had committed any crime, which on disclosure would have created an ethical dilemma for the researchers. They were also informed about the purpose of the research. The anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed. The questionnaire had no provision for respondents' names or addresses. Similarly, only respondents and participants who agreed to be interviewed or participate in the discussions after the purpose of the study had been explained to them were involved. Furthermore, participants for the focus groups were given consent forms, which clearly stated the study aims, process and organisation. However, the participants (except those from Ekiti) did not sign in light of people's general reluctance to sign formal documents.

Finally, a number of problems and necessity for modification of the terms of reference arose in the course of the research. They, however, were managed in such a way that they had no adverse impact on the anticipated output or their validity, within the context of the fact that the research was an exploratory one.

The first problem, which was encountered while conducting the in-depth interviews, was on over participants understanding of the concept of informal policing, which appeared a bit abstract to some of them when translated into their local languages. This problem was overcome by using the term of whatever examples they gave (vigilante groups etc.) to illustrate the points.

Secondly, separate focus groups could not be organized for women and youths, as it would have shot up the total number of focus groups budgeted for. However, it was ensured that women and young persons were represented in each of the eight focus groups organized.

Thirdly, the interview schedule could not be translated into the four major languages spoken in the four focal states before the commencement of the field research because of time pressure. This problem was overcome by the fact that the field researchers recruited for each of the states were indigenes and were very fluent in English and the local languages, which were their first languages. Furthermore, the key words in the interview schedule such as informal policing, safety and security were translated into the local languages during the training of field researchers. However, the research topics for the focus groups were translated in the four main languages spoken in the states – Tiv, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

Fourthly, the time-frame for the research provided in the TOR could not be adhered to, this was because the materials generated from the qualitative component of the interview schedule and focus groups were quite considerable and needed extension of the deadline for the submission of the final draft in order to do justice to the potentials of the data.

Finally, caution is advised on the use of the findings to generalize on poor peoples perceptions of safety, security and informal policing in the A2J focal states. This is because the sample size (184) is very small in comparison with the total population of poor people in the A2J states and of course the fact that the research is an exploratory one. Nonetheless, a reasonable amount of representativeness, at least of prevailing views in the focal community, can be assumed in view of the participant selection strategy, which ensured that as broad a spectrum as possible of different community based groups, as well as individuals not represented by any such group were included. Furthermore, the study provides substantial information and insights that have not been provided or analyzed elsewhere.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, a detailed discussion of the research methods used in the study was undertaken. The chapter also discussed the sample strategy, ethical issues and problems that necessitated modification of the terms of reference and how they were resolved in a way that had no adverse effect on the validity of the data. However, the chapter also called for caution in the use of the findings to generalize perceptions of people in poverty on the issues of safety, security and informal policing, given the sample size. The next chapter provides the respondents and participants' perceptions of safety and security.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### POOR PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF SAFETY AND SECURITY

#### **Introduction**

Safety and security are often used interchangeably. However, analytically, they refer to different concerns. Generally, safety refers to the absence of threat or actual incidence of injury to the lives and limbs of citizens. Thus, safety relates to the condition of freedom or protection of the human person from victimization and avoidable injuries and death. On the other hand, security refers to the guarantee of citizens' properties from theft and unwarranted destruction. Threats to safety of persons and security of property are differentially experienced by individuals and communities. People who experience lack of safety and security tend to exhibit greater level of fear of criminal victimization and other forms of harm to persons, theft and related offences. In this description of safety and security, we have used narrow definitions of the term that are limited to their expression within the context of criminal victimization. Broadly, however, there are economic, political and social dimensions of safety pertaining to the protection of individuals from deprivation in those aspects.

#### **Perceptions of safety and security**

The poor possess capacity to identify and explain their safety and security concerns. Participants in the focus group discussion in Nkanu East Local government described security in the following terms, relating it to economic prosperity.

The issue of security is of great importance. Because it is only when your house is secured can you think of going out to find things and fend for things to put in the house.

As far as I am concerned, safety and security are paramount because wealth accumulated that is not protected is a useless wealth. So I believe that if your life and wealth are secured it will induce accumulation of more wealth.

What is the point of accumulating wealth when the wealth is not secured? I believe that one would be induced more to look for wealth if the wealth would be protected in the end.

Significantly, participants in the focus group in Hadejia described three components of safety and security. First, participants conceived of safety and security as the protection of property and lives from crime. They highlighted the vital importance of such protection to their livelihoods, and to the economic well-being of communities as a whole.

It is very important to us because when we find out that somebody suffered to acquire some capital, if there is no safety and security, if there is no protection of his property and his life, what he has suffered, somebody will come to just steal it away, and that means that this person has suffered in vain. So it is very important to us. For a human being, for a business man, there is no way we can do without safety and security.

Secondly, participants emphasised that safety and security also imply freedom from violence or intimidation, and the absence of fear that comes with it. This emphasis, captured by the following responses by participants in focus group discussion sessions, may reflect the history of crises and outbreaks of often politically motivated violence along ethnic or religious lines in the LGA.

Security is freedom from torture or intimidation and freedom from danger”

Safety is...how somebody feels safe from violence”

There will be no violence if there is adequate security, no intimidation in the society”

I want to add...that part of the security relates to protection from crises like the two crises we had in Hadejia that involved a Hausa and an Igbo man... Instead of letting those people just reconciling or settling their dispute accordingly, even if it means going to court, instead of that, they just escalated the whole thing. I as an Igbo man could not even enter Hadejia. Many churches were burnt and they looted many other things. So apart from crimes like theft, there are these crises that at times just occur unexpectedly and though at the beginning the persons involved maybe just two or three, at the end the whole town will burn.

Some participants conceived of safety and security in moral terms. As such, they perceived it as fundamental to the stability and welfare of their communities as a whole.

Safety and security are very important in our communities. Without safety and security, the level of immorality would be very high. This will breed criminals and drug addicts in the society. So it affects aspects of our health, family coexistence and our lives and properties... It affects everything! Without safety and security, everything would get spoilt

A participant in the focus group discussion at Ushongo in Benue State stressed the economic dimension of the term security: “My own aspect of security is an environment where there is abundance of employment for the youth. Where people get employed ...”

Participants perceived safety and security, above all, as the protection of their property and lives and, the freedom from anxiety and fear of loss or harm that comes with it:

Safety has to do with making sure that one’s life and his property is safe from any external attack or making sure your belongings, your property are secured ... there is no interference, and when you are sleeping that you sleep peacefully and no-one disturbs you while you are sleeping. This is...the way I see it.

Some participants also described safety in terms of protection against emotional injury and other forms of distress.

Safety equally connotes the state of mind the way you live your life so that you don’t just get emotionally harmed...It has to do with the state of mind. That is even the most important safety.

Because where there is emotional restlessness one is even bound to die before ones property is protected

Poor people are particularly vulnerable to experiencing lack of safety and security. As a result, they express their lack of safety and security in terms of their bodily integrity, property, emotional and socio-economic well-being. Below we the examine level of feeling of safety and security among the respondents.

### Level of Feeling of Safety and Security

There were respondents who felt very safe and secure while there were also those who felt unsafe and insecure.

Table 1: Extent of feeling of safety from violence and intimidation in respondents' neighbourhood

State	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Somewhat unsafe	Very unsafe	Don't know
Benue	16	4	4	5	1
%	53.3	13.3	13.3	16.7	3.3
Ekiti	22	7	1	0	0
%	73.3	23.3	3.3	0.0	0.0
Enugu	7	4	7	12	0
%	23.3	13.3	23.3	40.0	0.1
Jigawa	15	9	3	2	0
%	51.7	31.0	10.3	6.9	0.0

Respondents in Ekiti state felt safer (96.6%) than their counterparts from other states. In contrast, respondents from Enugu state reported feeling unsafe (63.3%) more than respondents from other states (Table 1). Similarly, while more than 70% of respondents in the Benue, Ekiti and Jigawa states felt that their property were secured from theft and damage, only 40% of their counterparts from Enugu felt so (Table 2).

Table 2: Extent of feeling of security of property from theft and damage

State	Very secure	Somewhat secure	Somewhat insecure	Very insecure	Don't know
Benue	13	8	4	3	1
%	44.8	27.6	13.8	10.3	3.4
Ekiti	17	6	4	3	0
%	56.7	20.0	13.3	10.0	0.0

Enugu	9	3	5	12	1
%	30.0	10.0	16.7	40.0	3.3
Jigawa	14	8	6	1	0
%	48.3	27.6	20.7	3.4	0.0

But in spite of the relatively high level of feeling of safety and security in Ekiti, Jigawa and Benue States, a pervading fear of crime was reported in all the four states of study (Table 3). Across the four states, at least three-fifth of the respondents expressed some fear of criminal victimization. However, the intensity of the fear varies across the states. Table 3 showed that respondents from Enugu State were most fearful.

Table 3: Extent of fear of becoming victim of any type of crime

State	Very fearful	Quite fearful	A little fearful	Not at all fearful	Don't know
Benue	14	4	2	9	1
%	46.7	13.3	6.7	30.0	3.3
Ekiti	14	1	5	10	0
%	46.7	3.3	16.7	33.3	0.0
Enugu	19	3	2	6	0
%	63.3	10.0	6.7	20.0	0.0%
Jigawa	7	8	3	12	0
%	23.3	26.7	10.0	40.0	0.0

The reasons offered by respondents for feeling safe include:

- a. Neighbors keep watch of the area, while others are away
- b. Living in fenced houses
- c. Non-engagement in violent politicking
- d. Avoiding dealing or interacting with youths who are engaged in crime and other forms of violence
- e. Avoiding trouble with neighbours
- f. Neighbourhood had very low level of criminal activity
- g. Relying on God who is the protector

These explanations were captured by the responses of many people interviewed in the states. For example, a 29 year old respondent, who is also single and employed from Gboko East, said:

I feel very safe both in the day and night because in our community, people are always around to keep watch of the area. This makes it difficult for thieves and other criminals to dispossess us of our belongings.

Another 18 year old respondent who is a student residing in the GRA in Gboko narrates his feelings of safety thus:

We feel very safe here. We do not experience any security problem in the day and night time because we live in a fenced house. This is why it has been impossible for criminals to harass us.

Similarly, a 39 year old house wife, with a secondary school education, a Christian and who resides in the GRA in Gboko says:

I feel very safe because I live in a fenced house and with a big and strong gate which makes any criminal to think twice before embarking on a criminal mission to our compound.

Respondents who felt unsafe identified the following as reasons for these feelings:

- a. Increase in theft and robbery
- b. Police harassment, intimidation and arrest
- c. Political thuggery by unemployed youths
- d. The use of arms in political and communal conflicts

A 40 year old male, who is a civil servant and had lived in Ushongo LGA for more than 10 years, narrates a political dimension of his feeling of insecurity in the neighbourhood:

I must tell you that I feel very unsafe because I am a member of the opposition party in my LGA and you know to be in the opposition in Nigeria is a crime. You are treated as a leper. I feel my opponents in the ruling party will soon come for my head

Respondents who have a general feeling that their properties are secure from theft and damage identify the following as reasons:

- a. Neighbours cooperate to keep watch of the area while others are away
- b. Living in well fenced houses with fortified gates
- c. Non-ownership of property that will attract criminals
- d. Apartments are always under lock and key while away to work or market
- g. Belief that God is the protector

A 24 year old respondent and a secondary school leaver, and a Christian from Ushongo Local Government Area of Benue State said he does not entertain fears of being a victim of crime, because:

When the fox is out for game, it hunts for full chickens and not eggs. These criminals would usually look for places where they can get property and money. Besides this, I do not look for trouble and prays that trouble never comes my way.

The respondents who expressed a general feeling of insecurity also attributed their perception to the following:

- a. Rampant cases of house breaking and theft
- b. General increase in criminal activity
- c. Use of arms to perpetrate crime
- d. Increased threat of water erosion to agricultural produce

A male respondent who is about 45 year of age, and a businessman who had resided in Gboko Benue State for more than 10 years said:

...you know there are rampant cases of crime in our area. What frightens me most about these crimes is the way innocent people are mal-treated when caught by these criminals. It is something else. My friend was shot the other day by armed robbers for not possessing any valuable thing, which they could take away. It is terrible

A 43 year old male Pastor from Oye LGA of Ekiti State is fearful:

Because of my personality I feel very fearful. As the pastor of the church what would happen to my congregation if they found out the pastor of the church was a victim of a crime? It would be disastrous. That may be the end of my church.

Also a 35 year self-employed female from Oye LGA of Ekiti State narrated her ordeal with the criminals, which informs her increasing fear of becoming a victim again:

I have been a victim before. This has increased my fears particularly in the night. I pray before I go to bed. My prayer has always been: "God I don't want these people to come any longer". They came in the night asked us to open the door when we refused to open the door, they took a heavy stone to break the door and they opened the door themselves. When they got in they packed everything; clothes, trinkets and even money. They even took away our vehicle but we later got our vehicle back because it is very old; maybe that's why we got our vehicle back. They dropped the vehicle somewhere.

### **Priority Safety and Security Concerns**

The responses of the participants in this study indicate that their priority safety and security concerns are:

- Personal safety from criminals, especially armed robbers;

- Protection from harm associated with political thuggery;
- violent conflicts;
- brutality and corruption; and
- Security of property from theft and destruction.

To address these concerns, respondents indicated the need for employment opportunities for the youth and expanding opportunities for everyone to secure adequate means of livelihood. They emphasized the need for effective police system. Concerns that were expressed in respect of the police include their lack of adequate and appropriate means of preventing and fighting crime; ineffectiveness in responding to distress call; corruption and brutality, and delay in the administration of justice in the country.

The respondents, in response to the question, *what do you need in order to feel safe from violence and intimidation?* identified the following minimum requirements:

- Constant presence of police in the neighbourhood and the establishment of more police stations
- Constant presence of well equipped and trained vigilante groups
- Preventing the free usage of small arms/weapons by members of the community (opinion from Benue) and allowing people to use personal licensed guns (Ekiti State)
- Creation of employment opportunities for idle youths to prevent them from engaging in crime and violence

A 23 year old male in Oye LGA of Ekiti state pleaded that “the government need to assist us to get some ammunition to those people who really need it in order to work effectively. We need some better weapons to be given to the police”. Another respondent, a 30 year old unemployed male from Ileje meje of in the same state also responded that:

We can feel safe when we engage in self-defence. I believe that possessing a gun is a self-defence mechanism. The possession of a gun should be guaranteed by our Constitution and it should be legally allowed so that when you are under any serious threat you can deal with it.

In response to the question, *what do you need in order to feel your property is secure?* The respondents identified the following measures.

- a. Presence of privately-owned and community established vigilantes in the neighbourhood
- b. Ownership of gun
- c. Existence of an insurance scheme
- d. Belief in God who is the protector of life and property

Stressing the idea of faith in God as a source of safety and security, a 30 year old unemployed male respondent from Ileje meje of Ekiti State said that:

It is only God that can help you safeguard your property. Even if you have a burglary (proof door) the thieves will come and just cut it. We believe that if you don't have stolen

property then no one will come to take it. Make sure you only have what you laboured for and then no one can take it. If you have any other persons sweat then they will come back for it.

Some of the respondents emphasized the need for an effective formal police system in the country as means of ensuring security and safety. Thus, a 50 year old male and self-employed respondent from Hadejia LGA of Jigawa State said that there should be an:

Effective police or security agents fully paid by the government. Government must improve their welfare in terms of salaries, accommodation and equipment. Sometimes you see a policeman with tattered uniform. They stay months without salary. The government needs to boost the morale of the police because sometimes it is not their fault when they commit one crime or the other or they don't act when they are required to do so. They have so many problems. The government should also increase the number of police because the ratio of police to a citizen in Nigeria is far below average.

When asked what impact their priority safety and security concerns have on their economic welfare and quality of life, a 30 year old unemployed male from Ileje meje of Ekiti State responded that:

...living in a safe and secure environment will improve ones standard of living. For instance, if someone has 1000 Naira, and because the person feels insecure, he/she will spend it to acquire charms for self-protection. If this amount is safe, the owner can keep it and use it for good investment. If you are saving money to go to school but an armed robber takes it you cannot improve your standard of living.

Another respondent, a 24 year old female respondent from Ileje meje LGA of Ekiti State said that safety and security: "would attract other people into the community like the Ibos that sell things, even the civil servants would come. This would also attract people to come and buy our farm produce such as cocoa, kola nuts etc". Similarly, a 34 year old female respondent from Kenya LGA of Jigawa State in her response pointed out that:

When you have wealth, you can not enjoy it, your family can not enjoy the luxuries of life because you are afraid of enjoying it; afraid that someone might break into your house, terrorize your family or even hurt them when they don't find what they want. When safety and security is improved, people will be free to enjoy their wealth.

A participant in the focus group discussion in Enugu State reported that:

Here in Abakpa where we live the issue of security and safety has affected our means of livelihood. I know of a friend of mine who owns a provisions store. In the evenings when he is supposed to have some customers, when issue of insecurity increases what he does is to close his shop, immediately it gets dark. Because at times, the customer that has come to buy items will turn out to be a customer that has come to rob. Either using a gun to collect cash already earned earlier in the day or to collect items on display in the shop. This friend of mine has suffered this

fate twice in the past years. So what he has done now is to resolve not to open after it has become dark. So when it is getting late he simply locks up. So it is really how is able to run his business, and it is really affecting him because it means he has to close at the period of the day when he would have made the most sales”

### **Measures Currently Used to Improve Safety and Security**

Communities and individuals in the four states where the research was conducted employed different methods to improve safety and security. Majority of the respondents were involved in initiating measures to improve safety and security in their neighbourhood. Data from interviews showed the following percentages of people were involved in human safety enhancing initiatives – Benue (60%); Ekiti (69%); Enugu (53.5%) and Jigawa (60.0%). Comparatively, figures for involvement in initiatives aimed at enhancing security of property from theft and damage were – Benue (50.0%); Ekiti (62.1%); Enugu (58.6%) and Jigawa (62.1%). Generally, except in Enugu State, respondents were more involved in measures aimed at securing the safety of persons from violence and intimidation than in those targeted at the security of property.

The following were the most frequently adopted initiatives:

- a. Advising the youths to shun crime and violence
- b. Volunteering information to the community and the police about crimes
- c. Formation of neighbourhood watch groups
- d. Formation of vigilante groups and enrolling as members
- e. Monetary contributions for the welfare of members of the vigilante groups

A 50 year old male and self-employed respondent from Hadejia LGA of Jigawa State explains the initiatives of his neighbourhood as follows:

Whenever there are security problems, we first of all understand the problem, and then we discuss the measures to counteract these problems...we do what we call “addua” [prayer]. Thereafter we collect monetary contributions and pay the Mallam who offers the prayer to God. We then organise a meeting with the police and the vigilante to discuss the matter in order to find solutions to the problem. We offer assistance to them sometimes in the form of fuelling and repairing of their vehicles, buying some local weapons to improve their combat readiness against bandits and buying uniforms.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter a discussion of the participants’ perceptions of safety and security, including their level of feeling of safety, reasons offered for feeling safe and unsafe, priority safety and security concerns, current measures and requirements for improvement in their safety and security was undertaken. The next chapter discusses their perceptions of informal policing structures.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **POOR PEOPLE’S PERCEPTION OF INFORMAL POLICING**

#### **Introduction**

The term informal policing system should be used with caution. Many of the agencies employed in rural areas and even in the urban neighbourhoods where the low income earners are concentrated are rooted in the culture and tradition of the people, within which they form part of the formal traditional structures. Such structures are regulated by and in accordance with the political and cultural practices of the respective communities. For example, respondents were asked about the names of groups, other than the police, established to deal with crime in their communities. Many of the respondents identified policing groups that are founded on traditional practices of age-grade; divination and masquerade cults. Such groups are only informal in relation to the contemporary state police system but not in the consciousness and lived experiences of the people. However in addition to such culturally rooted legacy of policing, there are groups that were formed to arrest upsurge of crime. Such were founded by neighbourhoods or communities and are sustained either by direct participation of residents or through levies to pay employed night watchmen. The study identified several and different types of policing groups in the communities.

#### **Types of Informal Policing Structures (IPS)**

Apart from the police, the communities established several groups to deal with crime. The groups are called different names and are differentially related to the traditional practices and authorities of the community. Most of the terms used for this group in local languages translate to vigilante, though more appropriately as guards. When asked of the names by which the informal policing groups in their communities are called, respondents overwhelmingly (70.4%) chose the term vigilante among other choices on the questionnaire (e.g. neighbourhood watchers (8.2%), community guards (1.0%); traditional police (3.1% and others (17.3)). In Ekiti state, the term vigilante was not often used as only 41.7% of the respondents identified the groups with the term, compared to Benue (96.4%), Enugu (71.4%) and Jigawa (68.0%) The respondents explained that various groups operate in their communities to provide safety and security other than the police. Such groups were called by various names such as:

- a. Mbayer Ikyaior (vigilante)- Gboko East LGA
- b. Landlords Associations (Ushongo LGA)
- c. Motor Cycle Hire Association (Gboko East LGA)
- d. Denon Toffi (Rapid Response Group) in (Gboko East LGA).
- e. “Olodes” (hunters) in Oye LGA of Ekiti State
- f. Egbe (age grade) in Ilejemeje and Oye LGAs Ekiti state
- g. Boys Scouts (Ilejemeje LGA of Ekiti)
- h. Ijofins (warriors, are involved in settling land disputes) in Ilejemeje LGA of Ekiti State
- i. “Yan farauta” (local hunters) in Hadejia LGA of Jigawa State

- j. “Yan gadin dare” (night watchmen) in Hadejia LGA of Jigawa State
- k. Nigerian Defence Corp in Hadejia LGA of Jigawa State
- l. “Kato da gora” (big man with a big stick) in Kenya LGA of Jigawa State
- m. “Yan banga” (vigilante) in Babura LGA of Jigawa State
- n. Ndi-nche (community guard or guards) in Enugu State
- o. Ochi-ogodo (Enugu State)
- p. Masquerade cult (Enugu State).

Many of these groups - especially “olode”, “ijofin”, “yan farauta” and “yan banga” – developed from the traditional or cultural practice of hunters within the community providing safety and security. Among the Yorubas, however, the term “olode” or hunter, is now use more loosely to refer to any group involved in the defence of community at night. It is also the case that the term vigilante is now used broadly to refer to groups involved in community self-policing, irrespective of their origin and mode of operation. The confusing and interchangeable use of the term was exhibited by a young male respondent in Oye LGA in Ekiti state, who reported that:

We have security for every quarter. They are called vigilante or “olode”. The elders of the quarters form them. There may be more than one [group] in each quarter but they are all vigilante groups. There is one society in the town that comprises all the hunters that look at the security.

However, another young male respondent from Ilejemeje LGA in the same Ekiti state provided a detailed description of the “traditional” community policing groups and the vigilante group formed later.

We have vigilante. We also call them night watchers and they are employed by the locals, who pay their salaries... We have traditional groups. We call them ‘egbe’ – meaning “ologun” or warriors. It is the age groups ... The egbe serve as protection for the community. The town forms them, the government structure of the community. It has been existing for a very long time ... Looking at the vigilantes most of them are hunters [They were recruited and remunerated by the Local Government Council]. Our own feelings are that they will all have a charm ...Local medicine for protection to protect them from strange things in the night.

Another respondent, an elderly woman, also reported:

There is such a group known as ‘egbe’. The head of the group is known as the Elejoka, next to him is the Elewere followed by the Elegbira. It is a traditional institution that has been in existence since the inception of the community [a local metaphor for time immemorial]. Women are not allowed to join. They are dressed like warlords... they are the ones in charge of the security of the community.

The people interviewed and those who participated in the focus group discussion sessions described the functions of these groups largely in terms of policing the community in the night to ensure security and safety. Some of them, especially those with their origin in the people’s tradition and culture, for example the ‘egbe’ and the masquerades also by supernatural or mystical means engage in ‘criminal’ investigation and punishment.

The description of the informal police structure in Nkanu East LGA also throws light on the structure of informal policing in many parts of the country. In the area (Nkanu), there are three major community-based policing groups with roots in tradition and culture. These are:

- a) The “Ndi-nche” group, also called ‘vigilante’
- b) The “Ochi-Ogodo” process
- c) The Masquerade group

The *Ndi-nche* or ‘vigilante’, as participants described, is primarily engaged in routine patrols of the community throughout the night – the period considered most dangerous in terms of risk of theft or robbery. Through their patrols, they are able to detect suspects or apprehend criminals, as well as deter criminals from operating. They do not carry arms, and are only equipped with torches and sticks primarily for their own protection. The *Ndi-Nche* is composed of the community youth, for whom service on the group is compulsory, in a sense an obligatory community service. They are convened, supervised and assigned to duty shifts by committee of community elders.

The crime prevention function of the *Ndi- Nche*, as participants noted, is complemented by the activities of community elders who keep watch over houses and property during the day when those of working age are on the farms.

We have two groups that are involved in safety and security in our community - the elderly and the youth. The elderly are involved in the daytime, to look after the compounds when the youth have gone out to the farms. Then at night the youth take over. The duty of the elderly group during the day is to look after the compound and be able to identify visitors and inform the owners of the compounds who were away at that point, who the visitors were and what their missions were. By so doing they are able to identify strange elements at the time people were away at the farms”

The ... young men are divided into groups by the elders and assigned different days as the day they will be on guard. At the appointed time, a wooden gong is sounded signaling when the group for that day is supposed to assemble. They are now assigned to different areas where undesirables are likely to be lurking around [for example] houses built by those who are still ‘abroad’...Their major weapon is a stick and torch light since the area is dark and there may be snakes and other reptiles around.

The Ochi-Ogodo process, as the participants described, is a highly organised, periodic process of detection and then public ‘naming, shaming and punishment’ of wrongdoers in the community. By identifying, and then exposing and subjecting offenders to public punishment and humiliation in the community, the process fulfils a function of crime detection/investigation and corrective justice and, through this, crime prevention by acting as a deterrent. According to focus group discussion participants in Nkanu LGA:

It is a process whereby bad boys within the community are brought before the general members of the community and punished. The masquerades are invited to cane such people publicly. The purpose is to warn would be culprits to desist from a life of crime. The ceremony is organised quarterly but in emergency could be anytime. On that day each village gong is sounded and people troop to a particular village square ‘Obodo Igwesi’ to watch the spectacle. A list of the bad boys is brought by each village head who has already compiled this with elders of his village.

The list is read out and the culprits are assembled at a corner then the ceremony of caning commences. If the person mentioned on the list is not found in the assembled he will be regarded as having absconded and the town gotten rid of him... at times the notorious thief is banished from the community as an alternative to handing him over to the police.

The Ochi-Ogodo process, as the above quote describes, is prepared and overseen by village elders and heads who regularly investigate and compile 'lists' of offenders in their communities. The public ceremony usually takes place in roughly three-month intervals, but also any time a serious offender is caught.

The *Masquerade* cult is a customary group with perceived metaphysical links. It works to complement some of the functions of the Ndi-Nche and Ochi Ogodo, by enforcing penalties and sanctions assigned to offenders by community heads or elders.

### **Methods of Operation of IPS**

Information obtained from respondents showed that most of the informal policing groups operate during the night, essentially as night watchmen, patrolling and apprehending anyone suspected of crime or violating regulations on movement during the night. But in some communities with different and several informal policing groups, different roles may be performed by each of them. For example in the Ileje meje LGA of Ekiti state, the vigilantes and the 'egbes' performed different though complementary policing roles with different systems of legitimation. According to a young male respondent:

The two groups mentioned above are somewhat different. The 'egbes' are only used in terms [intended to mean during or in times] of emergency on crime issues in the community e.g. they receive letter that armed robbers will be visiting the town. The 'egbes' will mount road blocks in each entrance of the community with help of the vigilantes. They are an old traditional network whose members are not paid. The vigilante is recent due to the presence of the local government and they work every night and they are being paid by the council. They ['egbe' and vigilantes] both work hand-in-hand to combat crime. The vigilante will punish the criminal by giving the person stones, stripping the person also by beating and they [offenders] will be paraded the next day. While the 'egbes' do the same thing, they also use charms, and if they let the person go without any punishment the person will face obstacles while leaving the town. The 'egbes' use walking stick and caps as mark of distinction and their leader is called Elejoka.

It was revealed during interview that the vigilante groups often carry with them the following weapons: machetes, swords, clubs, bows and arrows, whips, locally made guns. But those involved in the collection of intelligence information rarely carry any weapon. Some groups also rely on charms to execute their tasks. A member of one of the policing groups reported that "we use weapons and the necessary things: guns, catapults, whips and spiritual stones" The same young male respondent from Oye LGA of Ekiti said that the vigilantes in his community "are armed with ammunitions and spiritual ammunitions". On why vigilantes carry weapons, the respondents said that the weapons are used for self-defence; to frighten criminals and to punish criminal offenders.

When the respondents were asked about what kinds of methods are employed by the informal policing groups, wide-ranging methods were reported as follows.

Table 4: Methods used by Informal Policing Groups

Methods	Benue %	Ekiti %	Enugu %	Jigawa %
Traditional divining methods	17.9	11.1	0.0	35.7
Traditional protection devices	0.0	44.4	0.0	0.0
Praying and fasting	0.0	3.7	0.0	0.0
Mob action	21.4	0.0	42.9	7.1
None	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Don't know	7.1	25.9	9.5	28.6
Others	46.4	14.8	47.6	28.6
Total No. of Respondents To this question	28	27	21	14

The fairly significant entries in the ‘don’t know’ and ‘others’ categories suggest that the methods used by the groups are diverse and not well known by members of the public. Furthermore, the use of traditional divining methods and protection devices, especially in Ekiti and Jigawa states, point to the traditional roots of some of the groups. Majority of the respondents supported the methods used by the groups. In Enugu state, where mob action and ‘others’ were widely identified as the methods used by the community policing groups, 94.7% supported the use of those practices. Comparative figures for other states were Benue (74.1%), Ekiti (75%) and Jigawa (78.3%). In traditional African societies, policing is not always about persons and weapons. People used charms to deter criminals from stealing. As reported by a participant in a focus group discussion in Enugu East LGA:

“Generally what we have tried to discuss on policing appears to be on the conventional way. However, there are also some unorthodox ways through which people police and protect their property. This is through the use of native charms or juju whereby the property to be protected is laced with a juju. Whoever touches it may be met with severe consequences”

### **Mode of Recruitment of Members of IPS**

In most communities, the recruits do not pay money to be members, but could make contributions to the smooth operation of the group like any other member. In addition, religion is not a factor that influence membership, rather residency does. Furthermore, in most cases only males are members of the vigilante and traditional policing groups. As for the more traditional policing groups, members were selected on the basis of belonging to a particular age group responsible for defending the community or membership of the hunting occupation by the traditional authority.

The respondents revealed that people become members of the vigilante by signifying their interest. Following such indication of interest, applicants may be required to take an oath to be of good character or to purchase drinks for the older members by the recruit. For example, a 24 year old respondent and a secondary school leaver from Ushongo Local Government Area of Benue State said:

Once you are interested in serving your community, you are welcomed into the group. You don't swear nor pay money. Membership is not restricted on the basis of sex or religion. We use women to get information we want from criminals. The other time, we used a woman who disguised as a groundnut seller stationed in an area we taught suspects could be. She indeed obtained the relevant information we needed.

In Oye LGA of Ekiti State, a respondent and a pastor in community told the interviewer that:

“Before anybody can be a member (of the informal policing groups), such a person needs to be somebody whose character is not questionable. They must be members of the quarters...if the quarters notice that someone has been accused of being a criminal he/she automatically cannot be a member of the group. There will be a panel probing into their own past life and that of their families. If the panel notice for instance that the father of an intending member has been a criminal, the quarters will not allow such a person to be a member of the group”.

Not all communities screened new members into the groups. Some communities prefer to select the leadership of the vigilante from the group of persons with past questionable character. The community will then closely monitor him. This is done in order to commit such persons and help reduce their tendency to continue with such behaviour. Generally, people intending to join the groups were screened for criminal records. This was much so in Ekiti and Jigawa states where 70.4% and 70.8% of the respondents respectively said potential members were screened. Corresponding figures for Benue and Enugu states were 32.1% and 57.1% respectively. Members of the groups also wear uniforms or special identification. This was especially the case in Benue and Jigawa where respectively 89.3% and 92.0% said group members had uniform or special identification. But 32.1% and 19.0% of the respondents in Ekiti and Enugu respectively also said that informal policing groups in their states had special identification or uniform.

### **Reasons for Patronage of IPS**

A significant proportion of the respondents said that they used the services of informal policing groups in order to protect the neighbourhood from criminal's attacks; to provide speedy safety and security services which the formal police are unable to offer, and because they are closer to the people than the formal police. They are particularly more widely used in Ekiti (88.9%) and Jigawa (62.5%) where they are more culturally rooted than in Benue (36.7%) and Enugu (38.1%) states. A 50 year old male and self-employed respondent from Hadejia LGA of Jigawa State explained that his community engages the services of the vigilante more than that of the police because:

First they [vigilante] are very much around. The office is very close so we can reach it quickly. Not only that, when we report cases to them, we are not subjected to rigorous interviews, making statements and buying papers to write statements like is the case with the police. The police ask a lot of questions and waste your time. They may even try to implicate you in one way or the other. But when you report to vigilante, they handover they try the matter quickly and if they cannot they refer such case to the police quickly. With the police, being an informant, you can become a victim.

Respondents who had used the services of informal policing groups reported a high level of satisfaction. The percentages of respondents' who reported satisfaction are as follows for the four states: Benue (85.7%); Ekiti (79.2%), Enugu (87.5%) and Jigawa (94.1%). These figures are higher than the respondents' level of satisfaction with the formal police system which is as follows: Benue (43.3%), Ekiti (60%), Enugu (46.6%) and Jigawa (67.9%). Notwithstanding, the level of satisfaction with the formal police, especially among respondents from Ekiti and Jigawa States, is not as dismal as might be expected from the general impressions in the media and public discourse.

The respondents gave several reasons why they patronize the services of the informal police organizations (table 5).

Table 5: Reasons for Patronizing Informal Police Organisations

Reasons for patronizing informal police organizations	Benue %	Ekiti %	Enugu %	Jigawa %
Rise in crime	16.7	53.6	26.7	35.0
High cost of the formal justice system	23.3	0.0	10.0	0.0
Lack of access to the justice system	6.7	0.0	6.7	5.0
Delays in the justice system	23.3	14.3	16.7	5.0
The police side with the criminal	10.0	7.1	23.3	10.0
Cultural prohibitions	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0
Others	16.7	14.3	3.3	35.0
Don't know	3.3	3.6	13.3	10.0
Total No. of respondents	30	28	30	20

From the distribution of responses in table 5, the three most important factors that influenced the respondents in patronizing the informal police organizations were rise in crime (32.4% of the entire respondents in the four states), delays in the justice system and collusion of the formal police with criminals. A male respondent of about 29 years with university education, but unemployed and a resident of Ushongo LGA for 3 years pointed out that:

The members of these vigilante groups are our people. They live with us and help us. They even resolve conflicts in homes. In fact recently, my neighbour's wife ran to her parent's house after a quarrel with the husband. The husband sought the help of the vigilante to resolve the matter. The leaders of the group handle the matter effectively and quickly too. The woman returned to the house.

Inefficiency and corruption of the Nigeria Police Force featured prominently in the discussion of the focus group members. For participants in the FGD session in Enugu East LGA observed that:

“One thing is very clear. One is that we don’t have enough police force that can take care of the population.

“Vigilante groups were formed because of this issue of bureaucracy. Because you know the police force is a government agency... So when you invite the police they will tell you ‘no personnel or no vehicle’... And then when they come they will be coming behind schedule and the criminals will have come to kill and to destroy and the police will be asking ‘where are the criminals?’... You might not necessarily blame them because it is because of this problem of logistics and if you look at it is a kind of general problem... [in] Nigeria.

In some areas of the town to even if they have vehicles the roads are just not fit for them to enter. Up till this 1999 when the PTF came in and constructed some roads you could not conceive of any vehicle going into some areas because of the nature of the roads.”

The crux of the matter is the issue of corruption. We must be precise because for some years the government has equipped the police especially in the last year because of the election ... But unfortunately because of this issue of corruption... the [police] have the habit of turning up 30 minutes or 1 hour after the armed robbers have left and ...they are very particular about asking how much was [stolen] from you so they know the cut they will take from the armed robbers.

“The...thing is that ... if somebody commits an offence and you take him to the police they are only interested in collecting money. And if possible from you and setting the person free. And then we start hearing stories from the police trying to equip even these criminals against the people they are supposed to protect.

“The police...normally collect a bribe and set the thief free, thereby putting the lives of group operatives in danger”

“Those who were handed over to the police were released after giving the police money and no charges were pressed against such criminals. In some cases robbers came back boasting that it will only take some 1000s of Naira off their loot and if the vigilante wanted they can hand them over to the police ten times a month. And it goes without saying that the vigilante become targets of these criminals”

From a policy perspective, it is important to understand whether or not the respondents would still patronize the group if the identified problems were solved. The respondents said the informal policing groups would still be patronized because they think that the formal police force is beyond redemption and therefore cannot deliver justice to the poor. Overall, 49% of the respondents said they would continue to patronize the groups even if the observed problems are resolved. As many as 73.1% of the respondents from Enugu state said they will continue to patronize the groups even if the observed problems no longer exist.. A 24 year old female respondent from Ileje meje LGA of Ekiti State explains why people will still persist in the use of informal police groups in the following way:

“Ohun ti oba da, o nfe adura, eyi ti o da na nfe adura” (anything good needs prayers to sustain it and anything bad needs prayers for it to change). Even if the community is safe and the property is secured, you would need to ensure that it continues like that so the olodes and the ijoyes [vigilantes] would still be relevant and functioning in the community”.

In the same vein, a 34 year old female respondent from Kenya LGA from Jigawa State says reports that she will still patronise informal policing groups because:

The police side with the criminals. Most of the time before you go back to the police station, the suspects is released. We wouldn't know what has been exchanged between the suspect and the police. Wouldn't it be better to punish the suspect and the police?

It is not all types of cases that the respondents believe the informal police groups could handle or should be reported to them. When asked about the type of issues or crimes they would report to the groups, the respondents' answers vary. The list of issues or crimes they would prefer the informal groups handle include petty theft, petty quarrels, conflict over debts, reporting suspects or persons with questionable characters, domestic violence, and squabbles over land. A 24 year old female from Ilejemeje LGA of Ekiti State said that:

The Olodes (vigilantes) should be given intelligence report about armed robbery attack. Also children that are unruly and are beyond parental control can be disciplined by the olodes. If a child is in the habit of leaving the house late at night, the parent can instruct the olodes to "discipline" such a child when they see him at night after curfew. They should discipline people both young and adults that are prone to being proud and heady.

### **Problems Facing IPS**

The informal police organizations faced several problems among which were multiplicity of organizations, poor organization of the groups, non-representativeness of the organizations in relation to the population they policed (for example women were excluded in most of them, so also non-indigenous residents, and in some cases only members of a particular age-grade and hunting occupational group were eligible). The level of screening also is another problem, as only 57% of the respondents said members of such groups were screened. Overall, there is a problem of accountability, more so as most groups worked in the night and possessed weapons. The presence of armed groups outside the purview of the state is problematic. The extent to which such groups contribute to the widespread cases of ethnic, religious and communal violence needs to be investigated, because many well known vigilante groups such as OPC and Egbesu boys are primarily ethnic militias. Among the groups that derived their existence from the community traditions and culture, there appears to be some degree of accountability and discipline. For example, as regards the Ndi-Nche in Nkanu, absenteeism from duty and involvement in criminal behaviour are punished by the community:

At day break, if any of the appointed members failed to turn out for the night guard he is reported to the elders, and the elders will now use the masquerade as an enforcer. They will go to the guy's place and extract a penalty for failing to do his community job. When they get to the guy's house, he normally does not resist paying the fine, being aware of the penalty from the beginning

Furthermore among the same group:

There have been incidents in the past whereby a complaint of stealing was brought against a member of the group. When that occurs the member is reported before the village community members who are then assembled at the village square. Appropriate punishment will now be meted out to the culprit. But this is rare now. As a deterrent, such a person is publicly canned by the masquerade.

### **Shortcomings of IPS**

At a fundamental level, informal policing groups that are armed and managed outside the purview of the state raise several concerns. Their existence in Nigeria mirrors the failure of the state and the danger of gradual drift towards state failure and collapse that may throw up warlords in different parts of the nation. The development in the Niger Delta and activities of the Odua People's Congress in the South-West are pointers in these directions. The existence of informal policing, their composition and methods of operation should also stir concern regarding human rights protection, observance of the rule of law or due process. The use of charms, divination and traditional protection devices by many of the groups to identify suspects underscores these concerns.

Besides the foregoing concern, respondents pointed out to negative tendencies as well as operational difficulties among the several watch groups. A participant at the FGD in Enugu East LGA pointed to the limits imposed on economic activities and movement of the public.

Apart from the criminals, even the vigilante groups make it more difficult for people to operate within certain hours, especially those who have their business during the night period, like bars or restaurants...Some of the vigilante groups now say from 8 (p.m.) or so all businesses should close. You find out that the people who are supposed to make their business at 8 or later will have to close at that time. So this security makes it difficult for our business at times”

“Like in our place of market you may go on a trip to buy wares from outside town and supposed to supply or sale to your customers later in the day. And it happens that you are back late. The market is supposed to close by 6pm, and the market security will not allow you to offload your goods and therefore you will loose supplying your customers”

Some of the groups have also been infiltrated by touts and thugs, some of who collude with criminals.

“And why you have such touts in the groups is because of the amounts of money they are paid. There are certain people who will not like to do it because of the amount of money they are paid. But if their payment should be improved no society would like a tout to help in keeping security”

## Relationship of IPS with the Formal Police

Some respondents feel that the relationship between formal and the informal policing groups is cordial in their own neighbourhood because the vigilantes complement police work in both the rural and urban areas, make the operation of the police in the remote villages simpler, and transfer difficult and complex cases to the police.

Table 6: Relationship between the Formal Police Organization and Informal Police Groups

Nature of Relationship	Benue %	Ekiti %	Enugu %	Jigawa %
Very cordial	56.7	40.7	59.1	56.0
Somewhat cordial	13.3	22.2	13.6	28.0
Somewhat hostile	13.3	11.1	0.0	4.0
Very hostile	0.0	3.7	0.0	4.0
Don't know	16.7	22.2	27.3	8.0
Total No. of respondents	30	27	22	25

However, some respondents explain that there is a sore relationship between the vigilantes and the police because the police feel that their lawful duties are being performed by untrained groups who are not legally recognised by law, and the opportunity usually available for the police to collect 'side payments' in neighbourhood when handling cases is blocked. For example, a 49 year old self-employed male respondent from Ilejemeje LGC of Ekiti State captures the sore relationship between the police and the vigilante in the following words:

Their relationship is not cordial since the police believe they are not trained and capable of handling such issue. When the groups report or take a criminal to the police, the police ask some unpleasing questions and sometimes try to implicate the members of the vigilantes. The vigilantes see this as deliberate attempt to frustrate their efforts in eliminating crime in their neighbourhood.

It should be stated that the Nigeria Police Force is not opposed to the formation and activities of community-based crime watch groups provided:

1. The groups are registered with the police;
2. Members are submitted to the police for screening;
3. Members do not bear arms;
4. Members do not detain suspects but rather hand them over to the police for investigation and prosecution if necessary.

## Conclusion

In this chapter a detailed discussion of the research participants' perceptions of Informal policing structures was undertaken. This included identification of the types IPS that exist, their methods of operation, mode of recruitment of members, reasons offered for poor peoples' patronage of them, problems and short-comings of the IPS. The next chapter concludes the study and outlines some action points emanating from it.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **CONCLUSION AND ACTION POINTS**

#### **Introduction**

This study investigated poor peoples' perceptions of safety, security and informal policing in the four focal states of A2J in Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the expectations, priorities and perceptions of people living in poverty in the four states with respect to safety and security in general and informal policing structures in particular. What follows are the outline of the major findings.

#### **Perceptions on Safety and Security**

The study found that the poor had capacity to identify and explain their safety and security concerns even though they might not be fluent in the language(s) used by policy makers. Their understanding of these concepts went beyond protection from criminal victimization, as they added social, economic, political and even moral dimensions. This was nicely articulated by a participant in the focus groups:

Safety and security are very important in our communities. Without safety and security, the level of immorality would be very high. This will breed criminals and drug addicts in the society. So it affects aspects of our health, family coexistence and our lives and properties... It affects everything! Without safety and security, everything would get spoilt.

With the possible exception of Enugu State where the respondents feeling of safety was very low (36.6 %) the majority of respondents in Ekiti (96.6 %), Jigawa (81.7%) and Benue States (66.6%) felt safe. However, in spite of the relatively high level of feeling of safety and security in Ekiti, Jigawa and Benue States, a pervading fear of crime was reported in all the four states of study. Across the four states, at least three-fifth of the respondents expressed some fear of criminal victimization. However, the intensity of the fear varies across the states, with respondents from Enugu State being most fearful (73.3 %).

The responses of the participants in the study indicated that their priority safety and security concerns around which they expect assistance are:

- personal safety from criminals, especially armed robbers;
- Protection from harm associated with political thuggery;
- Prevention of violent conflicts;
- Eradication of police corruption and brutality; and
- Security of property from theft and destruction.

#### **Perceptions of Informal Policing Structures (IPS)**

Apart from the police, participants to the study identified a total of 16 types of informal policing structures that were established in their communities to deal with crime. The groups are called

different names and are differentially related to the traditional practices and authorities of the community. Most of the terms used for this group in local languages translate to vigilante, though more appropriately as guards. When asked of the names by which the informal policing groups in their communities are called, respondents overwhelmingly chose the term vigilante (70.4%) among other choices on the questionnaire (e.g. neighbourhood watchers (8.2%), community guards (1.0%); traditional police (3.1% and others (17.3). In Ekiti state, the term vigilante was not often used as only 41.7% of the respondents identified the groups with the term, compared to Benue (96.4%), Enugu (71.4%) and Jigawa (68.0%).

The methods of operation of IPS identified include traditional diving methods, traditional protection methods, praying and fasting, and mob action (17.85%). There was also a fairly significant entry of 'don't know' and 'others', which suggests that the methods used by the groups are diverse and not well known by members of the public. Furthermore, the use of traditional divining methods and protection devices, especially in Ekiti and Jigawa states, point to the traditional roots of some of the groups. Majority of the respondents supported the methods used by the groups. In Enugu state, where mob action and 'others' were widely identified as the methods used by the community policing groups, 94.7% supported the use of those practices.

A significant proportion of the respondents said that they used the services of informal policing groups in order to protect the neighbourhood from criminal's attacks; to provide speedy safety and security services which the formal police are unable to offer, and because they are closer to the people than the formal police. They are particularly more widely used in Ekiti (88.9%) and Jigawa (62.5%) where they are more culturally rooted than in Benue (36.7%) and Enugu (38.1%) states.

However, the informal police organizations faced several problems among which were multiplicity of organizations, poor organization of the groups, lack of resources, non-representativeness of the organizations in relation to the population they policed (for example women were excluded in most of them, so also non-indigenous residents, and in some cases only members of a particular age-grade and hunting occupational group were eligible). The level of screening also is another problem, as only 57% of the respondents said members of such groups were screened. Overall, there is a problem of accountability, more so as most groups worked in the night and possessed weapons. The presence of armed groups outside the purview of the state is problematic. The extent to which such groups contribute to the widespread cases of ethnic, religious and communal violence needs to be investigated, because many well known vigilante groups such as OPC and Egbesu boys are primarily ethnic militias. Among the groups that derived their existence from the community traditions and culture, there appears to be some degree of accountability and discipline.

## **Conclusions and Action Points**

The study found that majority of the respondents in the four states, in response to their high level of fear of crime and lack of confidence in the formal police in guaranteeing their safety and security, patronized Informal policing structures (IPS). And that an average of 83.02 % of them appeared satisfied with the methods used by the IPS. However, the multiplicity of these groups (16 in all) and the use of mob justice by a significant percentage of them (17.8%), raise

questions, which should worry A2J but at the same time present opportunities for programmatic intervention. Among these questions are issues about coordination, accountability, representation of women and most importantly, the presence of armed groups outside the purview of the state. It is therefore recommended that if A2J decides to develop programmes on improvement of poor peoples' perceptions of safety and security, which it should do, the following action points are important:

## **6. Establishment of Community Safety and Security Forums**

- For the improvement of community perception of safety, security and relationship with the police, there is a need for periodic and predictable community interaction with the police, through the establishment of community safety and security forum at the LGA level. The local government should be encouraged to play a key role in such structure either as convenor or host. The local councils' halls have always served as venue for all kinds of community meetings and could serve as the venue and secretariat for the forum. The importance of taking the hosting or organisation of the forum away from the police is to encourage partnership in crime prevention rather than paternalism, where the community members are treated as mere informants. Participants in such a forum should include representatives all stakeholders in crime prevention in the community including women and IPS.

## **7. Regulation of IPS Activities**

- Holding of meeting(s) with traditional authorities and elders in the localities (such as the 8 LGAs in the study) where A2J might consider carrying out a pilot project on standardization of IPS procedure to identify groups that do not bear arms, other lethal weapons or resort to mob justice in their activities. Such traditional authorities and elders could be made to sign undertaken, which would be deposited to the police, vouching that the groups they recommended do not bear arms or resort to jungle justice.
- Coordination of the groups through holding of periodic meetings involving all the certified IPS and the police authorities within an LGA. This meeting could serve as a clearing house for information exchange, peer review, standardization of procedures, screening of members, registration with police and improvement of their relationship with the police.
- Advocacy for the enactment of by-laws by LGAs to regulate the activities of IPS subject to police supervision. This could be made a pre-condition for the establishment of IPS standardization and assistance project in a locality. A2J could also commission the drafting of model legislation for the regulation of the establishment and methods of operation of IPS at the LGA level.

## **8. Accountability of IPS to the Community**

- Accountability of the IPS to the community they serve should be encouraged by the introduction of report back mechanism (if they do not exist) where members of the

IPS would be made to appear before the local community to give a periodic account of their stewardship. Such gatherings should include representatives of women. Even if they are not allowed to participate directly because of the risk involved, they could at least provide important information that may prove invaluable to the IPS.

## **9. Reward Mechanism**

- A reward mechanism for groups who play by the rule should be introduced to encourage them. This could take the form of supplying them with simple and non-lethal items such as rain-coats, boots, flash-lights etc. USAID/OTI tried this in Lagos State with the neighbourhood watch association, though not sustained because of their pull-out from Nigeria.
- Non-governmental organizations working on issues of safety, security and access to justice should also be encouraged to invite members of IPS in their education and training programmes on human rights to enable them appreciate the importance of respecting the due process safeguards of suspects instead of weighting for the IPS to commit violations for them to document.
- Progressively a data base for the documentation of their activities and best practices learnt could be introduced in an effort to share lessons learned and avoidance of repeat of pitfalls experienced elsewhere.

## **10. General Recommendations**

- The issues of improving police capacity to curb crime, elimination of police corruption and brutality against the poor, which were identified by the participants to the study as major contributors to their lack of confidence in the police should be addressed seriously by the authorities. NGOs working to monitor, document and campaign against them should be supported by A2J, especially in the focal states.
- Finally and more fundamentally, the high level of unemployment among the youths, which the participants identified as a major contributor to crime, should be addressed by the governments at various levels in the states. A2J should also consider some pilot projects that could engage the youths and get them off the street under some kind of social crime prevention programme.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> A significant percentage of the respondents and participants in the study also asked for arms and ammunitions to enable them defend themselves and their communities from criminal attacks. This request was not included in the recommended action points as it would require an amendment of the Armed Robbery and Firearms Act, which criminalizes possession of firearms except those licensed for hunting purposes. For details of this refer to appendix 5 dealing with full report of the focus group discussions.

## CHAPTER 9

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS IN BENUE STATE

#### **Introduction**

The study in Benue State took place in Gboko Local Government Council, an urban council and Ushongo Local Council, a rural council. Comparison of the research respondents and participants perceptions on safety security and informal policing structures in Benue State, indicate that although specific details or forms may differ, their priorities and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing are largely underpinned by the same principal experiences and values. The only fundamental area of difference between those resident in rural and urban LGAs perhaps lie in their views on the ideal roles to be played by the informal policing structures (IPS) and the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). This chapter presents the summary of findings in Benue State on the participants' perceptions of safety and security and informal policing structures in particular.

#### **Perceptions of Safety and Security**

The research participants perceived safety and security as above all the protection of property and lives from crime, and the freedom from anxiety that accompanies it. They clearly expressed the fundamental importance that such protection has to their welfare. It is a pre-requisite for individuals' ability to sustain their livelihoods and for the economic development of poor communities as a whole:

The fact is that I am a food seller. By the nature of my occupation, most of the time I leave my things in the stall, it could be yams, soup items, or so many other things. If there is not enough security these things are not safe. So I feel that if security is beefed up people will feel very free ... if when I went back to my house I could be sure that people are looking over my property and I would be free to sleep soundly without any fear of any threat.

“When we are talking of safety and security we are talking of protecting the common man's ... lives and property.”

They stressed that it is the current lack of economic security, in particular the lack of employment opportunities for youths, that is the major cause of crime in their communities:

“My own aspect of security is an environment where there is an abundance of employment for the youth. Where people get employed. Where they know really what the government wants them to be in future and what they can help their community in future when they get the employment. They wouldn't think of going to commit other atrocities”

Over all, 66.6 percent of the respondents in Benue State felt safe from violence and intimidation, while 30 percent felt unsafe. However, this high level of feeling of safety did not prevent 60 percent of them from being fearful of crime. This finding appears contradictory given the fact with the high level of feeling of safety it was expected that their fear of crime would be lower. The possible explanation could be that the question on perception of safety was restricted to violence and intimidation while that of fear of crime included any type of crime.

## Priority Safety and Security Concern

The following were identified as priority safety and security concerns in Benue State:

- personal safety from criminals, especially armed robbers;
- Protection from harm associated with political thuggery;
- Prevention of violent conflicts;
- Eradication of police corruption and brutality; and
- Security of property from theft and destruction

## Perceptions of Informal Policing Structures

Apart from the police, the study participants identified several informal policing structures (IPS) that were established in the two local government areas in Benue State to deal with crime. When asked the names by which the IPS in their communities were identified 96.4 percent chose vigilante. The various methods of operation used by IPS in Benue State in their crime control activities include traditional divining methods 17.9 percent and mob action 21.4 percent. There were significant entries in the ‘don’t know’ and ‘others’ categories (53.5 percent), which suggest that the methods used by the IPS in Benue State are diverse and not well known by members of the public.

The approval rating of the IPS methods of operation by the respondents is 74.1 percent and their members are screened before recruitment in 32.1 percent of the cases. 36.7 percent of the research respondents make use of informal policing structures in resolving their safety and security problems and 85.7 percent of them are satisfied with their performance. The table below list the informal policing groups identified by the participants and their main activities.

**Table 1: Main IPS in Benue study communities: main activities and policing functions**

Informal Policing Structure	Main Activities and Policing Functions Contributed To
Vigilante Groups	<p><i>Main Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Night patrols in residential communities</li> <li>▪ Detection and investigation of suspicions or cases of crime reported to them.</li> <li>▪ Administer punishment to caught minor/novice offenders without subsequent referral to police</li> <li>▪ After questioning, grave offenders are usually referred to the police. In the urban community, such offenders are sporadically subjected to ‘jungle justice’ and killed by vigilante and/or wider community</li> </ul> <p><i>Function</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> <li>▪ Corrective Justice (partially)</li> </ul>
Satellite	<u>Main Activities</u>

<p><i>'Community Watch Groups'</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assist and supplement work of the vigilante through patrols in smaller communities</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> </ul>
<p><i>Oracle 'Trial by Ordeal' Process</i></p>	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Traditional process of consulting and inviting judgement from oracle, typically initiated by 'Orya' (traditional Tiv family head)</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measure of Corrective Justice</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection</li> <li>▪ Crime Prevention through Deterrence</li> </ul>

Table3: Communities requests for practical change in Benue study communities

LGA	Shorter Term	Longer Term	First Steps towards Change
<p>Ushongo (rural)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to improve effectiveness of vigilante including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Provision of remuneration to the vigilante provided through the community elders or vigilante chairman</li> <li>(ii) Provision of appropriate equipment and uniforms to boost morale and improve capacity to apprehend criminals</li> <li>(iii) Provision of training in skills and strategies of crime prevention and detection</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Same as for immediate term, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Efforts to improve economic opportunities through provision of infrastructure (roads) and employment opportunities, especially for the youth as a measure of primordial crime prevention</li> <li>▪ Measures to reform the police in order to ensure it brings guilty parties to justice, through</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continued consultation with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change.</li> <li>▪ Such consultation should involve FGD participants as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ter Ushongo</li> <li>- local government chairman</li> <li>- vigilante chairman</li> <li>- kindred heads.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>(iv) Provision of an ‘office’ to enhance stability and presence and encourage youth involvement</p>		
Gboko (urban)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to support vigilante and maintain/enhance their effectiveness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Provision of equipment such as vehicles and appropriate arms</li> <li>(ii) Provision of token remuneration for full-time vigilante, to boost morale</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Note: Communities wish for vigilante not to become fully salaried civil servants as this would lead to the loss of community control over, and ownership of them. i.e. vigilante should not become interest groups in their own right.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initiatives to effect change and reorientation in NPF including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(i) Punishment and elimination of police corruption beginning from the topmost positions</b></li> <li>(ii) Provision of sufficient equipment for police forces on the ground</li> <li><b>(iv) Facilitation of fora in which communities can freely express their needs to, and engage in a joint dialogue with NPF and relevant policy makers</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Efforts to improve employment opportunities, especially for the youth as a measure of primary prevention of crime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change</li> <li>▪ Such consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i) Vigilante chairman</b></li> <li>(ii) Vigilante members</li> <li>(iii) Community leaders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### **Problems faced by IPS in the State**

The main problems and short-comings of the IPS relate to lack of funding and sometimes hostilities from the police. There were also the issues of lack of appreciation of due process values and representativeness of women and minorities in their activities, though these were not identified by the research participants.

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS IN EKITI STATE**

#### **Introduction**

The study in Ekiti State took place in Oye Local Government Area (LGA), an urban LGA and Illejemeje Local Government, a rural LGA. Comparison of the participants perceptions on safety, security and informal policing structures in the state, indicate that although specific details or forms may differ, their priorities and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing are largely underpinned by the same principal experiences and values. The only fundamental area of difference in the perceptions of the participants in the urban LGA and those in the rural LGA was on the ideal roles to be played by the informal policing structures (IPS) and the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). This chapter presents the summary of findings in Ekiti State on the participants' perceptions of safety and security and informal policing structures in particular.

#### **Perceptions of Safety and Security**

The research participants perceive safety and security as above all the protection of lives and property from crime and broadly including enabling economic, political and social environment in which individuals and communities can pursue their livelihoods without undue danger to their well being and fear of such danger:

“When we think of security we think of the protection of our lives and property from robbery, from theft and such things”

“Safety and security means creating an enabling environment for the people to feel happy and safe from danger, from want, from poverty”

“Without security you can't have any rest of mind. During the time when these robberies came up, nobody had rest of mind. It is security that gives people good rest of mind”

“It is security that can even bring development to our areas. There are some people now they are not ready to go and live in Lagos because of the tension there concerning robbery. Then if you hear that there is peace and security somewhere, if you want to invest or establish a factory or trade, you will go there because you will have rest of mind. So security brings development so it is very important”

Over all, 96.6 percent of the respondents in Ekiti State felt safe from violence and intimidation, while 3.3 percent felt unsafe. However, this high level of feeling of safety did not prevent 50 percent of them from being fearful of crime. This finding appears contradictory given the fact with the level of feeling of safety it was expected that their fear of crime would be lower. The possible explanation could be that the question on perception of safety was restricted to violence and intimidation while fear of crime included any type of crime.

#### **Priority Safety and Security Concerns**

The following were identified as priority safety and security concerns in Ekiti State:

- Personal safety from criminals, especially robbers;
- Security of property from theft and destruction
- End to Police brutality and corruption
- Political thuggery

To address these concerns, respondents indicated the need for employment opportunities for the youth and expanding opportunities for everyone to secure adequate means of livelihood. They emphasized the need for effective and community oriented policing system. Concerns that were expressed in respect of the police include their lack of adequate and appropriate means of preventing and fighting crime; ineffectiveness in responding to distress call; corruption and brutality, and delay in the administration of justice in the country. They also called for guns for community members and insurance schemes against burglary and theft.

### Perceptions of Informal Policing Structures

Apart from the police, the study participants identified several informal policing structures (IPS) that were established in the two local government areas in Ekiti State to deal with crime.. When asked the names by which the IPS in their communities were called 41.7 percent chose vigilante. Others include hunters, age grades, traditional warriors and traditional authorities etc. The IPS are said to use mainly traditional divining and protection methods in their operation (55.5 percent) and do not resort to mob justice (0 percent). The approval rating of their methods of operation is 75 percent and their members are screened before recruitment in 70.4 percent of the cases. 88.9 percent of the research respondents make use of informal policing structures in resolving their safety and security problems and 79.2 percent of them are satisfied with their performance. The table below list the informal policing groups identified by the participants and their main activities.

**Table 1: Main IPS in Ekiti study communities: main activities and policing functions**

Informal Policing Structure	Main Activities and Policing Functions Contributed To
Vigilante Groups	<p><i>Main Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Night and day patrols in residential communities</li> <li>▪ In urban communities: after consulting with quarter chiefs/traditional rulers, subject caught offenders to process of public shaming.</li> </ul> <p><i>Function</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Corrective Justice (through process of shaming, in urban communities)</li> </ul>
Egbe/Omodewa	<u>Main Activities</u>

Age-grade Groups (rural only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Detection and investigation of suspicions or cases of crime reported to them</li> <li>▪ Guarding of community boundaries in case of expected aggression from other communities</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> </ul>
Process of Public Shaming (urban only)	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public naming and parading of offenders</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measure of Corrective Justice</li> <li>▪ Crime Prevention through Deterrence</li> </ul>
Traditional Rulers/Quarter Chiefs	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decide on course of corrective justice to be followed with caught offender. Minor/novice offences are usually punished directly, without referral to police. More serious cases are referred to police</li> <li>▪ Initiate and direct investigation of criminal cases reported to them</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corrective Justice</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> </ul>

***Vigilante groups in the Ekiti study communities: main organisational features***

LGA	Main Organisational Features
Ileje-Meje (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ COMPRISING OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS DRAWN FROM TRADITIONAL HUNTERS' GROUP</li> <li>▪ OVERALL ORGANISATION FOR LGA, INSTITUTED BY LGA</li> <li>▪ Three men posted in focal community</li> <li>▪ No vehicles for use in operations</li> <li>▪ Overseen and recruited by community chiefs</li> <li>▪ Members formally employed by LGA, receive monthly salary</li> </ul>
<b><i>Oye (urban)</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DEVELOPED FROM TRADITIONAL HUNTERS' GROUPS</li> <li>▪ OVERSEEN AND RECRUITED BY COMMUNITY CHIEFS</li> <li>▪ No vehicles for use in operations</li> <li>▪ MEMBERS SELECTED FROM TRADITIONAL HUNTER'S GROUP</li> <li>▪ No financial support from Local Government</li> <li>▪ Material support (mostly basic equipment and protective gear) as well as stipends received from community members' contributions</li> </ul>

*Table3: Communities requests for practical change in Ekiti study communities*

LGA	Shorter Term	Longer Term	First Steps towards Change
Ileje-Meje (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to enhance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initiatives to effect change and reorientation in NPF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continued consultation with the community to discuss</li> </ul>

	<p>effectiveness of vigilante including:</p> <p>(i) Provision of improved remuneration to vigilante members</p> <p>(ii) Provision of improved arms</p> <p>(iii) Increase in numbers of vigilante</p>	<p>including:</p> <p><b>(i) Punishment and elimination of police corruption beginning from the topmost positions</b></p> <p><b>(iv) Facilitation of fora in which communities can freely express their needs to, and engage in a joint dialogue with NPF and relevant policy makers</b></p> <p><b>(v) Efforts to engender willingness in government/NPF to engage in joint dialogue with communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Efforts to improve economic opportunities through provision of infrastructure (roads) and employment opportunities, especially for the youth as a measure of primordial crime prevention</li> </ul>	<p>subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Such consultation should involve FGD participants as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traditional Rulers</li> <li>- Vigilante Members</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**Problems and Short-comings of the IPS**

The main problems and short-comings of the IPS relate to lack of funding and sometimes hostilities from the police. There were also the issues of lack of appreciation of due process values and representativeness of women and minorities in their activities, though these were not identified by the research participants.

## CHAPTER 11

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS IN ENUGU STATE

#### **Introduction**

The study in Enugu State took place in Enugu East Local Government Area (LGA), an urban LGA and Nkanu East Local Government, a rural LGA. Comparison of the participants' perceptions on safety, security and informal policing structures in the state, indicate that although specific details or forms may differ, their priorities and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing are largely underpinned by the same principal experiences and values. This chapter presents the summary of findings in Enugu State on the participants' perceptions of safety and security and informal policing structures in particular.

#### **Perceptions of Safety and Security**

The research participants perceive safety and security as above all the protection of lives and property:

The issue of security is of great importance. Because it is only when your house is secured can you think of going out to find things and fend for things to put in the house

As far as I am concerned, safety and security are paramount because wealth accumulated that is not protected is a useless wealth. So I believe that if your life and wealth are secured it will induce accumulation of more wealth.

What is the point of accumulating wealth when the wealth is not secured? I believe that one would be induced more to look for wealth if it were sure that the wealth would be protected in the end.

Over all, 40 percent of the respondents in Enugu State felt safe from violence and intimidation, while 56.7 percent felt unsafe, thus making the most unsafe state among the four states where the study took place. Similarly, 73.3 percent of the respondents were fearful of crime.

#### **Priority Safety and Security Concerns**

The following were identified as priority safety and security concerns in Enugu State:

- Personal safety from criminals, especially robbers;
- Security of property from theft and destruction
- End to Police brutality and corruption
- Political thuggery

To address these concerns, respondents indicated the need for employment opportunities for the youth and expanding opportunities for everyone to secure adequate means of livelihood. They emphasized the need for effective and community oriented policing system. Concerns that were expressed in respect of the police include their lack of adequate and appropriate means of preventing and fighting crime; ineffectiveness in responding to distress call; corruption and

brutality, and delay in the administration of justice in the country. They also called for guns for community members and insurance schemes against burglary and theft.

### Perceptions of Informal Policing Structures

Apart from the police, the study participants identified several informal policing structures (IPS) that were established in the two local government areas in Enugu State to deal with crime.. When asked the names by which the IPS in their communities were called 71.4 percent chose vigilante. Others include hunters, age grades, traditional warriors and traditional authorities There was also a fairly significant entry of ‘don’t know’ and ‘others’, (57.1 percent) which suggests that the methods used by the IPS in Enugu State are diverse and not well known by members of the public. However, the approval rating of their methods of operation is 94.7 percent and their members are screened before recruitment in 57.1 percent of the cases. 38.1 percent of the research respondents make use of informal policing structures in resolving their safety and security problems and 87.5 percent of them are satisfied with their performance. The table below list the informal policing groups identified by the participants and their main activities.

**Table 1: Main IPS in Enugu study communities: main activities and policing functions**

Informal Policing Structure	Main Activities and Policing Functions Contributed To
Vigilante Groups	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Night patrols in residential communities</li> </ul> <p><i>Urban only:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Detection/investigation of suspicions or cases of crime reported to them</li> <li>▪ Administer punishment to caught minor/novice offenders without subsequent referral to police</li> <li>▪ Grave offenders are usually referred to the police or sporadically subjected to ‘jungle justice’ (killed) by vigilante and/or wider community</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation (urban only)</li> <li>▪ Corrective Justice (urban only)</li> </ul>
Guard Groups or Individuals	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Guard own or others’ property and lives in residential, occupational or social venues during the day</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection</li> </ul>
Process of Public Shaming/ Punishment	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Investigation/Identification, then public naming, parading (and punishment) of offenders</li> </ul>

(rural only)	<p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> <li>▪ Measure of Corrective Justice</li> <li>▪ Crime Prevention through Deterrence</li> </ul>
Village Heads (Traditional Rulers)	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Direct investigation/identification of offenders</li> <li>▪ Direct course of corrective justice to be followed with caught offender</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> <li>▪ Corrective Justice</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Vigilante groups in the Enugu study communities: main organisational features**

LGA	Main Organisational Features
Nkanu East (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ORGANISED WITHIN COMMUNITY VILLAGES</li> <li>▪ Represents continuation/revival of traditional formations</li> <li>▪ No vehicles for use in operations</li> <li>▪ COMPRISING OF YOUTH COMMUNITY MEMBERS SELECTED BY COMMUNITY ELDERS/LEADERS</li> <li>▪ Overseen by community elders/heads</li> <li>▪ No financial support from Local Government</li> <li>▪ COMPULSORY SERVICE</li> <li>▪ MATERIAL SUPPORT (MOSTLY BASIC EQUIPMENT AND PROTECTIVE GEAR) FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS</li> </ul>
<i>Enugu East (urban)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NEW INSTITUTION</li> <li>▪ ORGANISED IN DIFFERENT RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES</li> <li>▪ <b>Hierarchical structure comprising 'commandants' and ordinary members</b></li> <li>▪ No vehicles for use in operations</li> <li>▪ COMPRISING OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO SEEK EMPLOYMENT BY VIGILANTE</li> <li>▪ OVERSEEN BY COMMUNITY VIGILANTE COMMITTEES/CHAIRMAN</li> <li>▪ No financial support from Local Government</li> <li>▪ Modest salary from community residents' contributions</li> <li>▪ Material support (mostly basic equipment and protective gear) from community members' contributions</li> </ul>

**Table3: Communities requests for practical change in Enugu study communities**

LGA	Shorter Term	Longer Term	First Steps towards Change
Nkanu East (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to enhance the working conditions and boost the morale of the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Same as for immediate term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continued consultation with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the</li> </ul>

	<p>vigilante including:</p> <p>(i) Provision of basic equipment such as torches and batteries</p> <p>(ii) Provision of basic protective clothing especially for the rainy seasons: raincoats and boots</p> <p>(iii) Provision of a form of remuneration as compensation for their efforts and service</p>		<p>envisioned change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Such consultation should involve FGD participants as well as community elders and heads involved coordination of the Nde-Nche</li> </ul>
Enugu East (urban)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures to enhance effectiveness and approaches of the vigilante including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Provision of training in crime prevention and detection skills (preferably provided by NGO rather than government)</li> <li>(ii) Provision of equipment such as communication devices, as well as improved arms in some communities</li> <li>(iii) Provision of supplementary remuneration for vigilante, to boost morale</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiatives to effect change and reorientation in NPF including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(i) Punishment and elimination of police corruption beginning from the topmost positions</b></li> <li>(ii) Provision of sufficient equipment for police forces on the ground</li> <li>(iii) Provision of infrastructure (e.g. roads) needed for crime prevention</li> <li><b>(iv) Facilitation of fora in which communities can freely express their grievances and needs to, and engage in a joint dialogue with NPF and relevant</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change</li> <li>Such consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Community vigilante committee members</li> <li>(ii) Vigilante members</li> <li>(iii) Community elders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<b>policy makers</b>	
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**Problems Faced by IPS Groups in the State**

The main problems and short-comings of the IPS relate to lack of funding and sometimes hostilities from the police. There were also the issues of lack of appreciation of due process values and representativeness of women and minorities in their activities, though these were not identified by the research participants.

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS IN JIGAWA STATE**

#### **Introduction**

The study in Jigawa State took place in Hadeja Local Government Area (LGA), an urban LGA and Babura Local Government, a rural LGA. Comparison of the participants perceptions on safety, security and informal policing structures in the state, indicate that although specific details or forms may differ, their priorities and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing are largely underpinned by the same principal experiences and values. This chapter presents the summary of findings in Jigawa State on the participants' perceptions of safety and security and informal policing structures in particular.

#### **Perceptions of Safety and Security**

The study participants in Jigawa State perceived safety and security above all as the protection of property and lives from crime, as well as protection from violence and intimidation. Especially in Hadeja, this emphasis may reflect the numerous recent experiences of ethnic, religiously or politically motivated community violence.

They strongly expressed the fundamental importance that safety and security have to all aspects of their lives and livelihoods, and to the welfare and economic advancement of their communities as a whole:

Safety and security are very important to us because when we find out that somebody suffered to acquire some capital, if there is no safety and security, if there is no protection of his property and his life, what he has suffered, somebody will come to just steal it away, and that means that this person has suffered in vain. So it is very important to us. For a human being, for a business man, there is no way we can do without safety and security.

It is the bedrock of our economic status!

The aims of any human being or groups in going about their day to day life, depend on there being safety and security. If there is no safety and security in a society it is just like a man who is sick. So safety and security is just like health. A sick person cannot do anything, he cannot feed himself, and so a society where there is no safety and security cannot progress, cannot be self-reliant. They are very necessary in any society.

Safety and security are important to all aspects of our life.

It is only when you can...curb the activities of criminals... that you have a viable society.

They are the two things that determine the quality of our lives.

Over all, 82.7 percent of the respondents in Jigawa State felt safe from violence and intimidation, while 10.7 percent felt unsafe. However, this high level of feeling of safety did not prevent 50 percent of them from being fearful of crime. This finding appears contradictory given the fact with the level of feeling of safety it was expected that their fear of crime would be lower. The possible explanation could be that the question on perception of safety was restricted to violence and intimidation while fear of crime included any type of crime.

### Priority Safety and Security Concerns

The following were identified as priority safety and security concerns in Jigawa State:

- Personal safety from criminals, especially robbers;
- Security of property from theft and destruction
- End to Police brutality and corruption
- Political thuggery

To address these concerns, respondents indicated the need for employment opportunities for the youth and expanding opportunities for everyone to secure adequate means of livelihood. They emphasized the need for effective and community oriented policing system. Concerns that were expressed in respect of the police include their lack of adequate and appropriate means of preventing and fighting crime; ineffectiveness in responding to distress call; corruption and brutality, and delay in the administration of justice in the country. They also called for guns for community members and insurance schemes against burglary and theft.

### Perceptions of Informal Policing Structures

Apart from the police, the study participants identified several informal policing structures (IPS) that were established in the two local government areas in Jigawa State to deal with crime.. When asked the names by which the IPS in their communities were called, 68 percent chose vigilante. Others include smaller community watch groups, religious groups such as *hisbah* and Moslem Women Associations.

Among the methods used by the IPS in Jigawa States include traditional divining methods (35.7 percent); mob justice (7.1 percent). There were also significant entry of ‘don’t know’ (28.6 percent) and ‘others’ (28.6 percent) signifying that much of the methods used by IPS are not known by members of the public. The approval rating of the methods of operation used by the IPS in Jigawa State is however high (79.4 percent) and their members are screened before recruitment in 70.8 percent of the cases. 62.5 percent of the research respondents make use of informal policing structures in resolving their safety and security problems and 94.1 percent of them are satisfied with their performance. The table below list the informal policing groups identified by the participants and their main activities.

**Table 1: Main IPS in Jigawa study communities: main activities and policing functions**

Informal Policing Structure	Main Activities and Policing Functions Contributed To
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<p><i>Vigilante Groups</i></p>	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Night and day patrols in residential communities</li> <li>▪ Detection and investigation of suspicions or cases of crime reported to them.</li> <li>▪ After consulting with ward heads/traditional rulers, subject caught offenders to process of public shaming or other punishment before referral to police. (in the rural community only grave offenders are referred)</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> <li>▪ Corrective Justice</li> </ul>
<p>Smaller 'Community Watch Groups'</p>	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assist and supplement work of the vigilante through patrols in smaller communities</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection</li> </ul>
<p>Religious Groups (e.g. Hisbah, Muslim Women's Association)</p>	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide spiritual advice on moral conduct, especially to groups/individuals deemed in need of such guidance</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Primary Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
<p><b>Table 1 cont'd. Informal Policing Structure</b></p>	<p><b>Main Activities and Policing Functions Contributed To</b></p>

**Table 2: Vigilante groups in the Jigawa study communities: main organisational features**

LGA	Main Organisational Features
<p>Babura (rural)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No vehicles for use in operations</li> <li>▪ Assisted by 'satellite' community watch groups in smaller communities</li> <li>▪ COMPRISING OF SELECTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO VOLUNTEER FOR SERVICE</li> <li>▪ Overseen and recruited by community leaders</li> <li>▪ Financial support from Local Government (monthly allocation)</li> <li>▪ Voluntary service, but receipt of token 'stipends' from Local Government</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Material support (mostly basic equipment and protective gear) from community members' contributions</li> </ul> <p><b>AWAITING FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NEW INSTITUTION OR REVIVAL/CONTINUATION OF TRADITIONAL FROMATION?</li> <li>OVERALL ORGANISATION FOR LGA/EMIRATE?</li> <li><b>Hierarchical structure comprising 'commandants' and ordinary members?</b></li> <li>Manned offices in major communities?</li> </ul>
<i>Hadejia (urban)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DEVELOPED FROM TRADITIONAL HUNTERS' GROUPS</li> <li>OVERALL ORGANISATION FOR EMIRATE, INCLUDING CENTRAL AND WARD CHAIRMEN</li> <li><b>Hierarchical structure comprising 'commandants' and ordinary members</b></li> <li>Manned offices in major communities</li> <li>No vehicles for use in operations</li> <li>Assisted by 'satellite' community watch groups in smaller communities</li> <li>COMPRISING OF SELECTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO VOLUNTEER FOR SERVICE</li> <li>Financial support from Local Government (monthly allocation)</li> <li>Voluntary service, but receipt of token 'stipends' from Local Government</li> <li>Material support (mostly basic equipment and protective gear) from community members' contributions</li> </ul>

Table 3: Communities requests for practical change in Jigawa study communities

LGA	Shorter Term	Longer Term	First Steps towards Change
Babura (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures to maintain and bolster effectiveness of vigilante including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Provision of improved remuneration to vigilante members</li> <li>(ii) Provision of basic equipment (e.g. torches, batteries)</li> <li>(iii) Legislation at State or Local Authority level to recognise the vigilante and empower them to administer corrective</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiatives to effect change and reorientation in NPF including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(i) Punishment and elimination of police corruption beginning from the topmost positions</b></li> <li>(ii) Provision of sufficient equipment for police forces on the ground</li> <li><b>(iii) Facilitation of</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued consultation with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change.</li> <li>Such consultation should involve FGD participants as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- District Head</li> <li>- Community leaders and elders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	justice in certain cases	<p><b>fora in which communities can freely express their needs to, and engage in a joint dialogue with NPF and relevant policy makers</b></p> <p><b>(iv) Efforts to engender willingness in government/NPF to engage in joint dialogue with communities</b></p>	
Hadejia (urban)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to maintain and bolster effectiveness of vigilante including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Provision of basic equipment (e.g. torches, batteries)</li> <li>(ii) Provision of protective gear (raingear/blankets)</li> <li>(iii) Legislation at State level to empower vigilante to directly refer cases to courts without having to go through the police</li> <li>(iv) Provision of improved remuneration to vigilante members</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Note: One view is that vigilante should become fully salaried civil servants. The other view is that vigilante groups should not become publicly institutionalised and thus ‘interest groups’ in their own right.</p>	<p>I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initiatives to effect change and reorientation in NPF including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(i) Punishment and elimination of police corruption beginning from the topmost positions</b></li> <li>(ii) Provision of sufficient equipment for police forces on the ground</li> <li>(iii) Improvement and stricter criteria for NPF recruitment process</li> <li><b>(iv) Facilitation of fora in which communities can freely express their grievances and needs to, and engage in a joint dialogue with NPF and relevant policy makers</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change</li> <li>▪ Such consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i) Vigilante commandants</b></li> <li>(ii) Vigilante members</li> <li>(iii) Other community leaders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Problems Faced by IPS Groups in the State**

The main problems and short-comings of the IPS relate to lack of funding and sometimes hostilities from the police. There were also the issues of lack of appreciation of due process values and representativeness of women and minorities in their activities, though these were not identified by the research participants.

**CHAPTER 13**  
**EXPERIENCIAL FINDINGS**

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## Appendix I

### TERMS OF REFERENCE Research on Public Perceptions on Informal Policing In Access to Justice Focal States June – August, 2003

#### Background

One requirement of accessible justice is that all people are able to reach and use justice sector institutions without fear of bias or corruption on the part of justice system officials. In the year 2000, however, 94 percent of Nigerians perceived some corruption in the area of the rule of law and a majority of respondents believed that people ‘always’ bribe officials. Most people expressed no trust for the police. Further, although 58.3 percent of Nigerians reported feeling safer in 2000 than they did five years prior, roughly 40 percent of people knew someone who had been a victim of crime within the previous two years (IFES, 2000).

The World Bank’s 2001 report, *Nigeria: Voices of the poor* showed that poor people perceive poverty to be a denial of the right to an enabling and empowering quality of life, not simply the non-availability of material resources. Poor people are subject to risk, insecurity and vulnerability due to their exposure to danger, victimization or violence and their inability to access justice when wronged.

Some citizens around the country have responded to widespread perceptions of personal insecurity and vulnerability by forming community-based groups – commonly referred to as vigilantes or informal policing organizations. These groups work in a variety of ways – sometimes hand-in-hand with the official police and sometimes not – to confront local crime and insecurity problems.

Much more systematically collected data about what people expect from law enforcement – both official and in the form of informal policing organizations is vital. Such information should disclose whether people perceive vigilante groups as necessary in a democratic dispensation, how people perceive them in relation to the official police, how the activities of vigilantes affect peoples’ sense of safety and security, and what they actually want and expect from official law enforcement. Such information would supplement the available knowledge on the contexts of modern day policing in Nigeria as well as enrich the findings of victimization surveys by revealing underlying expectations and needs (with respect to safety and security) of the public.

#### Access to Justice Programme Research

The Access to Justice Programme of the British Council (the parent contracting body) supports the use of multiple methods to collect, analyze and interpret information on perceptions of the poor and on justice-related institutions and processes in Nigeria. The purpose is to use findings from the research to build an evidence base, particularly in the programme’s focal states: Benue, Ekiti, Enugu and Jigawa.

The research evidence base will inform the development of pilots and demonstration projects for the programme. The expectation is that outcomes of the monitoring and evaluation of the pilots will reveal successful initiatives that can enhance and expand access to justice for poor and vulnerable people in the focal states in particular and ultimately in Nigeria as a whole.

### Purpose

The purpose of the study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the expectations, priorities and perceptions of people living in poverty in the A2J's focal states, with respect to safety and security in general and informal policing structures more specifically.

### Methodology

The research will consist of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with poor people in the access to justice focal states. The consultant will prepare a plan for the participation and consultation with key audiences at the inception of the research. Participants in the in-depth interviews and focus groups should be drawn from at least two local government areas in each of the states. Groups may be organized by gender. At least one of the focus groups should comprise of youth – both boys and girls – from the selected local government areas.

The appropriate protections of privacy and confidentiality would be guaranteed to all participants and their willingness to participate or to end their participation in the discussions, at any point, would be respected. This will be particularly important in the case of the youth, where parental consent and the relative maturity and ability of the youth to participate will be relevant. These protections, while safeguarding the interests of participants also reflect one of A2J programme's core values—participatory engagement with people living in poverty.

Each of the focus groups should consist of no more than 8-10 participants. They reflect a broad array of female and male community members. For example, families incarcerated persons, representatives of local community (welfare, trade, or faith-based), women's organisations and any other relevant groups such as taxi drivers and household workers.

The facilitation of focus groups would be carried out by skilled interviewers. The key to the effectiveness of the open questioning is the intuitive and spontaneous questioning that would be prompted by the initial and subsequent answers by the focus group participants. Here, the 5 *Ws* are key: "who, why, what, where, and when," but especially the "why"?

### Relevant Research Questions

Relevant research questions include, but are not restricted to, the following:

1. What do respondents want from the official police and what do they say about whether those needs are met?
2. How do respondents describe the informal policing groups in their communities?

3. What types of issues do respondents expect to have resolved by informal policing groups and why?
4. What types of issues do respondents prefer to resolve under the formal policing system and why?
5. What do respondents want in order to feel that their safety and security are being safeguarded?
6. Does this differ by setting (i.e., public locations as opposed to private, rural versus urban, etc)?
7. What are respondents' top safety and security priorities and why?

#### DELIVERABLE MATERIALS

The following deliverable materials are expected from the research:

- A comprehensive listing of proposed discussion topics and identification of research assistants by July 7, 2003.
- Weekly written updates (1-2 pages only) of the status of the research.
- A detailed table of contents of the final report by August 4, 2003.
- A good draft report by August 15, 2003
- A final report by [August 22, 2003. The final report would be provided (a) in hard copy and (b) as a Microsoft Word document on a 3.5" computer disk. The final report would follow the format specified for consultant reports and would contain the following:
  - A clear identification of the safety and security issues that were noted as being important by focus group participants.
  - A rank ordering of the safety and security priorities of poor people as revealed by the research.
  - An analysis of peoples' expectations, perceptions and priorities for safety and security as revealed through the focus group discussions.
  - Suggestions for ways to address issues raised by the research participants during the main phase of the Access to Justice Programme.
  - Description of and rationale for the strategy for recruiting focus group participants.
  - Detailed description of the training of interviewers.
  - Description of participants including but not limited to: gender, age, marital status, family size, family composition and family living arrangements, housing type, number of years

and type of education, occupation, sources of income, religious affiliation, customs, attitudes, previous exposure to the justice system.

- Copies of all questionnaires and focus group materials (such as exercises and discussion themes/topics).
- Comprehensive bibliography of all reference materials used.

### Time Frame

The Study will be conducted from June to August 2003

### Management Arrangement

Day- to- today (in-field) communications with Dom Pan Sha, the Research Coordinator. All deliverables to Anthony Opara, Programme Manager Community Policing. Final Report to Innocent Chukwuma, Executive Director.

### Budget

See Annex 3 tables A – C

### References

1. Nigeria: Voices of the Poor. Country Synthesis Report G .B. Ayoola et al. World Bank, 2001.
2. IFES Survey (on Attitudes Towards Democracy and Markets in Nigeria), 2001

## APPENDIX II

### **REPORT ON TRAINING FOR FIELD RESEARCHERS AND SUPERVISORS FOR THE FIELD RESEARCH ON INFORMAL POLICING HELD ON THE 14<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2003 AT 9:00AM AT THE BANQUET HALL OF THE LAGOS TRAVEL INN, TOYIN STREET, OFF ALLEN AVENUE IKEJA, LAGOS.**

The meeting commenced at about 9:30am with a brief introduction of the participants at the training workshop. This was followed brief welcome remark by Mr. Innocent Chukwuma, the Executive Director of Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN) in which he gave a brief introduction on the objectives and purpose of CLEEN and the background initiatives that led to the research that is being conducted with the assistance of the Access to Justice Programme. Mr. Danladi Plang, Programme officer of the Access to Justice programme in Abuja also gave a brief background of the Access to Justice programme in Nigeria saying that four focal states are involved in the programmes of the organization.

In a lead paper to commence the training Mr. Chukwuma gave a background to the research and argued that the concept of informal policing was not new to the traditional Nigerian society as communities that made up Nigeria had a system of securing their lives, checking crime and settling disputes. According to him formal policing as it is now was a recent creation beginning in 1930. However the first attempt at formalizing policing started in 1861 with the creation of the Hausa constabulary, which was a brainchild of the colonial masters in checking the excesses of the colonized people.

This aspect of the training, which was interactive, agreed that informal policing was policing other than by state actors. The participants also attempted to distinguish between “police” and “policing”. They stated that “police” refers to the institution while “policing” is the process. The former was said to be formal while the latter is said to informal or formal. Examples of various groups that carry out informal policing system in the society were given, such as age grades in the eastern part of the country and the cults e.g. ogboni confraternity in the western part of the country.

According to Mr. Chukwuma more Nigerians are involved in the informal policing system adding that any reform in the laws enforcement sector must take into account the informal policing sector, which is the driving force behind the research. . He stated that one main purpose of the research was to prepare the informal policing structures to work closely or in collaboration with the formal police structures. The research is also expected to assist policy makers in taking decisions on reform in the law enforcement and justice sector as well as assist in making justice more accessible to the poor, which is the concern of the Access to Justice Programme

During the interactive session, various reasons were given for the existence of the informal policing system structure, such as:

- Rise in crime
- Lack of access to the formal structure,
- Delay in the justice system among others

In responding to fears raised about the legality of the informal policing structure Mr. Chukwuma stated that the legality of the informal policing system is not for the research because it is not really an issue for the purpose of the research. He however stated that the informal policing system has been in existence before the inception of the modern state structure. The cultural values of the communities would most likely come to play in the reports of the researchers at the end of the exercise.

Further to the above he stated that the informal policing system is part of the structure that has been in existence as a result of the society being a transnational society. He stated that it is important to note that urbanization does not eradicate informal policing because there are instances of migrants that live within an urban settlement but operate their own system within the urban settlement, for example the Asia communities in Britain and the United States of America.

This session went on a tea break at about 11.45 am.

The second session commenced at about 12 noon with Ms Isabella Aboderin of the Access to Justice programme facilitating. She took the participants through the process of qualitative and what is expected of the field research and how they can best carry out the field research. She gave four typologies of qualitative research as follows:

- In depth interviews
- Semi structured interviews
- Focus groups discussion
- Participant observation

For the purpose of this research the participants are expected to make use of the semi structured interviews and the focus groups discussions, which is usually in a research that is either explanatory, exploratory or sensitive. She further stated that the Participatory Action Framework would also be adopted because it allows the people being interviewed an opportunity to explain the reason(s) for their answers; and that this methodology would be quite relevant during the focus group discussion.

She stated further that the research is supposed to lead to practical changes on the part of the stakeholders including legislators, police and those concerned with informal policing. It would also act as a tool through which the communities may become aware of issues they face etc and this would be more apparent during the focus group meetings.

After the lead discussion on qualitative research was concluded the participants discussed the choice of the local governments selected in each state. The criteria laid down were as follows:

- Two local government areas in each state, that is one urban one rural
- Accessibility and familiarity of the choice to the researchers
- Presence of informal policing structure.

The local governments selected from the four Access to Justice Focal States are as follows:

- Enugu State - Nkanu East (rural), Enugu east (urban)
- Benue State - Ushongo (rural), Gboko (urban)

- Ekiti State                   - Ilejemeje (rural), Oye (urban)
- Jigawa                        - Babura (rural), Hadejia (urban)

The participants were divided into two groups for discussions on the measurement instruments to be used during the research and the modalities for the focus group discussions. Isabella led the group on the modalities for focus group discussion while Dum Pa Sha led the group on the measurement instruments.

During the group discussion on measurement of instrument, the field research group made some corrections to the questionnaire schedule and guideline. It was agreed that the corrections would be noted and a final copy of the questionnaire would be made available to the researchers. The group broke up for lunch break at 2:00pm

After the lunch break, the project document for the research on informal policing in A2J focal states in Nigeria was discussed. Certain corrections were made to the document, for example:

- The supervisors should come up with the methodology report
- In transcribing the local flavor; idiomatic expressions, proverbs etc should be maintained.

It was also agreed that CLEEN would send the questionnaires to the researchers by courier.

The work plan for the research was agreed upon as stated below:

Pilot interview-	July 18 – 24
Field Interview-	Aug 2 - 10
Field analysis-	Aug 13 – 20
First draft/focal group report-	Aug 22-29
Final report-	Sept 15, 2003

The reports for the 2 groups would be in areas whereby they complement an/or contradict each other. Mr.Chukwuma noted that there would be extensive literature review. He stated that after the research areas where intervention programmes can be carried out would be identified.

Administrative issues were also addressed. He also stated that at the end of the research each group ought to have interviewed 30persons – 15 rural and 15 urban. The breakdown of the persons to be interviewed is as follows:

- 4 male
- 4 female
- 3 boys
- 3 girls
- 1 member of informal policing structure

It was also stated that the sampling process should be random but not too far in between. There should also be one interview per household. Research Supervisors were appointed for each team thus:

Enugu: Dr Green Eleagu

Ekiti: Alex Stevens  
Jigawa: Hussaini Abdu  
Makurdi: Fanen Ade

The Supervisors were given the materials such as A Sony TCM 200DV Recorder, tapes, Batteries and notebooks. They were told that the Sony Recorders would be returned to CLEEN for onward transmission to Access to Justice Programme. The training workshop came to an end at about 5.39 P.M.

### Names and phone numbers of field researchers

#### Enugu State

Dr. Greene Eleagu (supervisor) – 088-509056  
Okechukwu Nwanguma (researcher) - 0803-3299474  
Chinyere Okebie (researcher) – 08033582008  
Emmanuel Onyeabo (focus Group Research Assistant

#### Jigawa State

Hussaini Abdu (Supervisor) – 08037861288, 062-410668  
Ibrahim Barkindo (Researcher) - 08037868419, 064-666816  
Aisha Haruna (Researcher) – 08023110720  
Saidu Danladi (Focus group research assistant)

#### Ekiti State

Alex Stevens (Supervisor) – 08035896989  
Angela Sanni (researcher) – 030- 250579  
Kemi Asiwaju (researchers) – 0802- 3448055  
Olabode Folorunsho (Focus group research assistant)

#### Benue State

Fanen Ade (supervisor) – 044-534159  
J.S. Tarpar (researcher) – 044- 534386  
Iorkenger Jev (researcher) – 044-531922  
Shankyula Samuel Terso, Focus Group Research Assistant

## Appendix III

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN), Lagos, is carrying out a study on community perceptions of informal policing, and priorities on safety and security in the four focal states of the British Council's Access to Justice Programme. The survey is intended to help ensure that the justice system meets the needs of the Nigerian people. The specific states are Benue, Ekiti, Enugu and Jigawa. The Research is sponsored by the British Council. May we ask you a few questions on your feeling of safety and security, and perceptions of informal policing? This interview won't take much of your time and your answers would be treated confidentially and anonymously. You are free to withdraw at anytime during the interview if you don't feel like continuing. Please do candidly respond to the following questions. Thank you for your co-operation.<sup>6</sup> Tick the appropriate response.

#### I. Descriptive Profile of Respondent (To be filled by the Interviewer).

1. Gender of respondent  
Male ( ) 1  
Female ( ) 2
  
2. What is your age as at your last birthday?  
15 – 24 years ( ) 1  
25 – 34 years ( ) 2  
35 – 49 years ( ) 3  
50 – 60 years ( ) 4  
61 years and above ( ) 5
  
3. What is your highest level of education?  
None ( ) 1  
Non-formal, religious literacy class, or adult education ( ) 2  
Primary school ( ) 3  
Secondary/technical/teacher's college ( ) 4  
Post-secondary (polytechnic/college of education/University) ( ) 5
  
4. What is your occupation?  
Unemployed ( ) 1  
Farming, petty trading, self-employed artisan ( ) 2  
Junior staff of government agencies or companies ( ) 3  
Intermediate staff of government agencies or companies ( ) 4  
Senior staff of government agencies and companies ( ) 5  
Businessman/woman or self employed people ( ) 6  
Retired ( ) 7  
Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) 8
  
5. If retired, what was you last occupation?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
6. What is your marital status?  
\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>6</sup> Open-ended questions should be recorded. In transcribing them, don't miss any proverb, wise sayings, figurative expressions or examples used by the respondents in answering their questions or describing their situations. These are very important in understanding poor people's perceptions. If you don't understand any particular saying or description, ask your respondent for explanation.

- Single ( ) 1  
 Married ( ) 2  
 Separated ( ) 3  
 Divorced ( ) 4  
 Widowed ( ) 5
7. What type of accommodation do you have?  
 Thatched or mud house ( ) 1  
 Rooming house with shared facilities ( ) 2  
 Self-contained room ( ) 3  
 Hostel ( ) 4  
 Flat ( ) 5  
 Rented House ( ) 6  
 Owner occupied house ( ) 7  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) 8
8. How many people are living with you in your household?  
 None ( ) 1  
 One ( ) 2  
 Two ( ) 3  
 Three ( ) 4  
 Four ( ) 5  
 Five ( ) 6  
 6 and above ( ) 7
9. How long have you lived in your area?  
 Less than 1 year ( ) 1  
 1 - 3 years ( ) 2  
 4- 9 years ( ) 3  
 10 years or more ( ) 4
10. What is your religion?  
 Islam ( ) 1  
 Christianity ( ) 2  
 Traditional ( ) 3  
 None ( ) 4  
 Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) 5
11. What is the name of your local Government?  
 a. Nkanu East ( ) 1  
 b. Enugu East ( ) 2  
 c. Ushongo ( ) 3  
 d. Gboko ( ) 4  
 e. Ilemeje ( ) 5  
 f. Oye ( ) 6  
 g. Babura ( ) 7  
 h. Hadejia ( ) 8
12. What is the name of your State?  
 Benue ( ) 1  
 Ekiti ( ) 2  
 Enugu ( ) 3  
 Jigawa ( ) 4

## II. Perceptions on Safety and Security<sup>7</sup>

13. How safe from violence and intimidation do you feel living in your area?
- |                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Very safe       | ( ) 1 |
| Somewhat safe   | ( ) 2 |
| Somewhat unsafe | ( ) 3 |
| Very unsafe     | ( ) 4 |
| Don't know      | ( ) 5 |
- If don't know, skip to question 18
14. If safe, why? (Probe to find out if this feeling varies during the day and night.)  
-----
15. If unsafe, why? (Probe to find out if there is any particular unpleasant experience that influenced the respondent view.)  
-----
16. If unsafe, what should be done to improve the respondents feeling of safety (probe to find out priority concerns of the respondents on safety, including what he or she expects the community, local and state Authorities to do)  
-----
17. How secure do you feel your property is from theft and damage, generally?
- |                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| Very secure       | ( ) 1 |
| Somewhat secure   | ( ) 2 |
| Somewhat insecure | ( ) 3 |
| Very insecure     | ( ) 4 |
| Don't know        | ( ) 5 |
- If don't know, skip to question 21
18. If secure, why? (probe to find out what makes the respondents feel secure)  
-----
19. If insecure, why (probe to find out why the respondents feels insecure. A listing of the factors that is responsible for this feeling is important and what could be done improve his or her feeling of security.)  
-----
20. In general, how fearful are you of becoming a victim of any type of crime?
- |                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| Very fearful       | ( ) 1 |
| Quite fearful      | ( ) 2 |
| A little fearful   | ( ) 3 |
| Not at all fearful | ( ) 4 |
| Don't know         | ( ) 5 |
- If don't know, skip to question 24
21. If fearful, why? (probe to find out if the respondent has been a victim of crime in the last five years and get a description of his or her most recent experience)  
-----
22. If not fearful, why? (Probe to find out what is responsible for this feeling.)  
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### Perceptions of Informal Policing

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<sup>7</sup> Safety in the context of this research is defined to mean how safe people feel from violence and intimidation in their communities, while Security relates to how secure people's property are from theft and damage.

23. How interested are you in knowing what is going on around your area about safety and security?
- Highly interested ( ) 1
  - Quite interested ( ) 2
  - Somewhat uninterested ( ) 3
  - Not at all interested ( ) 4
  - Don't know ----- ( ) 5

If don't know, skip to question 27

24. If interested, why? (Probe to find out if the interest is recent or sustained. If recent, find out if it is a response to a particular experience and what experience)
- 

25. If not interested, why? (Probe to find out if the lack of interest is as a result of an experience. If yes, try to find out what the experience was )
- 

26. How often would you speak to other residents in your street or neighborhood?
- Nearly everyday ( ) 1
  - About once a week ( ) 2
  - About once a month ( ) 3
  - Occasionally ( ) 4
  - Hardly ever ( ) 6
  - Never ( ) 7

27. If often, why? -----

28. If not often, why? (Probe to find out what is responsible for the respondents attitude)
- 

29. Are you involved in any initiatives to improve people's safety from violence and intimidation in your area?
- Highly involved ( ) 1
  - Somewhat involved ( ) 2
  - Quite involved ( ) 3
  - Not involved at all ( ) 4

30. Are you involved in any initiatives to improve the security of people's property from theft or damage in your area?
- Highly involved ( ) 1
  - Somewhat involved ( ) 2
  - Quite involved ( ) 3
  - Not involved at all ( ) 4

31. If involved, what kind of initiatives? (Get a listing and description of the initiatives.)-----

32. Apart from the police, are there groups specifically established in your area to deal with crime?
- Yes ( ) 1
  - No ( ) 2
  - Don't know ( ) 3

If don't know, skip to question 43

33. If yes, what are their names? (Probe to get a comprehensive list of all the groups operating in the area) -----
-

34. Who formed them? (probe to find out whether they were established by the community as a whole or some individuals formed them)  
-----

35. Please describe the most prominent ones for us. (Probe to find out when they were established, their leadership structure and the level of community involvement in their activities) -----

36. What general name(s) do you use in describing these groups
- Vigilante groups ( ) 1
  - Neighborhood watchers ( ) 2
  - Community guards ( ) 3
  - Traditional police ( ) 4
  - Others, please specify ----- ( ) 5

37. How are they differentiated from one another? (Probe to find out if they have different groups dealing with different types of crime.)-----

38. What kind of methods do they employ?
- Traditional divining methods (including oath and drinking concoction) ( ) 1
  - Traditional protection (juju) devices ( ) 2
  - Prayer and fasting ( ) 3
  - Mob action ( ) 4
  - None ( ) 5
  - Don't know ( ) 6
  - Others, (please specify)..... ( ) 7

(Probe to find out if groups resort to mob justice in dealing with criminal suspects. If yes, get a vivid description of what it looks like and the experience of victims).....

39. Do you approve of all the methods used by the groups in dealing with criminal suspects?
- Yes ( ) 1
  - No ( ) 2
  - Don't know ( ) 3

40. If yes, why -----

41. If no, why? (probe to find out the methods the respondent do not approve and why)

42. How do people become members of the informal policing groups? (Probe to find out if people pay fees or swear to an oath in order to become members. Also find out whether membership of the groups is restricted to people from particular areas, religion or sex.)

43. Are potential members screened for possible criminal pasts before they are admitted?
- Yes ( ) 1
  - No ( ) 2
  - Don't know ( ) 3

If don know, skip to question 46

44. If yes, what type of screening do they go through? -----

45. Are members of informal policing group in your community paid monthly salary?
- Yes ( ) 1
  - No ( ) 2

Don't know ( ) 3

If don't know, skip to question 49

46. If yes, why? (probe to find out who pays them) -----

47. If no, why? (probe to find out how the members sustain themselves in the absence of salary) -----

48. Do they wear any special identification or uniform?

Yes ( ) 1

No ( ) 2

Don't know ( ) 3

49. Do the groups carry any weapons?

Yes ( ) 1

No ( ) 2

Don't know ( ) 3

50. If yes, what kind of weapons do they carry?

51. Why do you think they carry weapons? (Probe to find out whether for defensive/offensive purposes).....

52. Do you use informal policing groups?

Yes ( ) 1

No ( ) 2

Don't know ( ) 3

If don't know, skip to question 60

53. If yes, why? -----

54. If no, why? -----

55. If yes, what type of issues or crimes would you report to the informal policing groups? (Get a listing of all the issues respondents refer to informal policing groups and why) -----

56. If yes, are you satisfied by the outcome?

Yes ( ) 1

No ( ) 2

Don't Know ( ) 3

57. If yes, why (probe to find out what they did exactly to satisfy the respondent ) -----

58. If no, why -----

59. If no, would you patronize them again? -----

60. Why do you think people patronize informal policing groups in general? (tick the most important)

Rise in crime ( ) 1

High cost of formal justice system ( ) 2

Lack of Access to the justice system ( ) 3

Delays in the justice system ( ) 4

The police sides with the criminal ( ) 5

Cultural prohibitions ( ) 6

Don't know ( ) 7

Others specify ----- ( ) 8

If know skip to question 63

61. If the reason you gave is addressed, do you think people would stop patronizing informal policing groups?

Yes ( ) 1

No ( ) 2

Don't know ( ) 3

62. If no, why? (probe to find out other non crime related reasons why respondents patronize informal policing groups)-----

63. What is the relationship between formal and informal policing groups in your areas?

Very cordial ( ) 1

Somewhat cordial ( ) 2

Somewhat hostile ( ) 3

Very hostile ( ) 4

Don't know ( ) 5

If don't know, skip to question 66

64. If cordial, why (probe to find out the level of interaction between the two) -----

65. If hostile, why (probe to find out why the respondents feels the relationship is hostile and what could be done to make the to work in a more collaborative manner) -----

### Perception of the formal police

66. How often do you see a policeman or woman in your area?

Every day ( ) 1

At least once a week ( ) 2

Less than once a week ( ) 3

Never ( ) 4

Don't know ( ) 5

67. When was the last time you had any dealing with a policeman or woman?

Less than 1 month ago ( ) 1

1 month or more, less than 3 months ( ) 2

3 months or more, less than 6 months ( ) 3

6 months or more, less than 1 year ( ) 4

A year or more a go ( ) 5

Never had any contact ( ) 6

Don't know ( ) 7

68. What were the circumstances? -----

69. Are you satisfied with the job the police are doing in your area?

Highly satisfied ( ) 1

Somewhat satisfied ( ) 2

Not satisfied ( ) 3

Don't know ( ) 4

If don't know, skip to question 72

70. If satisfied, in what way were you satisfied -----

71. If not, in what way were you not satisfied -----

72. What types of issues do you prefer resolved by the Nigerian Police Force? (probe to get a list of the issues and why) -----

73. How do the police in your area perceive informal policing groups? -----

74. Are the police in your area involved in screening new members of informal policing groups?

Yes ( ) 1

No ( ) 2

Don't know ( ) 3

75. If yes, why -----

76. If no, why -----

### Priority safety and security concerns

77. What do you need in order to feel safe from violence and intimidation? (probe to get a list of what the respondent need in order to feel safe, which ones are most important and why he or she feels so) -----

78. What do you need in order to feel your property is secure? (probe to get a list of what the respondent want in order to feel secure, which ones are most important and why he or she feels so) -----

79. What impact does your priority safety and security concerns have on your economic welfare and quality of life? (Probe to find out how the respondent's safety and security concerns affect his or her quality of life. Specifically, ask for examples of what the respondents thinks would happen to his or her economic life if the safety and security concerns are not addressed and vice versa.)

### For office use only

1. Name of interviewer(s) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_

3. Place of interview \_\_\_\_\_

4. Local government \_\_\_\_\_

5. State \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX IV

### REPORT OF QUESTIONNAIRE PILOT<sup>8</sup>

#### Introduction:

*The research team for Enugu State comprised Dr. Greence Iheanyi Eleagu (Supervisor), Mr. Okey Nwanguma (Field Researcher) and Miss. Chinyere Okebie (Field Researcher). The team left from Enugu town at about 8.00am and arrived Nkanu East, a distance of about 30km, at about 9.00am.*

#### METHODOLOGY:

The total sample size for Nkanu East was for the Pilot Interview was to ten (10). This consisted of 4 men, 23 women, 1 boy, 1 girl and 1 informal policing structure personnel.

The quota sampling technique was employed in the interview. In all 5 people, 2 men, 2 women, and 1 girl were interviewed. Attempts were made in each case to put the respondents at ease as the idea of interview was mostly strange to them. The key words in the study (police, security and safety) naturally heightened apprehension among the respondents.

Questions came, one at a time, from the team, including the supervisor. This was to ensure that the information put across to the respondents and the feedback were valid.

#### OBSERVATIONS:

At first the respondents apprehensive of the interview, thinking it was aimed at either assessing them for fax purposes or providing information from them for the police who may later come after them with one charge or the other.

Most of the respondents took exception to some questions which they felt were repetitive. Question 71 does not make provision for somebody who is dis-satisfied as to tally with Question 73. This is because not satisfied may not exactly mean dis-satisfied. (See Fredrick J. Herberg's Theory).

Majority of the questions do not have provision for "Don't know" to accommodate the views of those who may not know a thing on particular areas. Question 81-83 lack specificity. In Question 69, "Contact" was interpreted as "seen".

#### CONCLUSION/SUGGESTIONS

However some suggestions may be relevant here to enhance the ease of administration, reliability and validity of the subsequent Field Interviews.

These include:

- (1) Questions should be revisited with the aim of making them less repetitive otherwise they tend to distort the mood of the respondents which hampers the entire exercise.
- (2) Question 71 should contain "Dis-satisfied" in order to make Question 73 more relevant.

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<sup>8</sup> Written by Dr. Greene Iheanyi Eleagu

- (3) There should be provision for “Don’t know” in some of the questions including 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 42, 44, 63 and 64.
- (4) Questions 81 – 83 should be made more specific.
- (5) Question 31 should also contain “occasionally”.

It is hoped that the instrument will be more reliable when these areas are addressed.

## 2<sup>ND</sup> DAY (JULY 22, 2003) PILOT REPORT

### INTRODUCTION:

The research team of Dr. Iheanyi Greene Eleagu, Mr. Okey Nwanguma and Miss Chinyere Okebie went back to Nkanu East in continuation of the survey. Arrival time was 8.45am.

### METHODOLOGY:

The remaining respondents in our sample of 10 were interviewed. They included 2 men, 1 woman, 1 boy and 1 informal policing personnel.

### FURTHER OBSERVATIONS:

- (1) Majority of the respondents were quite and welcomed the objective of the interviews but were obviously apprehensive in matters or questions relating to the performance of the police.
- (2) Most respondents expressed boredom over the length of the interviews.
- (3) Most respondents were unable to identify a marked difference between the terms – ‘safety’ and ‘security’.
- (4) Some questions were clearly repetitive or attract similar answers. Only different wordings. See Question 25, 26 and 27.
- (5) Notwithstanding their reservations, respondents applauded the objective of the interview as desirable and timely.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) Questions should be compressed to make interviews a bit shorter and precise so as to sustain respondents’ interest.
- (2) Repetitions should be identified and eliminated.
- (3) Ideas/questions under the priority and safety concerns may be eliminated to avoid difficulty in explaining the purpose of the questions to respondents.

Respondents generally expressed concern that the research would yield good results, and not die a natural death as is common with government projects

## DAY 3 (JULY 23, 2003 PILOT REPORT)

### INTRODUCTION:

The same team now went to Enugu East. However we encountered a problem of sample composition. The instructed nomenclature for 15 respondents (9 Field Interview) consisted of 4 men, 4 women, 3 boys, 3 girls and 1 member of the informal policing structure. It was expected that this pattern be maintained in the pilot interview.

But the assigned number for the pilot Interview was 10, i.e 10 respondents. To have a distribution of 4 men, 3 women, 1 girl, 1 boy and 1 informal structure or 4 women, 3 men, 1 girl, 1 boy and 1 informal structure would have tilted the balance in favour of either the men or women and render the result unreliable and not valid.

Thus the team decided to obviate this problem by making Nkanu East 4 men, 3 women, 1 boy, 1 girl and 1 informal structure and Enugu East 3 men, 4 women, 1 boy, 1 girl and 1 informal structure.

This way the total number of men (7) studied in the pilot interview matches the number (7) of women. And so balance was maintained between the two groups.

#### METHODOLOGY:

2 men, 2 women and 1 boy were interviewed today.

#### OBSERVATIONS:

The observations were akin to those of the rural Nkanu East.

- (1) Many of the respondents had a mixed feeling of apprehension and excitement at what they perceived would provide a way of their safety and security problems.
- (2) Many respondents complained about the overly long questionnaires.
- (3) They also complained about some questions repeating earlier ones. These had been noted in the preceding day's reports.
- (4) The interviews moved a bit faster as the respondents in this urban area seemed more enlightened than those of the rural Nkanu East.

### DAY 4 (JULY 24, 2003) FIELD REPORT FOR ENUGU EAST

#### INTRODUCTION

As in other reports.

#### METHODOLOGY:

1 man, 2 women, 1 girl and 1 informal policing structure personnel were interviewed today.

#### OBSERVATIONS:

The same as in Day 1 for Enugu East.

#### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) Some questions, for instance Q 28, should read "very highly interested" etc not "very interested" etc.
- (2) The absence of "Don't know" in many of the options presupposes that the respondent(s) must know everything in the questionnaire. The field experience disagreed with this.
- (3) Question 81-83 should be made sharper and more meaningful.
- (4) Question 71 should contain Dis-satisfied in order to make Question 73 more relevant.
- (5) "Occasionally" should be added to the options in Question 31.
- (6) Attempts should be made to reduce the length of the interviews by reducing the number of questions therein.
- (7) It may be necessary to treat safety and security as addressing the same need.
- (8) Repetition in questions should be corrected. Compare 29 and 31. Again see 66 and 75.

- (9) Question 69 should read “when was the last time you saw police man or woman?” the word “contact” addresses something other than availability of the police or access to justice (A2J). Its correction will also reinforce the answer from Question 68.

**APPENDIX V**

***Poor Communities' Perceptions and Priorities on Safety, Security and Informal Policing in A2J Focal States.***

**Findings of Focus Group Research undertaken June-August 2003**

***Final Draft***

*Isabella Aboderin, PhD*

## Contents

- (i) Executive Summary
- (ii) Acknowledgements
- (iii) Glossary of terms
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This study could not have been undertaken, and could not have generated such a rich picture of poor communities' perspectives on safety, security and informal policing, were it not for the tremendous help and contribution of many people.

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## Executive Summary

*Debates on how to improve safety and security for the Nigeria are paying increasing attention to informal policing structures, which poor communities themselves set up in light of an apparent inability of the formal police forces to provide sufficient protection.*

However, to date, ambivalence and uncertainty surround the debate on, and perceptions of the role that such informal policing structures do, could and should play.

In large measure this is due to the current lack of systematic evidence and solid understanding of the types of informal policing structures that exist, the reasons and rationales underpinning their formation, the nature of their activities and functions, and communities' perceptions of their role, effectiveness and mandate.

The aim of this focus group research was to generate an initial understanding of these issues in order to provide an information base, which can inform the development of interventions, which can enhance safety and security in a way that is appropriate and responds to poor communities' own priorities and initiatives.

The research was under taken in all four A2J focal states, and within each state in two selected Local Government Areas. The research employed an entirely qualitative methodology and was informed by a participatory action framework.

The research findings show that despite variations in detail and form, the same principal concerns and experiences underpin communities' priorities and perspectives on safety, security, and informal policing across all four states.

First, and above all, the research has shown communities' profound appreciation of being given the opportunity to express their views, and to be listened to on an issue of such critical importance to their lives. Communities however also expressed a sincere wish for the research to go beyond good intentions and to result in practical change for them.

The research findings across all states have clearly shown that safety and security – conceived above all as the protection of lives and property from crime – are of vital importance to individuals' ability to sustain their livelihoods as well as to the development of communities as a whole.

In all communities, across all states there exist a range of informal policing structures and processes set up by communities themselves.

In all communities it is these IPS, and especially the so-called 'vigilante' groups, that play the central and dominant role in ensuring residents' safety and security. It is to them that communities entrust the main responsibility of protecting their lives and property through the prevention, detection and investigation of crime.

In all communities the IPS have generally been effective in curbing crime although in some communities certain limitations in their efficacy exist, mainly due to a lack of sufficient funding. The effectiveness of the IPS, being members of the communities themselves,

largely roots in the great degree of community ownership and control of them, their accountability to the community, and their vested interest in fulfilling their functions successfully.

Whilst in all communities the Nigeria Police Force retains the formal mandate for initiating the process of corrective justice for caught offenders, the IPS, with the explicit approval of their communities, usually administer justice themselves in minor or novice cases. Moreover, though grave offenders are usually referred to the police, the IPS in all urban communities (except Jigawa) occasionally administer what is termed 'jungle justice' to such offenders – i.e. the lynching of criminals, in particular armed robbers. Such jungle justice must be seen as a desperate measure taken by communities in order to remove the risk of re-offence by the criminal, to provide at least a temporary deterrent to other potential offenders, and to achieve a measure of justice.

Across all states, and in all communities, the formation and presence of the IPS and especially the vigilante groups, represents a response to the perceived failure of, and profound loss of confidence in the police.

There are three specific key rationales that have underpinned the formation of the IPS and underlie their present prominence. The major rationale in all urban and most rural areas is the failure of the police to adequately protect communities from crime - i.e. a failure to curb crime, which has often resulted in intolerably high levels of theft and armed robbery. Communities thus formed the IPS as a self-help or protection measure aimed to fill the gap left by the police. The failure of the police to curb crime is seen by communities, above all, as the result of a pervasive corruption in the police force and a readiness of officers to release or aid offenders in return for monetary reward.

A secondary rationale especially in many rural areas is the detrimental impact that police corruption has had (i) on the livelihoods and access to justice especially of poor community members and (ii) the divisive impact it has had on the solidarity between community members and thus the welfare and cohesion of the community as a whole.

All communities expressed clear long-term visions and desires for the 'ideal' policing of their communities and the relative roles to be played by the police and IPS.

All urban communities except in Jigawa endorse the constitutional mandate of the NPF and wish, ideally, for a reformed police force to carry out all policing functions in their community effectively and justly – thus rendering IPS, especially vigilante, unnecessary. In contrast, the rural communities in Enugu and Benue, perhaps as an expression of their alienation from the police, wish for their IPS to continue to play the dominant role in controlling crime in their midst. Police involvement should be limited mainly to the prosecution of serious offenders. Finally both communities in Jigawa and the rural community Ekiti do recognise the mandate of the police. However, they also view a continuation of their IPS' activities as essential for wholly effective crime prevention, detection and investigation. Their vision, ultimately, is thus for a complementarity of roles, or even a collaboration, between a reformed NPF and their IPS.

Despite their different longer-term visions, all communities share the same vision for the interim – until the longer-term change, especially reformation of the NPF, is achieved. Thus, for the shorter term all communities wish for a continued central role and

responsibility of their IPS for preventing and detecting crime in their midst. As part of this, communities wish for the IPS to be allowed or even empowered to administer, or access the formal process of, corrective justice themselves, without needing referral to the police

In light of their visions, all communities' requests for change in the shorter term centre on the need for practical measures to maintain and support and, where necessary, to enhance the effectiveness of their IPS, in particular their vigilante groups. Some communities additionally request for legal measures to empower the IPS to engage in the process of corrective justice.

For the longer term communities urge the need for measures to effect a change in the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). They specifically request for efforts to increase the police capacity to curb crime and, most important of all, to eliminate corruption in the NPF. As a way to begin to foster such change, almost all communities would welcome, or urge for a joint community-NPF-government dialogue in which they are able to freely express their views and needs to police and relevant policy makers. A precondition, however, is the presence of genuine willingness on the part of these bodies to engage in and respond to such a dialogue.

Several communities, finally, have emphasised the need for structural change – above all an improvement in economic and employment opportunities – as a way to tackle what they see as the root causes of crime in their communities.

As a first step to working towards the change they envision, both communities sincerely request for further consultation with the A2J programme

The research findings raise several important implications for A2J approaches and interventions on an overall and state level. These are, most importantly, the need for

- A broad substantive focus on improving safety, security and policing in poor communities, rather than a sole focus on effecting change in the NPF
- As part of this, community-led interventions, which engage with the IPS as important agents for positive change especially in the shorter term
- Interventions focused on advocacy and participatory action processes with relevant NPF and government officials to foster a genuine willingness to engage in, and respond to a joint dialogue for change with communities
- Practical Interventions focused on facilitating an providing a forum for such a dialogue
- In the immediate term, an imperative need to honour communities' requests for further A2J engagement and consultation with them, as a first step in supporting them in working towards the change they have envisioned.
- Such continued engagement with study communities can moreover provide an opportunity and entry point for a greater overall focus on 'giving a voice to', and working with the poor as an important part of A2J activities.

## Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

A2J	– Access to Justice Programme
FC	– Focus Community
FGD	– Focus Group Discussion
FS	– Focal State
IPS	– Informal Policing Structures
LG	– Local Government
LGA	– Local Government Area
LR	– Lead Researcher
NPF	– Nigeria Police Force
PAR	– Participatory Action Research
RA	– Research Assistant
SJA	– State Justice Adviser

## Introduction and Overview of Report

### Introduction

This report presents the findings of focus group research that was undertaken from July to August 2003 in the four Access to Justice (A2J) focal states – Benue, Ekiti, Enugu, and Jigawa, to explore poor communities’ perceptions and priorities regarding safety and security in general, and the role played by informal policing activities in particular. Eight focus groups were conducted in total: two in each state, one in a selected rural, and one in a selected urban Local Government Area (LGA).

The research was carried out by Dr. Isabella Aboderin, as the lead researcher (LR), assisted by one locally recruited research assistant (RA) in each state:

Mr. T. Shankyula, Benue State

Mr. O. Folorunso, Ekiti State

Mr. E. Onyeabor, Enugu State

Mr. S. Danladi, Jigawa State

The lead researcher was responsible for the design of the research, conduct, transcription, and analysis of focus group discussions. The research assistants, in their respective state, were responsible for the recruitment of focus group participants, the setting up and logistical organisation of the focus groups, and assistance with translation and provision of background information on LGA and focal communities. (see Annex A for details on the distribution of responsibilities, collaboration and issues of capacity building)

This focus group study was one of two independently conducted components of a larger research project on informal policing study, undertaken by the Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN), Lagos. The other component comprised of a semi-structured interview study and was conducted by a separate team of researchers.

### Overview of the Report

This report describes in detail the findings of the focus group component of the informal policing research project. Its main findings and conclusions, together with those of the interview component, are additionally included in the overall project report presented by CLEEN.

The report is divided into three parts.

Part I provides an overview of the background, aims and approach of the focus group study. It begins by outlining the rationale for the study, the emerging research questions it aimed to address, and the methodology it employed to achieve this. Subsequently, it delineates the aims, process, structure and scope of the analysis.

Part II presents in detail the study findings for each A2J focal state. Each of the four sections is dedicated to one of the states. Thus, Section 1 details the findings for Benue State, Section 2 for Ekiti State, Section 3 for Enugu State, and Section 4 for Jigawa State. Each section presents (i) an executive summary of findings,(ii) an overview of main cross-

cutting themes and rural-urban patterns, (ii) a discussion of emerging implications for A2J action in the state, and (iii) separate detailed analysis of the evidence for each of the two study LGA

Part III provides an overall synthesis of the findings across the four states. It highlights cross-cutting themes and patterns, reflects on lessons learnt and, in light of this, discusses emerging implications for A2J programme approaches and interventions.

*PART I*

BACKGROUND, AIMS AND APPROACH OF THE STUDY

## Section 1. Background, Aims, Methods and Approach of the Study

### 1 Background and Rationale

#### *Informal Policing Activities and Structures in Nigeria – an Emerging Issue*

Safety and security have been identified as being among the priority issues exacerbating the poverty of poor people in Nigeria (Ayoola *et al.* 2000/2001). Attempts to increase safety and security for ordinary Nigerians, as pursued amongst others by the Access to Justice (A2J) Programme, are thus seen as integral to the overall aim of reducing poverty in Nigeria.

Debates on how to improve safety and security for people living in poverty, in the context of a democratic order, are paying increasing attention to the issue of informal policing activities and structures in poor communities.

In light of the apparent inability of the existing formal police structures to ensure adequate safety and security for the citizens of Nigeria, there has been a growing awareness of the important role often played by informal policing initiatives set up by communities themselves to safeguard their lives and property. In this regard, a clear distinction is made between the private security purchased by the minority of high-income Nigerians, and the informal policing structures developed by the majority of Nigerians who live in poverty.

To date, ambivalence and uncertainty surround the debate on, and perceptions of, the role that such informal policing structures do, could and should play.

On the one hand, there is considerable concern about their legitimacy, integrity and possibly detrimental impact on human rights. This concern has arisen in light of the evident abuses of such rights by a number of prominent informal policing groups called ‘vigilantes’ – as for example the Bakassi Boys, or the Odua people’s Congress (OPC), who regularly appropriate the judicial function, and often mete out brutal and unjust punishment (Human Rights Watch/CLEEN, 2002; Chukwuma, 2000; Nwanguma, 2000; Ogundamisi, 2000)

On the other hand, however, there is also a recognition, especially in light of evidence from other countries, that informal policing groups can play a very beneficial and important role in protecting the safety and security of poor communities who are not adequately served by the formal police.

In Nigeria, no systematic evidence yet exists on the nature and role played by informal policing structures in poor communities. Thus, no sound understanding exists on the types of informal policing structures that have developed, the reasons and rationales underpinning their formation, the nature of their activities and functions, and communities’ perceptions of their role, effectiveness and mandate.

An understanding of these issues, however, is a vital prerequisite for the identification of effective and appropriate approaches to enhancing safety and security that are commensurate with poor communities’ own perceptions and needs.

This focus group research was undertaken as a first step to generating such an understanding. It can thus be seen as following on from the *Nigeria: Voices of the Poor* consultation (Ayoola *et al.* 2000/2001), which saw the beginning of donor efforts to document and understand poverty – and emerging implications for action, from the perspectives of poor people’s themselves.

## 2. *Study Aims and Objectives*

The *overall objective* of the focus group research was to generate an initial understanding of the poor communities’ perceptions, priorities and needs regarding safety and security in general, and the role played by informal policing structures in particular.

The *specific research questions* the research aimed to address were the following:

- What are experiences of the poor in terms of their security and safety and that of their communities?
- What are their main security and safety problems or priorities, and how do these impact on their economic welfare and livelihoods?
- What types and approaches of informal policing do they experience in their communities and what relative role do these play compared to formal policing activities in their communities?
- How do poor people experience and perceive the informal policing in their communities with respect to:
  - Its relative impact (positive or negative) on their safety, security and economic welfare and that of their communities
  - The degree to which it serves and represents their interests
- What are their reasons for their perceptions? Do perceptions differ between different community constituencies or groups, and if so, how?
- What are poor people’s views regarding the need to improve their safety and security? What are their priorities in terms of the safety/security issues needing to be tackled?
- What are poor people’s perceptions of the changes necessary in the policing of their communities in order to improve safety and security, specifically with respect to:
  - The relative distribution of policing roles and responsibilities tasks to be met by/of informal policing groups
  - Changes in the approaches or ways of working of policing groups
- What are poor people’s reasons for their vision? How do they relate to their conceptions of justice? Do visions differ between different community groups?
- What are poor people’s expectations or demands regarding action to effect changes in the policing of their communities? How do they relate to their conceptions of their rights or justice due to them?

- What are poor people's own wishes or ideas for ways in which their communities and others can work towards the envisioned change and engage in dialogue with other stakeholders?

### 3. Study Methods and Approach

#### 3.1 A qualitative approach

This study employed an entirely qualitative methodology to address the above research questions.

While there exists no one formal definition of qualitative research, three features are central to, and define the essence of qualitative methods. These are a naturalistic and interpretive approach, and an emphasis on inductive analysis concerned with understanding phenomena (action, experiences, decisions, values) 'in terms of the meanings people bring to them' (Creswell, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Such understandings are not developed through *a priori* imposed theories or hypothesis, but rather through patterns, themes and categories, which emerge from the empirical data (Huberman and Miles, 1994; Snape and Spencer, 2003)

Qualitative methods are increasingly widely used in social research, given the particular suitability of qualitative research to certain types of investigations, and in view of certain fundamental epistemological considerations.

These considerations also underlie the selection of a qualitative approach for this study, which was chosen in light of:

1. An interpretive epistemological position, which holds that a real understanding of any phenomenon in the social world must be based on an understanding of, and must be generated from, the perspectives and meanings of individuals (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Snape and Spencer, 2003)
2. The particular suitability of qualitative methods for research, such as this one, which is:
  - a) Exploratory - i.e. aims to explore issues that are as yet little understood, so as to map the form and range of phenomena, identify salient themes and develop theoretical ideas (Huberman and Miles, 1994; Creswell, 1998).
  - b) An Investigation of attitudes, motives and perceptions, as well of issues that may be potentially sensitive (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

#### 3.2 *A participatory action framework*

This focus group research, in line with the overall Access to Justice research strategy, was underpinned by a participatory action research framework (PAR). Its ultimate goal, through the generation of meaningful and relevant information, was thus to initiate the participation of poor communities in a process of working towards *practical change* (Stone, 2003).

Initiation of such a process with poor communities presents the first and most essential step towards change, as it is they who are intended to be the ultimate beneficiaries. Nevertheless, separate participatory action initiatives will also be needed with other key stake holders, in order to foster their engagement in a joint process of working towards change. Such other key stake holders include:

- (i) The Nigeria Police Force (NPF)
- (ii) Policy makers with relevant jurisdiction at local, state, or federal level

### Considerations of Audience and Participation

As essential for all participatory action research, the design of all aspects of this focus group study was underpinned by the two key considerations of *participation* and *audience* (Stone, 2003).

### Participation

The question of '*participation*' concerns the aim of achieving the active participation in the research process by those people the research is about, and conferring 'ownership' of the research on them.

The challenge was thus to design research that is *with* and *for* people, rather than *on* people, thus enabling the planning of interventions *with* and *by*, rather than *for* communities (Reason, 1988; Swantz and Vainio-Mattila, 1988)

To this end, the research methodology was designed so as to ensure, as much as possible, the active consultation of group participants prior to data collection, during the phases of data collection and analysis in the field, and during data reporting and beyond.

In essence, the research aimed in part to act as a tool to enable communities to envision, clarify and formulate their expectations or wishes for change. As such, it responded to the importance that poor communities in Nigeria have been found to place on their own initiatives and ideas for change, as highlighted in the *Voices of the Poor Consultation* (Ayoola *et al.* 2000/2001).

### Audience

Considerations of the intended *audience* for the research concern the question for whose immediate benefit the research is being conducted, and who will learn of the findings. They are thus inextricably linked with the goal of participation.

For this focus group research, two main audiences - a primary and a secondary audience - were identified.

The *primary audience* are the poor people who participated in the focus groups, and the communities they represent. For these, the research aimed to pinpoint:

- a) Their range of experiences of safety, security and policing and the needs for change arising from it
- b) Their own *vision* for a changed policing of their communities, specifically with respect to the relative role of formal and informal policing
- c) Their own wishes or ideas regarding ways of working towards such change

The *secondary audience* for the findings of this research must be seen as comprising an *initial* and an *ultimate* secondary audience. The *ultimate* secondary audience for the research findings are the other key stakeholders: the Nigeria Police Force and policy makers with relevant jurisdiction. It is, ultimately, their actions or orientation that must be

informed by, and change in response to, poor communities' perspectives, priorities and needs.

However, such change must occur through participatory action processes conducted by A2J with each of these stakeholders, in which the research findings are made relevant to their own practical concerns, interests and reference points. In addition, A2J must work with communities to foster the implementation of their envisioned steps to change. The *initial* secondary audience for the research findings is thus the Access to Justice programme.

### 3.3 Sampling and Recruitment

#### *SELECTION OF LGA*

In each state, the two Local Government Areas for study were chosen by the State Justice Adviser (SJA) and the research assistant, on the basis of two major criteria.

1. That the chosen LGA should have some measure or experience of informal policing activities
2. That one LGA should be predominantly rural and the other urban, so as to capture a range of different experiences and to facilitate rural-urban comparison.

Within these broad criteria, LGA, and a particular focal community within each LGA, were selected mainly in light of practical and logistical considerations. These included, most importantly, the local research assistants' familiarity with them. (see Annex B for profiles of the selected LGA in each state)

#### *Selection of Group Participants*

In each focal community, the sample of focus group participants ( 6-10 per group) was selected in close consultation with the research assistants, based on information provided by them on the population composition in the community, as well as the nature and constituencies of the main community based organisations or groups.

Participants were selected so as to comprise as broad a spectrum as possible of community residents. The aim was to capture a range of different perspectives on policing, safety and security, as well as to give a voice to constituents who may normally be excluded from partaking in decision making in their communities (Ayoola *et al.* 2000/2001).

In each focal community, participants were thus selected from:

a) Representatives of those community based institutions identified as the most relevant to the poor. These, variously included

- Local women's organisations
- Youth associations
- Occupational groups
- Community development associations
- Religious groups
- Traditional/customary groups

b) Where necessary, individuals not represented by or excluded from such community based associations

Efforts were made to ensure, as much as possible, a gender balance as well as the presence of at least one ‘youth’ among the selected group participants. (see Annex C for a list of selected focus group participants and the community based groups represented by them).

In order to enable a free initial discussion on informal policing activities, a conscious decision was made *not* to include representatives of informal policing groups (IPG). For this purpose, IPG were defined as community based groups whose prime and explicit aim and objective is the prevention or fighting of crime.

#### *Recruitment of Group Participants*

In each state, group participants were recruited by the research assistant, who was often assisted by a local ‘convenor’ within the focal community who himself became a participant in the group, and acted as a key informant.

All prospective group participants were invited to participate in the research in an honest and non-coercive manner. This involved ensuring that they had a full understanding of what the study involved, and that only those who voluntarily agreed to participate were included. Informed, active consent was thus conditional for participation in the research.

To this end, all prospective participants were given a consent form which, in simple language, set out key information on the study’s aims, process and organisation, and was signed by the lead researcher (see Annex D). In order to ensure full information also of non English speaking prospective participants, the consent form was translated into the four major languages in the states (Hausa, Igbo, Tiv and Yoruba). Where prospective participants were illiterate or had additional queries, the information on the consent form was read or further explained to them by the research assistant or ‘convenor’. Whilst it was originally planned to request participants’ signature on the consent form, this was found to be inappropriate in all states except Ekiti, in light of people’s general reluctance to sign formal documents.

### 3.4 Process of Data Collection: Focus Group Discussions

#### Main features of focus group discussions

Focus group discussions, the main method used for data collection in this study, are increasingly widely employed and recognised as a valuable approach in social research (Finch and Lewis, 2003).

In focus group discussions, participants not only present their own views and experiences. They also listen and react to the perspectives presented by others and, in doing so, are able to further reflect on and develop their own standpoints. Through this process, perspectives are progressively elaborated on and refined.

The main feature of focus groups, thus, in contrast to the other main qualitative methods – in-depth or semi-structured interviews – is their synergistic nature, in which the interaction and discussion between group participants is explicitly used to generate data and insights (Richie and Lewis, 2003; Arthur and Nazroo, 2003).

## Research Setting

*All focus groups were held in the particular focal community chosen. This minimised the necessary transport requirements for group participants, and provided them with a setting with which they were familiar. It thus allowed for a more relaxed discussion and reduced the time the participants had to devote to partake in the groups. All groups were held in hired public or private venues, depending on local conditions and availability. Each group comprised 6–10 (in one case 12) participants, seated around a dining or coffee table. All participants were provided with drinks and refreshments, as well as a sum of N500, as an appreciation for their willingness to give of their time.*

## Process

Each focus group lasted between 1.5 and 2 hours, was tape recorded (with permission from the participants) and immediately transcribed. Focus groups were held either mainly in English or in the local language (Hausa, Igbo, Tiv or Yoruba). Depending on the language chosen, they were lead either by the lead researcher or the local research assistant (see Annex E for a detailed discussion of the issue of language in the research)

Focus groups were initially guided by a loose topic guide which ‘translated’ the research questions into topics for discussion and exploration. With successive group discussions, and emerging insights into salient themes and issues, the topic guide was refined into a more structured ‘question guide’, which comprised a set of key questions and allowed for a more focused data collection (see Annex F). Apart from guiding the group discussions, the topic and question guides provided a measure of consistency across groups, and constitute a publicly available document for discussion and scrutiny (Richie and Lewis, 2003)

During the focus groups, all topics or questions for discussion were put to the participants in an open manner, encouraging them to relate, discuss and jointly reflect on and interpret their experiences and views. The sequence in which questions or topics were discussed often varied between groups, depending on the nature and direction taken by participants’ accounts.

During the discussion, the lead researcher’s or research assistant’s role was to:

- a) Moderate and encourage the discussion through gentle checks, so as to steer and maintain its focus and to ensure coverage of all topics and the involvement of all group participants
- b) Respond to any queries raised by participants
- c) Probe, and facilitate the exploration of participants’ accounts in more depth, to delve deeper and illuminate them from various angles.

Inevitably, the degree and nature of probing of views or issues varied depending on whether the discussion was lead by lead researcher or research assistant. (This limitation is discussed further in the reflections on ‘lessons learnt’ in Part III of the report)

## Section 2. Aims, Process, Structure and Scope of the Analysis

## 2.1 Aims of the analysis

The aim of the analysis was to develop two ‘accounts’ of the evidence, germane to the needs of the primary and secondary audience, respectively.

For each primary audience of focus group participants and their communities, the analysis generated a descriptive summary ‘statement’, which will be of *practical relevance* by providing a reference point and basis for their subsequent participation in a process of working towards change. This statement pinpoints:

- The range and main aspects of their current experiences of safety, security and policing in their communities
- Their common vision and rationale for improved safety and security and changes to policing in their communities, as well as any fundamental differences in views between community constituents that still require resolution
- Their requests for concrete change or improvements
- Their ideas or plans on how, and by whom their vision and requests for change may be achieved.

For the initial secondary audience, the A2J programme, the analysis generated a more in-depth account of the emerging evidence. This provides a more refined descriptive analysis, which offers not only a ‘literal summary’ of participants’ accounts, but also conceptual definitions and typologies or classifications. It, moreover, provides an initial understanding of the *nature* and *basis* of participants’ views and perspectives – in terms of personal intentions, values, norms or situational influences – and the patterns of these within and across groups.

The aim in generating such a more refined analysis, essentially, was to convey the groups’ perspectives in terms of the concepts that can provide reference points for the Access to Justice programme both

- a) Internally - with a view to identifying emerging implications for subsequent programme approaches or interventions at a state or overall strategy level
- b) Externally, to relate to the broader governance, justice and poverty reduction discourse.

To this end, a loose framework of conceptual definitions and perspectives was drawn on to guide and provide boundaries for the analysis (see Table 1 below).

*Table 1. Framework of concepts drawn on in the analysis*

Community based policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Based Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection</li> <li>▪ Non emergency servicing/patrol activities</li> <li>▪ Accountability to community</li> <li>▪ Decentralised command</li> <li>▪ Community Involvement in Planning and Overseeing Police Services</li> <li>▪ Police – Community Partnership</li> </ul>
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	(Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000; Community Policing Consortium, 1994; Skolnick and Bayley, 1988)
Criminal/corrective justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deterrence</li> <li>▪ Rehabilitation</li> <li>▪ Correction</li> <li>▪ Retributive justice</li> </ul> <p>(e.g. Maguire <i>et al.</i> 1994)</p>
Basis of social justice and rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Civil (constitutional) rights</li> <li>▪ Natural or human rights</li> </ul> <p>(Steiner, 1994)</p>
Typologies of law cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Criminal cases</li> <li>▪ Civil cases</li> </ul>
Typologies of crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Theft/robbery</li> <li>▪ Vandalism</li> <li>▪ Assault/murder</li> <li>▪ Extortion/corruption</li> </ul> <p>(Maguire <i>et al.</i> 1994)</p>
Typologies of policing-community violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Violence</li> <li>▪ Torture</li> <li>▪ Brutality</li> <li>▪ Corruption</li> <li>▪ Abuse</li> </ul> <p>(Alemika and Chukwuma, 2000)</p>
Livelihoods	<p>The..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Capabilites</li> <li>▪ Assets</li> <li>▪ Activities</li> </ul> <p>..required for a means of living (Chambers and Conway, 1992)</p>
Sustainability of livelihoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ability to cope with and recover from stresses and shocks</li> <li>▪ Ability to maintain or enhance capabilites and assets now and in the future. without undermining their natural resource base</li> </ul> <p>(Ashley and Carney, 1999)</p>

## 2.2 Process of Data Analysis

The process of data analysis proceeded in two successive stages (one in-field and one *post hoc* phase) geared towards the inductive generation of themes, patterns, concepts and understandings from participants' accounts. As typical for qualitative research, data analysis did not follow a fixed protocol, but was custom built and evolved during the study (Creswell, 1998). The process began in the field, where it went hand in hand with, and progressively guided data collection; continued after return from the field; and ended with the writing up of the study findings (Huberman and Miles, 1994; Spencer, Ritchie and Connor 2003)

### *i) In-field analysis*

In the course of the conduct and immediate transcription of successive group discussions, as well in light of research assistants' and local convenors' reports on communities' reactions to recruitment, initial hunches, impressions, or pertinent issues began to emerge in the field. These were noted and reflected on, and then further explored: both in discussions with participants in subsequent groups and, where possible, through follow-up questions put to the local convenors of preceding groups who, in this sense, acted as key informants for the focal community. Through the process of continuous comparison between groups, and the progressive supplementation and refinement of questions and themes to be explored, it became possible to identify initial broad themes, concepts and patterns, both within and across groups.

### *ii) Post-hoc analysis I*

In the post-hoc phase of analysis after return from the field, the identified broad themes and patterns were grounded and further conceptually developed, progressively 'moving up steps on the abstraction ladder' (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This was done through the systematic scrutiny of all transcripts, and the use of cognitive mapping and a framework approach. It involved the recording and charting of accounts in thematic matrices, and progressively unpacking and repackaging data in summary charts and cognitive maps.

Through this process the analysis developed, for each state (i) a detailed account of salient themes and concepts for each of the two LGA and (ii) a broad description of main cross-cutting themes and rural-urban patterns across LGA.

Finally, the analysis produced an overall, broad comparison and synthesis of main emerging themes and patterns across all states.

Due to the restrictions on the time available, the comparative analysis of rural-urban findings for each state, as well of findings across states can only be exploratory. It provides broad summary descriptions of main emerging contrasts or similarities only. A more robust examination of rural-urban and cross-state patterns in perspectives on safety, security and informal policing, would need to be conducted at a later date.

## 2.3 Thematic Frameworks for the Analysis

In the initial stages of post-hoc data analysis, thematic frameworks were developed to facilitate the sorting and grouping of evidence, and thus to provide structure for the

interpretation of data. These frameworks reflected both the main areas for exploration specified in the topic/question guides, as well as key recurrent themes or concepts emerging in the successive conduct of focus group discussions.

Different thematic frameworks were developed to guide the analysis for the primary and secondary reflecting the different purpose of the account to be generated for each audience.

Thus, for the primary audiences of FGD participants and their communities, a very simple framework of four main topics was used to develop the descriptive statements for them (Box 1)

Box 1. Framework of themes for the analysis of findings for FGD participants and their communities

1. Safety, Security and Informal Policing: Current Situation
2. Vision of Needed/Desired Change
3. Support/Change Requested
4. *Envisioned Steps to Achieving Change*

For the secondary audience a set of three more refined thematic frameworks was developed to respectively guide the analysis of findings at the LGA level, the analysis of cross-cutting themes and rural-urban patterns at state level, and the overall analysis of themes and patterns across all states. These frameworks are shown in Box. 2, 3, and 4, respectively.

Box 2. Thematic framework for analysis of findings at LGA level

1. *Degree of homogeneity of participants' views*
2. *Poor communities' reactions to focus group discussions*
  - 2.1 Reactions to/feelings about group discussions
  - 2.2 Views on future engagement
3. Communities' conceptions of safety and security and the importance of these issues to their lives
  - 3.1 Definitions/dimensions of safety and security
  - 3.2 Impact of absence of safety and security on welfare and livelihoods of individuals/communities
  - 3.3 Importance of safety and security as an 'issue' to be addressed
4. Nature of Current Informal Policing Structures: Nature, Functions, Organisation
  - 4.1 Name/Type of current informal policing groups/structures/processes
  - 4.2 Types of activities and functions carried out
  - 4.3 Structure/organisation of current informal policing groups/structures/processes

**5. Current Informal Policing Structures: Extent of Current Role and Mandate vis a vis NPF**

- 5.1 Extent of roles and *de facto* mandate
- 5.2 Boundaries of responsibility/areas of collaboration with NPF

Box 2 cont'd

**6. Current Informal Policing Structures: Emergence, Origin and Rationale**

- 6.1 History of formation of informal policing groups/processes (when were they formed)
- 6.2 Origin of informal policing groups/processes (who formed them)
- 6.3 Rationale/reasons for, meaning of formation of informal policing groups/processes
- 6.4 Underlying experiences/perceptions giving rise to formation of informal policing structures

**7. Current Informal Policing Structures: Perceived Effectiveness and Trustworthiness**

- 7.1 Perceived degree of effectiveness and trustworthiness of informal policing groups in protecting and working in the interest of communities
- 7.2 Reasons and factors underpinning degree of effectiveness and trustworthiness
- 7.3 *Areas of problems/limitations in effectiveness/trustworthiness*

**8. Views on the *de jure* mandate, and visions for the ideal role of informal policing structures vs NPF**

- 8.1 Views on the relative mandate of informal policing groups/processes vs. the NPF to ensure safety and security in community, *in principle*
- 8.2 Visions on the relative role ideally played by IPG/IPP and NPF in ensuring safety and security in communities
- 8.3 Reasons for views/visions

**9. *Concrete Visions/Requests for Change or Improvements* in practice**

- 9.1 Concrete visions/requests or needs for change/improvements in policing of communities in the longer term
- 9.2 Concrete visions/requests or needs for change/improvements in policing of communities in the shorter term

**10. Perspectives and wishes on ways to work towards change**

- 10.1 Ideas/wishes on principal actors to be involved in process of working towards change
- 10.2 Basis of these ideas/wishes
- 10.3 Ideas/wishes on types of activities needed/valuable in working towards change
- 10.4 Necessary first steps

*Box 3. Thematic framework for analysis of cross-cutting themes and rural urban patterns at state level*

1. *Overall Reflections on Rural – Urban Patterns*
2. Poor Communities' Reaction to Engagement with Them
3. Conceptions and Experiences of Safety & Security and their Importance to People's Lives
4. Informal Policing Structures: Role, Nature, Function
5. Informal Policing Structures: Effectiveness
6. Current Mandate of IPS vs. the NPF
7. Rationales Underpinning the Emergence and Current Role of the IPS
8. *Communities' Views on the De Jure Mandate and Ideal Roles of IPS vs NPF*
9. *Communities' Visions and Requests for Practical Change*
10. *Communities' Views on Ways of Working Towards the Envisioned Change*
11. Wider Generality of Findings
12. Implications for A2J Action in the State

*Box 4. Thematic framework for the overall synthesis of cross-state themes and patterns*

1. Overall Reflections on Cross – State Patterns
2. Poor Communities' Reaction to Engagement with Them
3. Conceptions and Experiences of Safety and Security and their Importance to People's Lives
4. Informal Policing Structures: Nature and Function
5. *Informal Policing Structures: Effectiveness*
6. *Current Role and Policing Mandate of Informal Policing Structures vs. NPF*
7. *Communities' Views on the De Jure Mandate and Ideal Roles of IPS vs NPF*
8. Communities Visions and Requests for Practical Change
9. Emerging Implications for A2J Approaches and Interventions
10. Reflections on Wider Generality of Findings and Lessons Learnt: Implications for Future A2J Research

#### 2.4 Scope of Data Analysis: Issues of Generalisability and Verification

Considerations of verification and generalisability are central to delineating the scope of any qualitative analysis (Huberman and Miles, 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Creswell, 1998).

##### *Verification*

The issue of verification concerns the question of how to ensure that the accounts generated by the analysis reflect, as accurately as possible, the 'reality' of those researched. Verification in qualitative research is a complex issue and a multiplicity of perspectives currently exists regarding the importance, definition and procedures of establishing verification (Creswell, 1998). These range from views of verification as equated to traditional quantitative positivistic notions of validity (e.g. LeCompte and Goetz, 1982), to perspectives rejecting such terms as inappropriate for qualitative research and advocating alternative criteria and means of 'verification', and finally to post-modernist stances which reject the notion altogether (Wolcott, 1990).

In this research, as in most qualitative inquiries, verification has been an important element in attempting to ensure the credibility or trustworthiness of its findings and interpretations<sup>9</sup>. To this end, four selected ‘verification measures’, were incorporated in the design of data collection, analysis and the proposed method of data reporting. (see Creswell, 1998; Huberman and Miles, 1994; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Schutz, 1972)

First, and closely linked with the goal of participation, is the involvement of group participants *themselves* in the interpretation and analysis of their accounts. Where possible, this was achieved through *member checks* in which emerging interpretations were fed back to participants or key informants either during the groups (within and across successive groups), or through follow-up questions afterwards.

Second, the cultivation of a *reflexive stance* by the lead researcher. The aim was to foster an awareness of her own values or biases and the way these may shape her interpretations. At the outset of the research this involved clarifying and, in a sense, setting aside prior conceptions and, throughout, aiming to keep questions as ‘open’ as possible, rather than just seeking simple confirmation of emerging ideas or hunches. Moreover, emerging dispositions and their possible influence on the researcher’s interpretations were reflected on and considered in the analysis

Third, the analysis took into account any possible effects of the researchers themselves on the views or perspectives expressed by participants.

Lastly, a degree of *triangulation* of findings was achieved through the collection of evidence from different angles and sources (e.g. focus group discussions with a range of different community members and informal conversations with key informants).

#### *Generalisability*

The issue of generalisability concerns the extent to which the research findings will apply beyond the small sample expressing their views in the groups. Specifically it concerns the degree to which findings can be said to reflect:

- a) The perspectives of the wider population in the focal community, and other poor communities in the LGA from which the group participants were drawn
- b) The perspectives of poor communities in other LGA in each respective A2J focal state

In principle, and strictly speaking, the research findings for each group cannot claim to represent the perspectives of other poor community members beyond those who participated in the FGD.

Nonetheless, a reasonable amount of representativeness, at least of prevailing views in the focal community, can be assumed in view of the participant selection strategy, which ensured that as broad a spectrum as possible of different community based groups, as well as individuals not represented by any such group were included. A wider generality to other communities in the study LGA, or to other LGA within the state should generally not be assumed.

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<sup>9</sup> The terms verification, credibility and trustworthiness, rather than ‘validity’ are used to underscore qualitative research as a distinct and legitimate mode of inquiry in its own right.

PART II

STUDY FINDINGS FOR THE A2J FOCAL STATES

## Introduction

This second part of the report presents the study findings for each of the A2J focal states, with each of the four subsequent sections dedicated to one focal state.

Thus,

- Section 1 presents the findings for Benue State
- Section 2 presents the findings for Ekiti State
- Section 3 presents the findings for Enugu State
- Section 4 presents the findings for Jigawa State

For each state, the discussion of findings will comprise the following:

- a) An executive summary of key findings
- b) An overview of main cross-cutting themes and broad rural-urban patterns in the State
- c) A discussion of emerging implications for A2J action in the State
- d) A separate analysis of findings for each LGA including
  - i) A summary statement of main views and priorities for change expressed by participants. This is intended above all for the primary audience of FGD participants and their communities.
  - ii) A detailed descriptive account of the nature, range, and basis of perspectives, priorities and views expressed by the focus group participants. Throughout, key points are illustrated with quotations of participants' statements or, in a few cases, of follow-up statements provided by the local convenors. For those groups conducted in English, citations of participants' statements are verbatim quotes. For those groups conducted in the local language, they are the literal translations provided by the local research assistants during transcription. To remain within reasonable confines on report length, a maximum of four quotes is used to illustrate each main point.

## SECTION 1: BENUE STATE FINDINGS

## Executive Summary

The focus group research findings for Benue State provide a rich picture of, and give a voice to poor communities' experiences, concerns and perceptions regarding safety, security and the role played by informal policing structures.

In particular, the findings highlight a number of key themes and priorities that emerged across both study communities and are central to their perspectives on these issues.

First, and above all, the research has shown communities' profound appreciation of being given the opportunity to express their views without fear, and to be listened to on an issue of such critical importance to their lives. It is an opportunity they feel they are usually denied. However, the communities also expressed a sincere wish for the research to go beyond good intentions and to result in practical change for them.

There can be no doubt that in both rural and urban communities safety and security – perceived above all as the protection of lives and property from crime – are of vital importance to individuals' ability to sustain their livelihoods as well as to the development of communities as a whole. The urban, but not the rural community, moreover, explicitly saw safety and security as a constitutional right.

In both rural and urban communities it is the informal policing structures (IPS) – primarily the 'vigilante' groups – that play the central and dominant role in, and are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring safety and security through the prevention and detection of crime. Whilst rural and urban vigilante groups vary in aspects of their organisational structure, their main functions are essentially the same.

In both rural and urban communities, the formation and presence of the vigilante groups represents a 'self-help' measure taken by communities in view of their profound loss of confidence in the Nigerian police (NPF), due to (a) the failure of the police to curb crime and the intolerably high rates of crime resulting from it and (b) in the rural community, moreover, the detrimental impact of police operations on community solidarity, and on the livelihoods and access to justice especially of the poor. The communities see both of these factors first and foremost as the result of a pervasive corruption in the police force.

In both urban and rural communities, the vigilante are trusted and have largely been effective in curbing crime. In the rural community, however, some limitations in the vigilante's efficacy remain, mainly due to their lack of funding. In both communities, the general effectiveness of the vigilante roots in the fact that they are themselves members of the communities they serve. They are thus 'owned' by, under the control of and accountable to the community and have a vested interest in carrying out their duties as effectively as possible. In the rural context, moreover, they possess a vital degree of knowledge of local population elements.

Whilst in both communities the NPF retains the formal mandate for bringing offenders to justice, the vigilante, with approval of their communities, usually administer justice themselves in minor or novice cases. Serious offenders are generally referred to the NPF. However, the police

commonly release guilty offenders in return for monetary reward, thus further exacerbating communities' risk of crime and engendering a sense of injustice. In view of this, urban vigilante groups, again with community approval, occasionally administer jungle justice to such offenders as a desperate measure of self-defence.

Views on the ideal role to be played by vigilante and NPF differ between urban and rural communities. The urban community ultimately envisions a changed police force that is able to effectively and justly prevent and detect crime in their community, thus rendering the vigilante unnecessary. A joint community-NPF-government dialogue is seen as an important way of working towards such change. Until change is achieved, however, the vigilante groups continue to be entrusted with the responsibility of policing the communities. The rural community wishes for continued dominant role of the vigilante in crime detection and prevention both now and for the foreseeable future.

Both urban and rural communities' requests for the shorter term thus centre on the need for practical measures to support, maintain and, especially in the rural community, to enhance the effectiveness of their vigilante groups. For the longer term, both urge the need for initiatives to reform and eliminate corruption in the NPF.

As a first step to working towards the change they envision, both communities sincerely request for further consultation with the A2J programme.

The research findings bear several important implications for A2J action in Benue State. These include, most importantly:

- (i) The vital need for interventions focused on safety and security, and an engagement with informal policing structures as important agents for positive change especially in the shorter term
- (ii) A need for advocacy and participatory action processes with relevant NPF and government officials to foster a genuine willingness to engage in, and respond to a joint dialogue for change with communities
- (iii) The need for interventions to initiate and facilitate such a dialogue
- (iv) In the immediate term, an imperative need to honour communities' requests for further A2J engagement and consultation with them, as a first step in supporting them in working towards the change they have envisioned.

A continued engagement with study communities can moreover provide an opportunity and entry point for a greater overall focus on 'giving a voice to', and working with the poor as part of A2J activities.

## 1. Cross-Cutting Themes and Patterns in Benue State

The focus group research in Benue State has highlighted a range of key themes and patterns in poor communities' perspectives, priorities and needs regarding safety, security and informal policing. These are outlined below.

### Overall reflections on rural – urban patterns

- 1. Comparison of the rural and urban focus group discussions clearly shows that although specific details or forms may differ, communities' priorities and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing are largely underpinned by the same principal experiences and values. The only fundamental area of rural-urban difference lies in communities' views on the ideal roles to be played by the informal policing structures (IPS) and the Nigeria Police Force (NPF)*

### *Poor communities' reaction to engagement with them*

2. Both rural and urban communities expressed a profound sense of appreciation of being given the opportunity to freely express their views and be listened to on an issue that is of utmost importance to their lives – an opportunity, which they feel they are usually not given.
3. More than that, groups expressed an appreciation of being able to voice their views without fear of reprisal and intimidation – a right and freedom, which they feel they are usually denied. They described their communities' general anxiety about freely expressing their views especially on a topic such as security and policing – out of fear they may be used against them. This anxiety may in part reflect the politicised atmosphere that currently prevails in the LGA
4. However, whilst greatly appreciating the opportunity to express their views, the communities also emphasised that being 'listened to' is not enough. They voiced a sincere wish and need for this research to go beyond rhetoric and good intentions, and to result in tangible change for them. Their request is underpinned by their profound sense of disillusionment with previous, especially government consultation exercises, which have never gone beyond promises and thus, for them, have been in vain.

### *Conceptions and experiences of safety and security and their importance to people's lives*

5. Poor communities understood safety and security above all as the protection of property and lives from crime, and the freedom from anxiety that accompanies it. They clearly expressed the fundamental importance that such protection has to their welfare. It is a pre-requisite for

individuals’ ability to sustain their livelihoods and for the economic development of poor communities as a whole.

6. Conversely, both rural and urban communities stressed that it is the current lack of economic security, in particular the lack of employment opportunities for youth, that is the major cause of crime in their communities. Their emphasis reflects the high unemployment problem in both Local Government Areas.
7. Both rural and communities, moreover, emphasised the various direct or indirect ways in which the lack of basic infrastructure (especially roads) or amenities (especially electricity) contribute to crime in their communities.
8. The urban, but not the rural community, saw safety and security as their right as citizens and, consequently perceived a constitutional obligation on the part of government to ensure it.

*Informal Policing Structures: Role, Nature, Function*

9. In both rural and urban communities, the informal policing structures play the central role in ensuring the safety and security of community members. It is to them, not to the police, that communities currently entrust the main responsibility for protecting their lives and property by preventing and detecting crime in their midst.
10. In both urban and rural communities, two major types of informal policing structure (IPS) exist:
  - (i) Community ‘vigilante’ groups
  - (ii) Oracle ‘trial by ordeal’ processes (of minor importance)

(see Table 1 for an outline of their major activities and policing functions contributed to by the IPS)

11. In both rural and urban communities the vigilante groups are the most important and prominent among the IPS. Communities evidently see no negative connotation in the term ‘vigilante’. The urban community, moreover, clearly distinguish their group from the Bakassi Boys who, in their eyes, are o longer under community control and have become interest groups in their own right.

(see Table 2 for an outline of the main organisational features of the vigilante in both study communities)

*Table 1: Main IPS in Benue study communities: main activities and policing functions*

Informal Policing Structure	Main Activities and Policing Functions Contributed To
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Vigilante Groups	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Night patrols in residential communities</li> <li>▪ Detection and investigation of suspicions or cases of crime reported to them.</li> <li>▪ Administer punishment to caught minor/novice offenders without subsequent referral to police</li> <li>▪ After questioning, grave offenders are usually referred to the police. In the urban community, such offenders are sporadically subjected to ‘jungle justice’ and killed by vigilante and/or wider community</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> <li>▪ Corrective Justice (partially)</li> </ul>
Satellite ‘Community Watch Groups’	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assist and supplement work of the vigilante through patrols in smaller communities</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> </ul>
Oracle ‘Trial by Ordeal’ Process	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Traditional process of consulting and inviting judgement from oracle, typically initiated by ‘Orya’ (traditional Tiv family head)</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measure of Corrective Justice</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection</li> <li>▪ Crime Prevention through Deterrence</li> </ul>

Table 2: Vigilante groups in the Benue study communities: main organisational features

LGA	Main Organisational Features
Ushongo (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NEW INSTITUTION (DOES NOT REPRESENT CONTINUATION/REVIVAL OF TRADITIONAL FORMATIONS)</li> <li>▪ Hierarchical structure comprising ‘commandants’ and ordinary members</li> <li>▪ No office in community</li> <li>▪ No vehicles for use in operations</li> <li>▪ COMPRISING OF SELECTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS, MANY RETIRED SERVICE MEN WHO VOLUNTEER FOR SERVICE</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overseen by community vigilante chairman/village elders</li> <li>▪ No financial support from Local Government</li> <li>▪ Voluntary service, charge to clients of N500 for arrests</li> <li>▪ Some community contributions for basic equipment</li> </ul>
<i>Gboko (urban)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NEW INSTITUTION (DOES NOT REPRESENT CONTINUATION/REVIVAL OF TRADITIONAL FORMATIONS)</li> <li>▪ OVERALL ORGANISATION FOR LGA</li> <li>▪ Offices at ward and central level, manned by the few full-time members</li> <li>▪ One vehicle and several motorcycles for use in operations</li> <li>▪ Assisted by ‘satellite’ community watch groups in smaller communities</li> <li>▪ COMPRISING OF SELECTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS, MANY RETIRED SERVICE MEN WHO VOLUNTEER FOR SERVICE</li> <li>▪ Overseen and recruited by community vigilante committees/chairman</li> <li>▪ Financial support from Local Government (monthly allocation) for equipment/logistics</li> <li>▪ Voluntary service: no salary or stipend received</li> </ul>

*Informal Policing Structures: Effectiveness*

- 12.** In both rural and urban communities the vigilante are trusted and have clearly been effective in curbing crime and protecting communities’ interests.
- 13.** In both rural and urban communities, the vigilante’s effectiveness roots in the fact that members are themselves from within and part of the communities, and that the communities themselves are close knit. This ensures the following:
- (i) A degree of community ‘ownership’ of the vigilante and, conversely, vigilante’s accountability to the community.
  - (ii) A degree of community control over, and scrutiny of vigilante during recruitment and service
  - (iii) A strong commitment and vested interest on the part of the vigilante to carry out their functions effectively and with integrity
  - (iv) Detailed knowledge on the part of the vigilante of the local terrain, population elements, customs and norms
- 14.** In the rural, but not the urban community, an in spite of their general success, there remain some important limitations in the effectiveness of, and approaches used by the vigilante.

Communities feel strongly that the vigilante could be much more effective than they currently are. The present limitations include specifically

- i) Their lack of personnel and equipment necessary for thorough crime prevention and detection
- ii) The N500 charged on parties requesting arrest or investigation.

Both areas of limitation are seen as the result of the lack of funding, especially the lack of remuneration for vigilante members.

*Current mandate of IPS vs. the NPF*

- 15.** In both rural and urban communities, it is the vigilante groups that are currently given the main mandate for crime prevention and detection.
- 16.** In both rural and urban communities, however, the legal mandate for initiating the process of corrective justice is in principle recognised to lie with the NPF.
- 17.** However, in practice, however, the vigilante commonly appropriate this mandate in certain cases
- 18.** First, in both urban and rural communities, the vigilante groups commonly administer punishment to minor or novice offenders without subsequently referring them to the police. In such cases referral to the NPF is seen as unnecessary or even counterproductive.
- 19.** Second, in the urban but not the rural communities, the vigilante, often in conjunction with the wider community, occasionally administer ‘jungle justice’ to perpetrators of particularly grave or damaging offences, such as armed robbery. This appropriation of the judicial function must be seen, above all, as a desperate response by communities. It is a reaction to the common practice of the NPF to release offenders in return for a monetary reward, thus increasing communities’ risk of repeat crime, and fostering a sense of grave injustice on their part. The administration of jungle justice by the vigilante is specifically an attempt to remove the risk of re-offence by the criminal, to provide at least a temporary deterrent to other potential offenders, and to achieve a measure of justice.

*Rationales underpinning the emergence and current role of the IPS*

- 20.** In both rural and urban communities the formation and current prominence of the vigilante represent a response to an experienced failure of the police to effectively protect their communities’ interests and, as a result, a profound loss of confidence in the police
- 21.** The vigilante were specifically formed in response to the ineffectiveness of the police in curbing crime, and the intolerably high crime levels that emerged as a result. Thus, communities formed them as a self-protection against crime, to fill the gap left by the

ineffectiveness of the police in crime prevention and detection. Their function was, and is in theory intended to complement and support the function of the police.

22. The main factor seen as underlying the NPF failure to protect communities from crime is police officer's apparent readiness to collaborate with, or release criminals in return for monetary rewards. I.e. an unwillingness to do all, always, to justly enforce the law and bring guilty parties to justice. This has enhanced communities' exposure to repeat crimes from such offenders and thus further undermined their security. This police conduct is seen the result of corruption and an interest in self-enrichment on the part of police officers. The corruption itself is seen as being enabled by officers' 'immunity' from prosecution and as engendered by those in the very top positions of the NPF and government.
23. The lack of equipment and personnel were seen as an additional, albeit secondary, reason for the police failure. In the rural community the police' lack of knowledge of the local terrain, population and customs is seen as a further contributing factor.
24. In addition to the police failure to protect communities from crime, a second rationale for the presence of the vigilante exists in the rural community. This is the fact that the police's readiness to side with whichever party can bring the most rewards (usually the richer party), and to demand undue payments from those who are already impoverished, has been experienced as introducing enmity between community members, and as being oppressive of the poor. In a sense, the prominence of the vigilante thus also reflects a wish for an alternative to, and protection from the NPF

Communities' views on the *de jure* mandate and ideal roles of IPS vs. NPF

25. Rural and urban communities clearly differed in their views on the *de jure* mandate and the ideal roles of vigilante and NPF.
26. The rural community, in light of a sense of alienation from and oppression by the NPF, wishes for the vigilante to continue to carry the mandate for all aspects of policing in the foreseeable future, except perhaps in the initiation of corrective justice for serious offenders, given the NPF's constitutional mandate for this. A further main reason for envisaging a dominant role for the vigilante is the fact that they possess the knowledge of local terrain, customs and population that is necessary for wholly effective crime detection and prevention.
27. The urban community, in contrast, and in spite of their current loss of confidence in the police, sees the mandate for all policing functions as lying, by right, with the NPF. It thus the NPF who should, ideally, carry out these functions – providing it could do so justly and effectively. Their vision and desire for change is thus for a police force, which is wholly able to carry out its mandate, thus removing the need for IPS. Until this is achieved, however, the IPS carry the provisional and temporary mandate for protecting them. This

includes a reluctant, but generally approved tacit mandate to administer jungle justice where this is deemed necessary.

Communities' visions and requests for practical change  
(see Table 3 below for a detailed outline of communities' requests for practical change)

28. The communities' requests for practical change reflect their views on the ideal roles of the NPF and vigilante in the shorter and longer term.
29. Thus, for the longer term, the urban community strongly requests initiatives to enable the NPF to carry out its mandate for policing effectively and justly.
30. As an important part of working towards such change, the urban community requests the facilitation of consultation fora in which they can freely express their views and needs to the NPF and policy-makers. A precondition for this, however, is a genuine willingness on the part of these bodies to engage in such a joint dialogue, and to respond to the requests for change that emerge from it.
31. For the shorter term, until change in the NPF is achieved, the urban community requests practical change to maintain and bolster the effectiveness of the vigilante groups
32. The rural community urgently request both for the longer and shorter term, measures to address the limitations in, and thus enhance the effectiveness and approaches of the vigilante. In addition, it requests measures to ensure that the NPF brings guilty parties to justice.
33. Finally, also for the longer term, both urban and rural communities expressed an urgent need for efforts to improve the employment opportunities for the youth, as a vital measure of primordial<sup>10</sup> prevention of crime. Again, this emphasis can be seen as reflecting the high unemployment problem in both LGA.

Table3: Communities requests for practical change in Benue study communities

LGA	Shorter Term	Longer Term	First Steps towards Change
Ushongo (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to improve effectiveness of vigilante including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Provision of remuneration to the vigilante provided through the community elders or vigilante chairman</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Same as for immediate term, plus:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Efforts to improve economic opportunities through provision of infrastructure (roads) and employment opportunities, especially for the youth as a measure of</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continued consultation with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change.</li> <li>▪ Such consultation should involve FGD participants as well as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ter Ushongo</li> <li>- local government</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> 'Primordial prevention', is a term often used in Health Promotion debates to refer to measures which address the macro-structural forces or conditions which influence the uptake of 'risk' (in this case: criminal) behaviours.

	<p>(ii) Provision of appropriate equipment and uniforms to boost morale and improve capacity to apprehend criminals</p> <p>(iii) Provision of training in skills and strategies of crime prevention and detection</p> <p>(iv) Provision of an 'office' to enhance stability and presence and encourage youth involvement</p>	<p>primordial crime prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to reform the police in order to ensure it brings guilty parties to justice, through</li> </ul>	<p>chairman</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- vigilante chairman</li> <li>- kindred heads.</li> </ul>
Gboko (urban)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to support vigilante and maintain/enhance their effectiveness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Provision of equipment such as vehicles and appropriate arms</li> <li>(ii) Provision of token remuneration for full-time vigilante, to boost morale</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Note: Communities wish for vigilante not to become fully salaried civil servants as this would lead to the loss of community control over, and ownership of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initiatives to effect change and reorientation in NPF including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Punishment and elimination of police corruption beginning from the topmost positions</li> <li>(ii) Provision of sufficient equipment for police forces on the ground</li> <li>(iv) Facilitation of fora in which communities can freely express their needs to, and engage in a joint dialogue with NPF and relevant policy makers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change</li> <li>▪ Such consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Vigilante chairman</li> <li>(ii) Vigilante members</li> <li>(iii) Community leaders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	them. i.e. vigilante should not become interest groups in their own right.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Efforts to improve employment opportunities, especially for the youth as a measure of primary prevention of crime</li> </ul>	
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### Communities' views on ways of working towards the envisioned change

- 34.** Communities perceived the need for different approaches and actors to work towards achieving the envisioned change in the NPF, and support for the vigilante, respectively
- 35.** In terms of the change in the NPF, both urban and rural communities expressed a request for government initiatives to effect such a change. Referring to the largely successful 'war against indiscipline (WAI)' policies of the Buhari/Idiagbon era, they argue that government, if willing, is capable of effecting such change very rapidly. The urban community, however, specifically requests for NGO initiatives in the facilitation of community-NPF-government consultation fora.
- 36.** In terms of support measures to the vigilante, the rural community specifically conveyed a strong wish for the involvement of NGO, rather than government, to work with them towards achieving the measures they have identified as necessary. The fear is that government involvement will, inevitably, result in delays, appropriation of funds and thus, ultimately, in disappointment.
- 37.** Both urban and rural communities perceived a responsibility on the part of government, to provide measures to improve the economic and especially employment opportunities in their communities.
- 38.** Both urban and rural communities clearly request, as a first step, further A2J consultation and engagement with them. Such consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as other relevant community members

### *Wider generality of findings*

- 39.** The findings of this research cannot claim to a wider generality beyond the focal communities from which the focus group participants were drawn. Whilst it is very likely that many of the main emerging themes will also apply in other communities or LGA, this cannot be assumed.

## 2. Implications for A2J Action in Benue State

In view of the findings emerging from the research, the following implications for A2J action in Benue State emerge:

a) Substantive Areas for Intervention

*i) Safety and security as a key intervention focus: engagement with informal policing structures*

- Given the fundamental importance of safety and security to the livelihoods of individuals and the development of poor communities as a whole, continued A2J interventions focusing on ways to improve safety and security (and thus policing) for poor communities are imperative.
- Given the central role entrusted to, and played by vigilante groups in ensuring poor communities' safety and security, it is vital that such interventions engage with these groups. They must be viewed as major agents for positive change, especially in the shorter term. Interventions must specifically consider the provision of practical support to such informal policing groups - as requested by communities themselves. This is particularly crucial in the rural LGA.
- Given the current urban practice and tacit acceptance of jungle justice in view of the lack of justice provided by the police, A2J engagement with urban informal policing structures and urban communities must also involve dialogue on the issue of how, until change in the NPF has been accomplished, 'corrective justice' and protection may be achieved without resorting to this extreme measure.

*ii) For the longer term: interventions to achieve change in npf*

- For the longer term, A2J interventions must also be directed at effecting and facilitating change (especially the elimination of corruption) in the NPF. A key focus of such interventions must be to facilitate a joint dialogue between NPF, government (i.e. relevant policy makers) and those poor communities wishing for such a dialogue. This will necessitate a) advocacy and participatory action processes to foster a genuine willingness of these bodies to engage in a dialogue with communities and b) the facilitation/institution of concrete consultation/discussion fora.
- Given communities' expressed apprehension about freely expressing their (political) views, and their sense of lacking a true 'right to freedom of expression' without fear of reprisal or intimidation, A2J should consider initiatives to foster awareness of, and support communities' practice of this constitutional right. These should form part of efforts to foster an NPF-government-community dialogue
- In view of the rural community's seemingly limited awareness of their rights as citizens vis a vis safety, security and the police, initiatives to foster such an awareness should also be part of A2J interventions aimed at fostering an NPF-government-community dialogue

*iii) Other opportunities for intervention*

- Issues of domestic violence were conspicuously absent from communities' conceptions and discussions of safety and security needs. This may indicate a need for awareness raising, should there be a wish on the part of A2J to focus on this area

*b) Necessary and recommended practical interventions*

*i) Continued engagement with study communities*

- The vital importance of continued A2J engagement with the study communities cannot be overemphasised. The Access to Justice programme must honour the request of the communities for further consultation and engagement with them as a first step to working towards achieving the change they have envisioned.
- The initial focus of such continued consultation must be the reporting and feeding back of the study findings to the communities with a view to establishing a common basis and reference point for subsequent activities and approaches. A failure to do so would not only violate the fundamental principles of the participatory action paradigm which underpins the A2J research approach – it would also further compound poor communities' disillusionment with research or consultation exercises, which raise their expectations but do not result in any tangible change or improvement for them. In the extreme it would add to poor communities' sense of abandonment by those, including the Access to Justice programme, who have the capacity to support them in effecting improvements in safety and security.
- A continued engagement with study communities can moreover provide an opportunity and entry point for a greater overall focus on 'giving a voice to', and working with the poor as part of A2J activities

*ii) Further discussion/consultation groups on different topics*

- Given communities' profound appreciation of being given an opportunity to freely discuss and be consulted on an issue of importance to their lives, A2J should consider initiating such consultation/discussion groups also on other topics related to justice, safety or security

*c) Further research*

- Given that the findings of this research cannot claim to a wider generality beyond the focal communities from which the focus group participants were drawn, there is a need for further research in other communities within the LGA, as well as in other LGA to identify main areas of need and requests for change regarding safety, security and policing – provided A2J intends to initiate policing interventions also in other communities.
- Any such further research on safety, security and informal policing could draw on the framework and methods developed for this study

*d) Immediate action points*

In view of the research findings, the following immediate action is required:

- In each of the study communities, as soon as possible, organisation of a consultation workshop with the FGD participants and other identified relevant community members. The primary aim of the consultation workshop must be to establish rapport with the A2J programme, to feed back the findings of this research to the communities and, in doing so, to establish common basis and reference point for subsequent joint efforts to work towards the envisioned change.

*Other relevant community members to be included in the initial consultation workshop include:*

In Ushongo:                   (i) Ter Ushongo (second class traditional chief)  
   (ii) Local government chairman  
   (iii) Vigilante chairman  
   iv) Kindred heads

In Gboko                       (i) Vigilante chairmen  
   (ii) Community leaders  
   (iii) Vigilante members

Organisation of the consultation workshop should be facilitated by the local research assistant (Mr. T. Shankyula) who, assisted by the local convenors, has established the necessary rapport with the community.

### 3. Main Findings For Ushongo LGA (Rural)

#### 3.1 USHONGO: SUMMARY STATEMENT

##### Safety, Security and Informal Policing: Current Situation

- Safety and security, and especially the protection from crime, are of vital importance to the livelihoods of community members and the development of the community as a whole
- A major cause of crime in the communities is the lack of employment opportunities, and the resulting desperation, which turns especially youth to commit offences
- The crime situation in Ushongo is now better than it was a few years ago, thanks to the operation of the community vigilante groups. These were formed as a self-protection measure in response to the failure of the police curb crime and to adequately protect the community, and the resulting rise in the rate of crime
- Today it is in these vigilante that the community entrust much of the responsibility to protect their lives and property through the prevention and detection of crime.

- Whilst the formal mandate for initiating the process of corrective justice for offenders remains with the NPF, the vigilante usually administer justice themselves in minor or novice cases. All other cases are usually referred to the police
- The vigilante's effectiveness in crime prevention and detection has clearly been greater than that of the police. To a large extent this is due to the fact that the vigilante are members of the community themselves and as such are under the 'control' of the community. Moreover, they possess the detailed knowledge of the local terrain and population that is necessary for wholly effective crime detection and prevention
- Nonetheless there clearly are some areas of weakness that have limited the vigilante's effectiveness in recent years. Above all, these weaknesses are consequences of the lack of funding, and especially remuneration for the vigilante.
- Moreover, although the NPF retains the mandate for bringing serious offenders to justice, there is a current failure of the police to do so and to justly enforce the law. Guilty offenders are commonly released in return for monetary rewards. This enhances communities' exposure to repeat crimes from such offenders, further undermines their security and creates a sense of injustice suffered at the hands of the police
- There thus remains a great need for change to improve the policing of communities in order to better ensure the safety, security and access to justice of its members.

#### Vision of Needed/Desired Change

- Despite their current weaknesses, it is the vigilante group to which the communities wish to entrust the mandate to prevent and detect crime in their midst for the foreseeable future. The ultimate vision is thus for a vigilante group that is able to carry out this function and protect the community wholly effectively. This requires, above all
  - Improvements in the vigilante's competence in, and capacity for crime prevention and detection
  - Modifications in some of their current policing practices that have been found to have negative impacts on community members' livelihoods
- The police is recognised to carry the legal mandate for initiating the process of corrective justice especially for serious offenders. The vision for change is thus a NPF that is willing to do all, in all cases, to justly enforce the law and bring guilty parties to justice. This requires, above all, a reorientation of, and elimination of corruption in the police.
- Lack of economic security, and especially lack of employment opportunities, especially for the youth are the root causes of crime in Ushongo. As a measure of primordial prevention, there is thus an urgent and vital need for change to enhance employment opportunities and economic security for individuals - and in doing so, to remove the motivation and incentives for crime

## Practical Support/Change Requested

- Practical support requested to improve the effectiveness and approaches of the vigilante include:
  - Provision of financial support, in form of remuneration to the vigilante. This should go through the community elders or vigilante chairman
  - Provision of appropriate equipment and uniforms to boost morale and improve capacity to apprehend criminals
  - Provision of training in skills and strategies of crime prevention and detection, to improve precision of their operations, and negotiate extent of judicial function to be carried out by vigilante
  - Provision of infrastructure in form of an ‘office’ to enhance stability and presence and encourage involvement of the youth
  - All support to the vigilante should be provided through NGO rather than government agencies
- Concrete measures requested to contribute towards change in NPF include:
  - Initiatives to punish and eliminate corruption in the NPF, beginning from the topmost positions
- Concrete measures proposed to enhance economic and employment opportunities, include
  - Improvement of roads and infrastructure to facilitate business activities

## *First Steps in Working Towards Change*

- a) Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change. Consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as other relevant community members, specifically:
  - Ter Ushongo (second class traditional chief covering Ushongo local government).
  - Local government chairman
  - Kindred heads.
  - Vigilante chairman

## 3.2 USHONGO: DETAILED FINDINGS

### 1. DEGREE OF HOMOGENEITY OF PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS

Participants' views and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing in their communities displayed a marked degree of homogeneity and agreement. On almost all topics, participants expressed the same principal values, experiences and attitudes. The only area in which views markedly diverged was on the question of the administration of jungle justice by informal policing structures (IPS)

### *2. Poor Communities' Reactions to Focus Group Discussion*

Reflecting on the focus group discussion, participants strongly expressed their appreciation of having had the opportunity to discuss and air their views on a topic of such vital importance to them. They stressed the positive impact that the discussion and the sense of 'being listened to' had had on them. In light of this, they expressed a strong wish for further A2J consultation with them, with a view to truly working towards the change they have envisioned.

“Really your coming here was a very very good development for us”

“In future we would like to discuss with you and ... even if we were to stay here all day we would like to do it! ...What you have brought here is as if you were in our minds. We believe that it is God who sent you people here. Because this is really what is happening to us here and you people have really come to hit the nail on the head. We have been discussing security here we have had a series of meetings here, on what has taken place here recently, and [it is] as if God has sent you here to come and discuss the issue and with us and how we can improve the situation ... So we...will be ready for you ... anytime you want to come.”

Participants also noted, in this context, how the experience of the FGD contrasted with, and had allayed their initial apprehension of the motives of study in the current politicised context, and fear that their views may be used against them.

“If we had known that this was the kind of discussion we would have... You see the Nigeria of this time is one kind. If you invite some person like that we will be sceptical as to what the motives or implications might be”

“Yes we were talking earlier about the politicisation of the environment here, in this political era, everyone is afraid that maybe you want to come and get us and then get us locked up because of the political situation”

### 3. Communities' Conceptions of Safety and Security, and Their Importance to Their Lives

Participants' perceived safety and security above all, as the protection of property and lives, and the freedom from anxiety and fear of harm or loss that comes with it

“The fact is that I am a food seller. By the nature of my occupation, most of the time I leave my things in the stall, it could be yams, soup items, or so many other things. If there is not enough security these things are not safe. So I feel that if security is beefed up people will feel very free ... if when I went back to my house I could be sure that people are looking over my property and I would be free to sleep soundly without any fear of any threat”

“When we are talking of safety and security we are talking of protecting the common man's ... lives and property”

Participants stressed the vital importance that such protection has for their lives, and especially for their livelihoods. They described the grave impact that especially a lacking protection from theft, robbery or

fraud within their own cooperative societies, has had on their ability and opportunities to engage in business activities or investments necessary to sustain their livelihoods. Thus, to them, safety and security are a key prerequisite for the economic progress and advancement of their community.

“Safety and security is very very important in our life here”

“Some two weeks ago [some] homes were being broken into by thieves, and that affected us seriously because the people that were affected were the Igbos that came to buy things here. Armed robbers broke into where they slept and took away their money. And that affected the entire people because the women that brought in their own goods to sell into the market - the people to buy them from them were not there. The Igbos said they won't buy anything here because they are not safe here. It is not safe for them, and for that reason we have problems. The farmers who brought their goods from villages, they couldn't sell, groundnuts were not sold here, we were forced to take our own products to sell in the next market a local government area altogether. So revenue wise we lost something ... The revenue that would have come from these people that came went to another local government, so we lost ... It was because we had no security... So we need security, without it, no progress”

“For some time now people in the village here have come ... to join their money together, for example so that they buy motorcycle for these people, so that it makes their life more worthwhile ... There are many of these associations which are helping most of the poor people around but there are some bad eggs coming into these associations and they have crumbled the association... I was in one association and I contributed money to the tune of N 15,000 knowing really that I would get a motorcycle. Later on some other people came and these people were given the loan and I was left like that...so we need help [with such] problems that bring the destruction of such an association because we need these associations in our community. So that it will continue helping the generality of the ...community”

Conversely, and equally important, participants also reflected on some of the root causes of crime. They stressed that it is the prevailing absence of *economic* security, in particular the lack of employment opportunities, that is the major cause of crime in their community, especially among youth. Those who have a job and a sense of perspective, they explained, will have no reason to turn to crime. Those who have no such perspective, however, will out of desperation do anything to earn a livelihood – including turning to crime or defrauding their own society members. In the latter case, they seem no longer to be deterred by the threat of community sanctions such as losing their name or reputation.

“My own aspect of security is an environment where there is an abundance of employment for the youth. Where people get employed. Where they know really what the government wants them to be in future and what they can help their community in

future when they get the employment. They wouldn't think of going to commit other atrocities”

“We in the motorcycle association ... we try to...engage ourselves in motorcycling as a business to make ends meet. But if there is unemployment and no economic security it ...becomes difficult for us to operate... If ... we [could] become gainfully engaged ...so many of our brothers [would] pull out of criminal activities”

“They don't care whether their name is being tarnished or not ... Anybody who has been unemployed for a long time and has now the chance to jump into a situation where he can earn a living, that question will not bother him”

#### *4. Nature of Current Informal Policing Structures: Organisation, Function, Activities, Approach*

The group participants described two principal types of informal policing structure or process that currently operates in their communities to ensure safety and security. These are:

- a) Community vigilante groups
- b) Metaphysical 'trial by ordeal' through oracles

##### *a) Community vigilante groups*

By far the most important and significant among these informal policing structures, as participants made clear, are the vigilante.

“In this society we have vigilante groups that take care of us”

Importantly, the term 'vigilante' evidently has no negative connotation in this community as participants used it without qualification.

##### *Function*

The main function of the vigilante groups, as the participants described, is to routinely patrol and guard villages and roads at night – the time considered most dangerous in terms of the risk of theft and armed robberies. Through their patrols the vigilantes work in particular towards the prevention crime.

“This vigilante group go out in the night starting from 10 o'clock, to block the road. Whenever you come you give your excuses your identity and they will allow you. But when they see that you are somebody that they cannot allow to pass you sleep with them there. So you sleep there and they will know exactly where you are coming from and where you are going”.

“These people normally work in the night sometimes leaving their immediate communities to come to areas at some distance where they have been assigned to operate. If they see someone doing a crime they stop him and get him arrested.”

In addition to their patrols, the vigilante also engage in the detection and investigation of crime, either in response to their own observations, or community members' reports of crime.

“If a case is reported, they will investigate and take the culprit to the police “

“They... go about... investigation. They... go into the interior villages even on foot to carry out their investigation. If for instance a goat is stolen they take time to go to the place. They ... trace footprints and all that is necessary to find out the whereabouts of the stolen goat...”

“Anytime there was a theft somewhere, they would be invited and they would find the root of that and get the culprits arrested”

In theory, as the participants described, the function of the vigilante ends with crime prevention and detection. Any criminals caught or identified are, by law, to be handed over to the police for prosecution. Thus, the vigilante's function is intended to complement that of the NPF who are responsible for bringing offenders to justice.

“Their duties are spread out. If a case is reported they will investigate half way and take the culprit to the police...They don't have the authority to take somebody to court. Normally they have to take him before the police”

In practice however, as the participants explained, this division of responsibility has not, and is not always observed. Especially at the beginning, when they were first formed, vigilante routinely 'settled cases' and /or administered justice to any offenders caught. In part it was a way to gain at least some remuneration for their service.

“When culprits were caught, they had no deliberation. They would compel the person to pay back whatever they had stolen or else, if he was now insisting that he was not the one, they would suffer him. You would be thoroughly beaten, at times you would be injured and that was really against the law, actually it was against the law”

“I was involved personally in this vigilante group. We were always there on the road every night. Then I believe if you are working you have to eat. ..but we were working just like that. And so if you arrested someone and you wanted to try and settle the matter”

At some point the police began to punish vigilante for this 'self justice' and to 'take cases from their hands' As participants described, the police did so partly because of the illegality of such appropriation of the judicial function but also in view of gaining monetary rewards themselves.

“Somewhere along the line the vigilante were afraid because the police were punishing them for what they were doing”

“If you arrested someone and you wanted to try and settle the matter the police would just come and receive the case from our hands [and] say they would take the settlement themselves. It seems we were feeling hungry and they were not allowing us to do the work”

Today, as a result, the vigilante largely hand all serious offenders over to the police. In cases considered minor, however, such as pick-pocketing or small theft, they continue to punish the offender him or herself, arguing that it is enough of a deterrent and that referral to the police is unnecessary

“Vigilantes to some extent still settle problems at their own level, not minding to take them to the police. Those are the minor cases, like someone is caught in the market pick pocketing and he is brought t the vigilante. Once there... they will ask ‘is it true’? And if you say yes, they will ask you to bring what you have stolen. They will beat you there and set you free warning you not to come again or do that again. In such a case there is no need to go to the police. It is in more serious cases, or where the suspect is denying, such people are taken to the police”

The vigilante in their community, as participants explained, do not engage in the practice of administering ‘jungle justice’ (usually killing) to grave offenders such as armed robbers.

### *Organisation*

The organisation and composition of the vigilante groups, as the participants explained, has undergone certain changes since their inception. Initially it was comprised mainly of community youths who volunteered to serve on the group, receiving no formal salary or remuneration. At some point, however, the police essentially disbanded the youth group, as many members were seen to have begun to engage in criminal activities themselves:

“Later on things went bad with this vigilante groups. Some of them were even redeemed criminals and they started stealing again. So there was confusion in the group and things began to fall apart”

“Then we stopped our work...It was the DPO who told us not to work on the road again”,

“When the vigilante was introduced they were actually working, but somewhere along the line the very boys that were in the vigilante were convicts. They went back to steal again”.

Today, as participants described, the vigilante groups still clearly exist, though with ‘new blood’ introduced into them. Instead of being essentially a youth group, the vigilante members today include many retired service men – both from army and police.

“We were saying there should be a way to get new blood into the vigilante... [so] vigilante now is not what we know before because the retired military men are now into the vigilante. Of course they are heading it now in most of the vigilante.

“Most people in the vigilante group now are retired service men, rather than youth ... retired army, police and so on”

The operations of the vigilante are typically overseen by elders in their respective communities or villages, and there is one overall chairman for the vigilante:

“There are usually elders in each community who oversee the operation of the vigilante”

“We have one chairman of the vigilante”

Vigilante members receive no formal salary, remuneration or other material assistance. Their equipment, mainly torches and batteries, is usually purchased through contributions from community members.

“They lack financial support...and any form of financial assistance”

“It is usually the people in the community that sometimes contribute money to enable the vigilante to purchase some of the equipment they need, like torchlight, batteries and so on”

c) *Metaphysical ‘trial by ordeal’ through oracle*

In addition to the vigilante groups, as participants explained, traditional processes of consulting and receiving judgements from oracles still play some, though a very minor role in the detection and punishment of crime –akin to a process of ‘trial by ordeal’

“Sometimes when a person commits a crime and by the oracle a curse is placed on him or her, by the time anything like sickness happens on him or her he /she may go to the hospital but without result ... By the time he/she comes back to consult the oracle she or he will be told of what she/he did and that unless she appeases the Gods the problem will persist. At this time you chose between saving your life and not believing it. When you comply you will get well that time. In this way the relevance of this method still remains one way or the other”

5. Current Informal Policing Structures: Extent of Current Role and Mandate vis à vis the NPF

The participants left no doubt that although the vigilante are no longer as potent a force as they were initially, they still play a central role in ensuring safety and security in their community.

“The vigilante groups take care of us because their own security set up is more cordial to us”

“They have tried...they are still doing very much and in fact they perform better than the police”

However, the tenor of participants' accounts also made clear their feeling that the role of the vigilante could (and should) be greater than it currently is (the reasons for this are linked to the perceived limitations in the present effectiveness of the vigilante, which are discussed below).

Moreover, while it is to the vigilante that the communities mainly entrust the responsibility for preventing and detecting crime in their midst, the NPF retains a crucial role and mandate in two aspects.

First, participants indicated, the police carry the authority for laying down the rules and restrictions for vigilante operations:

“[The] police usually give vigilante some rules and regulation“

Second, as we have seen, the NPF holds the mandate for the process of initiating corrective justice for caught offenders, and the vigilante generally operate in line with this

“The vigilante are now working in line with police authority...they will have to take [whoever they catch] before the police”

## 6. Current Informal Policing Structures: Emergence, Origin and Rationale

The vigilante groups, as participants explained, emerged in the late 1980s. Their emergence and current prominence can be seen as being underpinned by two main rationales.

The first, and main rationale for their formation was the evident failure of the police to effectively protect the communities against crime. The ineffectiveness of the police at the time, as participants described, resulted in the escalation of crime, especially theft, to such an extent that communities were 'forced' to come together to find ways of protecting themselves' against it. In essence, the formation of the vigilante, thus, represented a self-help or self-defence measure of communities aimed to 'fill' or compensate for the gap' left by the police.

“The reason they were formed is because there were lots of thieves in the villages, they were stealing goats, fowls and such things... So they were conceived in the villages to protect our farms and our produce”

“They were formed because it was full of thieves here and they were stealing so many things from so many people”

“The time the vigilante were formed, we were having so many hardened criminals in this place. These criminals were terrorising the people around. Sometimes they would come round in gangs and forcefully break down your door and enter your house and request something of you. And if you don't have anything they might kill you or inflict injuries on you. This thing went on for some time and the police were not able to confront these criminals”

“The police...fail us. Most of the time they fail us. That is why we made some alternative means to protect us”

The group participants highlighted two main dimensions to the police failure.

The first dimension is an ineffectiveness of the police in apprehending or detecting crime, which participant saw as being caused by two factors.

On the one hand, they saw it as the result of an *inability* of the police to effectively apprehend or detect crime, due to

- a) The lack of NPF personnel to man especially remote villages, as well as a lack of adequate equipment and weaponry:

“The problem in the rural areas is that you cannot easily get to a police man”

“Sometimes they don’t even have the guns to confront these criminals”

- b) A lack of the detailed knowledge of the local terrain, customs and population that is necessary for wholly effective crime detection

“The police don’t know the people within the community and those who indulge in criminal Activities”

“The police that are posted here, they usually don’t know anybody here. They are like foreigners here”

On the other hand, however, participants also saw the ineffectiveness as being caused by a general lack of inclination or *unwillingness* to engage in crime investigations, especially if they necessitate going to interior villages.

“To go into the interior villages on even foot to carry out investigations - This is what the police cannot do.  
“To the police, if there is no vehicle they are not prepared to take that risk”

“At the last market day some people... stole certain things from a particular house...which was near to the police station. While this robbery was taking place, no policeman took steps to intervene, and after the theft, none of them bothered to do anything about it”

As the second important dimension of police failure, participants described the apparent unwillingness of the NPF to do all, always, to justly enforce the law and bring caught guilty offenders to justice. In their experience, police commonly release caught or arrested criminals, in return for monetary rewards. The result of this has been an exposure of communities to repeat crimes from such offenders, and thus a further undermining of their security.

“We believe that the [police] are corrupt. Once you hand over criminals to the, their relations will come and bribe them and the next day you will see them out”

“The police...are always in solidarity with whoever has the most money to give”

The second, though less prominent rationale underpinning the formation and current role accorded to the vigilante, is closely related to the corruption and interest in self-enrichment among the police. As participants described, the readiness of the police to side with the party that can bring the most rewards (usually the richer party) has been experienced as introducing enmity between community members and, in a sense, as an oppression of the poor at the hands of the police.

“We believe that if you do take a case to the police you will become enemies. The police don’t really settle issues. They don’t.

“You see...when you are a peasant farmer who doesn’t have any money and you have a case with a richer person, and you take it to the police – when you get to the police, even though you the farmer are in the right, the police will turn the thing against you and side with the richer person.

Adding to the sense of ‘oppression of the poor, as participants made clear, is the police practice of demanding undue payments even from those who are already impoverished.

The police should be conscious enough to know that they are dealing with us the lower people...Why we are always so annoyed with the police is because they are dealing with us who are poor and illiterates, and still they take money from us and it makes us poorer.

“I want to sound this thing in clear terms ... The main reason why we do not carry our cases to the police is because it will cost us more. You go to the police to get justice, but when you get there you spend more. Nothing is free in police stations...And at the end of the day you will be delayed, and if you want your settlement there you will be asked to pay money for the settlement you want to make with your own brother.... If you take someone there you make a way for them to make money. You will be spending, the someone will be spending. So it is not worth it”

Thus, the formation and current trust invested in the vigilante is not just intended to ‘fill the gap’ left by the police failure. It also expresses communities’ wish for an alternative to, and protection from the police.

“We also need protection from them [the police]”

#### *Reasons for Police Corruption*

In reflecting on the reasons for the corruption in the police force, all participants emphasised the presence of an intrinsic corrupt mindset or ‘orientation’ in many officers. They see this as being inculcated during the police training and part and parcel of being a member of the police force. It can thrive, moreover, as participants argued, because of officers’ *de facto* immunity from prosecution.

“The blood that is in the police is quite different from the blood in the vigilante. The police are trained to be corrupt ... I am sorry to say that but do you all agree with me? (All: Yes!)...And their immunity helps in the corruption”

The group participants emphasised that the corruption in the NPF begins at, and is engendered by those in the top-most positions of the police and government itself.

“The fact is that it is our government right at the top that is not good, which is the reason why the police are also not good. If the government right at the top would fight corruption, then the police too would stop collecting bribes”

## 7. Current Informal Policing Structures: Perceived Effectiveness, Trustworthiness

### a) *Perceived level of effectiveness and trustworthiness*

Given the important role that the vigilante currently play in safeguarding the communities, what is their effectiveness? How successful are they in combating crime and working in the interests of the communities? And what are the reasons for this?

The participants left no doubt that, especially at the beginning, the vigilante groups were very effective in reducing the level of crime:

“Formerly they were very effective”

“The introduction of the vigilante helped. It helped a lot”

“Before it was full of thieves [who] were trying to steal so many things from so many people, [but] when they formed the vigilante they brought a very nice protection to the people”

“The emergence of the vigilante group was really a good thing [because] on several occasions the police never had the time to carry out the kind of painstaking investigations that the vigilantes carried out in order to discover certain facts”.

Even today, although the vigilante’s effectiveness has clearly declined, they are still perceived as being much more effective than the NPF in curbing crime.

“In any case...they are still trying in their own way. They are still doing very much. Even as they are not paid they perform better than the police”

Participants described two main factors, which make for the vigilante’s greater effectiveness compared to the police. These are:

First, their ability, expertise and commitment to investigating and solving crimes, in particular if they occur in interior villages.

“They know very well how to go about their investigations. The way they ask their questions, no matter how you try to be evasive you eventually speak the truth. And the way they go about their investigation is more appealing. They are always more committed to go to the interior villages even on foot to carry out their investigation. They can trace footprints and all that is necessary to find the whereabouts of a stolen goat”

Second, the lack of corruption among vigilante members.

“The vigilante are not corrupted”

#### *b) Reasons for Vigilante's Effectiveness and Trustworthiness*

In reflecting on the underlying reasons for the vigilante's effectiveness and their lack of corruption, the participants highlighted two major factors. Both of these root in (i) the fact that vigilante members are themselves from the communities, and (ii) the close-knit nature of the communities – i.e. the familiarity between all members. Together this ensures the following:

First, vigilante have the necessary detailed knowledge of the local terrain, customs and community members - especially those who may tend to, or have been involved in criminal activities.

“The vigilante...know the set up of the community, they know every person who steal and everybody who is a thief”

“It is a fact that the vigilante know the people within the community and those that indulge in criminal activities”

Second, vigilante, by virtue of being themselves members of the community, are under a degree of community 'control'. Specifically, they are kept in check by the threat of tarnishing ones name, which induce them to carry out their functions with integrity.

“They are our own brothers, we know them too well. They live here with us and there is no way that they will be posted out of this place. We know ourselves. That is the reason. So you can't get yourself corrupted in your own community”

#### *c) Areas of limitations in vigilante's effectiveness or approach*

In spite of the relative effectiveness of the vigilante, participants stressed that there are several important limitations in their present efficacy and approaches to policing. They highlighted in particular two areas of weakness.

First, participants indicated that vigilante at present do not work in rigorously assigned and regular shifts to cover all times of the night, but rather work at hours convenient to them:

“They have not quite helped us so very well... They decide to do it anyway they like and operate at their convenient times”

Second, the vigilante have introduced a practice of charging N500 from any one wishing for them to make an arrest. This is seen as detrimental, and as a barrier to access by the community members who often need the N500 for their livelihoods.

“Their effectiveness compared to the former times is less

“Formerly they were very effective but they are no longer so effective”

“They are not effective. That is why you now have to pay them N500 to get someone arrested.

“Even at the moment the vigilante could still be able to perform very effectively but this is hampered because of lack of funding”

“If a case is reported they will investigate half way and take the culprit to the police. And for that reason

As the main underlying reason for both these areas of limitation, the participants pinpointed the lack of remuneration paid to the vigilante. It is this, ultimately, that induces them to impose the N500 arrest charge to gain at least some compensation for their service, and that lessens their incentive to operate at inconvenient hours.

“The reason [is] that they do this job voluntary... Since they are not receiving any form of financial assistance, for example paying them monthly allowances, they decide to do it anyway they like and operate at their convenient times”

“Even at the moment the vigilante could still be able to perform very effectively but this is hampered because of lack of funding”

## 8. Views on the *De Jure* Mandate and Ideal Role of Informal Policing Structures vs. NPF

Given the community's loss of confidence in the police, and the important role currently played by the vigilante in safeguarding lives and property, what are the community's views on the mandate of these informal structures vs. the NPF *in principle*? And what are their visions or wishes for the relative roles *ideally* to be played these groups?

The group participants left no doubt that, in spite of the present weaknesses in the vigilante's effectiveness, it is they who should ideally continue to carry the main mandate for ensuring their safety and security through preventing and detecting crime – and this includes dealing with minor criminals the way they have done.

“We prefer the vigilante”

“It should be the vigilante because they know very well how to go about their investigation. So we feel that the vigilante are preferable to us to work with rather than the police”

The main reason for this, as the above quote already indicates, is the perceived greater effectiveness of the vigilante in detecting and investigating crime, as a result of their detailed knowledge of the local terrain and community.

In this context participants also considered the degree to which the vigilante should, as they do in other communities, be allowed to administer corrective justice (in practice ‘jungle justice’) to grave offenders such as armed robbers – given the lack of justice currently provided by the police. On this point, however, there were diverging viewpoints.

On the one hand, some participants argued that though the legal mandate for corrective justice lies with the NPF, the lack of justice provided by the police has become so serious that the vigilante should be empowered to administer jungle justice where deemed necessary. This, they maintained, would not only achieve a degree of justice. More importantly, it would act at least as a temporary deterrent to others, thus providing a measure of protection for the community.

“If the vigilantes could deal with them they could make them face justice and the wrath of the law there”

“This kind of jungle justice prevents others from committing such crimes. It does act as a deterrent. It has given other youths an incentive to go and do some work or learn some work and not to get involved in any such act. So that jungle justice will not affect them”

“[And] It takes the [criminals] a long time to come back. When they hear that one of them has been killed like that, they run away”

The majority of participants, however, argued that such jungle justice is against the law – and that the law must be respected. They questioned moreover the extent to which jungle justice really provides a measure of deterrence, given that armed robberies have not stopped in areas where it is practiced:

“We are talking as if there is no law... There is no law that allows for jungle justice. We are talking of things to do with justice”

“My reason against [it] is that the vigilante don’t have the power under the law to do so. So if they just proceed to kill [the offender] they will be apprehended for murder”

“I believe that so many thieves have been burnt in that way, but the thing continues. So what does it solve? If it is actually a deterrent to others, why do they continue doing it?”

At the end of this exchange of views, all participants agreed that the question of the extent of the vigilantes’ mandate for administering corrective justice to grave offenders, will need to be negotiated and resolved through further and wider discussion.

## 9. Concrete Visions/Requests for Change or Improvements *in Practice*

In line with their views on the ideal roles of the vigilante and NPF, the current limitations in the vigilante's effectiveness, and some of the root causes of crime, the group participants' visions and requests for concrete change centred on three key points.

First, and above all, they expressed the vital need and made a strong request for measures to enhance the effectiveness and current approaches of the vigilante.

“We are praying that there is any way that the vigilante can be improved ...because we want safety and security in our places so that we can sleep well”

Such measures, they argued, would need to include:

- a) The provision of equipment and uniforms. This, the participants stressed, would boost the morale and incentives of the vigilante, and enable them to better apprehend criminals.

“The equipment is the first thing. We didn't really have equipment. If you went to someone's house to arrest them they might bring out equipment that is even more than yours. So...vigilante need good equipment like torchlights and batteries”

“The other thing is that they have to be able to confront criminals whenever the need arises. That means that they have to be equipped”

“Well these people used to wear black trousers, black shoes and red caps. Most of them used to buy these things from their own funds. If one could supply their uniforms, one could motivate them sort of.”

- b) The provision of a form of remuneration to the vigilante to boost their morale and increase incentives for them to carry out their service as effectively as possible. Participants stressed that such remuneration should go through the vigilante chairman or the elders overseeing the vigilante in each community, in order to maintain community 'ownership' of the vigilante.

“If one could assist the vigilante through financial support this would definitely strengthen their operation”

“Any such assistance could come through the elders in the community...so it is the local community that has employed them ”

“I think the chairman, they respect him a lot, so if you want to give help to the vigilante it [could also] go through him”

- c) Provision of a fixed office for the vigilante near the youth centre, in order to create a sense of stability and to encourage the youth to interact and get involved with the vigilante.

“I would suggest that the vigilante should have their own office in the youth recreation centre so that the youth can easily have access to them and interact with them. That would incorporate the youth; they can work together to improve the welfare of the vigilante. We will get access to them they know that it is their own station just like we have the police station the vigilante group will have one permanent office in the youth centre”

- d) Provision of training for the vigilante. Participants explained that extra training for the vigilante would be extremely beneficial, both in order to enhance the accuracy of their patrol, crime prevention and apprehension operations, and to negotiate boundaries for their involvement in the administration of corrective justice.

“I ... think that the vigilante should be trained. You will find out that these people sometimes go for arrest and whenever they get there sometimes they are confronted with the suspects who usually have more sophisticated weapons. Because of the fact that some of these vigilantes are not trained and are even aged, they sometimes run away. But if these people were properly trained, even under such circumstances, they would know what to do to be able to overcome the suspects. The other point is that because they operate with their minimal level of intelligence, sometimes they find it difficult to cope. So for this reason it is necessary for them to receive additional training regarding intelligence and operation of equipment”

“It may still be ideal for the [vigilante] to have additional training. This perhaps will do away with a situation where they arrest somebody and go as far as killing him. For we have already known that the white man says we should temper justice with mercy. So it is necessary that somebody who is arrested will be taken to the appropriate authority where he will be disciplined. Of course there are many ways of disciplining somebody: killing is one of them but there are also other ways. So it is good to train them”

- d) Increase in the numbers of vigilante. In addition to the provision of training and equipment, participants noted that there is a need for greater numbers of vigilante to ensure coverage of all areas

“I feel that what should be done to improve the vigilante is to increase their numbers. More people should be recruited and trained to add to their number even as though the police too are in existence”

As the second, main request for necessary change, in addition to enhancement of the vigilantes, participants emphasised the need for efforts to change the orientation, and eliminate corruption in the police. This, so they argued, is vital if the police is to be able to enforce the law justly.

“We need efforts to bring a reformation in the police about. So that whenever somebody is arrested and taken to the police, they wouldn’t be looking forward to extracting money from the person but rather see to it that justice is done”

Finally, in addition to changes in the vigilante and NPF, group participants stressed the vital need for improvements in their economic situation as a way to tackling the roots of crime. In this context, they specifically stressed the need specifically for two types of measures

- a) Measures to improve employment opportunities, especially for the youth

“We need an abundance of employment for the youth. Where people get employed. Where they really know what the government wants them to be in future and how they can help their community in future when they get employment. [Then] they wouldn’t think of going to commit atrocities or crimes”

- b) Measures to improve the infrastructure, especially the roads in their communities, in order to enhance people’s opportunities to engage in business

“As we are talking about safety and security, we find out that most of our roads are not good...[there is a need] to improve the condition of our roads. Since our roads are bad, right into the interior communities, on market days it becomes difficult even to convey the villagers and their goods to the market. If these people are not conveyed to the market with their goods, this becomes most discouraging for them in terms of engaging in their farming activities. This in fact has a negative effect on the mindset of the farmers. That is to say that there is a tendency for them to become idle and as the saying goes ‘an idle mind is the devil’s workshop’”

## 10. Perspectives and Wishes on Ways to Work Towards Change

- a) *Who and what should be involved?*

In reflecting on approaches to achieve the envisioned change in the NPF, participants indicated the primary responsibility on the part of government to effect such change.

Referring to the successes of the ‘war against indiscipline’ policies of the Buhari/Idiagbon government, participants argued that if government were truly willing – it could surely effect the necessary reorientation in the NPF

“Like what Buhari and Idiagbon did...That is proof to us that law exists. The police were not created with the spirit of theft. It is because of the nature of the government that the police are now in the forefront of theft. The police are even the least problem in terms of that...People in other public offices embezzle millions of Naira... So what I am saying is that if government saw the need to rule this country in the best way possible, the police would no longer be corrupt”

In reflecting on approaches to achieve the envisioned improvement of the vigilante, participants strongly emphasised that such initiatives should not come from government. In their view, any government involvement would inevitably result in delays, appropriation of funds and thus, ultimately, in disappointment. Thus, they expressed a clear wish for NGO involvement in supporting the vigilante – both in the provision of training and equipment, as well as in the provision of additional remuneration.

“It should be the NGOs, not government... If our country were good such initiatives by government would not be objected to. But given the situation of corruption that lives with us, if that responsibility were given to government, they would only use it to enrich themselves (All: Yes, Government would spoil it)”

“There is another reason: government agencies operate on bureaucracy. They are very very slow. What you expect to be done in one month will be done in two years time. So it would retard progress. So if the NGO were directly coming to the welfare of our people it will be faster and we will get the benefit”

Importantly, group participants did not express any sense of having a ‘right’ to government support to improve their safety and security nor, conversely, of any ‘obligation’ on the part of government to provide such support. The only exception was their perception of a government responsibility for improvement of the road infrastructure.

“Government has a responsibility to improve the condition of our roads.”

*b) What are the needed first steps?*

In thinking about first steps to work towards the envisioned change, participants, as mentioned earlier, expressed a strong wish for further consultations between their communities and the Access to Justice Programme to discuss further steps to be taken. They noted that such further consultation should involve them, as well as other relevant community members, including,

- (i) Community elders overseeing the vigilante groups
- (ii) The Ter Ushongo (second class traditional chief covering Ushongo LGA)
- (iii) The Local Government Chairman
- (iv) The vigilante chairman
- (v) Kindred Heads

## 4. Main Findings for Gboko LGA (Urban)

### 4.1 GBOKO: SUMMARY STATEMENT

#### Safety, Security and Informal Policing: Current Situation

- Safety and security are of vital importance to the livelihoods of community members and the development of the community as a whole
- A major cause of crime in the communities is the lack of employment opportunities, and the resulting desperation, which turns especially youth to commit offences
- The safety and security situation today is vastly improved on what it was a few years ago, owing to the successful operation of the community vigilante groups
- These groups were formed as a measure of self-help in view of the failure of the police to adequately safeguard the communities.
- Today it is in these vigilante that the communities entrust much of the responsibility to protect their lives and property through the prevention and detection of crime.
- The effectiveness of the informal policing structures lies in the fact that they are ‘owned by’, under the control of, and ‘accountable to the community’; and, as members of the community themselves, have a vested interest in, and are committed to protecting its interests
- Whilst the formal mandate for initiating the process of corrective justice for offenders remains with the NPF, the vigilante usually administer justice themselves in minor or novice cases. Moreover, communities sometimes administer ‘jungle justice to particularly grave offenders, such as armed robbers.
- The administration of jungle justice is a desperate measure of response to the evident failure of the police to do all, always, to justly enforce the law and bring guilty offenders to justice. Criminals are often released or assisted by the NPF in return for monetary rewards. This enhances communities’ exposure to repeat crimes from such offenders, further undermines their security and creates a sense of injustice suffered at the hands of the police
- There thus remains a great need for change to improve the policing of communities in order to better ensure the safety and security of community members.

#### Vision of Needed/Desired Change

- Although the vigilante groups are currently entrusted with the responsibility to safeguard their lives and property, it is the Nigerian Police Force that is recognised to hold this mandate under the constitution. The ultimate vision and desire for change is thus a police

force, which is able to carry out its mandate effectively and justly. This requires, above all, a reorientation of, and elimination of corruption in the police.

- Any change in the police is likely only to be achieved in the longer term and, until then, the vigilante hold the provisional/temporary mandate to safeguard the communities. Thus, in the shorter term, there is a need for efforts to support the community vigilante groups and, where possible, to enhance their effectiveness.
- Lack of economic security, and especially lack of employment opportunities, especially for the youth are the root causes of crime in Gboko. As a measure of primordial prevention, there is thus an urgent and vital need for change to enhance employment opportunities and economic security for individuals - and in so doing, to remove the motivation and incentives for crime

#### Practical Support/Change Requested

- Practical support requested to support and enhance the effectiveness of the vigilante include:
  - Provision of vehicles and improved arms
  - Provision of token remuneration for full-time vigilante, to boost morale
- Concrete measures requested to contribute towards change in NPF include:
  - Initiatives to punish and eliminate corruption in the NPF, beginning from the topmost positions and effected by government
  - Initiatives to effect the provision of sufficient equipment and to improve conditions of service for police forces on the ground
  - Facilitation of fora in which communities can freely express their grievances and needs to, and engage in a joint dialogue with NPF and policy makers with relevant jurisdiction
- Concrete measures proposed to enhance economic and employment opportunities, include
  - Government programmes to create job opportunities especially for the youth

#### *First Steps in Working Towards Change*

- Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change. Consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as other relevant community members, specifically:

## 4.2 GBOKO: DETAILED FINDINGS

### 1. HOMOGENEITY OF PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS

Participants' views and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing in their communities displayed a marked degree of homogeneity and agreement. On almost all topics, participants expressed the same principal values, experiences and attitudes. The only area in

which views somewhat diverged was on the question of the root causes of the prevailing corruption in the NPF.

## *2. Poor Communities' Reactions to Focus Group Discussion*

Reflecting on the focus group discussion, participants strongly expressed their appreciation of having had the opportunity to discuss and voice their views on a topic of such vital importance to them.

“We have appreciated this discussion very well”

In this context, participants stressed that in spite of the constitutional provision, they do not feel they usually have the opportunity or the ‘freedom’ to express their views freely without fear of retribution. They noted that it was this fear that underpinned their initial apprehension when asked to participate in the research.

”We in Nigeria now, we don’t have that human right of [freedom of speech]. We have it in theory. But not in practice...Because when we came the first thing I asked you was ‘what is our protection in what we are going to say’, In was asking because I didn’t know the outcome. Others may fear even to come, because they are afraid it may get in the hands of the government. So the government of Nigeria now they don’t want people to tell them the truth. You who is up to telling the truth, they will say you want to cause violence of overthrow government or threaten democracy”

In light of the positive experience of the focus group discussion, participants made a plea, and expressed a strong wish for further A2J consultations with them – as with poor communities in Nigeria more widely – with a view to truly working towards the change they envision.

“If we can have such discussion again, not just us but with others as well, to air their views to know what they really want, it will be good”

“On the aspect of criminal safety, the government has not given us the right to speak and air our views, as you have now given us the opportunity. This is the kind of forum Nigerians need... Because in the absence of this, people are now choosing violence to express their grievances... The people [say] ‘since the government doesn’t want to hear our voice, this is the only way”

## *3. Communities' Conceptions of Safety And Security, and Their Importance to Their Lives*

Participants’ perceived safety and security above all, as the protection of property and lives, and the freedom from anxiety and fear of harm or loss that comes with it.

“Safety is that there is security... for the people, for their lives and property and otherwise. It is very important because if security is there your property is safe, your life is safe you have free movement ...free interaction and any other thing one can think of.

“If there is security as they are saying, we have a free mind ... without fearing”

Importantly, participants made clear that they see it as their right as citizens to expect the provision of safety and security from government – and its failure to do so as a violation of the constitution:

“Our constitution here has made provision for our security, in terms of safety and security and once these rights are not extended to us, we feel there is a violation of the provisions of the constitution of our country”

Q: You have mentioned the word ‘rights’. Do you all feel it is your ‘right’ to expect from government that it should ensure your safety and security?

All: Yes! We feel it is our right

Participants stressed the vital importance that the presence of safety and security has for their lives, and, above all for their livelihoods. They specifically noted the importance of safety and security as a prerequisite for their ability to engage in business, as well as for the willingness of foreign investors to invest in Nigeria. In other words, they saw it as vital precondition for the economic development of their community and the country as a whole.

“If there is safety and security it is better to do business. You have confidence that your investment will not have any problem. So people will be freer to invest in the economy.

“[If there is no safety and security]...fellow investors will not come in ... foreign investors ... will not come and there will not be progress in the country”

Conversely, and equally important, participants also reflected on some of the root causes of crime. They stressed that it is the lack of economic development and security that mainly causes crime in their communities on two levels.

First, and above all, participants pointed to lack of employment opportunities as the main reason people turn to crime. They argued that without perspective and hope of earning a living, people, in desperation, engage in theft, robbery or other offences, and are no longer deterred by the potential consequences of or punishments for their actions.

“The most important thing is to get people employed because the devil has more access to somebody who is in need, who is desperate. So when children graduate from school without job, they need to keep life moving. If they have a job they won’t think of what another person has, they will be thinking of how they can progress from where they are.

So... if everybody is employed, has something to do, either self employed or government employed, I think it will reduce criminal activity, bad acts, more than any other thing”

“You know if somebody is pushed beyond a level that he doubts his own survival, he can do anything to survive. He doesn’t even care ...if in the process he gets caught or would die – he doesn’t care about it ... So I believe that if the situation becomes so bad and people become so desperate, you discover that the citizens decide to react in certain ways. They will react maybe by going into crime to survive, knowing full well that they are doing it to the detriment of their own life if they are caught in the process – but they have no alternative”

Second, participants highlighted the various direct and indirect ways in which the lack of basic infrastructure, in particular the present lack of electrical power, contributes to rising crime.

On the one hand, the absence of electricity, and the resulting darkness at night, provides greater opportunities for serial operations on the part of criminals.

“In fact [the light problem] is very very important...the criminals, especially the armed robbers they strike when there is black-out in the community generally. And in a situation where there is no light for so long it gives them ample opportunity to strike serially ... the armed robbers have more of an opportunity than when there is light”

On the other hand, participants noted that the long lasting lack of electrical power has gravely undermined many people’s ability to sustain their livelihoods, implying that they too, in turn, may now turn to crime.

“I would like to say something about the light problem we are facing in Gboko now ... This blackout has caused a lot of hardship to people within the community. So many people that have been employed, maybe they had to use electricity to do their business – they are now unable to continue with their business so it is very tough”

In addition, interestingly, participants also highlighted the indirect way in which the electricity problem may lead to crime among students. Unable to revise sufficiently, students are forced to cheat or engage in fraud to pass their exams and, once successfully done, they may continue such practices after leaving school.

“ This problem of blackout, that is light off, is almost an equally big problem to us students. You see most of our schools, secondary schools or even universities, you will discover that the government fails to provide generators to them. And when it comes to the period of examinations, night preps cannot be held properly. So students find it difficult to revise at night for their exams. And apart from that you will discover that some people are not healthy enough to use lanterns because the smoke that oozes out from the lanterns causes hazard. So some students don’t use it much. So in the process of them not being able to revise for their exams, they will now indulge in exam malpractices just so that they can pass the exams. And when they do this, they now get perfected in it. And they use the same sense when they leave school, maybe to devise

other criminal activities... So this issue of light out has an adverse effect on the child right from the school age, right through his period of life”

#### *4. Nature of Current Informal Policing Structures: Organisation, Function, Activities, Approach*

The group participants described two principal type of informal policing structure that currently operates in their communities to ensure safety and security. This is the community vigilante group, and associated smaller ‘community watch groups’, who operate in different residential areas of the town.

“We in the communities now form vigilante groups, as we call them”

Importantly, the term ‘vigilante’ evidently has no negative connotation in this community, and participants were clear to distinguish their vigilante groups from the Bakassi Boys who, in their view are no longer ‘real’ vigilante owned by the communities, but have become ‘interest groups’ in their own right

“The vigilante groups in the East...the Bakassi. They started fine, but when they got the government support they got out of hand and government now has to step in a scrape it away. But our vigilante are locally with us and we are enjoying it”

##### *a) Community vigilante groups*

###### *Function*

The vigilante groups, as the participants explained carry out two major functions.

First, they routinely patrol and guard residential areas and roads especially at night – the time considered most dangerous in terms of risk of theft and armed robberies. Through their patrols the vigilantes work in particular towards the prevention and apprehension of crime.

“Especially in the night, say by 10 o’clock, when... the senior *ogas* have gone to bed and the police have gone to their houses, these vigilante take time and make sure no crime happens.”

“We patrol at night and stop anything that is coming to be a crime”

Second, and in addition to crime prevention, the vigilante engage in the detection and investigation of crime, either in response to their own observations, or community members’ reports of crime. Identified culprits are arrested and interrogated to establish their culpability.

“Maybe I have a case of stealing, somebody has stolen my things, then instead of going to the police, I go to the vigilante. They use their time to investigate and recover all these things for you”

“Now the vigilante group themselves investigate ...cases. They will ask you ‘where did you get this bike?’ and they will follow up and make sure that the bike is recovered and given back to the person from whom it was stolen””

“Within the area we are living, we young men assemble ourselves and whatever happens around the area we try and find out the person who has done something wrong. So we catch culprits”

“They go about arresting criminals in town”

Moreover, as the participants explained, the vigilante are frequently called upon to settle civil cases or disputes between community members:

“The vigilante are a bit like a family, they try to make sure they solve matters amicably rather than going to the police ... Like if you are owing me N50, 000 and I go to the vigilante, they will ask you to pay the money or pay in kind, or pay part of the money and I will collect it from them

In theory, as the participants described, the function of the vigilante ends with crime prevention and detection. Any criminals caught or identified are, by law, to be handed over to the police for prosecution. Thus, the vigilante's function is intended to complement that of the NPF who are responsible for bringing offenders to justice. In practice, as participants described, this complementarity is usually observed.

“Since they don't have the power to prosecute, they arrest and then give the person to the police... for prosecution”

“Usually once they have caught someone, they hand him over to the police

However, and importantly, it is not always observed. As participants made clear, the vigilante groups or the communities as a whole, at times take justice into their own hands.

“Sometimes they mete out justice themselves”

This occurs especially in two types of cases, depending on the gravity of the offence.

First, it occurs in cases of offences, which are considered very minor, or where the offender is a novice. In such instances, the vigilante administer punishment, usually in the form of beating. This is seen as appropriate punishment and sufficient deterrent, and referral to the police is deemed unnecessary.

“If they know you are a starter, new in crime, they will beat you up, maybe give you 12 strokes of the cane so that it will make you not repeat that kind of a thing again. But maybe when they catch you the second time, it is from there that they will now say ‘so you don't want to stop stealing...the they will hand you to the police for proper prosecution”

Second, and more significantly, the vigilante groups or the community at large administer justice themselves in cases where the crime is considered to be particularly grave and damaging. Most often, as participants explained, these are cases of armed robbery, especially repeated robbery by the same offender.

“Sometimes...they will mete out jungle justice. Sometimes they will catch you and burn you down. They will pour fuel on you and burn you. There are many cases like that where armed robbers have been burnt on the highways”

“If at all an armed robber is caught, the vigilante will investigate if he is actually involved in the case. And in most of the cases where these people are burnt, it was that the community overpowered the vigilante while they were in the process of taking the culprit to the police. They will say ‘even if they take this person to the police, the police will release him and he will be free, they will not even take them to court.’ So people will overpower the vigilantes, snatch the culprit from them and give him jungle justice. Not that it is the will of the vigilantes to take that action. It is the community, it is mob action”

The reason for administering such jungle justice, as the participants explained and above quote already indicates, is the apparent common failure of the police to bring to guilty offenders to justice. The result is not only a sense of grave injustice suffered at the hands of the police: it is also a heightened threat of repeat crime or revenge action by the offender. The administering of jungle justice is thus a desperate measure taken by communities – to protect themselves from such repeat crime or revenge, to provide at least a temporary deterrence to others, and to achieve a measure of justice.

“Once you hand any armed robber to the police, at the end of the day you see them walking on the street again and you will be their target, because they use money”

“By the time they hand over such criminals to the police, the police know what they do within themselves and the criminal and release him. And by tomorrow you will see him on the street and he will tell you ‘come and touch me again.’”

“The time...when there were so many armed robbers in Gboko south... these boys that were doing these operations were... known in the community. [We] knew them very well. But you will report them to the police, the police might come and arrest them but in less than two hours you see them back. And they used to even carry guns during daytime, parading them without even any fear. So you know it became, the people in the community had no other alternative than take action themselves... So you know the people just decided that time to take a final action towards such issues”

“A good number of them have been reduced...You see when they burn one person it will take months before they will start again, because all of them will run away and hide”

(The failure of the police to bring offenders to justice constitutes one of the main rationales for the formation and central role currently accorded to the vigilante and is discussed in more detail below)

### *Organisation*

There is one umbrella vigilante organisation responsible for the entire Gboko local government area. This organisation, as participants explained, was originally founded by the landlords’ association and house owners in Gboko, and was then registered with the local and state government, the police and traditional chiefs, in order to give it legal status.

“There is one overall vigilante group in Gboko Local Government, which was formed by the landlords associations and house owners...They came together and said ‘let us form this group called vigilante group...They wanted the group to be legal so they informed the... traditional chief, then they informed the police, and they informed the governor...so it is legal”

The vigilante organisation is structured into a central and several ward levels. At the central, local government level it is headed by the vigilante chairman, assisted by the vice chairman and the secretary. Each ward level is headed by a ward chairman and vice chairman.

“The vigilante group in Gboko Local government, - there is the overall structured body headed by the chairman. There is the vice chairman and the secretary, the PRO. That is on the local government level. The coming to the ward level, there are set ups. You have the chairman, the vice chairman, there are various set ups taking overall instructions from the local government office. So the vigilante group is a structured set up”

The vigilante organisation has certain logistical provisions and equipment to help its operations, including an office for interrogation, as well as a vehicle and a number of motor bicycles. These have been provided by the state government, which also allocates a monthly sum of N50, 000 to support the vigilante in meeting its equipment and logistical needs.

“The state government is even funding the vigilante group. They have bought motorcycles to aid the members to move about...and they have a bus here in Gboko. And they have even provided them with arms. The state government helps a lot. Like in Gboko here, I think they have an allocation of N50000 monthly from the local government budget to enable them to move around, buy equipment and boost their morale”

The vigilante organisation comprises a few core uniformed full-time members, who man the central and ward offices. The other members operate in the different communities, engaging in patrol activities and typically working in shifts. Many members of the vigilante, especially at more senior levels, are retired service men who have been brought into the organisation in order to provide expertise and thus enhance the effectiveness of the vigilante operations.

“Like those in the main office don’t go on road patrols ...Because the main people that wear the vigilante uniform, they are just few, those dedicate all their time only to the vigilante work and are always in the office, they are just few. The other aspect of the work, the patrolling and so on, it is the people around the communities that do it, under the instructions of the office. ...So this man will go out today, the next day that man will go out”

“Most of the heads of the vigilante are retired policemen or soldiers who have seen a lot ...[they] are ... brought in to help fight for a good security that is working because they can draw on their experience. That is why they bring them in”

As participants explained, all vigilante members work on a voluntary basis. They do not receive a salary. Volunteers wishing to join, report to, are then scrutinised and recruited by the ward chairman.

“It is not that these people are employed, it is like a self-help organisation... they don’t get salaries! They are not entitled to salaries”

“It is voluntary, provided you don’t have any dubious or criminal record. You just go and say ‘I want to join the group’ you go straight to the chairman. And he will try and find out very well what your character is so that you don’t have bad eggs into the vigilante”

At the community level, the umbrella vigilante group, importantly, is assisted in its operations by two different structures.

First, it is assisted by many smaller ‘satellite’ ‘community watch groups’, often formed by youth in individual residential areas, who patrol and investigate crime in their particular area. These groups, as participants described, must report to, and are under the overall authority of the umbrella vigilante organisation, which scrutinises and must approve their activities.

“The vigilante group is like the parent body to all these satellite groups who fight crime”

“People at the very local level, in small communities, will feel that they want to have their own vigilante group. Then they will sit together and the next day you will see them on the road. But they will still report to the head office”

“Maybe the young men in this area want to have a roadblock to check criminal activity in the night. Then they will have to report to the office that they want to have so and so roadblock. Then from there, the office will be monitoring the activities of these people who want to do roadblock. Are they doing it right or are they just using it to do other things?”

Whilst these satellite groups are under the general supervision of the umbrella vigilante, they do operate independently to some extent. Thus, as participants explained, they often deal themselves with caught offenders or suspects, especially if they are from within the same community, or if their offences are minor. Only in cases which they feel they cannot resolve themselves, do they hand offenders or suspects to the umbrella organisation for further investigation.

“Within the area we are living, we young men assemble ourselves and whatever happens around that area we ...face it, we try and find out the person who has done something wrong and...catch culprits. We patrol at night and stop anything that is coming to be a crime...If we cannot face the matter and finish it within ourselves, we take it to the vigilante group. But when we can settle it ourselves we do”

Second, and importantly, the vigilante organisation is assisted by and works in conjunction with many of the members of the motorcycle hire association (MHA) who, by virtue of their occupation and mobility are particularly well equipped to trace, chase or apprehend suspects or criminals.

“Apart from the main vigilante, the MHA has done so much.... since this motorcycling hiring business is a business that [involves] the process of picking passengers from one area or the other. And that is why sometimes, if there is an armed robber in town, we know. Because wherever you are dropping from your vehicle, sometimes we can monitor you. And once we monitor you and we know this is your character, your criminal behaviour, sometimes we arrange ourselves and check you”

“It is the MHA with the so called vigilantes who are unarmed who go about arresting these criminals in town”

Whilst they usually hand over apprehended or caught criminals to the vigilante, the MHA too, at times 'settle cases' themselves. Such cases, however, often involve the administering of jungle justice.

“If we (MHA) don't go straight into action we will hand over such a criminal to the vigilante who will now decide on the next line of action to be taken. So that is why we say we work in conjunction with the vigilante”

“Sometimes, the MHA...will mete out jungle justice. Sometimes they will catch you and burn you down. They will pour fuel on you and burn you down.”

#### 5. Current Informal Policing Structures: Extent of Current Role and Mandate vis a vis the NPF

The participants left no doubt at all, that the vigilante groups play the *central and dominant role* in ensuring safety and security in their community.

It is to them, rather than the NPF, that communities entrust the main mandate and the responsibility for preventing and detecting crime in their midst.

“We have more confidence in our security formed by ourselves than in the police Nigeria has provided for its citizens”

“We appreciate the vigilante more than the police in our areas”

Actually we now have more confidence in the vigilante than in the police”

The mandate of the vigilante, as we have seen, even extends to civil cases, which community members take to them, rather than to the police:

“Even civil cases, say me and my friend fight each other, we take it to the vigilantes since they live among us. They are our elders, so they will now call the two of us and iron out what was our disagreement. They maybe will try and warn the offender. So such cases do not go to the police”

Whilst crime prevention and detection are entrusted to the charge of the vigilante, however, the NPF retains the legal mandate for the process of initiating corrective justice for caught offenders. In practice, however, as we have seen this mandate, too, is often usurped by vigilante or other groups who administer jungle justice in cases of particularly grave offences, such as armed robbery.

This appropriation of the judicial function, as participants made clear, is generally approved of by the community. Though not seen as an ideal solution, it is felt to be the only way in which communities can protect themselves - by reducing the number of, and set a deterrent to criminals.

“It is approved. It is approved”

“Our ...view is that it is approved because it is making crime to be lesser, because the police are not helping matters (expressions of agreement from all)”

“You see ...because of the confidence we have lost in the police, somebody who is not a criminal is not free like a criminal. A criminal is more free even at the police station than you who are not a criminal...So not that jungle justice is the best way, but we are forced to, we are pushed to the wall. It is the only way”

## 6. Current Informal Policing Structures: Emergence, Origin and Rationale

The vigilante groups, as participants explained, have emerged over the last decade.

The main rationale for their formation, and for their central role today was (and is) the evident failure of the police to effectively protect the communities against crime. The ineffectiveness of the police at the time, as participants described, resulted in the escalation of crime to such intolerable levels that communities were ‘forced’ to come together to find ways of protecting themselves against it. In essence, the formation of the vigilante, thus, represented a self-help or self-defence measure of communities, aimed to ‘fill’ or compensate for the gap’ left by failure of the police.

“Having lost confidence in the NPF, the communities now formed vigilante groups, as they call them”

“When the issue of crime became too much, the landlords associations, house owners now came together and asked themselves ‘what do we do since the police are now failing us’... So they ... now formed this vigilante group ...and now said ‘okay’ we will now do the job of safeguarding ourselves”

The group participants clearly highlighted two principal aspects to this police failure and the resulting loss of confidence in the NPF.

First, they described an apparent ineffectiveness of the police in preventing or apprehending crime, especially armed robbery

“Actually when I came back in 1995, the situation in Gboko south was so bad. You would see armed robbers move from one house to the other. Maybe they would

rob about 20 houses in just one night without anybody challenging them. So when the issue became too much the...vigilante group, they started doing something about it”

“At times when you report to the police that an armed robbery case is going on, they will wait until the people have finished their operation and they will go there and say ‘where are they?’”

Participants saw this ineffectiveness as being caused by two main factors.

On the one hand, participants saw this as being caused by an *inability* of the NPF to be more effective, mainly due to a lack of adequate equipment, in particular vehicles and arms.

“Sometimes the police with their guns, they cannot even challenge these armed robbers.”

“In Gboko here, for the whole of Gboko they only have two vehicles for the whole place. When you report a case to the police station, they will tell you ‘we have no car to rush to that place’ and actually you see that there is no car. Will they start running there?”

“The implements given to [them] to fight armed robbers are not good enough for you to face the armed robbers”

On the other hand, however, the participants also saw the ineffectiveness of the police in preventing/apprehending crime as being caused by an element of *unwillingness* on the part of police officers to capture criminals, from whom they expect monetary rewards. In other words, they saw the apparent ineffectiveness of the NPF not only as a result of lacking equipment, but also in part as a result of police corruption.

“They work together with the armed robbers ... because they can get money from the armed robbers...”

“In the case of criminals in our area, sometimes you will see a policeman who knows that this criminal is wanted. He will go and take this criminal to hide him for the others not to see him and then collect money from the criminal”

As the second aspect of police failure – and again a result of officers’ corruption and interest in self-enrichment, participants underscored the apparent unwillingness of the NPF to do all, always, to justly

enforce the law and bring caught guilty offenders to justice. In their experience, police commonly release caught or arrested criminals, in return for monetary reward. The result of this has been an exposure of communities to repeat crimes from such offenders, as well as a risk of revenge attacks on those vigilante members who originally apprehended them – i.e. a further undermining of communities' security. More generally, it has created a sense of injustice suffered at the hands of the police.

“When you come with the money, even if you are a criminal, they will collect it, and keep the person who is in the right, at fault”

“Not like the police where, if you go, maybe you have to follow many processes and at the end of it, you will be tired and leave it for God”

“Once you hand any armed robber to the police, at the end of the day you see them walking on the street again and you will be their target, because they use money to bribe the police”

“By the time they hand over such criminals to the police, the police know what they do within themselves and the criminal and release him. And by tomorrow you will see him on the street and he will tell you ‘come and touch me again.’”

#### *Reasons for Police Corruption*

Although all participants agreed that the failure of the NPF mainly roots in the corruption and interest in self-enrichment of police officers, there were diverging views on the underlying reasons for this corruption.

Some participants, pointed to the poor conditions of service, especially inadequate and irregular remuneration of the police. They strongly emphasised that this is the major contributor to police corruption.

“Maybe because they are not well paid or their conditions of service are not good. At times it will take months and they will not pay them their salaries, so that may be a reason”

“If you go to a police station now, maybe the policeman has not been paid for the last three months. So even for the first time now, Nigerian Police has gone on strike! That means the government has not improved their conditions of service. Now a policeman will go to the market and buy a shoe for N150 to use for his service – all these things are not provided for the police now. A policeman will have to use his money to buy a uniform... So they [use] their uniform and their guns to collect money and do more crime than the armed robbers.”

In light of this they argued that if their conditions of service were improved, policemen would cease to be corrupt and fulfil their function with integrity.

“Frankly speaking, the NPF are very good in their job. If you improve their remuneration I think they will do better”

Q: So assuming their pay and conditions were improved, do you think they would cease to be corrupt?

“They will. We are assuming that they will...they know everything! It is just a matter that you see maybe because I go back to my house and I see my kids hungry, and you bring money, I will take the money even if you are an armed robber. But if you give the police money, they will do anything they want to do in this country. If they want to arrest a criminal they will do it”

Other participants, however, emphasised the presence of an intrinsic corrupt or even criminal mind-set or ‘orientation’ in many officers, which was part and parcel of being a member of the police force. Thus, improvements in their remuneration would not lead to a reduction in their corruption. In support of this view, they pointed to the fact that recent improvements in salary and equipment for the police had not resulted in any tangible reduction in their corrupt practices.

“I doubt things would change if you improved their service conditions...Because the policeman as a person, in their nature they are greedy. They are generally greedy; because anytime you go there the police misuse their services, anytime you go there they ask for money. Whatever it is they will try to make money. They don’t want at all to treat matters according to how the community would expect it”

“In fact, I think the nature of the police is corrupt. The police force is corrupt to the bone marrow. You just recounted the case of your neighbour who was detained and then released so many times because he gave the police money. Why did this not change after he gave them money so many times? Excuse me. I am absolutely telling you they will never become a better set up in this country as far as Nigeria is concerned. Today for example is the 27 July. A policeman will collect a salary of N15000 today. Come with a case of N100 he will believe in the N100 more than in the N15000 he has collected ...And the salary has even improved and they still don’t change. So I believe that police will never be able to become a better set up for the rest of this country”

In the end, after debating and reflecting on their diverging views, participants agreed on the view that although there are many well-principles and right-minded officers in the police force who just need to be given better conditions of service, there are also many intrinsically corrupt, ‘bad eggs’.

“There are some good men among the police, and there are even some pastors and evangelists among the police, who preach that evil and corruption and criminal activities should stop in the police. But we also have this element of bad men in the police...some people are now even joining the police for the purpose of collecting bribes”

Whilst participants' views differed on the proportion of good to bad in the police (some felt there are more good than bad, others believed the opposite) all concurred that the element of corruption is enabled by the apparent immunity that police officers enjoy from punishment for engaging in corrupt practices.

“The police are protected... You see, the police are protected by their uniform, that's by law. So they abuse that protection. That is, a policeman, whatever he says to his master or at the police station – it is always the truth, against you the civilian. They say the police is a friend to everybody and you should report any bad act of the police to the PRO, the public relations officer. Yes. But when you report such a police, they will not point at him and say you did “so and so” instead they will transfer him to another place. Instead of punishing him. So he will not feel that bad name”

Ultimately, and above all, participants strongly agreed that the presence of all corruption in the police force is the result of, and engendered by the corruption of those at the topmost positions.

“Actually, this [starts]... from the top”

“[It is]...our top most ogas, the big men there, they have this problem of corruption in them. So they will want a situation whereby money will come to their hand every day”

Participants saw the corruption of the top officers as engendering the corruption of those on the ground in four principal ways:

First, it effectively forces officers on the ground to extort money from civilians, in order to service their superior's needs.

“The money that the police collect on the road, it doesn't go to them. You know that. It goes to the superiors. If they post you on the road, and you don't bring anything good for them they won't post you there again”

“The commissioner of police will ask the DPO ‘I need N100000.’ So the DPO will have to send these people on the road to collect that money for the commissioner. If he doesn't do that the commissioner will remove him. You see these policemen that you see collecting money on the road, they don't eat that money. It is not them”

Second, and importantly, it undermines the checks and balances that should be inherent in the recruitment process. Using their influence, those in top positions effect the recruitment of their family members or others friends, without the need to pass rigid tests, or scrutiny of their character and suitability. As a result many officers are recruited despite having criminal or corrupt intentions.

“Our Nigerian system is very bad. It is so bad that even sometimes, when it comes to recruiting police, the big men in position now will give names of their relations that have criminal tendencies in them for them to be recruited into the police. No in honesty... they will pick those who have criminal tendencies simply because they are related to the boss, and they will be recruited as policemen. So they now use that avenue to enrich themselves and they will even encourage crime so that they get more money from criminals”

Third, the corruption of those at the top, including the appropriation of funds meant for the improvement of service conditions on the ground, has been responsible for perpetuating the poor conditions for lower rank officials and thus their incentives to engage in corruption.

“Actually... I remember the year 2002, when the federal government gave money to the police command for improvement of their services, vehicles, all these gadgets and the rest...they...actually...gave the money but it has not reached the police. The minister for police affairs will answer that better. The federal government has released the money but it has not reached the police.

Finally, corruption of those at the top sets an example for those on the ground, fostered by the very Nigerian orientation towards or wish to ‘make money fast’.

“There is also a problem on the orientation we have in the country. You know, Nigerians believe in getting money faster...Now those who are in leadership positions and set a precedent of corruption for others, [and] it becomes the nature of that society ... You know that thing has made so many people try to get money through whatever means they can think of.”

## 7. Current Informal Policing Structures: Perceived Effectiveness, Trustworthiness

### *a) Perceived level of effectiveness and trustworthiness*

Given the important role that the vigilante currently play in safeguarding the communities, what is their effectiveness? How successful are they in combating crime and working in the interests of the communities? And what are the reasons for this?

The participants left no doubt at all, that the vigilante are effective, and have had a tangible and significant impact on crime in their communities in recent years.

“They are effective...They are really doing their work”

“Though crime hasn’t stopped...it has reduced drastically, perhaps from 100% to 20%! In the hot season that people used to sleep with their doors open they now had to lock themselves inside because of fear of criminals. But now you can even sleep without locking your door, and you can leave your property outside without anybody touching it”

“Yes, before the issue of stealing in Gboko here was too much. But now it doesn’t happen much at all”

Moreover, participants expressed communities’ profound trust in the vigilante. They are trusted to work in and protect the interests of the community and not, for example, to engage in corrupt practices.

“They don’t take bribe!”

“Even if you try and bribe them, they will refuse”

#### *b) Reasons for perceived effectiveness and trustworthiness*

When asked about the reasons for the effectiveness of the vigilante, group participants highlighted three major factors. All three root in (i) the fact that vigilante members are from the communities themselves, and (ii) the close-knit nature of the residential communities – i.e. the familiarity between all members. Together, this ensures the following:

First, there is a sense of community ‘ownership’ of the vigilante groups, who – as they are paid by community members – are accountable to the community. Moreover, as members of the communities themselves, vigilante members are under close supervision and community control, and subject to a system of checks and balances. This begins with the process of recruitment: when recruiting vigilante, the chairman assesses candidates ‘character’ and previous conduct. This means that communities can, on the whole, be sure of vigilante’s trustworthiness and integrity.

“The chairman. And he will try and find out very well what your character is so that you don’t have bad eggs into the vigilante”.

“Yes... there are certain questions he will ask you and certain facts they will try to find out about you. If you discover you are a bad egg, they will snub you”

“If I decided to go to my chairman now and say I want to join the vigilante, already he has known me, the man has known me before ... He has known whom I was, he has known my father, how I was brought up and so on”

Furthermore, the community closely supervise members – both chairmen and recruits, while they are in service. Any abuse or malpractice is subject to community sanctions, in particular the loss of a reputation and this, as participants argued, people will always try to avoid. Recruits themselves, moreover, are closely scrutinised by their vigilante chairmen.

“Now they are being controlled by the community, they are kept in check by the community. They know that if they stain their name, tomorrow it will fall on their child... So now they are being controlled by me and you... There was a case recently, where the chairman of the vigilante had a minor problem, and because the people monitoring him are from within the same community, they easily suspended him”

“People will know. We all live together. You see there are vigilante offices in all areas of the town. We know these people we know them in the community. So if you do anything your integrity, your name in the community will be affected... So whatever he does bad it will be a disgrace to his name. So he will try to make sure that he keeps his name clear”

“[If] the young men in this area want to have a roadblock to check criminal activity in the night... then office will be monitoring the activities of these people who want to do road block. Are they doing it right or are they just using it to do other things?”

Second, by protecting the communities of which they themselves are members, vigilante members are protecting also their own kin and friends. Thus, they, as opposed to the NPF, have a *vested interest* in and commitment to carrying out their tasks as effectively as possible and in the interests of their community. This involves responding quickly to whatever need arises:

“This vigilante group... give quick service. They attend quickly to whatever problem that emerges”

“Why? They themselves ...are the sufferers of the crime... so why should they take bribe from a criminal again? If they take crime it will still bounce back on them – they will suffer more crime again”

Third, and finally, the vigilante, by virtue of their being from within the communities, have a degree of detailed knowledge of potential criminal perpetrators or plans

“Now, criminals live among us, [they] know them”

c) *Areas of limitations in vigilante's effectiveness or approach*

Participants described no limitations to the current effectiveness or approaches of the vigilante

8. Views on the *De Jure* Mandate and Ideal Role of Informal Policing Structures vs. NPF

Given that communities have lost confidence in the police, and presently entrust so much of the charge of ensuring their safety and security to the vigilante, what are their views on the mandate of these informal structures vs. the NPF *in principle*? And what are their visions or wishes for the relative roles *ideally* to be played these groups?

The group participants made clear, although the vigilante are currently entrusted with the mandate to safeguard their communities, this is, in a sense, only a provisional or temporary mandate

In spite of the present loss of confidence in the police, they emphasised that it is the NPF that by the Nigerian constitution holds the mandate. Thus, they feel it is the police who ought, ideally, to carry out this function - if only they could to do it effectively and justly.

“If the police ... improve on their job we will accept them”

“The police, definitely ...we would prefer the police. It is only that we have been pushed to the wall that these vigilante have come out. So if they are given all the amenities and change their orientation, it should be them to do it.

“Why we prefer the police is because it is constitutional. If we say we don't prefer the police, that means we would be taken the laws into our own hands. It is only now we are being pushed to the wall such that we are talking law into our hands, even to the extent that we mete out instant justice”

“ I would not support that the vigilante should be given priority. I prefer the police. It is just that they are failing us at the moment that we prefer the vigilante at the moment. If the police were doing what we want them to we prefer them. They are the chief security of the country”

Until the police are able to fulfil their mandate effectively and justly, however, the communities have no option but to continue to entrust the mandate for their protection to their informal policing groups. This, as we have seen includes a reluctant, but generally approved tacit mandate to administer 'jungle justice' where it is deemed necessary to achieve some measure of justice and protection from renewed offence.

9. Concrete Visions/Requests for Change or Improvements *in Practice*

In line with their views on the ideal roles of the vigilante and NPF and on some of the root causes of crime, the group participants' visions and requests for concrete change centred on three key points.

First, and for the longer term, participants stressed the vital need for efforts to effect a change in the working and orientation of the police. This, they argued, requires the following measures:

- a) Most importantly, the elimination of corruption in the police force, beginning with those at the top of the hierarchy and involving initiatives to punish those who engage in corrupt practices

“What all of what we have said comes to is that if corruption in the police is wiped out, the security and safety of our lives will improve better than the way we have it now”

“ That is why we are saying if you hit straight at corruption it will eliminate the whole evil set up we have now. If the whole system of the NPF, starting right from the head, from the AIG, is ridded of corruption things would change. It has to start from the top to the bottom”

“You ...have to give them a new orientation”

“Offenders within the police should be punished... if supervision is to be carried out, let them also truly punish the all offenders, so that they will learn from it, it will be a deterrent”

- b) The provision of the necessary funding and equipment for the NPF, in particular adequate remuneration to officers

“I believe that if the police are paid properly and then you give them the implements to carry out their job they will do something better...so you [have to] pay them very well”

Second, and for the shorter term until change in the NPF is achieved, participants emphasised the urgent need for practical measures to support and encourage the vigilante groups in their operation, and where possible to enhance their effectiveness.

“All we need is to encourage them”

This, they argued, would most importantly require two types of measures:

- a) Provision of more vehicles and improved arms to enable them to better apprehend criminals

“The vigilante groups should be provided with vehicles to combat the crime. Sometimes they go out on their legs on their patrols. So if they are provided with cars and guns it will help them to fight the crime more”

- b) Provision of a token remuneration to those vigilante working full-time in the office, in order to ‘boost their morale’ and enhance incentives for carrying out their work effectively and without abuse of their powers.

“Those who have dedicated all their time to the vigilante work...they should be given some token money to boost their morale to do their work.

“They should be given some token money to boost their morale to do their work”

In this context, importantly, participants emphasised that vigilante should not be supported too much in terms of remuneration. Specifically, the vigilante should not, become fully salaried, employed ‘civil servants’ as this would lead to a loss of communities’ control over them, and to abuses of power on their part, which would go unpunished. Participants argued, in other words, that support and empowerment of the vigilante should only go to the extent that effective community ownership of them is maintained – as this ownership is vital for their effectiveness and trustworthiness. A public ‘institutionalisation’ of these groups is thus not desired, as this may lead them to become interest groups in their own right.

“If you go further too much in supporting them, they will feel they have arrived, as Nigerians. I think you understand me. They will use that opportunity and then become corrupt. Because now they are being controlled by the community, they are kept in check by the community. They know that if they stain their name, tomorrow it will fall on their child. But if they belong to the government, they will now be fighting for what they can get (in terms of money) for their child – they will not mind their names again”

“Yes... the moment you give somebody an employment, you have to follow certain criteria before you push him out of it. Now if you say you want the vigilante to be on a payroll, the process of removing the bad ones would be very difficult... the process of suspending someone within the force will be very cumbersome and it will become very difficult to check problems...The more you institutionalise these groups the more it becomes difficult to check them, to control them, they go wild.”

Finally, in addition to changes in the vigilante and NPF, group participants stressed the vital need for initiatives to improve their economic situation, in a sense as a measure of primordial prevention of crime. In this context, they stressed, above all, the need for measures to improve employment opportunities, especially for youth.

“The most important thing is to get people employed because the devil has more access to somebody who is in need, who is desperate ... So ... if everybody is employed, has something to do, either self employed or government employed, I think it will reduce criminal activity, bad acts, more than any other thing”

“You see there is poverty in our country. If you look at it very well, if at all there is employment for youths and things done to alleviate this problems a lot of this crime wouldn't happen. It is because of poverty. Some people don't even get a square meal to eat in a day. And if someone is in a situation like that he will just look for anyway to find some money... So I feel the federal or state government should start some industries to provide jobs for the youth and reduce them roaming around aimlessly”

## 10. Perspectives and Wishes on Ways to Work Towards Change

### a) *Who and what should be involved?*

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n reflecting on approaches to achieve their envisioned change, participants focused above all on ways in which their requests for change in the NPF could be realised. In this context, they strongly perceived a primary responsibility on the part of government to effect the necessary change and reorientation in the NPF

“It must come from the government. Who am I to provide a vehicle? Who am I to discipline or even retrench a police man – the onus must come from the government”

Referring to the successes of the ‘war against indiscipline’ policies of the Buhari/Idiagbon government, participants argued that if government were genuinely willing – they could effect the necessary reorientation in the NPF in very little time.

A good government...that is not itself corrupt... would do that even within two days! I gave you an example earlier on from the Buhari/Idiagbon government [when] a separate body was set up to wage this ‘war against indiscipline’. And it worked, largely...they sanitised the police. So if government now wants things to change within a day, things will change”

Moreover, participants perceived a primary responsibility on government to put in place measures to improve their economic situation, and in particular to create employment opportunities.

“The federal or state government should start some initiatives to provide jobs for the youth”

As a crucial part of influencing government to effect change in the NPF and economic situation, participants strongly urged the need for the facilitation of discussion or consultation fora in which ordinary citizens such as themselves can engage in a joint dialogue with policy makers and police officers of all ranks to freely express their grievances and requests for change. They noted that such a forum, to be meaningful, must go far beyond the current public relation exercises of the police, which is largely ineffective. This then, they said, would be a true expression of their right to freedom of speech as provided for in the constitution – a right that, so far, they do not feel they enjoy.

“There is a better way to organise such police-community discussions than through the police community committee... What we need is an institution where bodies will come out and will have a workshop or a seminar preaching the police that this is what the communities are complaining about, trying to allot blame to them and trying to encourage them to improve... I think more such education from us the civilians, will give them more consciousness”

“Yes, we want that, we want to get a chance to sit and talk to the police and the government, to give them our views and experiences. Because if given the chance we will tell you our mind. And even corruption will be wiped out if such opportunities are given! We want to reason with them”

“The number one issue is the issue of human rights. Freedom of speech...But we in Nigeria now, we don't have that human right. We have it in theory. But not in practice... the government of Nigeria now they don't want people to tell them the truth. You who is up to telling the truth, they will say you want to cause violence of overthrow government or threaten democracy”

*b) What are the needed first steps?*

In reflecting on first steps to work towards the envisioned change, participants, as mentioned initially, expressed a strong wish for further consultations between their communities and the Access to Justice Programme to discuss further steps to be taken. They noted that such further consultation should involve them, as well as other relevant community members, including:

- (i) Vigilante chairmen
- (ii) Vigilante themselves
- (iii) Other community leaders

## SECTION 2: EKITI STATE FINDINGS

## Executive Summary

The focus group research findings for Ekiti State provide a rich picture of, and give a voice to poor communities' experiences, concerns and perceptions regarding safety, security and the role played by informal policing structures.

In particular, the findings highlight a number of key themes and priorities that emerged across both study communities and are central to their perspectives on these issues//this issue

First, and above all, the research has shown communities' profound appreciation of being given the opportunity to express their views and to be listened to on an issue of such critical importance to their lives. It is an opportunity they feel they are usually denied. However, the communities also expressed a sincere wish for the research to go beyond good intentions and to result in practical change for them.

There can be no doubt that in both rural and urban communities, safety and security – perceived above all as the protection of lives and property from crime – are of vital importance to individuals' ability to sustain their livelihoods as well as to the development of communities as a whole. Neither the urban, nor the rural community, however, perceived of safety and security as their 'right', or an obligation on government to provide it.

In both rural and urban communities it is the informal policing structures (IPS) – primarily the vigilante groups as well as the traditional rulers and, in the rural community, the Egbe/Omodewa Age Grade groups – that play the central and dominant role in, and are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring safety and security through the prevention and detection of crime. Whilst rural and urban vigilante groups vary in aspects of their organisational structure, their main functions are essentially the same.

In both rural and urban communities, the formation and presence of the IPS represents a 'self-help' measure taken by communities in view of their profound loss of confidence in the Nigerian police (NPF), due to (a) the failure of the police to curb crime and the high crime rates resulting from it and (b) the detrimental impact of police operations on the livelihoods and access to justice especially of the poor. The communities see both of these factors, first and foremost as the result of a pervasive corruption in the police force.

In both urban and rural communities, the IPS are trusted and have largely been effective in curbing crime. In the rural community, however, some limitations in the vigilante's efficacy remain, mainly due to their lack of funding. In both communities, the general effectiveness of the IPS roots in the fact that they are themselves members of the communities they serve. They are thus 'owned' by, under the control of and accountable to the community and have a vested interest in carrying out their duties as effectively as possible. In the rural context, moreover, they possess a vital degree of knowledge of the local terrain, customs and population.

Whilst in both communities the NPF retains the formal mandate for bringing offenders to justice, the IPS, with approval of their communities, usually administer justice themselves in minor or

novice cases. Serious offenders are generally referred to the NPF. However, the police commonly release guilty offenders in return for monetary reward, thus further exacerbating communities' risk of crime and engendering a sense of injustice.

Both communities see the failure to do justice not just as a problem of the NPF, but as a flaw pervading the court and justice system as a whole.

Views on the ideal role to be played by IPS and NPF differ between urban and rural communities. The urban community ultimately envisions a changed police force that is able to effectively and justly prevent and detect crime in their community, thus rendering the vigilante unnecessary. A joint and free community-NPF-government dialogue is seen as an important way of working towards such change. Until change is achieved, however, the vigilante continue to be entrusted with the responsibility of policing the communities. The rural community wishes, ultimately, for a continued engagement of their IPS in crime prevention and detection thus complementing the role of the NPF.

Both urban and rural communities' requests for the shorter term thus centre on the need for practical measures to introduce vigilante groups in communities where none so far exist, and to maintain and bolster the effectiveness of existing groups, in particular in the rural community. For the longer term, both urge the need for initiatives to reform and specifically to eliminate corruption in the NPF.

As a first step to working towards the change they envision, both communities sincerely request for further consultation with the A2J programme.

The research findings bear several important implications for A2J action in Ekiti State. These include, most importantly:

- (v) The vital need for interventions focused on safety and security, and an engagement with informal policing structures as important agents for positive change especially in the shorter term
- (vi) A need for advocacy and participatory action processes with relevant NPF and government officials to foster a genuine willingness to engage in, and respond to a joint dialogue for change with communities
- (vii) The need for interventions to initiate and facilitate a such a community-NPF-Government dialogue
- (viii) In the immediate term, an imperative need to honour communities' requests for further A2J engagement and consultation with them, as a first step in supporting them in working towards the change they have envisioned.

A continued engagement with study communities can moreover provide an opportunity and entry point for a greater overall focus on 'giving a voice to', and working with the poor as part of A2J activities.

## 1. Cross-Cutting Themes and Patterns in Ekiti State

The focus group research in Ekiti State has highlighted a range of key themes and patterns in poor communities' perspectives, priorities and needs regarding safety, security and informal policing. These are outlined below.

### Overall reflections on rural – urban patterns

- 1. Comparison of the rural and urban focus group discussions clearly shows that although specific details or forms may differ, communities' expressed the same fundamental priorities and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing. The only major area of difference in rural and urban views was on the question of the ideal roles to be played by the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and the informal policing structures (IPS).*

### *Poor communities' reaction to engagement with them*

2. Both rural and urban communities expressed their appreciation of being given the opportunity to freely express their views and be listened to on an issue that is of utmost importance to their lives. The rural group especially, urged the conduct of such discussion group also on other topics.
3. The urban, but not the rural group additionally noted their appreciation for being able to voice their views without fear of reprisal or intimidation, particularly from the police. This is a freedom and a right, which they don't feel they have in practice. Participants described their general anxiety about voicing their views - especially on the issue of security and policing - for fear that it may be used against them.
4. However, though appreciating the opportunity to express their views, the communities emphasised that being 'listened to' is not enough. They voiced a sincere wish and need for this research to go beyond rhetoric and good intentions, and to result in tangible change for them. Their request is underpinned by their profound sense of disillusionment with previous, especially government consultation exercises, which in their experience have never gone beyond promises and thus, for them, have been in vain.

### *Conceptions and experiences of safety and security and their importance to people's lives*

5. The communities conceived safety and security above all as the protection of property and lives from crime. In Ileje-Meje it was, moreover, seen to include the protection against aggression from other communities.

6. Both groups strongly expressed the fundamental importance of such protection to their ability to engage in the activities necessary to sustain their livelihoods, and thus to the development of their communities as a whole
7. Conversely, the rural group stressed that it is the current lack of economic and employment opportunities for the youth that is the main cause of crime in their communities.
8. Neither the rural nor the urban community expressed a sense of having a ‘right’ as citizens to expect the provision of safety and security from government

*Informal Policing Structures: Role, Nature, Function*

9. In both rural and urban communities the informal policing structures play the central role in ensuring the safety and security of community members. It is to them, not to the police, that communities currently entrust the main responsibility for protecting their lives and property by preventing and detecting crime in their midst.
10. In the urban communities 2 major types of informal policing structure/process exist:
  - (i) Community ‘vigilante’ groups
  - (ii) Quarter Chiefs/Traditional Rulers
  - (iii) Process of public shaming/punishment of offenders
11. In the rural community, three major types of informal policing structure/process exist:
  - (i) Community ‘vigilante’ groups
  - (ii) Egbe and Omodewa (Traditional Age-Grade Groups)
  - (iii) Traditional Rulers

(see Table 1 below for an outline of their major activities and policing functions contributed to)
12. In the urban communities the vigilante groups are the most important and prominent among the IPS. In the rural community both the vigilante and Egbe/Omodewa are of central importance.
13. Communities evidently see no negative connotation in the term ‘vigilante’ (see Table 2 below for an outline of the main organisational features of the vigilante in both study communities)

*Table 1: Main IPS in Ekiti study communities: main activities and policing functions*

Informal Policing Structure	Main Activities and Policing Functions Contributed To
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Vigilante Groups	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Night and day patrols in residential communities</li> <li>▪ In urban communities: after consulting with quarter chiefs/traditional rulers, subject caught offenders to process of public shaming.</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Corrective Justice (through process of shaming, in urban communities)</li> </ul>
Egbe/Omodewa Age-grade Groups (rural only)	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Detection and investigation of suspicions or cases of crime reported to them</li> <li>▪ Guarding of community boundaries in case of expected aggression from other communities</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> </ul>
Process of Public Shaming (urban only)	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public naming and parading of offenders</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measure of Corrective Justice</li> <li>▪ Crime Prevention through Deterrence</li> </ul>
Traditional Rulers/Quarter Chiefs	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decide on course of corrective justice to be followed with caught offender. Minor/novice offences are usually punished directly, without referral to police. More serious cases are referred to police</li> <li>▪ Initiate and direct investigation of criminal cases reported to them</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corrective Justice</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> </ul>

Table 2: Vigilante groups in the Ekiti study communities: main organisational features

LGA	Main Organisational Features
Ileje-Meje (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ COMPRISING OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS DRAWN FROM TRADITIONAL HUNTERS' GROUP</li> <li>▪ OVERALL ORGANISATION FOR LGA, INSTITUTED BY LGA</li> <li>▪ Three men posted in focal community</li> <li>▪ No vehicles for use in operations</li> <li>▪ Overseen and recruited by community chiefs</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Members formally employed by LGA, receive monthly salary</li> </ul>
<i>Oye (urban)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DEVELOPED FROM TRADITIONAL HUNTERS' GROUPS</li> <li>▪ OVERSEEN AND RECRUITED BY COMMUNITY CHIEFS</li> <li>▪ No vehicles for use in operations</li> <li>▪ MEMBERS SELECTED FROM TRADITIONAL HUNTER'S GROUP</li> <li>▪ No financial support from Local Government</li> <li>▪ Material support (mostly basic equipment and protective gear) as well as stipends received from community members' contributions</li> </ul>

*Informal Policing Structures: Effectiveness*

- 14.** In both rural and urban communities the IPS are trusted and, together, have been effective in curbing crime and protecting communities' interests.
- 15.** In both rural and urban communities, the vigilante's effectiveness roots in the fact that members are themselves from within and part of-, and (in the urban community) are paid by the community, and that the communities themselves are close knit. This, variously, ensures:
- (i) A degree of community 'ownership' of the vigilante and, conversely, vigilante's accountability to the community.
  - (ii) A degree of community control over, and scrutiny of vigilante during recruitment and service
  - (iii) A strong commitment and vested interest on the part of the vigilante to carry out their functions effectively and with integrity
  - (iv) Detailed knowledge on the part of the vigilante of the local terrain, population elements, customs and norms

*Current mandate of IPS vs. the NPF*

- 16.** In both rural and urban communities, it is the IPS that are currently given the main mandate for crime prevention and detection.
- 17.** In both rural and urban communities, however, the legal mandate for initiating the process of corrective justice is in principle recognised to lie with the NPF.
- 18.** However, in practice, however, the informal policing structures commonly appropriate this mandate in cases of minor or novice offenders. Such offenders are usually directly punished and reprimanded within the community. They are typically not referred to the police, as this

is considered unnecessary. More serious cases, however, are normally referred to the police.

19. In neither urban or rural communities do vigilante groups engage in the administering of jungle justice.

*Rationales underpinning the emergence and current role of the IPS*

20. In both rural and urban communities, the formation and present role of the vigilante (and the Egbe Omodewa in the rural LGA) represent a response to an experienced failure of the police to effectively protect their communities' interests and, as a result, a profound loss of confidence in the police
21. These IPS were formed specifically in response to the ineffectiveness of the police in curbing crime. Thus, communities formed them as a self-protection against crime, to fill the gap left by the ineffectiveness of the police in crime prevention and detection. Their function was, and is in theory intended to complement and support the function of the police.
22. The main factor seen as underlying the NPF failure to protect communities from crime is police officer's apparent readiness to collaborate with, or release criminals in return for monetary rewards. I.e. an unwillingness to do all, always, to justly enforce the law and bring guilty parties to justice. This has enhanced communities' exposure to repeat crimes from such offenders and thus further undermined their security. This police conduct is seen the result of corruption and an interest in self-enrichment on the part of police officers. The corruption itself is seen as being enabled by officers' 'immunity' from prosecution and as engendered by those in the very top positions of the NPF and government.
23. In both rural and urban communities, the corruption and failure to 'justice' is not seen as being confined to the NPF alone. It is perceived also as a core problem in the court and justice sector as a whole
24. The lack of equipment and personnel are seen as additional factors contributing to the police failure. In the rural community, moreover, the police's lack of knowledge of the local terrain, population and customs is seen as a further contributing factor.
25. In addition to the police failure to protect communities from crime, a second rationale exists for the central role currently accorded to the IPS. This is the fact that the police's readiness to side with whichever party can bring the most rewards, and to demand undue payments even from those who are already impoverished, has been experienced as being oppressive of the poor. The prominence of the vigilante thus also represents a wish for an alternative to, and protection from the NPF

Communities' views on the de jure mandate and ideal roles of IPS vs NPF

26. Rural and urban communities differed in their views on the *de jure* mandate and the ideal roles to be played by the IPS and NPF
27. The rural community ideally envisage a complementarity between NPF and IPS, with each playing an important role. The community recognises the NPF's legal mandate for all policing functions and accept that ideally, it should largely be the police to carry out these functions, provided it is able to carry them out justly and effectively. Nonetheless, they consider a continuation of vigilante group operations as essential for ensuring safety and security in their midst, given that the IPS possess the knowledge of local terrain, customs and population that is necessary for wholly effective crime detection and prevention. Moreover, until the necessary change in the NPF is effected, the IPS will need to continue to carry the main mandate for policing the community.
28. The urban community, in contrast, and in spite of their current loss of confidence in the police, sees the mandate for all policing functions as lying, by right with the NPF. It is thus the NPF who should, ideally carry out all these functions. Their vision and desire for change is thus for a police force, which is able to fulfil its mandate effectively and justly, thus removing the need for IPS. Until this is achieved, however, the communities maintain that the IPS should carry the 'provisional' mandate for protecting them. To do this as effectively as possible, the IPS require more legal empowerment especially in their engagement in the process of corrective justice.

#### Communities' visions and requests for practical change

(see Table 3 below for an outline of communities' requests for practical change)

29. The communities' requests for practical change clearly reflect their views on the ideal roles that should be played by the vigilante and NPF.
30. For the longer term, both urban and rural communities strongly request measures to improve the effectiveness and conduct of the police. For the shorter term, they stress the urgent need for measures to support and enhance the effectiveness of vigilante activities in their communities.
31. As an important part of working towards the necessary change in the NPF both rural and urban communities request the facilitation of consultation fora in which they can freely, and without fear, express their views and needs to the NPF and policy-makers. A prerequisite, however, is the presence of a genuine willingness on the part of these bodies to engage in such a joint dialogue, and to respond to the requests for change that emerge from it. The rural community explicitly highlighted the need for advocacy efforts to engender such a willingness among NPF and government officials.

32. Finally, also for the longer term, urban and rural communities expressed an urgent need for efforts to improve employment opportunities for the youth, as well as welfare provision for children from broken families, as vital measures of primordial<sup>11</sup> prevention of crime.

Table3: Communities requests for practical change in Ekiti study communities

LGA	Shorter Term	Longer Term	First Steps towards Change
Iljeje-Meje (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to enhance effectiveness of vigilante including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Provision of improved remuneration to vigilante members</li> <li>(ii) Provision of improved arms</li> <li>(iii) Increase in numbers of vigilante</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initiatives to effect change and reorientation in NPF including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Punishment and elimination of police corruption beginning from the topmost positions</li> <li>(iv) Facilitation of fora in which communities can freely express their needs to, and engage in a joint dialogue with NPF and relevant policy makers</li> <li>(v) Efforts to engender willingness in government/NPF to engage in joint dialogue with communities</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Efforts to improve economic opportunities through provision of infrastructure (roads) and employment opportunities, especially for the youth as a measure of primordial crime prevention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continued consultation with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change.</li> <li>▪ Such consultation should involve FGD participants as well as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traditional Rulers</li> <li>- Vigilante Members</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Table 3 cont'd			

<sup>11</sup> 'Primordial prevention', is a term often used in Health Promotion debates to refer to measures, which address the macro-structural forces, or conditions which influence the uptake of 'risk' (in this case: criminal) behaviours.

LGA	Shorter Term	Longer Term	First Steps towards Change
<p><i>Oye (urban)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to support and enhance vigilante activities in the communities, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Formation of vigilante groups in all communities which have none at present</li> <li>b) Enhancing effectiveness of existing vigilante groups, through                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Provision of improved equipment and weapons (concrete needs to be specified by community/vigilante leaders)</li> <li>(ii) Introduction of a formal system of tokens of recognition and honour for vigilante, to boost morale</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Note: The community are opposed to the vigilante becoming fully salaried civil servants. The view is that this may lead to the loss of community control over, and ownership of them. In</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initiatives to effect change and reorientation in NPF including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Punishment and elimination of police corruption beginning from the topmost positions</li> <li>(ii) Provision of sufficient equipment for police forces on the ground</li> <li>(iii) Improvement and stricter criteria for NPF recruitment process</li> <li>(iv) Facilitation of fora in which communities can, by post, freely and anonymously express their grievances and needs to, the NPF and relevant policy makers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change</li> <li>▪ Such consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Vigilante commandants</li> <li>(ii) Vigilante members</li> <li>(iii) Other community leaders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>other words, there is a wish for vigilante groups not to become publicly institutionalised and, thus, not to become interest groups in their own right.</p>		
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### Communities' views on ways of working towards the envisioned change

- 33.** Communities perceived the need for different approaches and actors to work towards the envisioned change in the NPF, and to achieve support for the vigilante, respectively
- 34.** In terms of achieving the necessary change in the NPF, both communities pointed to the federal government as bearing the main responsibility and capacity for action. Referring to the successes of the Buhari/Idiagbon era 'war against indiscipline (WAI)' policies, they argue that government, if willing, is capable of effecting such change very rapidly. However, communities see a role for NGO initiatives in the facilitation of community-NPF-government dialogue/consultation fora.
- 35.** The rural community, moreover, specifically requests for NGO advocacy to influence government and NPF in preparation for a joint dialogue, i.e. to engender in them a willingness to effect change in the interests of poor communities – a willingness that they see as being wholly absent to date.
- 36.** In terms of initiatives to support the vigilante, both rural and urban communities conveyed a wish for NGO, rather than government involvement. Any support measures would need to be planned in conjunction with the traditional community leaders
- 37.** Both urban and rural communities clearly request, as a first step, further A2J consultation and engagement with them. Such consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as other relevant community members

### *Wider generality of findings*

- 38.** The findings of this research cannot claim to a wider generality beyond the focal communities from which the focus group participants were drawn. Whilst it is very likely that many of the main emerging themes will also apply in other communities or LGA, this cannot be assumed.

## 2. Implications for A2J Action in Ekiti State

In view of the findings emerging from the research, the following implications for A2J action in Ekiti State emerge:

### a) Substantive Areas for Intervention

#### *i) Safety and security as a key intervention focus: engagement with informal policing structures*

- Given the fundamental importance of safety and security to the livelihoods of individuals and the development of poor communities as a whole, continued A2J interventions focusing on ways to improve safety and security (and thus policing) for poor communities are imperative.
- Given the central role entrusted to, and played by vigilante groups in ensuring poor communities' safety and security, it is vital that such interventions engage with these groups. They must be viewed as major agents for positive change, in the shorter and the longer term.
- For the shorter term, interventions must specifically consider the provision of practical support to existing vigilante groups and, in Oye, supporting the formation of vigilante groups in communities where none presently exist - as requested by communities themselves.
- For the longer term, A2J interventions in Oye must consider, together with communities, needs for a legal empowerment of informal policing structures in the administration of corrective justice, and ways and approaches of achieving these

#### *ii) For the longer term: interventions to achieve change in npf*

- For the longer term, A2J interventions must also be directed at effecting and facilitating change in the NPF. A key focus of such interventions must be to facilitate a joint dialogue between NPF, government (i.e. relevant policy makers) and those poor communities wishing for such a dialogue. This will necessitate a) advocacy and participatory action processes to foster a genuine willingness of these bodies to engage in a dialogue with communities and b) the facilitation/institution of concrete consultation/discussion fora.
- Given the urban communities' expressed apprehension about freely expressing their (political) views, and their sense of lacking a true 'right to freedom of expression' without fear of reprisal or intimidation, A2J should consider initiatives to foster awareness of, and support communities' practice of this constitutional right. These should form part of efforts to foster an NPF-government-community dialogue.
- In view of community's seemingly limited awareness of their rights as citizens vis a vis safety, security and the police, initiatives to foster such an awareness should be part of A2J interventions aimed at fostering an NPF-government-community dialogue

#### *iii) Other opportunities for intervention*

- Issues of domestic violence were conspicuously absent from communities' conceptions and discussions of safety and security needs. This may indicate a need for awareness raising, should there be a wish on the part of A2J to focus on this area

*b) Necessary and recommended practical interventions*

*i) Continued engagement with study communities*

- The vital importance of continued A2J engagement with the study communities cannot be overemphasised. The Access to Justice programme must honour the request of the communities for further consultation and engagement with them as a first step to working towards achieving the change they have envisioned.
- The initial focus of such continued consultation must be the reporting and feeding back of the study findings to the communities with a view to establishing a common basis and reference point for subsequent activities and approaches. A failure to do so would not only violate the fundamental principles of the participatory action paradigm which underpins the A2J research approach – it would also further compound poor communities' disillusionment with research or consultation exercises, which raise their expectations but do not result in any tangible change or improvement for them. In the extreme it would add to poor communities' sense of abandonment by those, including the Access to Justice programme, who have the capacity to support them in effecting improvements in safety and security.
- A continued engagement with study communities can moreover provide an opportunity and entry point for a greater overall focus on 'giving a voice to', and working with the poor as part of A2J activities

*ii) Further discussion/consultation groups on different topics*

- Given communities' profound appreciation of being given an opportunity to freely discuss and be consulted on an issue of importance to their lives, A2J should consider initiating such consultation/discussion groups also on other topics related to justice, safety or security

*c) Further research*

- Given that the findings of this research cannot claim to a wider generality beyond the focal communities from which the focus group participants were drawn, there is a need for further research in other communities within the LGA, as well as in other LGA to identify main areas of need and requests for change regarding safety, security and policing – provided A2J intends to initiate policing interventions also in other communities.
- Any such further research on safety, security and informal policing could draw on the framework and methods developed for this study

#### d) Immediate action points

In view of the research findings, the following immediate action is required:

- In each of the study communities, as soon as possible, organisation of a consultation workshop with the FGD participants and other identified relevant community members. The primary aim of the consultation workshop must be to establish rapport with the A2J programme, to feed back the findings of this research to the communities and, in doing so, to establish common basis and reference point for subsequent joint efforts and approaches to working towards the envisioned change.

*Other relevant community members to be included in the initial consultation workshop include:*

In Iye (Ileje-Meje):

- (i) Traditional rulers
- (ii) Community chiefs
- (iii) Vigilante members

In Oye:

- (i) Traditional rulers
- (ii) Community chiefs
- (iii) Vigilante members

Organisation of the consultation workshop should be facilitated by the local research assistant (Mr. O. Folorunso) who, assisted by the local convenors, has established the necessary rapport with the community.

### 3. Main Findings For Ileje-Meje LGA (Rural)

#### 3.1 ILEJE-MEJE: SUMMARY STATEMENT

##### Safety, Security and Informal Policing: Current Situation

- Safety and security – the protection of property and life from crime or violence, and the absence of fear and anxiety that accompanies it – are of vital importance to the lives and livelihoods of community members and to the development of the community as a whole
- The safety and security situation in the community today is by and large controlled, due to the successful operation of the two main informal policing structures: the Egbe and Omodewa, and the vigilante
- These informal policing structures (IPS) were largely formed as a measure of self-help in view of the failure of the police to adequately safeguard the communities, both as a result of an inability to prevent and detect crime, and a seeming unwillingness to do all to bring offenders to justice – i.e. to justly enforce the law
- The general effectiveness of the IPS lies primarily in the fact that members, being from within the communities themselves, have a determination to and vested interest in curbing crime, and have the detailed knowledge of the local terrain necessary to do so.

- Having lost confidence in the police, it is to the IPS that communities now entrust the responsibility of protecting their lives and property through crime prevention and detection.
- Whilst the formal mandate for initiating the process of corrective justice for offenders remains with the NPF, the traditional rulers in conjunction with the IPS usually administer justice themselves in minor or novice cases. All other cases are usually referred to the police.
- Although such cases are referred to the NPF, and despite having the mandate, there is a current failure of the police to justly enforce the law and bring guilty parties to justice. Caught offenders are commonly released in return for monetary rewards. This enhances communities' exposure to repeat crimes from such offenders, further undermines their security and creates a sense of injustice suffered at the hands of the police.
- The failure to do justice is not confined to the NPF, but applies to the court and justice system as a whole
- There remains a great need for change to the policing of communities in order to better ensure their safety, security and access to justice

#### Vision of Needed/Desired Change

- The community recognises the NPF's legal mandate for all policing functions and accept that ideally, it should largely be the police to carry out these functions, provided it is able to carry them out justly and effectively. Nonetheless, they consider a continuation of vigilante group operations as essential for ensuring safety and security in their midst, given that the IPS posses the knowledge of local terrain, customs and population that is necessary for wholly effective crime detection and prevention. The ultimate vision and desire for change is thus for a complementarity between NPF and vigilante, in which each plays a specific role.
- This requires, above all, change to effect a reorientation of, and elimination of corruption in the police.
- In addition, and especially in the meantime, until a change in the NPF has been effected, there is a need for efforts to bolster the effectiveness of the vigilante
- Lack of economic security, and especially lack of employment opportunities, especially for the youth is one of the root causes of crime in Ileje-Meje. As a measure of 'primordial' prevention, there is thus an urgent and vital need for change to enhance employment opportunities and economic security for individuals - and in so doing, to remove the motivation and incentives for crime

#### Practical Support/Change Requested

- Practical support requested to support and bolster the effectiveness of the vigilante include:
  - Provision of necessary equipment and weaponry (to be specified by community/vigilante leaders)
  - Provision of improved remuneration for vigilante to reduce their need to engage in exhausting farm work during the day
  - Increase in the numbers of vigilante
- Concrete measures requested to contribute towards change in NPF include:
  - Initiatives to punish corruption in the NPF, beginning from the topmost positions and effected by government
  - Facilitation of a forum in which communities can freely express their grievances and needs to NPF and policy makers with relevant jurisdiction

### *First Steps in Working Towards Change*

- Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change. Consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as other relevant community members, specifically: community chiefs and traditional rulers, and vigilante members

## 3.2 ILEJE-MEJE: DETAILED FINDINGS

### 1. HOMOGENEITY OF PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS

Participants' views and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing in their communities displayed a marked degree of homogeneity and agreement. On all topics, participants expressed the same principal values, experiences and attitudes.

### *2. Poor Communities' Reactions to Focus Group Discussion*

Reflecting on the focus group discussion, participants expressed their sincere appreciation of having had the opportunity to discuss their views, and be listened to on a topic of such vital importance to them. In light of this, they urged for more such discussions on other relevant issues.

“We... really thank the researchers for organising this discussion and I appreciate this work and I even want them to go further, maybe not on this topic, but on another topic which can help the community and the country at large. This is a very well organised discussion and it helps us”

Despite appreciating the discussion, however, participants made clear that the consultation will only be of true value to them, if it leads to practical change. They expressed their disillusionment with the many previous consultation exercises they have experienced, which have never gone beyond rhetoric or good intentions to result in concrete improvements. In this

regard they conveyed a sincere wish for further A2J consultation with their community with a view to working towards the change they envision.

“Thank you very much, we have been seeing different types of organisations of this type coming here, but after so many sittings, so many discussions, there is no effect at all. If we are able to see the effect of this discussion, after you have reported on what we have discussed, then we would be very very satisfied...So... before we can say this organisation has done very good work let us see the impact, the effect of our sitting here. So that we are not discouraged”

### 3. Communities' Conceptions of Safety and Security, and Their Importance to Their Lives

In its broadest sense, participants conceived of safety and security as an 'enabling environment' in which individuals can pursue their lives without undue danger to their well being, and without fear of such danger.

“Safety and security means creating an enabling environment for the people to feel happy and safe from danger, from want, from poverty”

They saw this as comprising two main elements.

First and, above all, they saw safety and security as the protection of property and lives from crime, and the absence of fear that comes with it.

“When we think of security we think of the protection of our lives and property from robbery, from theft and such things”

“Without security you can't have any rest of mind. During the time when these robberies came up, nobody had rest of mind. It is security that gives people good rest of mind”

Participants emphasised the vital importance that such protection from crime has for people's ability to engage in the investments or activities to sustain their livelihoods, and thus for the economic development of communities as a whole:

“The importance of safety and security cannot be overemphasized...in any community where one is trying to make a living, ...working relentlessly to at least amass some wealth or to meet one's material needs. If one has the fear of ...being burgled over night or robbed and where one's life is not safe, one automatically feels like leaving that environment”

“It is security that can even bring development to our areas. There are some people now they are not ready to go and live in Lagos because of the tension there concerning robbery. Then if you hear that there is peace and security somewhere, if you want to invest or establish a factory or trade, you will go there because you will have rest of mind. So security brings development so it is very very important”

In reflecting on the protection from crime, participants also highlighted one of the factors that they see as one of the root causes of crime in their communities. This is the lack of employment, especially in urban areas. With no means of earning a living and no perspectives, so participants argued, people are easily attracted, or even forced to engagement in criminal activities.

“When people are jobless they will be a threat to security...because an idle mind is the devil’s workshop. If they don’t have any job, any work, they will turn to crime”

“When [people]...in urban centres have no job or means of livelihood, and if they are hungry they must take to crime”

As the second main element of safety and security, in addition to the protection from crime, participants emphasised the freedom of violence and intimidation, and specifically, the freedom from other communities’ aggression.

“Safety is enabling the society to be free from violence and intimidation”

“When we talk of safety and security we ... also [think] about...[the] problems one can encounter with nearby communities. For example, there are times when we become suspicious of each other. Like the community next to us here, maybe for boundary reasons... these people... may come and put some charms on our land and this may affect us, because I have heard of cases where one community wants to go to war with another community”

#### *4. Nature of Current Informal Policing Structures: Organisation, Function, Activities, Approach*

*Participants described four principal informal policing structures (IPS) or processes that currently operate in their community. These are:*

- a) Community Vigilante Group
- b) Egbe and Omodewa (Age-grade Groups)
- c) Traditional Rulers
- d) Community Residents as a Whole
- e) Traditional Protection Charms/Practices

a) *Community vigilante group*

The 'vigilante' group, or '*Olode*' was mentioned by the participants as the first, and most prominent of the IPS in their communities.

“Here we have different ways. First we talk of the vigilantes”

“We employ vigilante groups, called *Olode*, to watch over our property and lives in the community”

Importantly, the term 'vigilante' evidently has no negative connotation in this community, as participants used it without any qualification.

*Function*

The vigilante, which currently comprise about 3 men, carry out one major function.

As the participants described, they routinely patrol and guard strategic points in residential areas and roads during the night – the time considered most dangerous in terms of the risk of theft or armed robberies. Through their patrols the vigilantes work in particular towards the prevention and apprehension of crime or criminals.

“The vigilante...work and patrol during the night”

“They are stationed at strategic places to protect properties, both private and from the government, during the night”

Once suspects or offenders are apprehended or arrested, as participants explained, they are usually brought before the traditional leader (*Kabiesi*) who then decides on the course of corrective justice to be taken.

“After arresting such a person...[they]...report it to the *Kabiesi* and then he will handle the case...”

*Organisation*

The vigilante group, as participants explained, was introduced by the Local Government about three years ago, in order to increase the policing of all towns and villages.

Members from the community themselves, specifically from the hunter's group, were recruited to constitute the vigilante. Thus, Local Government instructed the head community chief who, in turn, instructed the head of the community hunter's group to select 2-3 members from among his men.

“Now they employed people from our own communities to do the work of the vigilante. We have about 2 or 3 here”

“What they do is they contact the head chief. Then that head chief called the hunters the ‘ode’ to select people from their group to do it”

The vigilante members, as participants explained, are employed directly by the government and receive a salary at the O1 grade level.

“These vigilante are being paid by local government”

“They receive a proper salary from the local government, not just a stipend. It is a salary on grade level of O1”

Vigilante members do not work ‘full-time’. They only assemble at night and, during the day, typically pursue their farming activities.

“These people...go...to the farm in the mornings, spend most of their time on the farm”

#### *b) Egbe and Omodewa age-grade groups*

The second main structure working towards ensuring safety and security in the community, in addition to the vigilante, are the Egbe/Omodewa groups. They represent two of the traditional age-grade groups for men – the youth (Omodewa), and the more mature men (Egbe).

“Then in our communities here, we also have traditional ways where we group ourselves, especially the men folk. We have the young ones, called Omodewas... Then we have the middle class, the Egbe – they are older men. These two groups oversee the affairs of safety and security of the community. Both in the town and inside the bush, to see to the security of the farm products and of the township”

In contrast to the vigilante, as the participants explained, these groups do *not* engage in patrol activities at night.

“The Egbe and Omodewa do not guard and patrol the town in the night that is the job of the vigilante”

Rather, they carry out two major functions, which complement those of the vigilante. First, and most importantly, they engage in the detection and investigation of crime in response to community members’ alerts or reports of crime.

“If there is any case of theft or any other wrong doing in the town, this will be reported to them and the egbe will then investigate the matter and find some clue”

“What they do is if there is any emergency or tip off, or any information or you have a case ... the egbe and omodewa will be called to come and work on the case”

“For example, if something is missing within the town...or if something happens during the night, the next day when they meet the egbe and omodewa will constitute themselves into a larger group to keep watch around the town... So by doing that, things lost will be recovered. If there is a case of theft in the bush, this group will collect the people in that area, ask some questions from them, just like policemen do, and then while questioning, they will be able to get clues and then track the thief down. So they investigate cases”

As with the vigilante, once suspects or offenders are identified and arrested, the Egbe bring them before the traditional leader (*Kabiesi*) who then decides on the course of corrective justice to be taken.

“Then, when the Egbe catch someone, they too bring him before the Kabiesi who decides what to do with him”

In addition to the investigation of cases, as participants described, the Egbe and Omodewa groups guard the community's boundaries in cases of emergency, in order to impede any attack or aggression from other communities.

“In addition to dealing with crime...the Egbe and omodewa ...are empowered to go and stand at boundaries during the night to make sure ... they ...prevent...acts from other communities”

#### *Organisation*

The operations of the Egbe and Omodewa, as participants explained, represent a revival of traditional age-based community security formations in Yoruba land.

“You see this Egbe and Omodewa that they look after safety and security, that has been a traditional practice in Yoruba land. An age-long tradition that was practiced even before the introduction of the police force. Now we have reverted to it”

They are convened by the traditional ruler every nine years, after which they move on to the next higher age-grade.

“In the town here, the oba and the oba in council, convene these groups, the Egbe and the Omodewa who work for security every nine years. For example, they will call upon my father to produce two or three, or one of his children to do this job. After nine years, another group is formed. So these people will be constituted into the Egbe and the Omodewa”

Whilst in the age grade and, unless convened in an emergency, the Egbe and Omodewa meet every nine days to discuss the security situation and to investigate any cases of crime that occurred.

“They meet every nine days in the town. If there is any case of theft or any other wrong doing in the town, this will be reported to them and the egbe will then investigate the matter”

The Egbe and Omodewa are not paid, and are required to provide their own equipment – as their operation is a mandatory ‘community service’

“The egbe and omodewa are purely on a voluntary basis. They don’t receive any stipend or anything. It is a self-sacrifice. And they themselves pay to provide their equipment, because it is mandatory for every male child to belong to the group, and they graduate from one group to the other”

*c) Traditional rulers*

The role of the traditional rulers (Kabiesi/Oba) complements that of the Egbe/Omodewa and the vigilante in two important ways.

First, as participants explained, it is these bodies that act as the first port of call to which any case is reported:

“If there is a case we report it to the Kabiesi”

“If you ...have a case and you report it to the chief”

Once a case is reported, it is the Kabiesi who will order the detection and investigation of the case by the Egbe/Omodewa

“For example, if something is missing within the town, the Kabiesi and Kabiesi in council will meet. They will call the egbe and they will call on the omodewa to investigate the case”

Second, as already described above, the traditional rulers complement the crime apprehension and detection function of the other vigilante or Egbe/Omodewa, by deciding on the course of corrective justice to be taken with any offender arrested or apprehended by them.

The course decided upon, as the participants explained, depends on the type of the offence. Whilst civil cases are settled in the palace, all criminal cases are usually referred to the police

“If it is not a criminal case we will settle it in the palace, but if it is a criminal offence, like an armed robber, or theft, killing or burgling, then it goes to the police”

In certain cases, however, exceptions are made and offenders are not referred to the police. This specifically occurs in cases where the offence is very minor, or the offender is a novice or of unsound mind. In such cases, culprits and their parents are usually reprimanded and warned by the community

leaders. This is considered to be sufficient punishment and deterrence, and referral to the police is deemed either unnecessary or counterproductive.

“There are some cases, minor cases, that the community know they can be settled...within themselves without going to the police. Like, for example, someone has stolen some Kola seeds from a farm. These types of cases, the Oba can decide on a punishment...He with his chiefs in council... will now join together to resolve it and to know the type of punishment to be imposed on such a person”

“[A thief]...will usually be handed over to the police, unless it is the first or second time he has stolen. But if it is the first or second time, he will be reprimanded by the town, then they call the parents and hand it to them”

“They will also not hand a case to the police when they feel that the culprit is not of sound mind, is a mental case or is suffering from a certain malady. Then the community may decide to call on the parents to take care of this culprit, because taking him to the police station may not be the solution for such a person”

Participants emphasised that in contrast to other areas in Yoruba land, their community does not engage in the practice of subjecting grave offenders, such as armed robbers, to jungle justice.

“In Yoruba land jungle justice ... is very common for example in Lagos... but it doesn't happen here”

#### *d) Traditional protection charms/practices*

In addition to the more conventional policing structures, participants noted that a significant policing function is also carried out by traditional charms, which are used by community members to protect themselves against crime or attack.

“[There are]...some charms to put in houses to protect the property and lives of those people living within that place. Even when intruders or criminals come they won't be able to remove anything from the house”

“There are some charms that you can have, even if the armed robbers or criminals are coming with sophisticated weapons, the charms can serve as a bullet proof”

#### *e) Community residents as a whole*

As the final informal policing activity, in a sense, complementing the crime prevention function of the vigilante at night, the participants described the vigilance exercised by all community residents during the day. This ensures that anything untoward is immediately paid attention and attended to.

“I think what happens about preventing crime during the day is that every citizen in the town is security conscious. If for instance by day you suspect any unusual movement you raise an alarm, you will shout, and everybody will troop out to see what is happening. And if it is a matter of stealing they track down the person. So whatever is endangering the safety of the community they try to nip it in the bud”

#### 5. Current Informal Policing Structures: Extent of Current Role and Mandate vis à vis the NPF

The participants left no doubt at all, that it is their own informal policing structures that play the *central and dominant role* in ensuring their safety and security.

It is to them, rather than the NPF, that the communities entrust the mandate and the responsibility for preventing, detecting and investigating crime in their midst.

“We have our own groups to watch over our property and our lives”

“These ...groups oversee the affairs of safety and security of the community”

Importantly, however, as participants described, the NPF is recognised to retain the major responsibility and the legal and constitutional mandate for the process of initiating corrective justice for caught offenders.

“The [police] are the body that are responsible to do it by law”

In practice, however, as we have seen, the IPS commonly appropriate this mandate in the case of minor or novice offences. In all other cases, the IPS typically do honour the NPFs mandate and hand caught offenders to the police. They primarily do so, out of respect of the law and, as participants explained, out of fear of themselves being found guilty of an offence.

“If the Kabiesi were to...give judgement, the government will come at the end of the day and say that the Kabiesi has created an illegal court and that he has put law into his hands...So even an educated Oba would not do that”

“I think the Egbes would not want to be held responsible and then punished by the police for taking justice into their own hands. Because the police, by the time they get a hint of any such thing, they will really deal with it. And the Egbes they are not really totally immune, it is not that the community has given them any kind of immunity against the law. Because of this they will have to face the music all alone, and so they will not go out of their way to dish out justice or punishment. They would rather allow the case to be handled by the police – in whatever form, they will be alright with it”

It is mainly for the same main reason, as participants explained, that communities as a whole do not engage in jungle justice:

“It is because the population of this place is so small that it is easy to track down the people responsible for meting out jungle justice...they would be able to identify the persons who did it and they would be taken to a court of law.

“Yes, because of the fear of the court of law people don’t want to involve themselves in this jungle justice because they don’t want to take law into their own hands. Because one has to be very careful. That is why you see in this area they will always refer cases to the police. Because the moment you take justice in your own hands you will be arrested because people will point to you”

Thus, communities and IPS refer grave offenders to the police, despite their deep reservations about the ‘justice’ provided by the police. These reservations form part of the rationales underpinning the formation and presence of the IPS, and they are further discussed below.

## 6. Current Informal Policing Structures: Emergence, Origin and Rationale

In reflecting on the reasons underpinning the revival of the Egbe/Omodewa, the formation of the vigilante groups, and the central role accorded to these IPS today, participants pointed to two main rationales.

The first, and most important rationale was the evident failure of the police to effectively protect the communities against crime. The ineffectiveness of the police compelled the local community to come together to find ways to protect themselves against it. In essence, the formation of the Egbe/Omodewa in the 1970s, and the more recent institution of the vigilante thus, represent a self-help measure aimed to ‘fill’ or compensate for the gap’ left by failure of the police.

“ We have reverted to the practice of Egbe and Omodewa because the police force was ineffective”

“That was in the 1970s. And it was because the police were inefficient in protecting our communities”

“During the introduction of the police force a long time ago, we believed that the police force would be enough to give us security. At that time, there were three tiers of police. We had the native police authority, the state police, and the national police. The native authority and the state police knew the terrain of the people... so they could prevent crime effectively more than the national police called the Nigeria police. But when the native authority police was scrapped, the state police was scrapped and it was left to the hands

of the national police, then you discovered that they couldn't protect us properly and then the loopholes started. Then you discovered that the security became very porous. And in order to augment the inefficiency of the police we now recalled 'what of our tradition? Even before the police we were protecting ourselves. Can't we protect ourselves again?' Then we resorted to saddling the Egbes and the Omodewas with this responsibility to look after our safety and security"

"The vigilante are created to augment the efforts of the police because the Nigeria police is not being effective"

The group participants described two major aspects of the police's past and present failure to effectively protect their community.

The first aspect is an apparent ineffectiveness of the police in preventing, apprehending or investigating crime. Participants saw this ineffectiveness as being caused, on the one hand, by the lack of sufficient equipment on the part of the police and – as a result of the current NPF posting policies – their lack of local knowledge on terrain, population and customs. In other words, an *inability* of the police to effectively apprehend or investigate crime

"The problem we have in Nigeria is that the weapons of the armed robbers are even more powerful than those of the police!!"

"The national police, where they bring somebody from Sokoto to Iye - for them to know the terrain, to know the custom and the tradition, even to know the language – it wasn't possible. They found it very difficult even to communicate"

"Now, if a policeman...doesn't know the local language, how can he go and investigate?"

On the other hand, however, the participants saw the ineffectiveness of the police also as a result of an *unwillingness* on their part to apprehend or capture offenders from whom they can receive monetary rewards. In other words, they saw it not only as a result of lacking equipment or knowledge, but also, and more importantly, as a result of police corruption.

"The police also connive with the criminals... There was a case of burglar...[who] burgled about three houses, stealing foodstuffs...and the policemen knew the abode of this

[burglar] but they had received... some money from the family of this boy, so...they didn't go there to arrest him”

As the second aspect of the police failure to protect them – and again a result of police corruption, participants underscored the apparent unwillingness of the NPF to do all, always, to justly enforce the law and bring caught, guilty offenders to justice. In their experience, police commonly release caught or arrested criminals handed over to them, in return for monetary rewards.

“If you have people who can stand by you, or you have your own money, even if you have committed a very grievous offence... the police manoeuvre the case and just release you...Because of money”

“If an accused person is arrested, you submit your own statement as a complainant, and the accused will also submit his own statement. The first statement of the accused, the police will get it down. If he now brings money, they will dump that first statement and then take another statement. The police will tell the accused person how to change their statement, this is how you can escape from this case, and they ask him leading questions so automatically he knows what to say and he will get off”

“For example my brother's daughter was robbed by armed robbers with whom she had gotten a lift to Ibadan. So somewhere on the road they robbed her of N200, 000 and then turned back... Then she went to...the police to report the matter. The police then went to the robbers' house and arrested them and they had evidence that they were guilty. But the robbers... said they only robbed N10, 000. Then they bailed themselves by giving N30, 000 to the police. And that was the end of the case. And then if you want to pursue this case the money you will have to send to consult a lawyer, do this, do that, at the end of the day the police will just manoeuvre your case and say 'for want of evidence'...So this is Nigeria”

The result of this has been an exposure of communities to repeat crimes from such offenders, thus further undermining their security and creating a sense of injustice suffered at the hands of the police.

“Because when we want justice through the police we don't get it the way it should be!”

“We cannot shy away from the issue. It is a pertinent issue. You see injustice breeds our insecurity. 75% of our cases in Nigeria are not well handled to the satisfaction of the community because of the mode of bribery and corruption that is prevalent in the police and courts today”

As the above quote already indicates, participants saw the corruption and failure to do justice not just as confined to the police. They also saw it as a grave problem affecting the court and judicial system as a whole.

The second major rationale underpinning the presence and central role accorded to the IPS is equally linked to the problem of police corruption. Participants indicated that the tendency of the police to side with whichever party brings more monetary reward – i.e. usually the richer party – is, in a sense, experienced as an ‘oppression’ of the poor. Communities’ reliance on the IPS can thus also be seen as expressing, at least in part, a wish for an alternative to, and protection from the police.

“The law Nigerians made applies to the poor people, but not the rich people. Because if a rich somebody has a case, if you have money to spend for your case, that is the end of your case, you can settle it anyway you like with the police. But a wretched person who can’t offer them anything, they will not consider him”

### *Reasons for Police Corruption*

In reflecting on the nature and reasons for corruption in the police force, participants stressed that, in their view, it is almost all of the police officers who are corrupt.

“Out of 100%of the police, 80% are not honest. [And] what do you think the 20% who are honest are able to do? Nothing!....And if they are ready to insist that they are ready to follow honesty, some of them will just lose their job or even their life”

In reflecting on the direct causes of the corruption among the police force, participants discussed two main factors.

First, they asserted that the frequently cited reason by the police themselves – i.e. the poor conditions of service and poor pay – are, in their view, not the real cause of officer’s corruption.

The police they are talking that it is their poor conditions of service and their poor pay that is causing their corruption, but I don’t believe that

So I don’t believe it is poor pay. If you pay a police constable 100000 every month, he will still stay on the road to collect money.

Second, and in light of this, participants emphasised what they see as the most important factor that has led to the corruption among the police force. This is an intrinsic corruption and interest in self-enrichment among officers, which reflects the materialism and greed in society as a whole.

“Police are corrupt. There is no amount that you can pay to them that they will be satisfied”

“The whole society is being corrupted... we love money more than security and more than peace... And the police is part of the society and [they] lay so much emphasis on money and material things and godliness is no longer there. That is the reason”

Participants strongly agreed that this greed and interest in self-enrichment is most pronounced among those at the topmost positions of the NPF and government itself. And it is this corruption at the top that engenders the corrupt practices of those on the ground. It even does so directly, by effectively forcing low rank officers to extort money from civilians in order to service their superior's needs

“The corruption starts from the top”

“When we are talking from corruption it starts right from the top of government”

“I remember quite well. It was...introduced corruption into the police force, because if you were to be appointed as a DPO there were certain returns you had to make to him quarterly. And as a result of that you send your boys to go and collect money from people. Since that time they have been corrupt”

## 7. Current Informal Policing Structures: Perceived Effectiveness, Trustworthiness

### *a) Perceived level of effectiveness and trustworthiness*

Given the important role that the informal policing structures currently play in safeguarding the communities, what is their effectiveness? How successful are they in combating crime and working in the interests of the communities? And what are the reasons for this?

Participants gave a different assessment of the effectiveness of the Egbe/Omodewa than that of the vigilante.

#### *Egbe/Omodewa*

As regards the Egbe/Omodewa, participants left no doubt at all that they are trusted, and have been effective in ensuring that crime in their community has remained at a low level.

“It is because we have the Egbe and the Omodewa and they do their work very well, that is why you don't see so many thieves or armed robbers here”

“We trust them they look after our interests”

### *b) Reasons for perceived effectiveness and trustworthiness*

When asked about the reasons for the effectiveness and trustworthiness of the vigilante, group participants highlighted two major factors, both of which root in (i) the fact that vigilante members are from and the communities themselves, and (ii) in the familiarity between community members.

“They are one of us, they know us and we know them”

This ensures especially the following:

First, a degree of vested interest, determination, and honour on the part of the group members in carrying out their tasks as effectively as possible and in the interests of their community.

“Even we are happy to be called into such a group. It is an honour, because you are serving our community”

Second, a high degree of detailed knowledge of the local terrain, customs and population elements

“They know the terrain...they know the environment and have an insight into the society, our customs and so on”

### *Vigilante*

Whilst participants saw no limitations in the operation of the Egbe/Omodewa, they noted that the effectiveness of the vigilante is somewhat limited at present. They specifically highlighted two main areas of limitation.

First, participants noted that the vigilante currently consist of too few men, and don't have the necessary arms to effectively confront and apprehend criminals

“You see at the moment the vigilante are not able to really face robbers face to face, because sometimes there will be a group of robbers may up to 12 in a vehicle. And there will be only 3 vigilante operating at the time, and their weapons will be far inferior to the ones the robbers may have”

Second, the vigilante at present are often too tired to perform their duties as alertly as they should, given that they have to continue their farming activities during the day in order to sustain their and their families' livelihoods.

“The [vigilante] are not able to do the work very very alertly... Because their salary is too small compared to the economic situation we have presently. Where a married man with about three four children goes home with a pay-packet of less than N200 a day. How does he keep mind and soul together? So these people end up going to the farm in the mornings, spend most of their time on the farm. When they come back, by the time are doing their vigilante work, before 12 midnight they will have slept off because they are tired.

The main factor ultimately seen as underlying both of these limitations, as above quote already indicates, is the insufficient remuneration and funding provided to the vigilante.

## 8. Views on the *De Jure* Mandate and Ideal Role of Informal Policing Structures vs. NPF

Given that communities have lost confidence in the police, and presently entrust so much of the charge of ensuring their safety and security to their informal policing structures, what are their views on the mandate of these IPS vs. the NPF *in principle*? And what are their visions or wishes for the relative roles *ideally* played these groups?

Participants indicated that, ideally, both the police and their informal policing groups should play a role.

On the one hand, they recognised that is the NPF, that by law holds the mandate for and thus, ought, in principle, carry out all policing functions - provided they can do it effectively and justly.

“The police...are the body that are responsible to do it and they should be allowed to do it if they can perform according to how they should ”

This notwithstanding, however, participants argued that their own groups nevertheless remain necessary, especially given their detailed knowledge of the local terrain, which is vital for wholly effective policing of their community.

“But our own groups should still play a role... As we said our own groups, they know our local terrain and they know our customs, so they can investigate cases more effectively than the police. So we still need them”

“Yes, both should play a role”

Moreover, participants expressed a profound scepticism about whether the NPF would ever be able to change to such an extent that it fulfils its mandate justly. At the very least, they argued, change will take a very long time, as it will be impeded by the vested interests of those in power.

“The way I see it, it may take us till Christ comes to be able to change the police”

“It may be until Christ comes [because] the corruption ...starts right from the top of government”

“The thing will not happen because it has to start from government and government is not ready”

Until change is achieved, thus – i.e. for the foreseeable future, the mandate for ensuring their safety and security will need to remain with their informal policing structures. In this context, importantly, participants discussed and reflected on whether their IPS should be empowered to themselves administer corrective justice to offenders, as long as the NPF and the courts remain unable to do this justly.

On the one hand, participants initially expressed a wish for their traditional rulers to be empowered to administer such justice, hoping that this would ensure that justice is done.

“With the present situation of things, there is injustice in the court of law and with the police. If this continues this way, personally I would prefer the Oba and the chiefs to administer justice”

“With the present trend maybe we have to revert to our former system of looking for justice”

Upon further discussion, however, participants agreed that such a system may bring difficulties with it – it may cause enmity within the community, and may be open to abuses on the part of the ruler.

“Because of the intimacy and closeness within our community...there would be a possibility that justice would not be done so... the police and courts, rather than the Oba or chiefs should handle...cases”

“By allowing the chiefs and Obas to administer justice, there is a danger that if they mete out justice someone might bear grudges against them”.

“With our Obas, partiality will creep in when there are cases for them to judge...Taking this place for example. We are a small community and we know each other right from the start. So hatred lingering from...olden days could influence their judgement”

Ultimately, in view of these potential problems, participants agreed that an empowerment of traditional rulers to administer justice is not advisable. The best course of action, rather, is to adhere to the law and to work (and hope) for an improvement in the police and court system.

“If it is crime detection and punishment...the law of the land should take its course”

“The best thing to do, rather than reverting back to the olden ways, would be to improve the present justice system – the police and the courts and make sure they are not corrupt so that people can get due justice”

“If there are ways to have a very honest and loyal and disciplined police and courts, if that could be addressed that would be better”

## 9. Concrete Visions/Requests for Change or Improvements *in Practice*

In line with their views on the ideal roles of the IPS and NPF, group participants' expressed two major requests for concrete change.

First, and for the immediate and shorter term, they emphasised the crucial need for efforts and measures to maintain and bolster the effectiveness of the vigilante groups:

“The vigilante should be improved very well”

Participants explained that such measures would need to include:

- c) Provision of improved equipment, and training on the use of such equipment, in order to enable the vigilante to better apprehend and deter criminals (what specifically is needed would be for the Oba and the vigilante themselves to specify)

“The vigilante should be given some better sophisticated weapons to work with and they should be trained on how to use these weapons and when to use them”

“Once the armed robbers know that these people are well trained, that they have sophisticated weapons...they will not come to our area”

“The [vigilante] should be trained and equipped”

- d) Efforts to increase the numbers of vigilante employed

“They need to increase the numbers of the vigilante, they have to employ more people. You cannot expect three people to do it. And once the armed robbers know that... they are many, they will not come to our area”

- e) Provision of improved salary to the vigilante members, in order to boost their morale and to allow them to dedicate more energy to their service

“If there is a way to improve the salary of these vigilante it will serve as an impetus to make them work harder. Because their salary is too small compared to the economic situation we have presently. Where a married man with about three four children goes home with a pay packet of less than N200 a day. How does he keep mind and soul together? These people end up going to the farm in the mornings, spend most of their time on the farm. When they come back, by the time are doing their vigilante work, before 12 midnight they will have slept off because they are tired. So they are not able to do the work very very alertly”

Interestingly, in reflecting on the provision of improved remuneration to the vigilante, participants initially considered the idea of whether the vigilante should be fully institutionalised into a new 'state police' along the model of the former state police, which existed in the early years after independence.

“ Why can't we make the vigilante...into state police, like we used to have? Train them, and equip them very well...and allow them to work side by side or hand in hand with the Nigerian police. So then we have the Nigerian police, and the state police- made up of people from the locality”

Upon further discussion, however, participants agreed that though it may be a good idea in principle, it may prove counterproductive in practice. They argued that an institution of the vigilante as state police would lead to communities' loss of control over them and, likely, to corruption among them just as in the NPF. To illustrate this point, participants mentioned the case of the road safety corps, which started off their operations with integrity but, once subsumed under the police, became corrupt.

”If the vigilante are made almost into another police, the same things the police are doing now, those problems will start entering the vigilante too, and it might aggravate our condition. (others: yes!)”

“You see, it has always been the character of Nigerians – the moment they have loopholes or methods of amassing wealth, they suddenly change...so the moment they are given such powers... most of them... will emulate the police. The moment they see how the Nigerian police get their money, they will want to do the same. And that will create another problem for us”

“Well...that is the big question because even the road safety corps, when they were created they were not corrupt, but the moment they were integrated with the police they became corrupt and they are even more corrupt than the police now. So I think that fear is a fear we have. We cannot guarantee their honesty”

The participants argued, in effect, that 'institutionalisation' and empowerment of the vigilante should only go to the extent that effective community ownership of them is maintained. In other words, care should be taken not to enable them to become 'interest groups' in their own right. To this end, participants further emphasised that need for the vigilante group to remain entirely separate from the police, and, ideally, to be headed by leader of the highest integrity.

“The [vigilante] should be entirely separate from the police”

“The vigilante [should] have a very good leader...a well-disciplined officer”

The second major request for change expressed by the participants, this time for the longer term, was for initiatives to change the working and conduct of the police, especially through a reorientation and elimination of corruption in the force.

“There must be a reorientation in the police”

This, participants emphasised, would require above all the institution of mechanisms to punish and bring to justice those who engage in corrupt practices - beginning from the top cadres in the NPF as well as in government.

“The reorientation must start from our leaders... from the top including our politicians...Then, if the leaders set a good example for others, the others will follow. So it has to start right from the top”

“If you see someone in the police force suddenly amassing wealth, it should be retrieved. So if they are corrupt they should be punished”

“Unless there is a way by which this corruption can be wiped out, and all those who do it are punished, things will not improve. And if it is to be done, it has to be from the top”

In addition to a reorientation in the e NPF, participants emphasised the urgent need for an elimination of corruption also among those working in the court and judicial system.

“If this Nigeria is going to be in a better position...it means that those in charge of administering the law must be very honest”

“If there are ways to have a very honest and loyal and disciplined police and courts, if that could be addressed that would be better”

Finally, as a third request, in addition to changes in the vigilante and NPF, group participants stressed the vital need for improvements in their economic situation as a way to tackling the roots of crime. In this context, they specifically emphasised the need for measures to improve the employment opportunities, especially of the youth.

“If we want to have security here there are certain things we must do. First, when people are jobless they will be a threat to security. Joblessness is staring us in the face, and if you want security and justice the government should do everything possible, instead of stacking their money in bank accounts in other countries, they should provide job opportunities for our children! (All: yes!)”

## 10. Perspectives and Wishes on Ways to Work Towards Change

### a) *Who and what should be involved?*

In reflecting on approaches to achieve the envisioned change in the NPF, participants indicated the primary responsibility on the part of government to effect such change. Referring to the successes of the 'war against indiscipline' policies of the Buhari/Idiagbon government, participants implied that if government were not corrupt itself – it could surely effect the necessary reorientation in the NPF.

“Under the Buhari/Idiagbon regime it worked. It worked because Idiagbon was a well-discipline military officer, He didn't think of property at all. He was very straightforward. But we don't find these people today.”

As a step towards influencing government and NPF to effect change, participants suggested a consultation forum in which poor communities can express their views, requests and grievances to the relevant government and NPF officials. They noted, moreover, that to be effective, such discussion must involve those at the top of the NPF hierarchy.

“The majority of us here are men and women of courage. We can confront the problems of our society with those in charge. The police should rub hands with us; we should be able to tell them their deficiencies but also their good sides. If we are to sit down together like this and discuss heart to heart without mincing words.

“But...if we are to discuss with the police, there is not point discussing at the level of the DPO. It has to be higher, we have to be able to discuss with those at the top!”

In light of the seeming disinterestedness of government in listening to poor communities, however, participants also requested for advocacy support from NGO, such as the Access to Justice Programme. They urged the need for NGO efforts to influence, and engender in government a genuine willingness to take seriously and respond to communities' needs.

“We pray that you should prevail on the Nigerian government to allow the voice of the people to prevail because the government doesn't listen to the yearnings of the people”

In terms of the envisioned support to vigilante activities, participants indicated that NGO, such as the Access to Justice Programme, could help to provide such practical support to the vigilante in consultation with the traditional ruler.

“NGOs like your programme could help provide these things. You (A2J) would need to go and consult the Oba, and the Oba in council. And he will then consult his side chiefs – those who are in charge of selecting the vigilante”

b) What are the needed first steps?

In reflecting on first steps to work towards the envisioned change, participants, as mentioned initially, expressed a strong wish for further consultations between their communities and the Access to Justice Programme to discuss further steps to be taken. They indicated that such further consultation should involve them, as well as other relevant community members including:

- (i) Community chiefs
- (ii) Traditional Rulers
- (iii) Vigilante members

#### 4. Main Findings For Oye LGA (Urban)

##### 4.1 OYE: SUMMARY STATEMENT

###### Safety, Security and Informal Policing: Current Situation

- Safety and security – the protection of property and life from crime and the absence of fear and anxiety that accompanies it – are a vital prerequisite for individuals’ ability to sustain their livelihoods
- In those communities which have vigilante groups, the safety and security situation today is vastly improved on what it was, due to the successful operation of the vigilante
- In those communities where no vigilante groups presently exist, the crime situation remains grave
- The vigilante groups were formed as a measure of self-help in view of the failure of the police to adequately safeguard the communities, both as a result of an inability to prevent and detect crime, and a seeming unwillingness to do all to bring offenders to justice – i.e. to justly enforce the law
- The general effectiveness of the vigilante groups lies primarily in the fact that members, being from within the communities themselves, have a determination to and vested interest in curbing crime, and are under the control of, and accountable to the community

- Having lost confidence in the police, communities now entrust the responsibility of protecting their lives and property through the prevention of crime to the vigilante. The investigation of crime or civil cases is entrusted to the quarter chiefs and traditional rulers.
- Whilst the formal mandate for initiating the process of corrective justice for offenders remains with the NPF, the traditional rulers in conjunction with the IPS usually administer justice themselves in minor or novice cases. All other cases are usually referred to the police.
- Although such cases are referred to the NPF, and despite having the mandate, there is a current failure of the police to justly enforce the law and bring guilty parties to justice. Caught offenders are commonly released in return for monetary rewards. This enhances communities' exposure to repeat crimes from such offenders, further undermines their security and creates a sense of injustice suffered at the hands of the police.
- The failure to do justice is not confined to the NPF, but applies to the court and justice system as a whole
- There remains a great need for change to the policing of communities in order to better ensure their safety, security and access to justice

#### Vision of Needed/Desired Change

- Although the vigilante and other informal structures are currently entrusted with the responsibility to safeguard their lives and property, it is the Nigerian Police Force that is recognised to hold this mandate under the constitution. The ultimate vision and desire for change is thus a police force which is able to carry out its mandate effectively and justly. This requires, above all, a reorientation of, and elimination of corruption in the police.
- In addition there needs to be improvement in the court system as a whole to allow a speedier and more just administration of justice
- Any change in the police is likely only to be achieved in the longer term, and until then the informal policing groups, in particular the vigilante hold the provisional/temporary mandate to safeguard the communities. Thus, in the shorter term, there is an urgent need for efforts to support and bolster community vigilante activities. Specifically, until the NPF is able to justly carry out its mandate for corrective justice, there is a need to legally empower the vigilante in their administration of justice in certain cases.
  - Lack of care for children from disrupted families is seen as one of the root causes of crime in the communities. As a measure of primordial prevention, there is thus an important need for improvements in the welfare provided for such children and, in so doing, to remove their risk of becoming engaged in criminal activities.

#### Practical Support/Change Requested

- Practical support requested to support and bolster community vigilante activities include:
  - a) Formation of vigilante groups in communities where none presently exist
  - b) Maintaining or enhancing the effectiveness of existing vigilante groups, through
    - Provision of necessary equipment (to be specified by community/vigilante leaders)
    - Introduction of a formal system of tokens for recognition, honour and appreciation for vigilante members, to boost their morale
    - Legislation to empower the informal structures to themselves administer corrective justice in certain cases
- Concrete Actions/Initiatives requested to contribute towards change in NPF include:
  - Initiatives to punish corruption in the NPF, beginning from the topmost positions and effected by government
  - Initiatives to effect the provision of sufficient equipment and communication technology to police forces on the ground
  - Facilitation of a forum in which communities can, in writing and anonymously, freely express their grievances and needs to NPF and policy makers with relevant jurisdiction

### *First Steps in Working Towards Change*

- Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change. Consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as other relevant community members, specifically:
  - (i) Community chiefs
  - (ii) Traditional rulers
  - (iii) Vigilante members

## 4.2 OYE: DETAILED FINDINGS

### 1. HOMOGENEITY OF PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS

Participants' views and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing in their communities

displayed a marked degree of homogeneity and agreement. On all topics, participants expressed the same principal values, experiences and attitudes.

### *2. Poor Communities' Reactions to Focus Group Discussion*

Reflecting on the focus group discussion, participants expressed their appreciation of having had the opportunity to discuss their views, and be listened to on a subject of such vital importance to them.

In this context, importantly, participants noted their appreciation of the confidentiality of the discussion. They described their general anxiety about of freely expressing their views, especially on a topic as 'security' and 'policing', for fear it may be used against them. In effect, they feel they are usually denied the right to freedom of expression without fear or intimidation.

“We don’t have the right to express ourselves in the present situation in Nigeria”

“The [police] can come to your house. Even this discussion here. We took part because you assured us that you won’t mention any names. Because with the little thing we have been discussing or saying so far, they can come and pick you in your house and punish you. That is how Nigeria is”

Despite their appreciation of being able to voice their views freely, however, participant made clear that the consultation will only be of value and not in vain, if it truly leads to practical change for them. In light of this, they conveyed a sincere wish for further A2J consultations with their community with a view to working towards the change they envision.

“We really appreciate it...because it is in our own interest and for the safety of our community”

“We very much appreciate it provided it will have an effect, so that it won’t be a wasted exercise. At the end of the day we need something very concrete to come out of it. So we wish that you will come back to us”

“Yes we appreciate it provided it has a positive effect. Because if it is effective we shall live in peace”

### 3. Communities’ Conceptions of Safety and Security, and Their Importance to Their Lives

Participants’ conceived of safety and security above all, as the protection of property and lives from crime, and the absence of anxiety that accompanies it. They described vividly how the absence of such protection has generated fear and a sense of ‘not being free’ among them.

“The impact of this crime and lack of security is that there is no rest of mind”

“No safety, no security, no peace of mind. You just pray”

“You see you can’t live free. Even with your vehicle you are not safe. Even with your property, you are not safe. Even with your own personal life you are not safe”

“If you are on the road with your car there is no rest of mind until you are fortunate enough to reach your destination. Even in your own home, nowadays...you are scared of robbers and thieves”

Participants stressed the vital importance of safety and security especially for their economic welfare.

“I think the need for safety can never be overemphasised it is very very important.”

They described the critical impact that the absences of protection from crime has had on people’s ability to pursue and sustain their livelihoods, especially through business.

“This thing is having a bad impact on our business. For example if you want to go and buy things, you may have to go to Ibadan. But even whilst on the road they may rob the money from you. Like about 2 or 3 weeks ago, when the armed robbers stopped business women on the road and asked them to be paying 10% of their money – during the day!”  
“Then there is going to buy your goods. By the time you have bought your goods and come back. Even the fear of buying fine things now is always there so you buy less. Because if your shop is beautiful, full up, these people may come in the night and pack everything away”

“There is a great impact of crime on business these days. Like some people that are into the timber business, they are usually Igbos from the East, some are from Abuja. Formerly when they came, they used to come with cash. But the robbers discovered that they normally came with good cash – maybe 1 million, 700,000 or so...and they robbed them on the way. And this will affect them – when the businessmen get back they have to start afresh... So these days... They don't usually go back with a lorry again because they fear that armed robbers will stop their vehicle on the road and if they are unable to bring out cash they will kill them. Sometime ago one businessman, when armed robbers stopped his vehicle, he ran into the bush. And the armed robbers burnt his whole vehicle because they couldn't get cash from him. So the impact of crime on business is high”

In addition, the participants indicated that the fear of crime, by affecting their health, can itself undermine their capabilities to engage in the activities necessary to sustain their livelihoods.

“And the fear of meeting the robbers affects us too. If you are not a hypertensive before you may get hypertension with the fear, because you don't sleep during the night, you can't travel during the day – where are we heading to?”

In reflecting on safety, security and crime, participants also highlighted some factors that, in their eyes, are root causes of crime. In this context, they pointed specifically to the detrimental impact of the increase in ‘broken homes’. The lack of structure and supervision for such children of broken marriages, so they argued, is a key reason why children turn to crime.

“There is another thing that is causing all these armed robbers: the case of broken homes is contributing a lot. By the time the home is broken, the child will say, I will go to my mother. But he won't reach the mother and the end of the day he will go and join a bad gang or group, and the mother and father won't know what is going on until at the end of the day the child commits a crime”

#### *4. Nature of Current Informal Policing Structures: Organisation, Function, Activities, Approach*

*The presence of informal policing structures varies in the three different communities from which participants came from: Ilupeju; Ayede-Ekiti; and Oye-Ekiti*

In Ilupeju, as participants from this community described, there exists at present no major informal policing structure dedicated to protecting them from crime. Until three years ago, the community received

the services of a 'night guard group', called '*Ibariba*' from abroad. This group was paid through regular contributions from the community members. Though initially effective in patrolling and protecting the community from crime, the group later began collaborating with the criminals. The result was a renewed surge of crime and, in light of this, their employment was terminated. Since then, Ilupeju community has no major informal policing structure.

“They were night guards, the name of this group was '*Ibariba*', that is the name of the ethnic group they came from, I think from Benin republic. In each town they were engaged. The town met and decided to get *Ibariba* and they sent for them. For example in Ilupeju we engaged about two or three, and everyone had to pay toward the payment of their work. When they first came they were very very effective, they did the work without fear or favour. There was no burglary, nothing. There was peace. But after some years they were influenced by the robbers. They ganged up with the robbers, and they now allowed the robbers to perform their operations. So when the town noticed that they were becoming ineffective, they were sent away. But since they left we have no such group operating in Ilupeju.”

In Ayede, as participants explained, the same experience with the *Ibariba* was made. Now, however, in contrast to Ilupeju, Ayede just as Oye has three major types of informal policing structure or process who operate in the community. They are:

- a) Community Vigilante Groups
- b) Processes of Public Shaming of Wrongdoers
- c) Quarter Chiefs and Traditional Rulers

#### a) Community Vigilante Groups

The 'vigilante' group, made up of the traditional 'hunters' group, was mentioned by the participants as the first and most prominent of the IPS in their communities.

“In Oye here, we...have a...community effort and we call it vigilante. They are the Olodes, the local hunters”

“We in Ayede are now using the community effort, the...local hunters”

Importantly, the term 'vigilante' evidently has no negative connotation in this community, as participants used it without any qualification.

#### *Function*

The vigilante groups, as the participants explained carry out only one major function.

They routinely patrol and guard residential areas and roads during the night – the time considered most dangerous in terms of the risk of theft or armed robberies. Through their patrols the vigilantes work in particular towards the prevention and apprehension of crime or criminals.

“The patrolling in the night, that is their main duty”

“[In Ilupeju] they will come out around 11pm and leave around 5 am”

“[In Oye] they come out as from 10pm to 4 am in the morning. They will be going from one street to the other with their whistle and if they discover you coming any time from 10 or 12, if they ask you questions and you are unable to answer, they will keep you till day break so they know who you are. That is the highest they can do. And if, at day break they discover you are a suspect or are suspicious, they keep you and take the normal steps to take on you”

Once suspects or offenders are apprehended, as participants explained, they are usually brought before the traditional leader (*Kabiesi* or *Oba*) who then decides on the course of corrective justice to be taken.

“They will first take the person to the Kabiesi”

The course decided upon, as the participants described, depends on the gravity of the offence. In cases of minor offences such as theft, the offenders are usually subjected to a process of public shaming, and a warning from the traditional leader. This is considered sufficient penalty and deterrent, and such offenders are typically not referred to the police.

“If it is an ordinary thief, in our town, in Ilupeju, if he is caught, maybe he stole yam or kola nut, they won’t take him to the police station. They will ask him to carry whatever he has stolen around the market, so that everyone will see him that this is a thief. They won’t beat him, just shaming him...That is immediate justice”

“And after that the Oba will warn him that if anything gets lost they will look for him and hold him responsible. So he is now like an eyesore”

In cases of grave offences such as armed robbery, however, offenders are immediately referred to the police.

“If it is an armed robber at times the weapon in his hand will not allow them to do such a thing. They will only take him to the palace; it is now the Kabiesi that will send for the police. And the police will come to the palace and pick him up from there”

In this context, participants emphasised that the vigilante in their community do not administer jungle justice to such grave offenders.

“No, we don’t do that here”

### *Organisation*

The vigilante groups in Oye and Ayede is exclusively supported and maintained by the communities themselves. Though the Local Government is aware of their operation, it provides no financial assistance to these groups.

“The [Local Government] know the Oba ...has such groups operating. But the local government does not give any support to the vigilante”

“It is us who pay for their services not the local government”

The vigilante group is supported, and paid through regular contributions from all households in the community – organised through the quarter chiefs. This provides a stipend for the vigilante members, and allows the purchase of the basic equipment, such as torches and batteries, used by them.

“We the community members pay them. Individual houses or flats pay at the end of the month, just to give them a stipend. It is not like a salary, just like a stipend”

“So each quarter chief will call the members together and explain to them. He will know the number of houses in the quarter, so they pay accordingly. Each home has to pay. ...So if there are four flats in this building, each flat will pay maybe N200”

“They use the money we contribute to buy the torch lights, the batteries and other things they need”

In addition to such basic equipment as torches and canes, as participants implicitly indicated but did not want to state directly, the vigilante also use guns, though they typically do not hold formal licenses for these arms.

“We are not supposed to know...what they are carrying. And they warn you not to come out in the night again. The thing is if you want to carry a gun you need a license and if you don't have license, the police will come after you”

Members do not volunteer for service, but are selected by the chief hunter, who is instructed by the traditional ruler and high chiefs of the town. The chief hunter usually selects young and middle aged men, who during the day have their other jobs.

“And it is the chief hunter who recruits you. You see the Kabiesi of the town, the king, will pass information to the high chiefs, the high chiefs will send the information to the chief hunter, and the chief hunter will now pick the vigilante members. He [usually] picks...youth and middle aged men, so it is not that people come and say ‘I want to join’”

Vigilante members do not work ‘full-time’. They only assemble at night and, during the day, pursue their own other occupations or businesses.

“In the mornings they go to their respective jobs or businesses”

**b) Quarter Chiefs and Traditional Rulers**

The role of the quarter chiefs and traditional rulers (Kabiesi, Oba) can be seen as complementing that of the vigilante in two ways.

First, as participants explained, it is these bodies that are responsible for effecting the detection and investigation of crime (or the settlement of civil disputes) in response to community members' reporting of cases. The leaders or chiefs do not typically conduct the actual investigations themselves. They direct subordinates to carry out the inquiries and report back to them. Only cases that cannot be solved are referred to the police.

“If we discover a crime or have a case with a neighbour...we go to the quarter chiefs or to the Kabiesi, and then they try to investigate and settle the case”

“If anything happens like that, if you report a case to your quarter chief, he will now instruct 2 or 3 of the other set of chiefs under him to investigate, and then report back. If he is unable to solve or trace the case, the case will now be sent to the oba, and if the oba is unable to do it, then to the police”

Second, as already described above, the traditional rulers complement the crime apprehension function of the vigilante, by deciding on and directing the course of corrective justice to be taken with an arrested offender.

**5. Current Informal Policing Structures: Extent of Current Role and Mandate vis à vis the NPF**

The participants left no doubt at all, that it is the vigilante groups (in those communities where they exist), as well as the quarter chiefs and traditional rulers, that play the *central and dominant role* in ensuring their communities' safety and security.

It is to them, rather than the NPF, that the communities entrust the mandate and the responsibility for preventing, detecting and investigating crime in their midst.

“We are relying on our own community efforts now”

Importantly, however, as participants described, the NPF is recognised to retain the major responsibility and the legal and constitutional mandate for the process of initiating corrective justice for caught offenders.

“You see there is no other alternative so far as we are under the law of this country. Everybody is under the law. Irrespective of delaying justice and all that, you still have to give the respect for the constitutional law, whether there is justice or not”

In practice, however, as we have seen, the IPS commonly appropriate this mandate in the case of minor offences. In cases of grave offences, the traditional rulers typically do honour the NPFs mandate and hand caught offenders to the police. They do so, out of respect of the law and, as participants explained, out of fear of themselves being found guilty of an offence.

“You see, a thief or...armed robber can...go and report and they will go and arrest the Oba for administering self justice which is not allowed under the law. So the Oba or Quarter Chief are afraid of anything coming back to bounce on them. They don't want to be blamed for that, as the police say they have no right to judge at home. That they don't have that power”

It is for the same main reason, as participants explained, that communities do not engage in jungle justice:

“If there were a case where someone administered jungle justice here in Oye, some people would name you to the police and tomorrow around 12 midnight they would arrest them for jungle justice...So applying jungle justice is dangerous here because before you know it, they will say it is Mr. X and then the police will deal with you”

Thus communities and IPS refer grave offenders to the police, despite their deep reservations about the 'justice' provided by the police.

“At least the community has to do its own part and adhere to the law. Then it is up to them, the police, to do their own part. If they are unable to play their own part and provide justice - it is their own”

These reservations are closely linked to the rationales that originally underpinned the formation of the vigilante, and they are further discussed below.

## 6. Current Informal Policing Structures: Emergence, Origin and Rationale

In reflecting on the reasons that underpinned the formation of the vigilante in Ayede and Oye, as well as the earlier employment of the 'Ibariba' guard groups in Ilupeju and Ayede, participants pointed to two main rationales. And it is the same two rationales that lie behind the current wish of Ilupeju residents for the formation of a vigilante group in their community.

The first, and most important rationale was (and is) the evident failure of the police to effectively protect the communities against crime. The ineffectiveness of the police (has) resulted in the escalation of crime to such high levels that communities were (now feel) forced to come together to find ways to protect themselves against it. In essence, the formation of the vigilante, thus, represented a self-help or self-defence measure of communities aimed to 'fill' or compensate for the gap' left by failure of the police. As participants noted, it expressed communities' profound loss of confidence in the police.

”Have they provided security? We have lost confidence in the police!”

“You see in Oye, the vigilante group was formed due to the high rate of crime by the youth...there was a high rate of crime because the police were not performing”

“It was the same reason with the Ibariba. They were brought because of the high rate of crime and the police were not reducing it”

“In Ilupeju, where we have no vigilante, there is crime every day... It is now only the police that patrol our community. But this is not enough and we have to do something on our own.”

The group participants highlighted two principal aspects to this police failure and the resulting loss of confidence in the NPF.

As the first aspect, participants described an apparent ineffectiveness of the police in preventing or apprehending crime.

“When crime is going on they don’t respond well at all”

“And if you go to the police station to call them if there is a crime, you won’t meet them there. Or they won’t come”

They saw this ineffectiveness mainly as the result of lack of sufficient police personnel and equipment – i.e. an *inability* to effectively apprehend crime – and consequently also a reluctance on the part of the police to put their lives at risk.

“You see even the equipment they have is nil. You that for the whole local government of Oye, they only have one pick up. Do you expect them with that one pick-up to operate in Oye, to operate in Ayede, to operate in Ilupeju, in 15 towns with a single vehicle? And even their communication network is nil”,

“There was a time at Ayede-Ekiti, thieves entered our house. My sister escaped and went to the police to call them but the policeman told my sister that do ‘you want the armed robber to kill me? The gun in the armed robber’s hand is mightier than the one in my hand’”

“There is also the issue of numbers. According to the UN there should be one policeman to every 200 people. But in Nigeria it is one policeman to 10000. So even with good equipment that is not enough”

As the second, and more important, aspect of the police failure to protect them – again a result of corruption on the part of the officers, participants underscored the apparent unwillingness of the NPF to do all, always, to justly enforce the law and bring caught guilty offenders to justice. As participants described, the police commonly release caught or arrested criminals, in return for monetary rewards. The result of this has been a continuous exposure of communities to repeat crimes from such offenders, and thus a further undermining of their security.

“And the end of the day, if we are fortunate and the criminals are caught, there is no justice. They will give them money and they will release them”

“And there is the question of justice...We had a case when we were burgled. They caught the culprits and kept them on remand but in the end they just manipulated the case because the thieves, they had money to give to the police but I had no money to give them. Even one of the officers said ‘oh mummy... you are not ready to spend money again?’ So in the end they released them, said there was ‘not enough evidence’. All of them were released”

“If you have money in your hand, even if you are a criminal, you know you can commit any crime and you can use your money to settle whatever crime they have committed with the police”

Importantly, participants emphasised that they see this failure to bring guilty parties to justice not just as confined to the police. They see it as a grave problem affecting the court, judicial and political system as a whole – and, as an example, quote the as yet unresolved assassination of the former attorney general of the Federal Ministry of Justice in Nigeria.

“Concerning justice. Justice in Nigeria is nil. When all these things can be happening at the top, what can you expect at our own local level? A big man, Bola Ige was killed, and up till now we don’t know where we are. And when this can happen to Bola Ige, what will happen to us poor people? There is no case, no investigation. So the whole system is totally bad and it is making people very sick”

The second major rationale for communities’ loss of confidence in the police is equally underpinned by the problem of corruption. Participants indicated that the tendency of the police to side with whichever party brings more monetary reward - i.e. usually the richer party – is experienced, in a sense, as an oppression of the poor. Adding to this sense of ‘oppression’ is the police practice of demanding undue payments even from those who are already impoverished. The formation of the vigilante can thus also be seen as expressing, at least in part, a wish for an alternative to, and protection from the police.

“You see we feel that Nigerian law now does not apply to the rich person. How it is now...the moment the police know that you have money and ‘this is a rich person’, if you have any case with them, they will treat it accordingly, in your interest, because they will collect money from you. But the moment they know that you are poor and you don’t have money that you can spend on them, they will just drop your case on one side”

“Even the mobile police men. They are supposed to protect us but they are destroying us the poor people. If you want to carry your goods from one place to the other you will be fearing the mobile policemen because if you meet them on the road they will... stop the vehicle, go inside, open your boot, whatever is loaded they will carry it, and if you are carrying something like eggs, the majority will be broken. So these types of things are what is happening to us. So you know there is no safety here again, unless the police’s powers are no longer used arbitrarily”

### *Reasons for Police Corruption*

In reflecting on the nature and reasons for corruption in the police force, participants stressed that, in their view, it is the majority of police officers who are corrupt.

“You see, the set of people in the force are drop outs... You see, the policemen you have today, most of them are bad eggs”

As regards the direct causes of the corruption among the police force, participants first considered the lack of equipment and, at least in the past, the poor salary of the police, which may tempt officers to enrich themselves by other means.

“Formerly their salary was not good. I don’t know about now, but formerly it was very very poor. Then there is no equipment for them to work. So all this contributes to their own way of satisfying themselves”

However, participants also noted that other civil servants have received equally poor salaries without becoming as corrupt as the police.

“Well, formerly their salary was nothing to write home about, but even at that time, the other civil servants too received bad salaries, and they didn’t behave that way”

In light of this, thus, participants concurred that the most important causes of police corruption are others than lacking equipment or poor salary. They pointed specifically to three major factors.

First, participants emphasised that corrupt practices can thrive because of the *de facto* immunity of police officers from prosecution or punishment.

“You can’t discipline the police. Even if you complain nothing will happen to him”

“There is no justice because there is no discipline. They don’t discipline the police force”

Second, they pointed to faults in the NPF recruitment process. They specifically noted the lack of proper scrutiny of applicants’ character that should be inherent in the process. As a result, so they argued, many officers are recruited despite having criminal or corrupt intentions.

“The type of policemen they employ, the category is one thing. Most of the policemen, their background educationally is nil, and they don’t look into the moral aspect of their character and background. Because if you want to go to teacher training you need a recommendation, but it is not so with the police. They don’t need recommendation on

whether they have good behaviour. I think that is one aspect because they just recruit anyhow. There is no proper screening”

Third, and most fundamentally, participants strongly agreed that the presence of all corruption in the NPF is the result of, and engendered by, the corruption of those at the topmost positions of the NPF and of government itself.

“The thing starts from the top. If your family is good, your parents are good, the children will be good. But if the head is bad, what do you expect? All others following will be bad and they won’t see anything bad in what they are doing because the ones at the top are doing the same thing”

## 7. Current Informal Policing Structures: Perceived Effectiveness, Trustworthiness

### *a) Perceived level of effectiveness and trustworthiness*

Given the important role that the IPS, and especially the vigilante, currently play in safeguarding the communities, what is their effectiveness? How successful are they in combating crime and working in the interests of the communities? And what are the reasons for this?

The participants left no doubt at all, that the vigilante are trusted, and have been effective. Since their inception, they have had a tangible and significant impact on crime in their communities. The quarter chiefs and traditional rulers, too, as participants explained have been very effective in investigating and solving cases and crimes.

“The vigilante are very effective because in Ayede-Ekiti, since they started again, earlier this year, there is nothing like crime again”

“The chiefs are very effective in investigating cases...They will do the investigation thoroughly, they take the time, even more than the police”

### *b) Reasons for perceived effectiveness and trustworthiness*

When asked about the reasons for the effectiveness and trustworthiness of the vigilante, group participants highlighted two major factors, both of which root in (i) the fact that vigilante members are from and are paid by the communities, and (ii) the familiarity between community members.

“Those who are in the vigilante, they are part of us. We know them, they are part of us”

“It is because they are from among us, they are our people”

This ensures the following:

First, there is a strong sense of community 'ownership' and control of the vigilante group. As members of the community themselves, and by being paid by the community, vigilante members are under close supervision and community control, beginning, most importantly, with the recruitment process. In recruiting vigilante, as participants emphasised, the community strictly assesses candidates 'character' and previous conduct. As a result, the community can be sure of vigilante members' integrity. Moreover, whilst in service the community can check the vigilante's operations and punish any malpractice.

"Like here in Oye, before you can be recruited into that vigilante group they will see you are a person of proven integrity. They go back to your family"

"We are from the same town, we live together, if they start conniving with any other person, people in the town will know and they will be taken to the Kabiesis and they will be punished"

"Yes, and if one of them is misbehaving the Oba will discipline him"

Second, by protecting the communities of which they themselves are members, vigilante members are protecting also their own kin and friends. Thus, they, as opposed to the NPF, have a determination to, and *vested interest* in carrying out their tasks as effectively as possible and in the interests of their community.

"They are working to protect the community and that means also themselves and their homes. So they have that dedication...It is in their own interest"

In the case of the quarter chiefs and traditional rulers, as participants explained, a further big motivation for good service is derived from the honour and 'promotion' that accrues to those who are seen to serve the interests of the community well.

"They know that they are just doing this thing for the safety of the community. And you know, there is something in Yoruba land: if you are a quarter chief and you are very effective and people love you, you will get a promotion. So our people are after their names, not money"

### *c) Areas of limitations in vigilante's effectiveness or approach*

Participants did not mention any specific area of limitation in the vigilante's effectiveness at present.

## 8. Views on the *De Jure* Mandate and Ideal Role of Informal Policing Structures Vs NPF

Given that communities have lost confidence in the police, and presently entrust so much of the charge of ensuring their safety and security their IPS, what are their views on the mandate of these informal structures vs. the NPF *in principle*? And what are their visions or wishes for the relative roles *ideally* played these groups?

The group participants indicated, that although the IPS, and especially the vigilante are currently entrusted with the mandate to safeguard their communities, this is in a sense only a provisional or temporary mandate

In spite of the present loss of confidence in the police, they noted that it is the NPF, that by the Nigerian constitution holds the mandate for all police functions and thus ought, ideally, to carry out these functions - if only they could do it effectively and justly.

“Well, our constitution says the police are the ones to do it, so if there is proper justice, right from the top, we can now rely on police but without that we prefer the vigilante”

However, as the above quote already suggests, participants expressed great reservations about whether the NPF would ever be able to fulfil its mandate justly and noted that, if anything, such change would take a long time. Until then, thus, they need to entrust the mandate for their protection to their informal policing structures, especially their vigilante groups.

“Concerning the police, we have our reservations: we have said it... If at all it will take a long time for them to change”

“But to improve the police it will take a long time...So in the meantime we have to rely on the vigilante group”

In this context, importantly, participants emphasised that as long as the police failed to fulfil its mandate for corrective justice *justly*, their informal policing structures should be legally empowered to themselves adjudicate and bring criminals ‘to justice’ swiftly and effectively. The result, they argued, would be a true reduction in crime.

“If the Oba were given that power [to administer justice] I think the rate of crime in Nigeria would be reduced (All: Yes!)”

“Formerly in this country, there was a time we had the house of chiefs. Then the Obas used to administer justice and pass judgement, and we lived in a free environment. (Interjection: Yes, we had safety). Because if there was any crime, within 24 hours justice would be done. But these days we have prolonged cases – see the Bola Ige case. For the past almost two years now nothing has been done. So if the Oba were given the power to judge it would bring back justice to the commoners”

## 9. Concrete Visions/Requests for Change or Improvements *in Practice*

In line with their views on the ideal roles of the IPS and NPF, group participants’ expressed two major requests for concrete change.

First, and for the immediate and shorter term, they emphasised the crucial need for efforts to support the vigilante activities.

“We say: first start with the vigilante”

This would require, on the one hand, initiatives to form vigilante groups in all communities, like Ilupeju, where none presently exist.

“Every town should have vigilante. Like in my town, Ilupeju, as we don’t have vigilante now, we should form them”

Participants noted that in Ilupeju specifically, such groups, as in Oye, could be formed from the local hunter’s group, instructed by the quarter chiefs and, ultimately, the Oba.

“Like the one they have in Oye, there are some hunters in Ilupeju too and they work in the night to catch animals. So they can use that same method to secure the communities from crime. I think if they start from those people it would be good. And if they need more hands, if the hunters are not enough, they can still get more people”

“Yes they could start with using the hunters. We would have to inform the quarter chiefs first, he will now go to the Oba”

On the other hand, it would require measures to maintain and bolster the effectiveness of already existing vigilante groups:

“We need to encourage the vigilante in their work!”

Participants explained that such measures would need to include:

- a) Provision of improved equipment to enable them to better apprehend criminals. (what specifically is needed would be for the Oba and the vigilante themselves to specify)

“We would need support for the vigilante in terms of equipment”

”They themselves and the Oba would know what equipment they need for security”

- b) Provision of formal tokens of appreciation and recognition to the vigilante members, in order to ‘boost their morale’.

In discussing this measures, importantly, participants initially proposed provision of proper government ‘salaries’ to the vigilante. Upon further reflection, however, they agreed that, though a good idea in principle, such a formal salary may lead to communities’ loss of control over the vigilante and possibly to abuses of power on their part. They felt, in other words, that support and empowerment of the vigilante should only go to the extent that effective community ownership of them is maintained – as this ownership is critical to their effectiveness and trustworthiness. Thus, the participants concurred that, rather than remuneration, formal tokens of appreciation or recognition should be provided to the vigilante to motivate them.

“If the government can take over from the *Kabiesis*, if the government can take over the vigilante group and give them a salary, then it would be good, they would be more effective”

“On this issue of salary...you see now if it involves too much money, collusion will come in because everybody loves money and you will derail the vigilante from the whole purpose of the community. Now you are under government and you will discover that you and the policemen will be working hand in hand. But if it is just our stipend that we give them we the communities will have control over them. But if it is government that is giving them money, the community will not have control over them again. They will say ‘if you don’t give me your stipend, government will pay me’. That is why I personally would not subscribe to the idea of giving them salaries. Because the moment salaries are involved the system will collapse”

(All: “Yes, it is true!”)

“Yes, if you say government should be paying these people, I believe the policemen were good before. I think it is because of the money they have seen and tasted it has opened their eyes too much about money. So now they try to collect money from everyone. So if government were to pay the vigilante, what assurance do we have that they too will not open their eyes to money and then start collecting it? So I too don’t support the idea of salaries. I believe if they are working and the community gives them some kind of honour, that they feel fulfilled that will be better”

“Yes, the community should give that honour!”

- c) Legislation at Local Authority or State level, to empower the traditional rulers (*Kabiesi*) to themselves adjudicate in cases of crime and bring criminals to justice without needing to refer to the police.

“They should give more power to the *Kabiesis* that they can deal with crimes themselves in the palace without needing to refer them to the police”

- d) Training: whilst provision of training was discussed, the general sense was that this is not really necessary as the vigilante are ‘hunters’ and know what to do.

“I don’t think they need training since they are hunters they know what to do!”

The participants’ second major request for change, this time for the longer term, was for initiatives to change the working and conduct of the police.

On the one hand, and above all, they emphasised the need for efforts to effect a reorientation and elimination of corruption in the force.

“We need a proper orientation for the policemen. So the police need reorientation”

This, participants emphasised, would require the following measures:

- c) Most importantly, the institution of mechanisms to punish and bring to justice those in the police who engage in corrupt practices, beginning from the top.

“There must be a way of correcting...malpractices and it must start from the top. If the top people are really disciplined, the discipline will come down to the lower levels”

“Supposing someone at the top was corrupt or did something wrong... if that person was punished, according to the law, people would fear. Even the junior ones would fear and it would deter them”

“There needs to be proper justice at the top. And then the policemen will adjust. If the governor or president commits the same offence as a messenger, if the two of them are subjected to the same punishment, the police too will know that if they are protecting one person because of his money, if they are taken to the court, the justice will take its right course. And then the police will adjust...So there needs to be proper justice right away from the top down”

- d) Changes to the current recruitment policies and processes to ensure only men of good character are recruited into the NPF

“If they want to employ anybody to be a policeman, they should make sure that he should be of good behaviour, of a good background, and I am sure he would behave better than someone who is a thief before”

On the other hand, and in addition, participants highlighted the need for measures to enhance their effectiveness in apprehending and detecting crime. This, they argued, would require the following:

- a) Provision of improved equipment and communication technology

“In fact, until we improve their equipment and communication technology and so many things we will not have a good police force”

“They need to equip the police”

b) Increases in the numbers of NPF officers

“They should...increase their number...Every town should have policemen there”

In addition to a reorientation in the police, importantly, the participants stressed that the court system as a whole must be changed to enable a speedier administration of corrective justice. This, they argued, would necessitate, amongst others, the institution of more courts.

“Also the justice sector the process must be improved...so that there is justice immediately, in 2 or 3 weeks”

The thing is that the number of high courts and magistrate courts are not enough. And then you are expecting justice. So there must be more courts”

Finally, participants noted the need for efforts to secure the welfare of children from disrupted families, in order to protect them from the risk of engaging in criminal activities, i.e. as a measure of ‘primordial’ crime prevention.

“If there is something [that can be done] maybe to improve on the welfare for children from broken families, like for example welfare homes, so that there is enough opportunity for them. Then the crime will be reduced”

## 10. Perspectives and Wishes on Ways to Work Towards Change

### a) *Who and what should be involved?*

In reflecting on approaches to achieve the envisioned change in the NPF, participants strongly perceived a primary responsibility on the part of government to effect such change.

“Let the government look after the police”

Referring to the successes of the ‘war against indiscipline’ policies of the Buhari/Idiagbon government, as well as the effective policies in the Murtala Muhammed era, participants argued that if government were seriously willing – it could effect the necessary reorientation in the NPF easily and quickly.

“Look at the regime of Buhari and Idiagbon... It was during their regime that there was discipline and justice and the police were better. Their war against indiscipline. It worked so well that even as a civil servant you will think twice before you are late for work... So if the government wanted to they could change things”

As a step towards influencing government and NPF to change, participants urged the need for a consultation forum in which poor communities can express their views, requests and grievances to the relevant government and NPF officials. However, given their earlier mentioned fear of retribution,

especially from the police, participants emphasised that such a consultation should be conducted anonymously and by post.

“They should organise quarterly meetings for the top officers and ask them to report from each zone. Then in each zone there should be a suggestion box where ordinary people could drop suggestions or issues they have, or say their opinions, without any fear or intimidation (M interjection: yes without any fear). So you don’t have to put your name, you just drop in what you feel about them. And they shouldn’t allow that officer, but another officer to bring that suggestion box to someone who would collate it, and then any police leader who is bad or doing a bad job should be punished”

Q: Why would you want to do this by writing and not in person, as a group?

M: It is better for one to write, because like myself as a government official, I know what it takes to work with a police officer. This serviette is white. But a policeman will tell you it is black. Then if you call them to a public gathering like this, whoever says you are not good, that person is in trouble. So it is better to write things in a suggestion box”

In terms of the envisioned support to vigilante activities, participants indicated a preference for NGO involvement. They noted that NGO, such as the Access to Justice Programme, could contribute to the provision of practical support to existing vigilante.

“The Access to Justice people could help in providing for the equipment for the vigilante”

In addition, participants mentioned that, through advocacy, the Access to Justice Programme could support them and other concerned community residents’ in petitioning their traditional rulers for the installation of new vigilante groups in communities that are currently without.

“It would be us concerned citizens to go and talk to the quarter chiefs. The more people will go the more they will think it is a serious issue...and the ”

“The Access to Justice people, they could go to the oba and inform him that this is the observation, this is the desire of the people. They can pass the information to the oba. You can do it”

#### b) What are the needed first steps?

In reflecting on first steps to work towards the envisioned change, participants, as mentioned initially, expressed a strong wish for further consultations between their communities and the Access to Justice Programme to discuss subsequent concrete steps to be taken. They noted that such further consultation should involve them, as well as other relevant community members, including,

- (vi) Community Chiefs
- (vii) Traditional Rulers
- (viii) Vigilante Members

*Section 3: Enugu State Findings*

## Executive Summary

The focus group research findings for Enugu State provide a rich picture of, and give a voice to poor communities' experiences, concerns and perceptions regarding safety, security and the role played by informal policing structures.

In particular, the findings highlight a number of key themes and priorities that emerged across both study communities and are central to their perspectives on these issues//this issue

First, and above all, the research has shown communities' profound appreciation of being given the opportunity to express their views and to be listened to on an issue of such critical importance to their lives. It is an opportunity they feel they are usually denied. However, the communities also expressed a sincere wish for the research to go beyond good intentions and to result in practical change for them

There can be no doubt that in both rural and urban communities safety and security – perceived above all as the protection of lives and property from crime – are of vital importance to individuals' ability to sustain their livelihoods as well as to the development of communities as a whole. Neither the urban, nor the rural community, however, perceived of safety and security as their 'right', or an obligation on government to provide it.

In both rural and urban communities it is the informal policing structures (IPS) – primarily the 'vigilante' groups as well as the Ochi-Ogodo (public naming and shaming) process in the rural community – that play the central and dominant role in, and are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring safety and security through the prevention and detection of crime. Whilst rural and urban vigilante groups vary in aspects of their organisational structure, their main functions are largely the same.

In both rural and urban communities, the formation and presence of the IPS represents a 'self-help' measure taken by communities in view of their profound loss of confidence in the Nigerian police (NPF), due to (a) in the urban community, the failure of the police to curb crime and the intolerably high crime rates resulting from it and (b) in the rural community, the detrimental impact of police operations on community solidarity, and on the livelihoods and access to justice especially of the poor. The communities see both of these factors first and foremost as the result of a pervasive corruption in the police force.

In both urban and rural communities, the IPS, especially the vigilante, are trusted and have largely been effective in curbing crime. In the urban community, however, some limitations in the vigilante's efficacy remain, mainly due to their lack of funding and training. In both communities, the general effectiveness of the vigilante roots in the fact that they are themselves members of the communities they serve. They are thus 'owned' by, under the control of and accountable to the community and have a vested interest in carrying out their duties as effectively as possible.

Whilst in both communities the NPF retains the formal mandate for bringing offenders to justice, the vigilante, with approval of their communities, usually administer justice themselves in minor or novice cases. Serious offenders are generally referred to the NPF. However, the police

commonly release guilty offenders in return for monetary reward, thus further exacerbating communities' risk of crime and engendering a sense of injustice. In view of this, urban vigilante groups, again with community approval, occasionally administer jungle justice to such offenders as a desperate measure of self-defence.

Views on the ideal role to be played by IPS and NPF differ between urban and rural communities. The urban community ultimately envisions a changed police force that is able to effectively and justly prevent and detect crime in their community, thus rendering the vigilante unnecessary. A joint community-NPF-government dialogue is seen as an important way of working towards such change. Until change is achieved, however, the vigilante groups continue to be entrusted with the responsibility of policing the communities. The rural community wishes for a continued dominant role of their IPS in crime detection and prevention both in the short and the longer term. Above all, they wish to maintain the almost complete non-interference of the NPF that they have achieved over the past decades.

Both urban and rural communities' requests for the shorter term thus centre, on the need for practical measures to support, maintain and, especially in the urban community, to enhance the effectiveness of their vigilante groups. For the longer term, the urban community urges the need for initiatives to reform and specifically to eliminate corruption in the NPF.

As a first step to working towards the change they envision, both communities sincerely request for further consultation with the A2J programme.

The research findings bear several important implications for A2J action in Enugu State. These include, most importantly:

- (i) The vital need for interventions focused on safety and security, and an engagement with informal policing structures as important agents for positive change especially in the shorter term
- (ii) A need for advocacy and participatory action processes with relevant NPF and government officials to foster a genuine willingness to engage in, and respond to a joint dialogue for change with communities
- (iii) The need for interventions to initiate and facilitate such a dialogue
- (iv) In the immediate term, an imperative need to honour communities' requests for further A2J engagement and consultation with them as a first step in supporting them in working towards the change they have envisioned.

A continued engagement with study communities can moreover provide an opportunity and entry point for a greater overall focus on 'giving a voice to', and working with the poor as part of A2J activities

## 1. Cross-Cutting Themes and Patterns in Enugu State

The focus group research in Enugu State has highlighted a range of key themes and patterns in poor communities' perspectives, priorities and needs regarding safety, security and informal policing. These are outlined below.

### Overall reflections on rural – urban patterns

1. *Comparison of the rural and urban focus group discussions clearly shows that although specific details or forms may differ, communities' priorities and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing are largely underpinned by the same principal experiences and values. The only fundamental area of rural-urban differences lies in communities' views on the de jure mandate and ideal role to be played by the NPF and informal policing structures (IPS).*

### *Poor communities' reaction to engagement with them*

2. Both rural and urban communities expressed a profound sense of appreciation of being given the opportunity to freely express their views and be listened to on an issue that is of utmost importance to their lives – an opportunity, which they are usually denied.
3. However, the communities also expressed that being 'listened to' is not enough. They conveyed a sincere wish and need for this research to go beyond rhetoric and good intentions, and to result in tangible change for them. Their request reflects their profound sense of disillusionment with previous, especially government consultation exercises, which in their experience have never gone beyond promises and thus, for them, have been in vain.

### *Conceptions and experiences of safety and security and their importance to people's lives*

4. Poor communities conceived safety and security above all as the protection of property and lives, and the freedom from anxiety that accompanies it. They emphasised the fundamental importance of such protection as a pre-requisite for individuals' ability to sustain their livelihoods and for the economic development of poor communities as a whole.
5. In the rural, but not the urban community, safety and security was additionally seen as involving protection from the police force. This view reflects the community's negative experience of police involvement and its detrimental impact on the solidarity and welfare of the community as a whole.
6. Neither urban nor rural communities expressed a sense of having a 'right' as citizens to expect the provision of safety and security from government

*Informal Policing Structures: Role, Nature, Function*

7. In both rural and urban communities the informal policing structures play the central role in ensuring the safety and security of community members. It is to them, not to the police, that communities currently entrust the main responsibility for protecting their lives and property by preventing and detecting crime in their midst.
8. In the urban community, 2 major types of informal policing structure (IPS) exist.
- (i) Community ‘vigilante’ groups
  - (ii) Guard Groups or Individuals (employed or assigned by social, occupational community based organisations or bodies, e.g. OMATA security group for the market)
9. In the rural community, three major types of informal policing structure/process exist.
- (i) Community ‘vigilante’ groups (Nde-Nche)
  - (ii) Guard Groups or Individuals (Elders)
  - (iii) Process of public shaming/punishment of offenders
  - (iv) Traditional Rulers (Village Heads)
- (see Table 1 below for an outline of their major activities and policing functions contributed to)
10. Together, the IPS especially in the rural community can be seen, in a sense, as forming an informal policing system, which covers most aspects of crime prevention, detection, investigation and initial corrective justice
11. In both urban and rural communities the vigilante groups are the most important and prominent among the IPS. Communities evidently see no negative connotation in the term ‘vigilante’. The urban community, moreover, clearly distinguish their group from the Bakassi Boys who, in their eyes, have become a political interest groups in their own right. (see Table 2 for the main organisational features of the vigilante in both study communities)

*Table 1: Main IPS in Enugu study communities: main activities and policing functions*

Informal Policing Structure	Main Activities and Policing Functions Contributed To
Vigilante Groups	<p><i>Main Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Night patrols in residential communities</li> </ul> <p><i>Urban only:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Detection/investigation of suspicions or cases of crime reported to them</li> <li>▪ Administer punishment to caught minor/novice offenders without subsequent referral to police</li> <li>▪ Grave offenders are usually referred to the police or sporadically subjected to ‘jungle justice’ (killed) by vigilante and/or wider community</li> </ul>

	<p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation (urban only)</li> <li>▪ Corrective Justice (urban only)</li> </ul>
Guard Groups or Individuals	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Guard own or others' property and lives in residential, occupational or social venues during the day</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection</li> </ul>
Process of Public Shaming/ Punishment (rural only)	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Investigation/Identification, then public naming, parading (and punishment) of offenders</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> <li>▪ Measure of Corrective Justice</li> <li>▪ Crime Prevention through Deterrence</li> </ul>
Village Heads (Traditional Rulers)	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Direct investigation/identification of offenders</li> <li>▪ Direct course of corrective justice to be followed with caught offender</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> <li>▪ Corrective Justice</li> </ul>

Table 2: Vigilante groups in the Enugu study communities: main organisational features

LGA	Main Organisational Features
Nkanu East (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ORGANISED WITHIN COMMUNITY VILLAGES</li> <li>▪ Represents continuation/revival of traditional formations</li> <li>▪ No vehicles for use in operations</li> <li>▪ COMPRISING OF YOUTH COMMUNITY MEMBERS SELECTED BY COMMUNITY ELDERS/LEADERS</li> <li>▪ Overseen by community elders/heads</li> <li>▪ No financial support from Local Government</li> <li>▪ COMPULSORY SERVICE</li> <li>▪ MATERIAL SUPPORT (MOSTLY BASIC EQUIPMENT AND PROTECTIVE GEAR) FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS</li> </ul>
Enugu East (urban)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NEW INSTITUTION</li> <li>▪ ORGANISED IN DIFFERENT RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES</li> <li>▪ Hierarchical structure comprising 'commandants' and ordinary</li> </ul>

	<p>members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No vehicles for use in operations</li> <li>▪ COMPRISING OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO SEEK EMPLOYMENT BY VIGILANTE</li> <li>▪ OVERSEEN BY COMMUNITY VIGILANTE COMMITTEES/CHAIRMAN</li> <li>▪ No financial support from Local Government</li> <li>▪ Modest salary from community residents' contributions</li> <li>▪ Material support (mostly basic equipment and protective gear) from community members' contributions</li> </ul>
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*Informal Policing Structures: Effectiveness*

**12.** In both rural and urban communities the vigilante are trusted and have clearly been effective in curbing crime and protecting communities' interests.

**13.** In both rural and urban communities, the vigilante's effectiveness roots in the fact that members are themselves part of the communities (and in the urban context paid by the community), and that communities themselves are close knit. This ensures

- (i) A degree of community 'ownership' of the vigilante and, conversely, vigilante's accountability to the community.
- (ii) A degree of community control over, and scrutiny of vigilante during recruitment and service
- (iii) A strong commitment and vested interest on the part of the vigilante to carry out their functions effectively and with integrity
- (iv) Detailed knowledge on the part of the vigilante of the local environment, population elements, customs and norms

**14.** In the urban, but not the rural community, an in spite of their general success, there remain some important limitations in the effectiveness and some of the current approaches of the vigilante. These limitations include:

- (i) Their lack of training and expertise in crime prevention or detection strategies
- (ii) The detrimental impact of some of their policing methods, especially the imposition of curfews, on the livelihoods of community members whose businesses depend on operation after nightfall.

*Current mandate of IPS vs. the NPF*

15. In both rural and urban communities, it is the vigilante groups that are currently given the main mandate for crime prevention and detection.
16. In the urban communities the vigilante work under the ultimate supervision of the NPF and are sporadically checked by the NPF. In the rural community, in contrast, the vigilante work largely autonomously and independently of the police. Indeed, ensuring the non-involvement of the police in most aspects of 'policing' is an important aspect of their protection function.
17. In both rural and urban communities, the legal mandate for initiating the process of corrective justice is in principle recognised to lie with the NPF.
18. In practice, however, the vigilante commonly appropriate this mandate in two ways.
19. First, in both urban and rural communities, the IPS groups commonly administer punishment to minor or novice offenders without subsequently referring them to the police. In such cases referral to the NPF is seen as unnecessary or even counterproductive.
20. Second, in the urban but not the rural communities, the vigilante, often in conjunction with the wider community, occasionally administer 'jungle justice' to perpetrators of particularly grave or damaging offences, such as armed robbery. This appropriation of the judicial function must be seen, above all, as a desperate response by communities. It is a reaction to the common practice of the NPF to release offenders in return for a monetary reward, thus increasing communities' risk of repeat crime, and fostering a sense of grave injustice on their part. The administration of jungle justice by the vigilante is specifically an attempt to remove the risk of re-offence by the criminal, to provide at least a temporary deterrent to other potential offenders, and to achieve a measure of justice.

*Rationales underpinning the emergence and current role of the IPS*

21. In both rural and urban communities, the formation and presence of the IPS represent a response to an experienced failure of the police to effectively protect their communities' interests and, as a result, a profound loss of confidence in the police. The specific aspect of the police failure to which communities responded, differs between the rural and urban communities.
22. In the urban community, the IPS and especially the vigilante were formed primarily in response to the ineffectiveness of the police in curbing crime, and the intolerably high crime levels that emerged as a result. Communities thus formed the vigilante as a self-protection against crime, to fill the gap left by the ineffectiveness of the police in crime prevention and detection. Their function was, and is in theory intended to complement and support the function of the police.

23. The main factor seen as underlying the NPF failure to protect communities from crime is police officer's apparent readiness to collaborate with, or release criminals in return for monetary rewards. I.e. an unwillingness to do all, always, to justly enforce the law and bring guilty parties to justice. This has enhanced communities' exposure to repeat crimes from such offenders and thus further undermined their security. This police conduct is seen the result of corruption and an interest in self-enrichment on the part of police officers. The corruption itself is seen as being enabled by officers' 'immunity' from prosecution and as engendered by those in the very top positions of the NPF and government.
24. The lack of equipment and personnel are seen as additional factors contributing to the police failure in the urban context
25. In the rural community, the main rationale underpinning the formation of the IPS in the 1970s and their prominence today also relates to police corruption. It is specifically the readiness of police to side with whichever party (usually the richer party) provides the most monetary reward, and to demand undue payments even from those who are already impoverished. These practices were and are experienced as an 'oppression of the poor', and as having a deeply divisive impact on the solidarity between community members and thus the welfare of the community as a whole. In effect, the IPS were thus formed in order to protect the community against police involvement and its effects. I.e. to provide an alternative to the police to which the mandate for policing could be entrusted, rendering further NPF involvement unnecessary.

#### Communities' views on the *de jure* mandate and ideal roles of IPS vs NPF

26. Rural and urban communities showed a marked difference in their views on the *de jure* mandate and the ideal roles of the IPS and NPF
27. The rural community, in light of their damaging experiences with the NPF, wishes for their IPS to continue to carry the mandate for all aspects of policing in the foreseeable future, maintaining complete non-involvement of the NPF – except in cases such as armed robbery in which communities do not wish to become involved.
28. The urban community, in contrast, and in spite of their current loss of confidence in the police, sees the mandate for all policing functions as lying, under the constitution, with the NPF. It is thus the police who should ideally carry out these functions in their community – providing it is able to do so effectively and justly. Their ultimate vision and desire for change is thus for a police force, which is wholly able to carry out its mandate, thus removing the need for IPS. Until this is achieved, however, the IPS will continue to carry the provisional and temporary mandate for protecting them. This includes a reluctant, but generally approved, tacit mandate to administer justice where this is deemed necessary.

Communities' visions and requests for practical change

(see Table 3 below for an outline of communities' requests for practical change)

- 29.** The communities' requests for practical change reflect their views on the ideal roles of the NPF and vigilante in the shorter and longer term.
- 30.** Thus, for the longer term, the urban community strongly requests initiatives to enable the NPF to carry out its mandate for policing effectively and justly. As an important part of working towards such change, the urban community requests the facilitation of consultation fora in which they can freely express their views and needs to the NPF and policy-makers. A precondition for this, however, is a genuine willingness on the part of these bodies to engage in such a joint dialogue, and to respond to the requests for change that emerge from it.
- 31.** For the shorter term, until change in the NPF is achieved, the urban community requests practical measures to address the limitations in, and thus enhance the effectiveness and approaches of the vigilante
- 32.** The rural community urgently requests both for the longer and shorter term, measures to maintain and bolster the effectiveness of the vigilante groups

*Table3: Communities requests for practical change in Enugu study communities*

LGA	Shorter Term	Longer Term	First Steps towards Change
Nkanu East (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to enhance the working conditions and boost the morale of the vigilante including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Provision of basic equipment such as torches and batteries</li> <li>(ii) Provision of basic protective clothing especially for the rainy seasons: raincoats and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Same as for immediate term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continued consultation with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change.</li> <li>▪ Such consultation should involve FGD participants as well as community elders and heads involved coordination of the Nde-Nche</li> </ul>

	boots  (iii) Provision of a form of remuneration as compensation for their efforts and service		
Enugu East (urban)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to enhance effectiveness and approaches of the vigilante including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Provision of training in crime prevention and detection skills (preferably provided by NGO rather than government)</li> <li>(ii) Provision of equipment such as communication devices, as well as improved arms in some communities</li> <li>(iii) Provision of supplementary remuneration for vigilante, to boost morale</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initiatives to effect change and reorientation in NPF including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Punishment and elimination of police corruption beginning from the topmost positions</li> <li>(ii) Provision of sufficient equipment for police forces on the ground</li> <li>(iii) Provision of infrastructure (e.g. roads) needed for crime prevention</li> <li>(iv) Facilitation of fora in which communities can freely express their grievances and needs to, and engage in a joint dialogue with NPF and relevant policy makers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change</li> <li>▪ Such consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Community vigilante committee members</li> <li>(ii) Vigilante members</li> <li>(iii) Community elders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Communities' views on ways of working towards the envisioned change

**33.** Both urban and rural communities' accounts have indicated a wish for the involvement of NGO, rather than government, to work with them towards achieving the change they have identified as necessary. This pertains in particular to the practical support requested for the

vigilante groups, as well as the facilitation of community-NPF-government consultation fora.

34. Both urban and rural communities clearly request, as a first step, further A2J consultation and engagement with them. Such consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as other relevant community members

#### *Wider generality of findings*

35. The findings of this research cannot claim to a wider generality beyond the focal communities from which the focus group participants were drawn. Whilst it is very likely that many of the main emerging themes will also apply in other communities or LGA, this cannot be assumed.

## 2. Implications for A2J Action in Enugu State

In view of the findings emerging from the research, the following implications for A2J action in Enugu State emerge:

### a) Substantive Areas for Intervention

#### *i) Safety and security as a key intervention focus: engagement with informal policing structures*

- Given the fundamental importance of safety and security to the livelihoods of individuals and the development of poor communities as a whole, continued A2J interventions focusing on ways to improve safety and security (and thus policing) for poor communities are imperative.
- Given the central role entrusted to, and played by vigilante groups in ensuring poor communities' safety and security, it is vital that such interventions engage with these groups. They must be viewed as major agents for positive change, especially in the shorter term and, in the rural community studied, also for the longer term. Interventions must especially consider the provision of practical support to such informal policing groups - as requested by communities themselves.
- Given the current urban practice and tacit acceptance of jungle justice in view of the lack of justice provided by the police, A2J engagement with urban informal policing structures and urban communities must also involve dialogue on the issue of how, until change in the NPF has been accomplished, 'corrective justice' and protection may be achieved without resorting to this extreme measure.

#### *ii) For the longer term: interventions to achieve change in NPF*

- For the longer term, A2J interventions must also be directed at effecting and facilitating change (especially the elimination of corruption) in the NPF. A key focus of such

interventions must be to facilitate a joint dialogue between NPF, government (i.e. relevant policy makers) and those poor communities wishing for such a dialogue. This will necessitate a) advocacy and participatory action processes to foster a genuine willingness of these bodies to engage in a dialogue with communities and b) the facilitation/institution of concrete consultation/discussion fora.

- In view of communities' seemingly limited awareness of their rights as citizens vis a vis safety, security and the police, initiatives to foster such an awareness should be part of A2J interventions aimed at fostering an NPF-government-community dialogue

### iii) Other opportunities for intervention

- Issues of domestic violence were conspicuously absent from communities' conceptions and discussions of safety and security needs. This may indicate a need for awareness raising, should there be a wish on the part of A2J to focus on this area.

## *b) Necessary and recommended practical interventions*

### *i) Continued Engagement with Study Communities*

- The vital importance of continued A2J engagement with the study communities cannot be overemphasised. The Access to Justice programme must honour the request of the communities for further consultation and engagement with them as a first step to working towards achieving the change they have envisioned.
- The initial focus of such continued consultation must be the reporting and feeding back of the study findings to the communities with a view to establishing a common basis and reference point for subsequent activities. A failure to do so would not only violate the fundamental principles of the participatory action paradigm which underpins the A2J research approach – it would also further compound poor communities' disillusionment with research or consultation exercises, which raise their expectations but do not result in any tangible change or improvement for them. In the extreme it would add to poor communities' sense of abandonment by those, including the Access to Justice programme, who have the capacity to support them in effecting improvements in safety and security.
- A continued engagement with study communities can moreover provide an opportunity and entry point for a greater overall focus on 'giving a voice to', and working with the poor as part of A2J activities

### *ii) Further discussion/consultation groups on different topics*

- Given communities' profound appreciation of being given an opportunity to freely discuss and be consulted on an issue of importance to their lives, A2J should consider initiating such consultation/discussion groups also on other topics related to justice, safety or security

c) Further research

- Given that the findings of this research cannot claim to a wider generality beyond the focal communities from which the focus group participants were drawn, there is a need for further research in other communities within the LGA, as well as in other LGA to identify main areas of need and requests for change regarding safety, security and policing – provided A2J intends to initiate policing interventions also in other communities.
- Any such further research on safety, security and informal policing could draw on the framework and methods developed for this study

d) Immediate action points

In view of the research findings, the following immediate action is required:

- In each of the study communities, as soon as possible, organisation of a consultation workshop with the FGD participants and other identified relevant community members. The primary aim of the consultation workshop must be to establish rapport with the A2J programme, to feed back the findings of this research to the communities and, in doing so, to establish common basis and reference point for subsequent joint efforts to work towards the envisioned change.

*Other relevant community members to be included in the initial consultation workshop include:*

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| In Nkanu East: | (i) community elders<br>(ii) Community heads<br>(especially those involved in coordinating Nde Nche activities) |
| In Enugu East: | (i) community vigilante committee members<br>(ii) Community elders<br>(iii) Vigilante members                   |

Organisation of the consultation workshop should be facilitated by the local research assistant (Mr. E. Onyeabor) who, assisted by the local convenors, has established the necessary rapport with the community.

### 3. Main Findings For Nkanu East LGA (Rural)

#### 3.1 NKANU EAST: SUMMARY STATEMENT

##### Safety, Security and Informal Policing: Current Situation

- Safety and security - the protection of lives and property from crime - is of vital importance. It is a prerequisite individuals' ability to sustain their livelihoods and for the development of communities as a whole.
- On the whole, the crime situation in Ugbawka is under control, owing to the successful operation of the informal policing structures and processes: in particular the Nde-Nche 'vigilante' group and the Ochi-Ogodo process of naming and shaming offenders.
- The informal policing structures represent traditional security formations, which were restored as a measure of 'protection' against the detrimental impact of police involvement on the cohesion in the community, and on the welfare especially of poor community members. This divisive and oppressive impact resulted from the police readiness to 'enforce the law' in the interests of whichever party (usually the richer party) could offer the greatest monetary reward, and their practice of demanding of undue payment even from those who are already impoverished.
- Having entirely lost confidence in the police, the communities now entrust the main responsibility for ensuring their safety and security through crime prevention, detection and administration of corrective justice to their own informal policing structures/processes.
- Both work largely autonomously and independently of the police. The only element of policing entrusted to the police is the prosecution of offenders of blood crime as well as of persistent other offenders.
- Together, the informal policing structures are trusted, and have been successful and effective in reducing and controlling crime. In addition, they have fostered the well-being of the community as a whole, by ensuring almost complete non-interference of the police
- The effectiveness of the informal policing structures lies in the fact that they are owned by, under the control of, and accountable to the community and that, as part of the community themselves, IPS members have a vested interest in carrying out their duties effectively and with integrity
- There is a need to maintain and support the IPS in their operations in order to ensure the communities safety, security and access to justice also in future

#### Vision of Needed/Desired Change

- In light of their experienced impact of the NPF on community cohesion and welfare, the community categorically does *not* wish for any greater police mandate or presence in ensuring their safety and security in neither the shorter nor longer term. Their vision, rather, is to maintain the central role and mandate of their own informal policing structures in all aspects of safeguarding their communities.

- The only change that is desired is for measures to enhance the working conditions and boost the morale of the informal security group, which in turn will further enhance their effectiveness.

#### Practical Support/Change Requested

- Requested measures to enhance the working conditions and boost the morale of the vigilante include:
  - Provision of basic equipment such as torches and batteries
  - Provision of basic protective clothing especially for the rainy seasons: raincoats and boots
  - Provision of a form of remuneration as compensation for their efforts and service

#### *First Steps in Working Towards Change*

- Continued consultation with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change. Consultation should involve FGD participants as well as other relevant community members, including:
  - (i) Community elders and heads involved co-ordination of the Nde-Nche

### 3.2 NKANU EAST: DETAILED FINDINGS

#### 1. HOMOGENEITY OF PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS

Participants' views and accounts, and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing in their communities displayed a marked degree of homogeneity and agreement. In all areas, and on all topics, participants expressed similar values, experiences and attitudes.

#### *2. Poor Communities' Reactions to Focus Group Discussion*

Reflecting on the focus group discussion, participants expressed a genuine appreciation of the process a focus group discussion, which enabled them, through joint reflection of issues, to pinpoint and refine their views and perspectives.

“On my part I believe that FGD is a good approach. It is open, everybody is free to say what he or she wants to say and in the process one remembers any issue not touched by another person. This advantage would not be obtained if people are meant to be interviewed separately”

In light of this participants expressed a wish, initially, for further consultations between their communities and the Access to Justice Programme (or any other interested group) to discuss ways of achieving the improvements they envision.

*“We would want to discuss with them and whenever they come we will welcome them and discuss the issues with them freely”*

### 3. Communities' Conceptions of Safety and Security, and Their Importance to Their Lives

Participants' conceptions of the issues of safety and security centred on two main themes. First and foremost the protection of property and lives, and second, protection from police involvement in community affairs.

#### *Protection of property*

Participants made clear that, above all, it is the protection of property and accumulated wealth from crime – either farm produce or houses built and furnished in the home village – that is furthestmost in people's minds when thinking about safety and security in their community.

Participants emphasised the fundamental importance of such protection for their lives and livelihoods. They specifically described it as a vital prerequisite for their ability, but also for their motivation to engage in activities necessary to produce wealth, and thus for the development of their communities as a whole.

“The issue of security is of great importance. Because it is only when your house is secured can you think of going out to find things and fend for things to put in the house”

“As far as I am concerned, safety and security are paramount because wealth accumulated that is not protected is a useless wealth. So I believe that if your life and wealth are secured it will induce accumulation of more wealth”.

“What is the point of accumulating wealth when the wealth is not secured? I believe that one would be induced more to look for wealth if it sure that the wealth would be protected in the end”.

#### *Protection from police involvement*

As the second major aspect of safety and security, participants pointed to their communities' need for protection from the involvement of the formal police in their affairs.

Participants expressed this directly, as well as indirectly in their accounts of the primary rule or principle that underpins all procedures for solving disputes in their community: to prevent and avoid police involvement at any cost. This rule is so important that penalties, especially monetary fines, accrue to those who go against it.

“To me it [security and safety] involves protecting our group members from taking matters to the police whenever a squabble arises between them”

“In my town (Nkerefi) when a dispute arises between two persons or groups, they are required by our law to bring the matter before the general assembly of our community... If a person decides to go to the police first he is fined N10, 000 and ordered to bring the matter back to the town. The reason is to discourage people from going to the police first... And this law still exists till today”

“In our community (Ugbawka) disputes are not allowed to get out of the community. You do not go out with it first. So where a serious dispute arises the matter is brought before

the community leaders ... But when a person decides to take the matter to the police first, he is ordered to pay a fine of N1, 000 for doing so and he must bring the matter back from the police. The idea is to reduce spending money unnecessarily and to reduce generating of bad blood among the members of our community”.

Communities' emphasis on the need to protect themselves from police interference, as the last quote already indicates, roots in their profoundly negative experiences of the impact that police involvement in the past had on their economic and social well being, both on an individual level, and on the level of the community as a whole.

It is these past experiences and the perceptions arising from them that lie at the heart of the rationale for the formation of the informal policing structures that operate in the communities today. They are discussed below.

#### *4. Nature of Current Informal Policing Structures: Organisation, Function, Activities, Approach*

The group participants described three principal informal policing structures that operate to ensure safety and security in their communities.

These are,

- d) The Nde-Nche group, also called 'vigilante'
- e) The Ochi-Ogodo process
- f) The Masquerade group

All three represent traditional, customary practices or institutions of community protection of safety and security, which have been revived.

##### *a) 'Nde Nche' group (literal translation: security group)*

The Nde-Nche, or vigilante, were mentioned by the participants as the first and most prominent of their informal policing structures. Importantly, the term 'vigilante' evidently carries no negative connotation in these communities, as participants it without qualification.

##### *Function:*

The *Nde-Nche* or 'vigilante', as participants described, is a group primarily engaged in routine patrols of the community throughout the night – the period considered most dangerous in terms of risk of theft or robbery. Through their patrols, the Nde-Nche members contribute above all to crime prevention. They are able to detain suspects or apprehend criminals, as well as deter criminals from operating. They do not carry arms, and are only equipped with torches and sticks primarily for their own protection.

The crime prevention function of the *Nde Nche*, as participants noted, is complemented by the activities of community elders who keep watch over houses and property during the day when those of working age are on the farms.

“We have two groups that are involved in safety and security in our community. The elderly, and the youth. The elderly are involved in the daytime, to look after the compounds when the youth have gone out to the farms. Then at night the youth take over. The duty of the elderly group during the day is to look after the compound and be able to identify visitors and inform the owners of the compound who were away at that point, who the visitors were and what their missions were. By so doing they are able to identify strange elements at the time people were away at the farms”

“The ... young men are divided into groups by the elders and assigned different days as the day they will be on guard. At the appointed time, a wooden gong is sounded signalling when the group for that day is supposed to assemble. They are now assigned to different areas where undesirables are likely to be lurking around [for example] houses built by those who are still ‘abroad’ ...Their major weapon is a stick and torch light since the area is dark and there may be snakes and other reptiles around”.

### *Organisation*

The *Nde Nche* is composed of the community youth, for whom service on the group is compulsory, in a sense an obligatory community service. They are convened, supervised and assigned to duty shifts by committee of community elders.

They receive no formal remuneration, only occasional gestures of appreciation, monetary or in kind, from better to do community residents who are satisfied with their services. Such remuneration is also used to buy their basic equipment, such as torches and batteries.

“Their effort...is usually appreciated by those who are living outside the community whenever they come back. Their appreciation is usually in form of cash, which they use in buying palm wine at the end of the day and batteries for their torch. In addition many prominent members who are living within the community usually show us appreciation for what has been done by toeing the line of those who are living abroad (i.e. they give money or cartons of beer)”

### *b) Ochi-Ogodo process*

#### *Function*

The Ochi-Ogodo process, as the participants described, is a highly organised, periodic process of detection and then public ‘naming, shaming and punishment’ of wrongdoers in the community. By identifying, and then exposing and subjecting offenders to public punishment and humiliation in the community, the process fulfils a function of crime detection/investigation and corrective justice and, through this, crime prevention by acting as a deterrent.

“It is a process whereby bad boys within the community are brought before the general members of the community and punished. The masquerades are invited to cane such people publicly. The purpose is to

warn would be culprits to desist from a life of crime. The ceremony is organised quarterly but in emergency could be anytime. On that day each village gong is sounded and people troop to a particular village square ‘Obodo Igwesi’ to watch the spectacle. A list of the bad boys is brought by each village head who has already compiled this with elders of his village. The list is read out and the culprits are assembled at a corner then the ceremony of caning commences. If the person mentioned on the list is not found in the assembled he will be regarded as having absconded and the town gotten rid of him... at times the notorious thief is banished from the community as an alternative to handing him over to the police”

#### *Organisation*

The Ochi-Ogodo process, as the above quote describes, is prepared and overseen by village elders and heads who regularly investigate and compile ‘lists’ of offenders in their communities. The public ceremony usually takes place in roughly three-month intervals, but also any time a serious offender is caught.

#### *c) Masquerade group*

The masquerade group, a customary group with perceived metaphysical links. As the last quote indicates, it works to complement some of the functions of the Nde Nche and Ochi Ogodo, by enforcing penalties and sanctions assigned to offenders by community heads or elders. Its primary function, thus, is the administering of corrective justice.

### 5. Current Informal Policing Structures: Extent of Current Role and Mandate vis à vis the NPF

The participants left no doubt that the informal policing groups and processes in their communities play the *central and dominant role* in ensuring their safety and security.

In a sense, the three main informal policing groups/processes together form what can be seen as a comprehensive informal policing system, which operates autonomously and independently from the police.

It is to this their own informal policing system, that communities currently entrust the mandate and the responsibility for all elements of ensuring safety and security: crime prevention, detection and investigation, and to a large extent the adjudication and administering of corrective justice.

“We are more inclined to our own security outfits than to the police”

“We now prefer to police ourselves”

“We prefer our security outfits to going to the police”

Indeed, a key feature of this informal policing system is that it has achieved an almost complete non-interference of the formal police in community affairs. And this itself is an integral part of its protective function.

“There has never been any complaint from the police about the way they (the security groups/processes) have been carrying out their job. We never invited them and we are not ready to do so now”

There are only two dimensions of safety and security protection that communities entrust and refer to the formal police. These, as participants explained, are, first, the prosecution of ‘hardened’, repeat criminals, which the community cannot reform. Second, it is the prosecution of ‘blood-crime’, such as murder or armed robbery, in which the communities do not wish to get involved as the effect on community harmony may be too grave.

“There are instances where we don’t interfere and the matter must be referred to the police. Such instances include for example fights involving the use of machetes resulting in bodily injury or death. The reason why we refer such matters straight to the police is that to adjudicate on such matters would make it seem that we support shedding of blood”

“Where a person is identified as a notorious thief such a person is handed over to the police for prosecution, after he [has] received the community’s treatment”

## 6. Current Informal Policing Structures: Emergence, Origin and Rationale

Both the Nde-Nche and the Ochi-Ogodo process, as the participants explained, were revived in the early 1970s following the Nigerian civil war. In reflecting on the rationales that originally gave rise to their revival and that underpin their central role today, participants pointed to one main reason.

This was, and is, a perceived failure of the police to act in, and protect the interests of the community, and the threat posed by this to the welfare of individuals and the community as a whole.

In light of this, the informal policing structures were revived, in effect, as a protection against police involvement in their affairs. In other words, they were formed in order to create an autonomous alternative to the police, to which the mandate for policing could be entrusted, rendering any involvement of the NPF unnecessary.

As the participants explained, it was specifically two main aspects of police operations that gave rise to their need to protect themselves against NPF involvement.

First, and most importantly, it was the readiness of the police to act in the interests of whichever party was able to offer them the most monetary reward. In other words, it was police officers’ unwillingness to do all, and always to enforce the law justly and bring guilty parties to justice. This was commonly seized on by richer members of the community to ‘settle scores’ with others, or to achieve certain outcomes in disputes against poorer parties.

As participants described, this was experienced as an ‘oppression of the poor’ at the hands of the police. Moreover, it was experienced as having a deeply divisive impact on the cohesion and solidarity among community members upon which their collective welfare and progress depended.

*“Initially the issue of security was done jointly between the police and members of the community. However, along the line we started noticing that some members of the community were using the police to settle scores rather than solve crimes. So we therefore resolved that the bad blood being generated in the community was not for our advancement and progress. So that is why we decided to take our destiny in our own hands. That gave birth to various laws on resolving problems within rather than rushing to the police. And also to the setting up of the outfits to safeguard safety and security of the community”*

“In the beginning all matters were referred to the police for settlement. But they compounded it rather than solve the problem. Because we all know that they connive with the rich to oppress the poor”

“We are more inclined to our own security outfits than to the police”, because police gang up with some well to do people and oppress us the poor”

The second aspect of police operations that participants described as underlying the formation of the IPS, is equally related to police officers’ corruption. This is the typical police practice of requesting undue payments for services even from those who are already impoverished, thus further undermining their livelihoods. This, too, has contributed to the sense of an ‘oppression of the poor’ at the hands of the police.

“Going to the police is a waste of time and money. The money we generate is meant to take care of our numerous basic needs rather than being wasted at the police station.”

“At times going to the police leads to one into debt. Because when they come you are meant to pay something and when you don’t have it you have to look for it elsewhere, and that continues to impoverish us. So to avoid all this we prefer talking it over within our community or group”

## 7. Current Informal Policing Structures: Perceived Effectiveness, Trustworthiness

### *a) Perceived level of effectiveness and trustworthiness*

Given the prominence and central role and the mandate currently entrusted of the informal policing structures in ensuring safety and security, what is their effectiveness? How successful are they in combating crime and working in the interests of the communities? And what are the reasons for this?

The participants left no doubt that the informal policing structures in their communities is trusted, and has been effective in ensuring safety and security and serving the communities’ interests on two levels.

First, they have been successful in reducing and maintaining a low incidence of crime such as theft, robbery or assault, thus effectively protecting the property and lives of community members.

“As far as we are concerned they have been doing a very marvellous job. We have no regrets in them being set up”

“Why we say they are doing a good job is that we have rarely had any incidents of theft, manhandling, or persons found wandering at night”

“Yes it has greatly helped. The frequency of the Ochi-Ogodo has an effect whenever it is done...[it] helps to reduce crime within the period”

Second, and in addition, the informal policing structures have served the welfare of the community as a whole, by making possible an almost complete non-involvement of the NPF in community affairs. In doing so, the IPS have contributed to the maintenance of cohesion and ‘brotherliness’ among community members which is so vital for their collective advancement.

“We in our community see ourselves as brothers and sisters and therefore ... we prefer settling [cases] within ourselves ... to start living together again”.

*b) Reasons for perceived effectiveness and trustworthiness*

When asked about the reasons for the effectiveness of the informal policing structures, group participants highlighted two major factors. Both of these factors root in (i) the fact that IPS members are from the communities themselves, and (ii) the close-knit nature of the community - i.e. the cohesion and familiarity between its members. This ensures the following:

First, that the IPS are ‘owned’ by the community. IPS members are accountable to the community and are under close supervision and community control. Specifically, they are subject to a set of sanctions or penalties (for example monetary fines), which accrue to those who default on or abuse their responsibilities. For the Nde Nche group, as participants described, this pertains particularly to youth who fail to go on their assigned shift, or themselves engage in criminal activities:

“At day break, if any of the appointed members failed to turn out for the night guard he is reported to the elders, and the elders will now use the masquerade as an enforcant. They will go to the guy’s place and extract a penalty for failing to do his community job. When they get to the guy’s house, he normally does not resist paying the fine, being aware of the penalty from the beginning”

“There have been incidents in the past whereby a complaint of stealing was brought against a member of the group. When that occurs the member is reported before the village community members who are then assembled at the village square. Appropriate punishment will now be meted out to the culprit. But this is rare now. As a deterrent, such a person is publicly caned by masquerade”

For the Ochi-Ogodo process, such checks and sanctions apply especially to village elders or heads who may attempt to abuse the system to settle scores:

“Of course there are instances of abuse [of the Ochi-Ogodo system] but there are penalties. Where there is a complaint of victimisation, and it is investigated and found to be correct, the chief is fined N1, 000. Since it appears that the victim was wrongly accused”

Second, as participants implied, it ensures a commitment to, and vested interest on the part of the IPS members in carrying out their tasks as effectively as possible, as, in doing so, they are also protecting their own families and friends.

Ultimately, the effectiveness and trustworthiness of the informal policing structures groups is thus fostered and ensured by an underlying self interest of their members: on the one hand to avoid community sanctions, on the other to protect their own kin and friends.

*c) Areas of limitations in vigilante’s effectiveness or approach*

Participants mentioned no area of limitation in the effectiveness or approach of their informal policing structures.

8. Views on the *De Jure* Mandate and Ideal Role of Informal Policing Structures vs NPF

Given that the communities perceive the NPF as a divisive and oppressive force and currently entrust the charge of protecting their interests almost entirely to their own informal policing structures – what are their views on the mandate of informal policing groups vs. NPF *in principle*? And what are their visions or wishes for the relative roles that should *ideally* to be played these groups?

While the participants did not directly comment on the *de jure* mandate of IPS vs the NPF, their visions for the future clearly indicated that they wish their IPS to retain the central and dominant responsibility for ensuring their safety and security. In this vein, they expressed a clear wish to maintain, for the foreseeable future, the almost complete non-involvement of, and their independence from the NPF.

“We never invited [the police] and we are not ready to do so now”

“[We don’t want anyone to] disrupt our own structures we have set up here...They have been going for about 30 years”

9. Concrete Visions/Requests for Change or Improvements *in Practice*

In line with their emphasis on maintaining the central role of their IPS and the non-involvement of the police, the participants’ requests for change or improvement focused exclusively on measures to support the IPS, in particular the Nde-Nche, in their work.

These requests reflect communities' recognition of the drain on resources and energy that the night duty imposes on the Nde-Nche, without much tangible compensation, and the resulting 'temptation' of members to skip their duties.

Thus, the participants specifically noted the need for (i) measures to improve the working conditions of the Nde-Nche during their night patrols, and (ii) for measures to 'boost the morale' of the Nde Nche, and thus to maintain or enhance their effectiveness. They explained that such measures must involve the following:

First, provision of more basic equipment to protect the Nde-Nche during the night, specifically raincoats and boots, as well as torches and batteries. What is *not* needed, as participants made clear, is more advanced weaponry for the Nde-Nche, as this may have negative consequences.

“We don't need any equipment like guns ... because this may be a boomerang in the end. Presently they don't even use machetes during their guarding as anyone found with one is deemed to be interested in another activity... So we only need the basic things that will keep those people comfortable especially during the rainy period. I.e. raincoats, boots, torch lights and batteries”

“[They need] ... certain materials and equipment. Like during the rainy season, they will need raincoats and rain boots to help protect them from rain and other elements. We also need torch lights...engaging in security services at night does not involve the use of bush lantern, so we would appreciate if torch lights and batteries could be provided for these chaps. This will help to boost their morale and enhance their performance”

Second, provision of some degree of monetary compensation for Nde-Nche so as to heighten their incentives for maintaining or even enhancing the quality of their service.

“In my own opinion I think that the security groups we have are doing a good job. However I am calling on the government to come to their aid by way of providing some measures of compensation to those who are engaged in the security services. This will act as a moral booster to them and enhance their performance”

## 10. Perspectives and Wishes on Ways to Work Towards Change

### a) *Who and what should be involved?*

When initially discussing their practical requests for support or change, participants spontaneously expressed an 'appeal to government' to provide these measures.

“We are appealing to government not just for monetary compensation but also for provision of certain materials and equipment”

However, they did not express any sense of having 'rights' or 'entitlements' to such government support, or of any 'obligation' on government to provide it.

Upon further discussion, the participants expressed no particular preference about who should be involved in working towards the envisioned improvements with them. Rather, they conveyed a sense of welcoming and a keenness to work with any body *truly* interested in supporting them in achieving the changes *they* have identified as necessary.

“Since the whole exercise is geared towards our own benefit and protection we believe that any groups that comes later to discuss the issues raised shall be welcomed and we will be very willing to work with them to improve on what we are doing at the present”

Given their profound sense of disillusionment with government (which emerged in their initial reactions to recruitment into the study), however, in practice this is likely to mean NGO.

*b) What are the needed first steps?*

In thinking about first steps to work towards the envisioned change, as mentioned earlier, participants expressed a wish for further consultations between their communities and the Access to Justice Programme (or any other interested group) to discuss subsequent concrete steps to be taken.

“We would want to discuss with them and whenever they come we will welcome them and discuss the issues with them freely”

Participants noted that such further consultation should involve them, as well as other relevant community members, specifically

- (i) Community elders
- (ii) Community heads

(given their central role in overseeing the informal policing system)

#### 4. Main Findings For Enugu East LGA (Urban)

##### 4.1 ENUGU EAST: SUMMARY STATEMENT

###### Safety, Security and Informal Policing: Current Situation

- Safety and security - the protection of property and lives from crime - are of vital importance to the livelihoods of community members and the development of the community as a whole
- The safety and security situation today is vastly improved on what it was a few years ago, owing to the successful operation especially of the community vigilante groups.
- These groups were formed as a measure of self-help in view of the failure of the police to adequately safeguard the communities, both as a result of an inability to prevent and detect

crime, and a seeming unwillingness to do all to bring offenders to justice – i.e. to justly enforce the law.

- The vigilante's success in curbing crime has not only improved individuals' safety and security; it has also tangibly enhanced economic activity and development of the community.
- The effectiveness of the informal policing structures lies in the fact that they are 'owned by', under the control of, and 'accountable to the community', and, as members of the community themselves, have a vested interest in, and are committed to protecting its interests
- Despite their general success, however, the vigilante's effectiveness and approaches remain limited in certain aspects
- In view of the vigilante's effectiveness, and having lost confidence in the police, communities now entrust the responsibility of protecting their lives and property, through preventing and detecting crime, to their informal policing structures, in particular the vigilante.
- Whilst the formal mandate for initiating the process of corrective justice for offenders remains with the NPF, the vigilante usually administer justice themselves in minor or novice cases. Moreover, communities sometimes administer 'jungle justice' to particularly grave offenders, such as armed robbers.
- The administration of jungle justice is a desperate measure of response to the evident failure of the police to do all, always, to justly enforce the law and bring guilty offenders to justice. Criminals are often released or assisted by the NPF in return for monetary rewards. This enhances communities' exposure to repeat crimes from such offenders, further undermines their security and creates a sense of injustice suffered at the hands of the police
- The crime situation in Abakpa Nike remains serious and continues to affect the welfare and livelihoods of individuals and the community as a whole. There thus remains a great need for change to improve the policing of communities in order to better ensure the safety, security and access to justice of community members.

#### Vision of Needed/Desired Change

- Although the vigilante groups are currently entrusted with the responsibility to safeguard their lives and property, it is the Nigerian Police Force that is recognised to hold this mandate under the constitution, and to be trained for it. The ultimate vision and desire for change is thus a police force, which is able to carry out its mandate effectively and justly. This requires, above all, a reorientation of, and elimination of corruption in the police.
- Any change in the police is likely only to be achieved in the longer term, and until then the informal policing structures, in particular the vigilante, hold the 'temporary' mandate to

safeguard the communities. Thus, in the shorter term, there is an urgent need for improvements in the effectiveness and some of the approaches of the community vigilante groups. These include:

- Improvements in their competence in and capacity for crime prevention and detection
- Modifications in some of their current policing practices, which have been found to have negative impacts on community members' livelihoods

#### Practical Support/Change Requested

- Practical support requested to improve the effectiveness and approaches of the vigilante include:
  - Provision of training in crime prevention and detection skills (preferably provided by NGO rather than government agencies)
  - Provision of equipment such as communication devices, as well as improved arms in some communities
  - Provision of supplementary remuneration for vigilante, to boost morale
- Concrete measures requested to contribute towards change in NPF include:
  - Initiatives to punish and eliminate corruption in the NPF, beginning from the topmost positions
  - Initiatives to effect the provision of sufficient equipment for police forces on the ground
  - Initiatives to effect the provision of the necessary infrastructure (e.g. roads) to enable police forces to carry out their functions
  - Facilitation of fora in which communities can freely express their grievances and needs to, and engage in a joint dialogue with NPF and relevant policy makers

#### *First Steps in Working Towards Change*

- Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change. Consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as other relevant community members, specifically:
  - (i) Community vigilante committee members
  - (ii) Community elders
  - (iii) Vigilante themselves.

## 4.2 ENUGU EAST: DETAILED FINDINGS

### 1. HOMOGENEITY OF PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS

Participants' views and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing in their communities displayed a marked degree of homogeneity and agreement. On almost all topics, participants expressed the same principal values, experiences and attitudes.

### *2. Poor Communities' Reactions to Focus Group Discussion*

Reflecting on the focus group discussion, participants strongly expressed their appreciation of having had the opportunity to discuss and air their views on a topic of such vital importance to them. They stressed the positive impact, especially psychologically, that the discussion as well as the sense of 'being listened to' had had on them. In light of this participants expressed a strong wish for further A2J consultation with them, with a view to truly working towards the change they have envisioned.

“For quite a long time the issue of security has been with us...so my question is: Why has this thing not been done before? This kind of talk. You cannot imagine the kind of psychological boost this discussion will have had on the participants. In terms of the Access to Justice programme, why is this coming so late? Though it is not too late. Truth is that we want more and more of this. Because for this particular exercise you can't cover all the areas. So this is both a question and a request that there should be more of this”

### 3. Communities' Conceptions of Safety and Security, and Their Importance to Their Lives

Participants perceived safety and security, above all, as the protection of their property and lives and, the freedom from anxiety and fear of loss or harm that comes with it.

“Safety has to do with making sure that one's life and his property is safe from any external attack or making sure your belongings, your property that you have in the house, say when you are going out in the morning that by the time you come back in the evening they are still there for you and there is no interference, and that when you are sleeping that you sleep peacefully and that no-one disturbs you while you are sleeping. This is...the way I see it”

Participants emphasised the vital importance of such safety and security to their lives and that of their community. Most of all, they highlighted the grave impact that the absence of protection has had on their economic well being and livelihoods - in three principal ways.

First, through the loss of income or accumulated wealth as a result of theft or robbery.

Second, and equally important, through the high opportunity costs of the absence of safety and security. Especially for people whose business depends on operation after nightfall, the absence of protection from crime has meant foregone earnings, as they have been forced to close their operations early for fear of attack.

“Here in Abakpa where we live the issue of security and safety has affected our means of livelihood. I know of a friend of mine who owns a provisions store. In the evenings when he is supposed to have some customers, when issue of insecurity increases what he does is to close his shop, immediately it gets dark. Because at times, the customer that has come to buy items will turn out to be a customer that has come to rob. Either using a gun to collect cash already earned earlier in the day or to collect items on display in the shop. This friend of mine has suffered this fate twice in the past years. So what he has done now is to resolve not to open after it has become dark. So when it is getting late he simply locks up. So it is really how is able to run his business, and it is really affecting

him because it means he has to close at the period of the day when he would have made the most sales”

Third, participants indicated that people’s anxiety and fear of crime itself crucially affects and *undermines* their capability to effectively engage in activities necessary to secure their livelihoods.

*“Safety equally connotes the state of mind the way you live your life so that you don’t just get emotionally harmed...It has to do with the state of mind. That is even the most important safety. Because where there is emotional restlessness one is even bound to die before ones property is protected”*

#### *4. Nature of Current Informal Policing Structures: Organisation, Function, Activities, Approach*

The group participants described three major types of informal policing structures existing in their community. All of these operate in spatially defined areas, in order to protect people’s property and lives either at home, their place of business/work, or in social venues. They include:

- a) Community Vigilante Groups
- b) Guard Groups or Individuals
- c) Traditional Protection Charms/Practices

##### *a) Community vigilante groups*

Most prominent and important among the existing informal policing structures are outfits, called ‘vigilante’, which have been formed or ‘hired’ by different residential communities.

“Now we have various groups set up by members of the communities themselves for the purpose of protecting their community. We now call them vigilante groups, thus today when we talk of policing, there are two groups that are very important: the police which is a formal agent of the government, and the vigilante, set up by the people themselves”

“The vigilante group is very very common here. We have it in different places like ‘Oguago, or Ugbene. They are all introduced for security”

“Within our own zone...we have a standing vigilante group... they are the major people that secure the area”

Importantly, the term ‘vigilante’ has no negative connotation in these communities, and participants were clear to distinguish their vigilante groups from the Bakassi Boys who, in their view are no longer ‘real’ vigilante but political groups.

“The Bakassi they are not [a] vigilante group. That Bakassi organisation is more of a political oriented something”

### *Function*

The main function of the vigilante groups, as the participants described, is to routinely patrol and guard the residential communities at night – the time considered most dangerous in terms of the risk of theft and armed robberies. Through their patrols the vigilantes work in particular towards the prevention crime.

“They patrol in the night and when any culprit is caught the person will be brought to book in collaboration with the police, because any activity of theirs is being supervised by the police. The police is quite aware of the vigilante groups”

In addition, to their patrols, the vigilante also engage in the detection and investigation of crime, either in response to their own observations, or community members’ reports of crime.

“The vigilante carry out crime detection either from individual members’ observations of suspicious movements, or from reports sent in by other inhabitants ... They do discrete investigation”

“These days it is inconceivable that people will not be willing to report crimes to the vigilante”

In theory, as the participants described, the function of the vigilante ends with crime prevention and detection. Any criminals caught or identified are, by law, to be handed over to the police for prosecution. Thus, the vigilante’s function is intended to complement that of the NPF who are responsible for bringing offenders to justice.

“They are according to law supposed to turn identified culprits over to the police or at the very least pass on information to the police”

This division of responsibility, as the participants explained, is usually also observed in practice:

“The general trend, I am not speaking for any particular zone but I am talking from observation, having lived in this area for some time...is that when they catch a suspected thief or criminal the person is handed over to the police”

In some cases, however, it is not observed and the vigilante, with the general approval of the community, administer justice themselves, depending on the gravity of the offence.

This occurs, first, in cases of minor offences, or where the offender is a novice. In such instances, referral to the police is typically considered to be unnecessary, and immediate punishment, for example through beating, considered more effective as a deterrent:

“...[It] depend[s] on the gravity of the offence the person committed ... At times if somebody is caught for a little thing that is not much some people are beaten up as a measure to stop the person”

Second, and more importantly, a form of retributive justice - what the participants termed 'jungle justice' - is occasionally administered by vigilante groups to offenders of extremely grave and damaging crimes, such as armed robbery. In such instances, armed robbers are killed, usually through burning. Such lynchings, as the participants explained, are, on the one hand, an expression of communities' utter exasperation at being repeatedly subjected to such damaging crime by offenders who are not being brought to justice by the police. On the other hand, they are desperate measures taken by the communities as the only way to achieve at least a temporary deterrence of further such crime.

"Jungle justice has become almost a natural consequence of catching a criminal. The anger and frustration of the people make it tolerable. It is an action at the heat of passion"

"If somebody is caught trying to operate as an armed robber, in some areas in some cases such a person has been burnt instantly ... In most cases if an armed robber is caught, the person receives jungle justice, it is only when the police intercepts that matter is handed over to the police"

In one particular extreme situation, where crime rates reached intolerable levels, such measures have also been taken pre-emptively, against suspected armed robbers. Even in this case, as participants explained, though there were mixed feelings about the justness of the action, support outweighed objections.

"Where there is high incidence of armed robbery and the populace are so agitated ... There was this time in Oguago the vigilante ...raid[ed] all the known places where suspected armed robbers resided and a number of people were really razed. And after that the occurrence and rate or frequency dropped. The robbery is still going on but the rate has dropped"

"This episode was quite horrendous ... and there were for sure mixed feelings and divergent views about whether the action was justified ... But on the whole the support outweighed the objections to it because these were known criminals in the neighbourhood who were dreaded by all"

### *Organisation*

The community vigilante groups, as the participants described, are now typically well organised and structured into a hierarchy of normal service men and commanding officers (sometimes called 'commandants'). Members are recruited, vetted, co-ordinated and supervised by residential community committees, headed by a chairman. They are paid by their community, through regular contributions pooled by residents. The levy on each family or household varies, depending on the zone and density of the population in a given residential community. As the participants explained, this degree of strict community supervision, scrutiny and 'ownership' (through payment) of the vigilante was introduced, in response to initial experiences of 'abuses of office' on the part of vigilante members. These initial abuses, as participants explained, were partly due to the fact that the only 'remuneration' that vigilante at the time received was through the 'settlement' of cases.

“They are organised, they have a chairman, they have their night commandants, and they have the committee that studies their activities and reports to the community. So this committee employs people that will form the vigilante group. They study their activities and know whether they are working in accordance with what the committee wants them to do. Because sometimes before the thing was organised to this extent, when it was in the hands of those people who now take the security, organise themselves, found that they sometimes connived with the criminals to receive money from them. But for some time now the organisation has become...okay because we have set up a committee that takes care of these vigilante and this committee are men of integrity. They study them and employ people to form the vigilante and they are paid. It is no longer a question of whatever money they collect they collect they pay themselves with it. A certain amount of money is mapped out for their payment every month. And it is the people living within that particular zone that contribute this money”

“The amount of money paid it depends on the number of people in an area. If the people are small they are bound to pay more to cover the costs. But if you have a thickly populated area you pay less. In my own zone what you pay is N100”

*b) Guard groups/individuals*

The second, main, type of informal policing structures operating in the community are a wide array of guard groups or individuals.

*Function*

The main function of these groups is to keep watch over their own or other people's lives and property and thus prevent crime during the day. In doing so they complement the vigilante's function at night.

Such guard groups typically operate in occupational or social areas or venues. They include, for example, the 'OMATA (Onitsha Amalgamated Trader's Association) security guards in the market; civil defence corps groups or 'man or war' clubs employed or formed to guard schools or universities, and guard groups in church premises.

“Apart from the vigilante there are other groups that engage in policing. For instance in the market we have the 'OMATA (Onitsha Amalgamated Trader's Association) security guards, They patrol the market and see to it that people's wares are protected and make sure that peace and order are maintained while in the market. Also in the churches there are groups that have been formed to coordinate peace and tranquillity within the church premises and help to ensure that life and property are secured during church services. So all these things amount to processes of policing”

“In our school system we also employ various ways to protect lives and property and police the students. We use the civil defence corps (a formal paramilitary under the control of local government). Through this way we are able to monitor the students and ensure that they are protected from coming at harms way and protect other students from being harmed by the bad eggs”

“In addition to all we have said so far using the school as an example, some schools have set up boy scouts and ‘Man O’ War’ clubs, engaged in protecting and policing the schools. Their aim also is to protect what one has when one is not around”

As with the vigilante, any caught criminals, or information about a suspected criminal or gang, are supposed to be, and usually are handed over to the police. In some cases, however, these groups too, as the vigilante, administer corrective justice to caught criminals.

“These groups more often than not hand over the thief or criminal to the police...However, it must be acknowledged that sometimes...they mete out jungle justice to such a thief”

### *Organisation*

Generally, the guard groups or individuals are under the supervision of the occupational/social associations or bodies, whose members they have been assigned to, or are employed to protect.

The heads of these occupational/social association or bodies, moreover, as the participants illustrated with numerous examples, are the major port of call in civil cases or disputes between community members. In general everything is done to avoid taking such cases to the police.

### *c) Traditional protection charms/practices*

In addition to the conventional policing groups, participants noted that a significant policing function is also carried out by charms or juju, which are used by community members to protect themselves against crime or attack.

“Generally what we have tried to discuss on policing appears to be on the conventional way. However, there are also some unorthodox ways through which people police and protect their property. This is through the use of native charms or juju whereby the property to be protected is laced with a juju. Whoever touches it may be met with severe consequences”

## 5. Current Informal Policing Structures: Extent of Current Role and Mandate vis à vis the NPF

The participants left no doubt that the informal policing structures, in particular the vigilante groups play the *central and dominant role* in ensuring safety and security in their community.

It is mostly to these informal policing structures, that communities entrust the mandate and the responsibility for crime prevention and detection in their midst. However, these structures are not entirely autonomous, and do not work completely independently of the police. The NPF retains a crucial role and mandate on two levels.

First, as participants described, the NPF has the authority to scrutinise and influence the work of the vigilante groups. Vigilante groups are required, and most do, to work under police approval (including the need for the approval of weapons used by them), and are subject to periodic 'checks' by the police.

“ How the [vigilante] collaborate with the police is that at least once or twice in a week the police now come and keep security with them to see how they carry out their security activities... So sometimes they will now tell this side ‘we are coming to you on this day’, they will come and check these people and supervise their activities and go back.

“Most of the vigilante groups are approved by the police and the police approve the type of weapons they use”

Second, and as already indicated earlier, the NPF retains the legal mandate for the process of initiating corrective justice for caught offenders. And the IPS mostly honour this mandate also in practice, as taking justice into their own hands would be unlawful.

“The groups more often than not hand over a thief/criminal to the police because if they do not and the police gets to know, members of the group responsible will themselves be in trouble with the police, given that our laws presume one innocent until proven guilty”

The fact, as we have seen, that the IPS do not always honour the police's legal mandate for corrective justice and sometimes administer justice themselves especially to grave offenders, is the result of a perceived failure or unwillingness of the police to do all, and always to justly enforce the law and bring guilty parties to justice. This unwillingness is part of the main reasons originally underpinning the formation of the IPS, and is discussed below.

## 6. Current Informal Policing Structures: Emergence, Origin and Rationale

The informal policing groups, as participants explained, emerged in the communities in the late 1980s to early 1990s.

The main rationale for their formation, and for their central role today was (and is) the evident failure of the police to effectively protect the communities against crime. The ineffectiveness of the police at the time, as participants described, resulted in the escalation of crime to such intolerable levels that communities were 'forced' to come together to find ways to protect themselves' against it. In essence, communities thus formed the IPS, especially the vigilante, as a self-help or self-defence measure, aimed to 'fill' or compensate for the gap' left by failure of the police.

“Because police could not do their work and the crime kept on multiplying the people insisted that they must form these vigilante groups. And when they formed the groups some of the crimes were controlled”

“The vigilante...is a self help activity, necessitated by the obvious failure of police to fill the gap”

The group participants clearly highlighted two principal aspects to this police failure and the resulting loss of confidence in the NPF.

First, they described an apparent ineffectiveness of the police in preventing or apprehending crime, which they saw as being caused by two main factors.

On the one hand, participants saw it as being caused by an *inability* of the NPF to be more effective, due to a lack of equipment and personnel, as well as due to the lack of infrastructure – in particular accessible roads.

“One thing is very clear. One is that we don’t have enough police force that can take care of the population.

“Vigilante groups were formed because of this issue of bureaucracy. Because you know the police is a government agency... So when you invite the police they will tell you ‘no personnel or no vehicle’... And then when they come they will be coming behind schedule and the criminals will have come to kill and to destroy and the police will be asking ‘where are the criminals?’... You might not necessarily blame them because it is because of this problem of logistics and if you look at it is a kind of general problem...[in] Nigeria.

“In some areas of the town to even if they have vehicles the roads are just not fit for them to enter. Up till this 1999 when the PTF came in and constructed some roads you could not conceive of any vehicle going into some areas because of the nature of the roads.”

On the other hand, however, the participants also saw it as being caused by an element of police *unwillingness* to apprehend criminals, from whom they expect to receive monetary rewards. In other words, they saw the apparent ineffectiveness of the NPF not only as a result of lacking equipment and personnel, but also as a result of police corruption.

“The crux of the matter is the issue of corruption. We must be precise because for some years the government has equipped the police especially in the last year because of the election ... But unfortunately because of this issue of corruption... the [police] have the habit of turning up 30 minutes or 1 hour after the armed robbers have left and ...they are very particular about asking how much was [stolen] from you so they know the cut they will take from the armed robbers”

As the second aspect of police failure – again as a result of officers’ corruption and interest in self-enrichment, participants underscored the apparent unwillingness of the NPF to do all, always, to justly enforce the law, and bring caught culprits to justice. In their experience, police commonly release caught or arrested criminals, in return for monetary rewards. Moreover, and again in return from monetary rewards, the NPF at times actively collaborate with criminals, for example by providing them with arms. The result has been a sense of injustice suffered at the hands of the police, a further exacerbation of the risk of crime for communities and a risk of revenge attacks on those informal policing group members who initially apprehended or caught the criminals.

“The...thing is that ... if somebody commits an offence and you take him to the police they are only interested in collecting money. And if possible from you and setting the person free. And then we start hearing stories from the police trying to equip even these criminals against the people they are supposed to protect”

“The police...normally collect a bribe and set the thief free, thereby putting the lives of group operatives in danger”

“Those who were handed over to the police were released after giving the police money and no charges were pressed against such criminals. In some cases robbers came back boasting that it will only take some 1000s of Naira off their loot and if the vigilante wanted they can hand them over to the police ten times a month. And it goes without saying that the vigilante become targets of these criminals”

### *Reasons for Police Corruption*

Although all participants agreed that the failure of the NPF roots in the corruption of police officers, there were diverging views on the underlying reasons for this corruption.

Some participants pointed to the poor conditions of service, especially officers' inadequate remuneration, as a major contributor.

“The reason for the corrupt practices of the police has been that they are not well equipped and funded. I think I can remember some time last year when the police wanted to embark on strike, I think they actually did ... So... what they need is to be given the good and conducive atmosphere to work, good equipment and funds to execute their operations”

Most participants, however, emphasised the presence of an intrinsic corrupt mind-set or ‘orientation’ in many officers, which was part and parcel of being a member of the police force. In support of this view, they pointed to the fact that recent improvements in salary and equipment for the police had not resulted in any tangible reduction in their corrupt practice.

“So far the Nigerian police system we must tell ourselves the truth they have that orientation of bribing, taking bribes from the public, irrespective of whatever you give to the person... That does not need paying him much or equipping him – that needs a change in orientation. Because people enter police now with the hope of going to collect money from people, not necessarily to go and serve people. That is what I mean by reorientation”.

## 7. Current Informal Policing Structures: Perceived Effectiveness, Trustworthiness

### *a) Perceived level of effectiveness and trustworthiness*

Given the prominence and central role that the IPS and especially the vigilante currently play in safeguarding the communities, what is their effectiveness? How successful are they in combating crime and working in the interests of the communities? And what are the reasons for this?

The participants left no doubt that the informal policing groups, and above all the vigilante, have had a tangible and significant impact on crime in their communities in recent years. The reduction of the intolerably high crime levels, as participants explained, has not only enhanced individuals' safety and security. It has also created a context in which individuals are freer to pursue their livelihoods. As such it has had a profound positive impact also on the economic development of the communities as a whole.

“In Oguago...it was terrible period because of the activities of the armed robbers. But now that we have formations for security the economic development is now more than it used to be because people can stay doing their business up to 10pm. And they will still be buying and selling in a particular area known as ‘Ahia 4’. And I know that before the formation of the vigilante people nobody would stay up to that time because of the fear of the unknown. ... So ...it still... the economic activities of the people positively up till now. ... Prior to [their] formation a lot of havoc was wrought physically, materially, spiritually and psychologically. But with the vigilante now I think is better for the inhabitants in Oguago”

Q: “Do you all share this view generally that the vigilante groups have improved things?”

“That is the general feeling. And almost all the communities are trying to form vigilante groups, because without them it would be a hell”.

### *b) Reasons for perceived effectiveness and trustworthiness*

When asked about the reasons for the effectiveness of the vigilante, group participants highlighted three major factors. All four root in (i) the fact that vigilante members are from and are paid by the communities, and (ii) the close-knit nature of the residential communities – i.e. the familiarity between all members. This ensures the following:

First, there is a sense of community ‘ownership’ of the vigilante groups, who – as they are paid by community members – are accountable to the community. Moreover, as members of the communities themselves, vigilante members are under close supervision and community control, and subject to a system of checks and balances. This begins with the process of recruitment: in recruiting vigilante, the responsible community committee assesses candidates ‘character’ and previous conduct. This means that communities can, on the whole, be sure of the vigilantes’ trustworthiness and integrity. Furthermore, the community committees closely supervise vigilante group members also while they are in service, in order to detect any abuse or malpractice.

“The committee ... studies their activities and reports to the community. So this committee employs people that will form the vigilante group. They study their activities and know whether they are working in accordance with what the committee wants them to do. Because sometimes before the thing was organised to this extent, when it was in the hands of those people who now take the security, organise themselves, found that they sometimes connived with the criminals to receive money from them. But for some time now the organisation has become a little bit okay because we have set up a committee that takes care of these vigilante and this committee are men of integrity...

“They have lived up to the expectations because they are screened to make sure that... criminals are not part of it”

“One cannot rule out having a few touts within the group... But the majority of them are not. Most of them are good. Very good. That is why we have relative calmness.”

Second, by protecting the communities of which they themselves are members, vigilante members are protecting also their own kin and friends. Thus, they, as opposed to the NPF, have a *vested interest* in, and a commitment to carrying out their tasks as effectively as possible and in the interests of their community.

“I would like to say that why they are not corrupt is that they are also protecting their own property. When you talk of the vigilante groups they are doing it for their own interest. Unlike a policeman who may be posted to an area he knows nothing about he wouldn't care about how their lives or property are being protected. But a vigilante is chosen from that same community to watch over the lives and property of those in his community. So he will also have his own family at heart, he will have them in mind. If he doesn't do his work his family or the family of his friend may be affected, he may also share in the problem. So the issue now is that they have that self-interest. That is why the vigilante is much better than the police who doesn't have that interest. All he cares about is what he can get there”.

“The vigilante...is a self help activity... so you can expect that there will be that commitment which you cannot see in the police”

Third, and finally, the vigilante, by virtue of their being from within the communities, possess a degree of inside knowledge of potential criminal perpetrators or plans.

“Another reason why the vigilante are more effective is that for thieves to come and operate in a particular area there needs to be an insider. The advantage the vigilante have is that everybody knows everybody in the community. So, if there is someone who is bad the vigilante already know them.

### *c) Areas of limitations in IPS effectiveness or approach*

Despite the general effectiveness of the vigilante groups, the participants made clear that there are some limitations in their current effectiveness and approaches to policing. They specifically highlighted three main areas of limitation:

First, participants pointed to a lack of proper training and expertise and, in many cases, a lack of adequate arms, which limit the vigilante's effectiveness in preventing or detecting crime.

“The police...are trained to do the job. But this vigilante people are not trained to do the job. At times... their investigations will turn out to be wrong”.

“And...[while] In some areas they are wealthy enough they can organise good arms for the vigilante to use. But in other areas you will see only one or they will use machetes but there will not be enough to combat the robbers who are well armed”

Second, and related to the above, participants noted that some of the vigilante’s methods of policing have had detrimental effects on the livelihoods of certain community members. They referred specifically to the practice of imposing curfews after nightfall, which leads to lost earnings for those whose businesses operate in this period.

“Apart from the criminals, even the vigilante groups make it more difficult for people to operate within certain hours, especially those who have their business during the night period, like bars or restaurants. So people who are supposed to patronize them don’t go there because they fear police will arrest them because of the security issue, and some of the vigilante groups now say from 8 or so all businesses should close. You find out that the people who are supposed to make their business at 8 or later will have to close at that time. So this security make it difficult for our business at times”

“Like in our place of market you may go on a trip to buy wares from outside town and supposed to supply sale to your customers later in the day. And it happens that you are back late. The market is supposed to close by 6pm, and the market security will not allow you to offload your goods and therefore you will loose supplying your customers”

Third, and less common, participants referred to the occasional presence of ‘touts’ or ‘bad eggs’ among the vigilante, and the danger of their conspiring with criminals in their activities. They attributed such presence to the meagre remuneration paid to the vigilante, implying that this may provide a temptation to engage in (more lucrative) criminal activities, as well as deter ‘good’ men from entering the service, leaving room for others.

“And why you have such touts in the groups is because of the amounts of money they are paid. There are certain people who will not like to do it because of the amount of money they are paid. But if their payment should be improved no society would like a tout to help in keeping security”

## 8. Views on the *De Jure* Mandate and Ideal Role of Informal Policing Structures vs. NPF

Given that communities have lost confidence in the police, and presently entrust so much of the charge of ensuring their safety and security to their own informal policing structures, what are their views on the mandate of these informal structures vs. the NPF *in principle*? And what are their visions or wishes for the relative roles *ideally* played these groups?

The group participants left no doubt that, although the IPS, and especially the vigilante are currently entrusted with the mandate to safeguard their communities, this is, in a sense, only a provisional or temporary mandate

In spite of the present loss of confidence in the police, they emphasised that it is the NPF, that under the constitution holds and is qualified to fulfil the mandate of policing their communities. Thus, it is the police who ought, ideally, to carry out this function - if only they could to do it effectively and justly.

“If the police could be brought to their traditional and constitutional role of protecting the citizens of this country then Nigeria should be boosted”

“The police from every angle is more capable of handling security in a particular community or state. Every policeman is very intelligent. What they need is to be given the good and conducive atmosphere to work, good equipment and funds to execute their operations. So I believe with that security measures would be well taken care of”

“To support what they are saying, I think everybody will prefer police because they are trained to do the job...”

Until the police are able to fulfil their mandate effectively and justly, however, the communities have no option but to continue to entrust the mandate for their protection to their informal policing groups. This, as participants noted, includes a reluctant, but generally approved tacit mandate to administer ‘jungle justice’ where it is deemed necessary to achieve some measure of justice and protection from renewed offence.

“Those who object to such jungle justice point to our adversary legal system where one is presumed innocent until convicted by the regular courts. But the handicap in our criminal justice system... is that with our corrupt police force the criminals are hardly brought to book ... Either they are let off the hook by the police or there is connivance and watery charges are brought to court, making conviction impossible...[thus] the community approve of [jungle justice] because of this...[though] they think the vigilante should be cautious in meting it out”

## 9. Concrete Visions/Requests for Change or Improvements *in Practice*

In line with their views on the ideal roles of IPS and NPF, participants expressed two main requests or visions for practical change.

First, and for the longer term, participants stressed the vital need for efforts to effect a change in the working and orientation of the police. This, they argued, requires the following measures:

- e) Most importantly, the elimination and punishment of corruption in the police force, beginning with those at the top of the hierarchy:

“The issue of corruption in the police should be tackled. Starting from the topmost person so that all their big men should be educated and ensure that those working under them should know that any policeman caught in the act of extorting money should be dismissed from the police and with that they will sit up”

- f) Provision of the necessary funding, equipment, logistical and infrastructural support for the NPF:

“They need ...to be given the good and conducive atmosphere to work, good equipment and funds to execute their operations. [then] I believe with that security measures would be well taken care of”

“They [need to be] well equipped, and there need to be enough [personnel], and a change in orientation is very necessary”

For police to really be able to effectively control ...area[s] ... the issue of development, infrastructure are very important especially in urban areas

Second, and for the shorter term until change in the NPF is achieved, participants emphasised the urgent need for practical measures to support and enhance the effectiveness of the vigilante groups.

“In practical terms ... it is a long way between making the Nigerian police incorrupt. So I would suggest a situation where the vigilante groups could be reached either by a government or informal group to try to ... fill the gap within the vigilante groups so that they will now improve their services and then make life more secure”

The participants specifically pinpointed three measures to be of most importance.

- f) Most importantly, provision of training to the vigilante, to enhance their skills and expertise in crime prevention and detection

“The vigilante need] from time to time...some kind of workshop on security, the psychology that is needed which is part of the training that the police has and which they lack”

“The issue of training is very necessary. Because these [vigilante] lack certain security knowledge”

- g) Provision of better remuneration to the vigilante to ‘boost their morale’ and enhance incentives for carrying out their work effectively and without abuse of their powers.

“Maybe the payment of these vigilante people improved because they are paid meagre amounts of money. They are paid about N2000, N3000 which is not enough for the to use in a week but they get paid that for one month... if [one] could complement what the residents pay to these vigilante groups, they can achieve wonders”

- h) Provision of improved arms and communication equipment to vigilantes in those residential communities where they lack such tools

“In some areas they are wealthy enough they can organise good arms for the vigilante to use. But in other areas ...they will use only machetes and there will not be enough to combat the robbers who are well armed. So the issue of arms ...needs to be specific to each area”

“You will find out that many of the communities they serve cannot provide enough arms for the [vigilante.] In a population of about 100000 they will only have about 2 double-barrelled guns, which is not enough”

“If something like communication gadgets can be provided for these vigilante people because they are always at different posts, so such gadgets would enable them to communicate with each other to enable them to talk”

## 10. Perspectives and Wishes on Ways to Work Towards Change

### *a) Who and what should be involved?*

#### *Support to the vigilante*

In discussing their requests for improvement and practical support to the vigilante groups, the participants strongly emphasised that such initiatives should not come from government. In their view, any government involvement would inevitably result in delays and, ultimately, in disappointment. Instead, they expressed a clear wish for the involvement of NGOs, both in the provision of training and equipment to the vigilante groups, as well as in supporting vigilante through additional remuneration.

“I would not encourage a situation where that training would be done by government because they would end up not achieving anything... (all: express agreement). And again the NGOs could provide approved arms and... could complement what the residents pay to these vigilante groups”

Group participants did not express any sense of having ‘rights’ or ‘entitlements’ to government support to improve their safety and security, or of any ‘obligation’ on the part of government to provide such support.

#### *Change in the NPF*

In thinking about ways to achieve the envisioned change in the police, participants agreed that a valuable step would be the institution of a forum where community residents, such as themselves could freely express their needs for change to, and engage in a joint dialogue with the police and relevant policy makers.

Participants emphasised, however, that to be meaningful, such a forum must go far beyond the current public relation exercises of the police. Thus, whilst police public relations officers (PRO) could be part of such a forum, the inclusion of other ordinary community members is vital, as PROs are reluctant to freely express criticism of the NPF.

“Yes, it will work. In terms of talking to the police there is what the police call the public relation officers. So they are always in contact with the police about different communities and the crime and they have meetings sometimes, maybe once every 2 months to discuss about the security situation in their different zones. So if you people can talk with the police in conjunction with these public relation officers and some other people outside these public relation committees who may be open enough or who will like to talk about the problems and weaknesses of the police. Because what happens here is that the policeman will not agree and tell you that they are corrupt. They will not, and most often the so-called public relation committee, some of them are appointed by the police. So they cannot as well tell you the problems we are having with the police. They will only tell you they don’t have equipment, they don’t have this and the personnel are not enough. So if you want to talk with them you can talk with them involving some other members who are not from the police or this public relations committees”

### *b) What are the needed first steps?*

In thinking about first steps to work towards the envisioned change, participants, as we saw earlier, expressed a strong wish for further consultations between their communities and the Access to Justice Programme to discuss subsequent concrete measures to be taken. They noted that such further

consultation should involve them, as well as other relevant community members, including, community elders and, most importantly, members of the committees overseeing the vigilante, as well as vigilante themselves.

“The issue of the vigilante, they do have chairmen of the committees and night commandants in charge of the operations. So these two persons are very important. They will still be in a position as well to tell you their difficulties to tell you what they encounter at the process of keeping security”

## SECTION 4: JIGAWA STATE FINDINGS

## Executive Summary

The focus group research findings for Jigawa State provide a rich picture of, and give a voice to poor communities' experiences, concerns and perceptions regarding safety, security and the role played by informal policing structures.

In particular, the findings highlight a number of key themes and priorities that emerged across both study communities and are central to their perspectives on these issues//this issue The findings of

First, and above all, the research has shown communities' profound appreciation of being given the opportunity to express their views and to be listened to on an issue of such critical importance to their lives. It is an opportunity they feel they are usually denied. However, the communities also expressed a sincere wish for the research to go beyond good intentions and to result in practical change for them.

There can be no doubt that in both rural and urban communities safety and security – perceived above all as the protection of lives and property from crime and violence – are of vital importance to individuals' ability to sustain their livelihoods as well as to the development of communities as a whole. The rural, but not the urban community, moreover, explicitly saw safety and security as a constitutional right

In both rural and urban communities it is the informal policing structures (IPS) – primarily the 'vigilante' groups as well as the Hisbah, traditional rulers, and other smaller groups – that play the central and dominant role in, and are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring safety and security through the prevention and detection of crime. Whilst rural and urban vigilante groups vary in aspects of their organisational structure, their main functions are essentially the same.

In both rural and urban communities, the formation and presence of the vigilante groups represents a 'self-help' measure taken by communities in view of their profound loss of confidence in the Nigerian police (NPF), due to the failure of the police to curb crime and the high crime rates resulting from it. The communities see this failure first and foremost as the result of a pervasive corruption in the police force

In both urban and rural communities, the IPS and especially the vigilante are trusted and have largely been effective in curbing crime. In the rural community, however, some limitations in the vigilante's efficacy remain, mainly due to their lack of funding. In both communities, the general effectiveness of the vigilante roots in the fact that they are themselves members of the communities they serve. They are thus 'owned' by, under the control of and accountable to the community and have a vested interest in carrying out their duties as effectively as possible. In the urban context, moreover, they possess a vital degree of knowledge of the local terrain, customs and population.

Whilst in both communities the NPF retains the formal mandate for bringing offenders to justice, the rural IPS, with approval of their communities, usually administer justice themselves in minor or novice cases. Serious offenders are generally referred to the NPF. However, the police

commonly release guilty offenders in return for monetary reward, thus further exacerbating communities' risk of crime and engendering a sense of injustice.

The urban community in particular see the failure to do justice not just as a problem of the NPF, but as a flaw pervading the court and justice system as a whole.

Rural and urban communities concur in their views on the ideal role to be played by IPS and NPF.

Their ultimate vision and desire for change is for an effective partnership and collaboration between NPF and vigilante, in which each plays a specific role, and which is under the lead of the NPF – provided the NPF can change to an extent that it is able to carry out its functions effectively and justly. A joint community-NPF-government dialogue is seen as an important way of working towards such achieving such change – providing there is genuine willingness on the part of NPF and government to listen and respond to the views of the communities. Until change in the NPF is achieved, the IPS and especially the vigilante will continue to carry the main mandate for crime prevention and detection in their communities. To this end, vigilante should also be legally empowered to engage in the process of administering corrective justice to offenders.

Both urban and rural communities' requests for the shorter term thus centre on the need for practical and legal measures to maintain and support the effectiveness of their vigilante groups. For the longer term, both urge the need for initiatives to effect reform and eliminate corruption in the NPF.

As a first step to working towards the change they envision, both communities sincerely request for further consultation with the A2J programme.

The research findings bear several important implications for A2J action in Jigawa State. These include, most importantly:

- (i) The vital need for interventions focused on safety and security, and an engagement with informal policing structures as important agents for positive change especially in the shorter term
- (ii) A need for advocacy and participatory action processes with relevant NPF and government officials to foster a genuine willingness to engage in, and respond to a joint dialogue for change with communities
- (iii) The need for interventions to initiate and facilitate such a dialogue
- (iv) In the immediate term, an imperative need to honour communities' requests for further A2J engagement and consultation with them, as a first step in supporting them in working towards the change they have envisioned.

A continued engagement with study communities can moreover provide an opportunity and entry point for a greater overall focus on ‘giving a voice to’, and working with the poor as part of A2J activities.

## 1. Cross-Cutting Themes and Patterns in Jigawa State

The focus group research in Jigawa State has highlighted a range of key themes and patterns in poor communities’ perspectives, priorities and needs regarding safety, security and informal policing. These are outlined below.

Overall reflections on rural – urban patterns

1. *Comparison of the rural and urban focus group discussions clearly shows that although specific details or forms may differ, communities’ expressed the same fundamental priorities and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing*

*Poor communities’ reaction to engagement with them*

2. Both rural and urban communities expressed a profound sense of appreciation of being given the opportunity to freely express their views and be listened to on an issue that is of utmost importance to their lives – an opportunity, which they feel they are usually not given.
3. However, whilst greatly appreciating the opportunity to express their views, the communities emphasised that being ‘listened to’ is not enough. They voiced a sincere wish and need for this research to go beyond rhetoric and good intentions, and to result in tangible change for them. Their request is underpinned by a profound sense of disillusionment with previous, especially government consultation exercises, which in their experience have never gone beyond promises and thus, for them, have been in vain.

*Conceptions and experiences of safety and security and their importance to people’s lives*

4. The communities conceived safety and security above all as the protection of property and lives from crime, as well as protection from violence and intimidation. Especially in Hadejia, this latter emphasis may reflect the numerous recent experiences of ethnic, religiously or politically motivated community violence.
5. Both groups strongly expressed the fundamental importance that safety and security have to all aspects of their lives and livelihoods, and to the welfare and economic advancement of their communities as a whole

6. Conversely, the rural group stressed that it is the current lack of economic and employment opportunities especially for the youth that is the main cause of crime in their communities.
7. The rural, but not the urban community conveyed a sense of having a ‘right’ as citizens to expect the provision of safety and security from government

*Informal Policing Structures: Role, Nature, Function*

8. In both rural and urban communities the informal policing structures play the central role in ensuring the safety and security of community members. It is to them, not to the police, that communities currently entrust the main responsibility for protecting their lives and property by preventing and detecting crime in their midst.
9. In both urban and rural communities, six major types of informal policing structure (IPS) exist:  
(see Table 1 below for an outline of their major activities and policing functions contributed to)
  - (i) Community ‘vigilante’ groups
  - (ii) Various smaller ‘community watch groups’
  - (iii) Religious groups (e.g. Hisbah, Muslim Women’s Association)
  - (iv) Processes of public shaming/punishment of offenders
  - (v) Traditional rulers
  - (vi) Community elders or senior individuals
10. Together, these IPS can be seen as forming an informal policing system, which covers most aspects of crime prevention (including primary prevention<sup>12</sup>), detection, investigation and initial corrective justice
11. In both rural and urban communities the vigilante groups are the most important and prominent among the IPS. Communities evidently see no negative connotation in the term ‘vigilante’. The urban community, moreover, clearly distinguish their group from the Bakassi Boys who, in their eyes, have become interest groups in their own right.  
(see Table 2 below for an outline of the main organisational features of the vigilante in both study communities)

*Table 1: Main IPS in Jigawa study communities: main activities and policing functions*

Informal Policing Structure	Main Activities and Policing Functions Contributed To
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<sup>12</sup> ‘Primary Prevention’ is a term often used in Health Promotion debates to refer to initiatives which aim to change people’s attitudes and behaviours and thus prevent their engagement in ‘risk’ (in this case: criminal) behaviours.

<p><i>Vigilante Groups</i></p>	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Night and day patrols in residential communities</li> <li>▪ Detection and investigation of suspicions or cases of crime reported to them.</li> <li>▪ After consulting with ward heads/traditional rulers, subject caught offenders to process of public shaming or other punishment before referral to police. (in the rural community only grave offenders are referred)</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation</li> <li>▪ Corrective Justice</li> </ul>
<p>Smaller 'Community Watch Groups'</p>	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assist and supplement work of the vigilante through patrols in smaller communities</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection</li> </ul>
<p>Religious Groups (e.g. Hisbah, Muslim Women's Association)</p>	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide spiritual advice on moral conduct, especially to groups/individuals deemed in need of such guidance</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Primary Crime Prevention</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
<p><i>Table 1 cont'd.</i> Informal Policing Structure</p>	<p>Main Activities and Policing Functions Contributed To</p>
<p>Process of Public Shaming/Punishment</p>	<p><u>Main Activities</u> Public naming, parading (and punishment) of offenders</p> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measure of Corrective Justice</li> <li>▪ Crime Prevention through Deterrence</li> </ul>
<p>Traditional Rulers</p>	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Direct course of corrective justice to be followed with caught offender</li> <li>▪ Direct investigation of criminal cases reported to them, where vigilante are absent (urban only)</li> </ul> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Corrective Justice (partially)</li> <li>▪ Crime Detection/Investigation (urban only)</li> </ul>

Community Elders/ Senior Individuals	<p><u>Main Activities</u></p> <p>Provide advice and warning to wayward youth and their parents</p> <p><u>Function</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Primary Crime Prevention</li> </ul>
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Table 2: Vigilante groups in the Jigawa study communities: main organisational features

LGA	Main Organisational Features
Babura (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No vehicles for use in operations</li> <li>▪ Assisted by 'satellite' community watch groups in smaller communities</li> <li>▪ COMPRISING OF SELECTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO VOLUNTEER FOR SERVICE</li> <li>▪ Overseen and recruited by community leaders</li> <li>▪ Financial support from Local Government (monthly allocation)</li> <li>▪ Voluntary service, but receipt of token 'stipends' from Local Government</li> <li>▪ Material support (mostly basic equipment and protective gear) from community members' contributions</li> </ul> <p>AWAITING FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NEW INSTITUTION OR REVIVAL/CONTINUATION OF TRADITIONAL FROMATION?</li> <li>▪ OVERALL ORGANISATION FOR LGA/EMIRATE?</li> <li>▪ Hierarchical structure comprising 'commandants' and ordinary members?</li> <li>▪ Manned offices in major communities?</li> </ul>
Hadejia (urban)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ DEVELOPED FROM TRADITIONAL HUNTERS' GROUPS</li> <li>▪ OVERALL ORGANISATION FOR EMIRATE, INCLUDING CENTRAL AND WARD CHAIRMEN</li> <li>▪ Hierarchical structure comprising 'commandants' and ordinary members</li> <li>▪ Manned offices in major communities</li> <li>▪ No vehicles for use in operations</li> <li>▪ Assisted by 'satellite' community watch groups in smaller communities</li> <li>▪ COMPRISING OF SELECTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO VOLUNTEER FOR SERVICE</li> <li>▪ Financial support from Local Government (monthly allocation)</li> <li>▪ Voluntary service, but receipt of token 'stipends' from Local Government</li> <li>▪ Material support (mostly basic equipment and protective gear) from community members' contributions</li> </ul>

*Informal Policing Structures: Effectiveness*

12. In both rural and urban communities the IPS, and especially the vigilante are trusted and have clearly been effective in curbing crime and protecting communities' interests.
13. In both rural and urban communities, the vigilante's effectiveness roots in the fact that members are themselves from within and part of-, and receive material support from the community, and that the community itself is close knit. This ensures
  - (i) A degree of community 'ownership' of the vigilante and, conversely, vigilante's accountability to the community.
  - (ii) A degree of community control over, and scrutiny of vigilante during recruitment and service
  - (iii) A strong commitment and vested interest on the part of the vigilante to carry out their functions effectively and with integrity
  - (iv) Detailed knowledge on the part of the vigilante of the local environment, population elements, customs and norms

*Current mandate of IPS vs. the NPF*

14. In both rural and urban communities, it is the vigilante groups that are currently given the main mandate for crime prevention and detection.
15. In the urban community, the NPF however continues to carry the main mandate for controlling and protecting residents from factional community violence. The major reason for the non-involvement of vigilante in such protection is the fact that they are not assembled during the day and, as such, cannot respond to any violence arising.
16. In both rural and urban communities, moreover, the legal mandate for initiating the process of corrective justice is recognised to lie with the NPF.
17. In practice, however, the informal policing structures commonly appropriate this mandate in two ways.
18. First in both urban and rural communities, an initial measure of corrective justice (public shaming/punishment) is administered to all caught offenders. In the urban community all offenders are subsequently referred to the police.
19. Second, in the rural community only serious offenders are referred: minor offenders are not, as it is considered unnecessary. Thus, in this context, the police effectively retain only the mandate for initiating the *formal* process of corrective justice for serious offenders. Even this mandate has been demanded by the rural vigilante who have in the past attempted

(unsuccessfully) to take offenders directly to the courts. (This attempt is a response to the common failure of the police to bring criminals to justice, see below)

**20.** In neither urban nor rural communities do vigilante groups administer jungle justice.

*Rationales underpinning the emergence and current role of the IPS*

- 21.** In both rural and urban communities, the formation and presence of the IPS and especially the vigilante, represent a response to an experienced failure of the police to effectively protect their communities' interests and, as a result, a profound loss of confidence in the police
- 22.** The vigilante specifically were formed in response to the ineffectiveness of the police in curbing crime, and the high crime levels that emerged as a result. Communities thus formed them as a self-protection against crime, to fill the gap left by the ineffectiveness of the police in crime prevention and detection. Their function was, and is in theory intended to complement and support the function of the police.
- 23.** The main factor seen as underlying the NPF failure to protect communities from crime is police officer's apparent readiness to collaborate with, or release criminals in return for monetary rewards. I.e. an unwillingness to do all, always, to justly enforce the law and bring guilty parties to justice. This has enhanced communities' exposure to repeat crimes from such offenders and thus further undermined their security. This police conduct is seen the result of corruption and an interest in self-enrichment on the part of police officers. The corruption itself is seen as being enabled by officers' 'immunity' from prosecution and as engendered by those in the very top positions of the NPF and government.
- 24.** The lack of equipment and personnel are seen as additional factors contributing to the police failure. In the urban community, moreover, the police's lack of knowledge of the local terrain, population and customs is seen as a further contributing factor.
- 25.** In the urban community, importantly, the corruption and failure to 'justice' is not seen as being confined to the NPF alone. It is perceived also as a core problem in the court and justice sector as a whole

Communities' views on the *de jure* mandate and ideal roles of IPS vs NPF

- 26.** Rural and urban communities expressed the same views on the *de jure* mandate and the ideal roles to be played by the vigilante and NPF
- 27.** Communities do recognise the NPF's constitutional mandate for all policing functions and accept that ideally, it should largely be the police to carry out these functions – providing it can do so effectively and justly. Nonetheless, communities perceive a continuation of vigilante group operations as essential for ensuring safety and security in their midst.

28. The urban community see continued vigilante activity as necessary in view, mainly, of their superior knowledge of the local environment, customs and norms – knowledge that is deemed essential for wholly effective crime prevention and detection
29. The rural community see continued vigilante activity as necessary, in view of the lack of sufficient NPF personnel to adequately man all villages, and in view of the exceptional loyalty and trust from the community that the vigilante enjoy
30. Communities’ ultimate vision and desire for change is thus for an effective partnership and collaboration between NPF and vigilante, in which each plays a specific role, and which is under the lead of the NPF.
31. Until the NPF is able to carry out its functions justly and effectively, however, the informal structures will need to continue to carry the main mandate for policing and ensuring the safety and security of the community. To do this as effectively as possible, the vigilante require more legal empowerment especially in their engagement in the process of corrective justice.

Communities’ visions and requests for practical change

(see Table 3 below for an outline of communities’ requests for practical change)

32. The communities’ requests for practical change clearly reflect their views on the ideal roles that should be played by the vigilante and NPF.
33. For the longer term, both urban and rural communities thus strongly request measures to improve the effectiveness and conduct of the police. For the shorter term, they stress the urgent need for measures to maintain and bolster the operations of the vigilante
34. As an important part of working towards the necessary change in the NPF and the envisioned collaboration between vigilante and NPF, both rural and urban communities request the facilitation of consultation fora in which they can freely express their views and needs to the NPF and policy-makers. This must be preceded, however, by efforts to engender a genuine willingness in these bodies to engage in, and respond to, such a dialogue

Table 3: Communities requests for practical change in Jigawa study communities

LGA	Shorter Term	Longer Term	First Steps towards Change
Babura (rural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to maintain and bolster effectiveness of vigilante including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Provision of improved remuneration to vigilante members</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initiatives to effect change and reorientation in NPF including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Punishment and elimination of police corruption beginning</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continued consultation with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change.</li> <li>▪ Such consultation</li> </ul>

	<p>(ii) Provision of basic equipment (e.g. torches, batteries)</p> <p>(iii) Legislation at State or Local Authority level to recognise the vigilante and empower them to administer corrective justice in certain cases</p>	<p>from the topmost positions</p> <p>(ii) Provision of sufficient equipment for police forces on the ground</p> <p>(iii) Facilitation of fora in which communities can freely express their needs to, and engage in a joint dialogue with NPF and relevant policy makers</p> <p>(iv) Efforts to engender willingness in government/NPF to engage in joint dialogue with communities</p>	<p>should involve FGD participants as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- District Head</li> <li>- Community leaders and elders</li> </ul>
Hadejia (urban)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Measures to maintain and bolster effectiveness of vigilante including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Provision of basic equipment (e.g. torches, batteries)</li> <li>(ii) Provision of protective gear (raingear/blankets)</li> <li>(iii) Legislation at State level to empower vigilante to directly refer cases to courts without having to go through the police</li> <li>(iv) Provision of improved remuneration to vigilante members</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Note: One view is that vigilante should become fully salaried civil servants. The other view is that vigilante</p>	<p>I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Initiatives to effect change and reorientation in NPF including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Punishment and elimination of police corruption beginning from the topmost positions</li> <li>(ii) Provision of sufficient equipment for police forces on the ground</li> <li>(iii) Improvement and stricter criteria for NPF recruitment process</li> <li>(iv) Facilitation of fora in which communities can freely express their</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change</li> <li>▪ Such consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Vigilante commandants</li> <li>(ii) Vigilante members</li> <li>(iii) Other community leaders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	groups should not become publicly institutionalised and thus ‘interest groups’ in their own right.	grievances and needs to, and engage in a joint dialogue with NPF and relevant policy makers	
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### Communities’ views on ways of working towards the envisioned change

- 35.** Communities perceived the need for different approaches and actors to work towards the envisioned change in the NPF, and to achieve support for the vigilante, respectively
- 36.** In terms of achieving the necessary change in the NPF, both communities pointed to the federal government as bearing the main responsibility and capacity for action. Referring to the successes of the Buhari/idiagbon era ‘war against indiscipline (WAI)’ policies, they argue that government, if willing, is capable of effecting such change very rapidly. However, communities see a role for NGO initiatives in the facilitation of community-NPF-government dialogue/consultation fora.
- 37.** The rural community, moreover, specifically requests for NGO advocacy to influence government and NPF in preparation for a joint dialogue. I.e. to engender in them a willingness to effect change in the interests of poor communities – a willingness that they see as being wholly absent to date.
- 38.** In terms of initiatives to support the vigilante, both rural and urban communities conveyed a strong wish for NGO, rather than government involvement, as see NGOs as being more dedicated and genuinely willing to assist them.
- 39.** Both urban and rural communities clearly request, as a first step, further A2J consultation and engagement with them. Such consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as other relevant community members

### *Wider generality of findings*

- 40.** The findings of this research cannot claim to a wider generality beyond the focal communities from which the focus group participants were drawn. Whilst it is very likely that many of the main emerging themes will also apply in other communities or LGA, this cannot be assumed.

## 2. Implications for A2J Action in Jigawa State

In view of the findings emerging from the research, the following implications for A2J action in Jigawa State emerge:

### a) Substantive Areas for Intervention

#### *i) Safety and security as a key intervention focus: engagement with informal policing structures*

- Given the fundamental importance of safety and security to the livelihoods of individuals and the development of poor communities as a whole, continued A2J interventions focusing on ways to improve safety and security (and thus policing) for poor communities are imperative.
- Given the central role entrusted to, and played by vigilante groups in ensuring poor communities' safety and security, it is vital that such interventions engage with these groups. They must be viewed as major agents for positive change, in the shorter and the longer term.
- For the shorter term, interventions must specifically consider the provision of practical support to such informal policing groups - as requested by communities themselves.
- For the longer term, A2J interventions must consider needs, approaches and ways to achieve a formally and legally more recognised role and mandate for the vigilante groups - i.e. a legal empowerment of these groups, as requested by the communities.
- The most important (but also delicate) aspect of this, given the lack of justice currently provided by the police, will need to involve considerations of the extent of vigilante groups' mandate to themselves administer, or access the formal process of corrective justice (i.e. the courts), without needing to go through the police.

#### *ii) For the longer term: interventions to achieve change in npf*

- For the longer term, A2J interventions must also be directed at effecting and facilitating change in the NPF. A key focus of such interventions must be to facilitate a joint dialogue between NPF, government (i.e. relevant policy makers) and those poor communities wishing for such a dialogue. This will necessitate a) advocacy and participatory action processes to foster a genuine willingness of these bodies to engage in a dialogue with communities and b) the facilitation/institution of concrete consultation/discussion fora.
- In view of community's seemingly limited awareness of their rights as citizens vis a vis safety, security and the police, initiatives to foster such an awareness should be part of A2J interventions aimed at fostering an NPF-government-community dialogue

#### *iii) Other opportunities for intervention*

- Issues of domestic violence were conspicuously absent from communities' conceptions and discussions of safety and security needs. This may indicate a need for awareness raising, should there be a wish on the part of A2J to focus on this area

*b) Necessary and recommended practical interventions*

*i) Continued engagement with study communities*

- The vital importance of continued A2J engagement with the study communities cannot be overemphasised. The Access to Justice programme must honour the request of the communities for further consultation and engagement with them as a first step to working towards achieving the change they have envisioned.
- The initial focus of such continued consultation must be the reporting and feeding back of the study findings to the communities with a view to establishing a common basis and reference point for subsequent activities and approaches. A failure to do so would not only violate the fundamental principles of the participatory action paradigm which underpins the A2J research approach – it would also further compound poor communities' disillusionment with research or consultation exercises, which raise their expectations but do not result in any tangible change or improvement for them. In the extreme it would add to poor communities' sense of abandonment by those, including the Access to Justice programme, who have the capacity to support them in effecting improvements in safety and security.
- A continued engagement with study communities can moreover provide an opportunity and entry point for a greater overall focus on 'giving a voice to', and working with the poor as part of A2J activities

*ii) Further discussion/consultation groups on different topics*

- Given communities' profound appreciation of being given an opportunity to freely discuss and be consulted on an issue of importance to their lives, A2J should consider initiating such consultation/discussion groups also on other topics related to justice, safety or security

*c) Further research*

- Given that the findings of this research cannot claim to a wider generality beyond the focal communities from which the focus group participants were drawn, there is a need for further research in other communities within the LGA, as well as in other LGA to identify main areas of need and requests for change regarding safety, security and policing – provided A2J intends to initiate policing interventions also in other communities.
- Any such further research on safety, security and informal policing could draw on the framework and methods developed for this study

*d) Immediate action points*

In view of the research findings, the following immediate action is required:

- In each of the study communities, as soon as possible, organisation of a consultation workshop with the FGD participants and other identified relevant community members. The primary aim of the consultation workshop must be to establish rapport with the A2J programme, to feed back the findings of this research to the communities and, in doing so, to establish common basis and reference point for subsequent joint efforts and approaches to working towards the envisioned change. A separate consultation should be held for women and men.

*Other relevant community members to be included in the initial consultation workshop include:*

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| In Kanya Babba: | (i) District head<br>(ii) Other community elders and leaders                |
| In Hadejia      | (i) vigilante chairmen<br>(ii) Community leaders<br>(iii) Vigilante members |

Organisation of the consultation workshop should be facilitated by the local research assistant (Mr. S. Danladi) who, assisted by the local convenors, has established the necessary rapport with the community.

### 3. Main Findings For Babura LGA (Rural)

#### 3.1 BABURA: SUMMARY STATEMENT

##### Safety, Security and Informal Policing: Current Situation

- Safety and security - the protection of property and life from crime and intimidation - are of vital importance to the lives and livelihoods of community members, and the welfare of the community as a whole
- The safety and security situation today is vastly improved on what it was, owing to the successful operation especially of the informal policing structures, especially the vigilante group
- These groups were formed as a measure of self-help in view of the failure of the police to adequately safeguard the communities, both as a result of an inability to prevent and detect crime, and a seeming unwillingness to do all to bring offenders to justice – i.e. to justly enforce the law
- The general effectiveness of the vigilante groups lies primarily in the fact that members, being from within the communities themselves, have a determination to and vested interest in curbing crime, and are under the control of and accountable to the community
- Having lost confidence in the police, communities now entrust the main responsibility of protecting their lives and property through crime prevention and detection to the vigilante.
- Whilst the formal mandate for initiating the process of corrective justice for offenders remains with the NPF, the traditional rulers in conjunction with the IPS usually administer justice themselves in minor or novice cases. All other cases are usually referred to the police.
- Although such cases are referred to the NPF, and despite having the mandate, there is a current failure of the police to justly enforce the law and bring guilty parties to justice. Caught offenders are commonly released in return for monetary rewards. This enhances communities' exposure to repeat crimes from such offenders, further undermines their security and creates a sense of injustice suffered at the hands of the police.
- There remains a great need for change to the policing of communities in order to better ensure their safety, security and access to justice

##### Vision of Needed/Desired Change

- 41.** The community recognises the NPF's legal mandate for all policing functions and accept that ideally, it should largely be the police to carry out these functions, provided it is able to carry them out justly and effectively. Nonetheless, they consider a continuation of vigilante group operations as essential for ensuring safety and security in their midst, given the

exceptional trust and loyalty from the local community that the IPS enjoy, and the insufficient number of NPF officers to adequately man all villages. The ultimate vision and desire for change is thus for an effective partnership and collaboration between NPF and vigilante, in which each plays a specific role, and which is under the lead of the NPF

- This requires, above all, change to effect a reorientation of, and elimination of corruption in the police.
- In addition, and especially in the meantime, until a change in the NPF has been effected, there is a need for efforts to maintain and bolster the effectiveness of the vigilante. This includes a need for legal backing of the vigilante. Specifically, until the NPF is able to justly carry out its mandate for corrective justice, there is a need to legally empower the vigilante to themselves administer such justice in certain cases, or to access to the formal court process without needing to go through the police.

#### Practical Support/Change Requested

- Practical support requested to maintain and bolster the effectiveness of the vigilante include:
  - Provision of improved arms
  - Provision of improved remuneration to vigilante members, to boost morale
  - Provision of more basic equipment, e.g. torches
  - Legislation at State or Local Authority level to recognise the vigilante and empower them to administer corrective justice in certain cases
- Concrete Actions/Initiatives requested to contribute towards change in NPF include:
  - Initiatives to punish corruption in the NPF, beginning from the topmost positions and effected by government
  - Initiatives to effect the provision of sufficient equipment and to improve conditions of service for police forces on the ground
  - Facilitation of a forum in which communities can freely express their grievances and needs to NPF and policy makers with relevant jurisdiction
  - NGO advocacy to support to communities in their dialogue with NPF/policy makers
  - Initiatives by NGO such as A2J, to foster and openness and genuine willingness to respond to poor communities' needs among NPF and policy makers

#### *First Steps in Working Towards Change*

- Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change. Consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as other relevant community members, specifically:
  - (i) Community leaders
  - (ii) District head
- Separate consultations should be held for women and men

## 3.2 BABURA: DETAILED FINDINGS

### 1. HOMOGENEITY OF PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS

Participants' views and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing in their communities displayed a marked degree of homogeneity and agreement. On all topics, participants expressed the same principal values, experiences and attitudes.

#### *2. Poor Communities' Reactions to Focus Group Discussion*

Reflecting on the focus group discussion, participants expressed a profound appreciation of having had the opportunity to discuss their views, and be listened to on a topic of such vital importance to them. In light of this, they conveyed a sincere wish for further A2J consultations with their community with a view to truly working towards the change they envision.

“Sincerely speaking we have really appreciated this discussion and we would like more discussions in future because the issue of safety and security is central to our lives and it affects everything”

“We have come to know and appreciate the effort the NGO (access to justice) is making to help us and this is an opportunity for the NGO to know our problems. We wish that you will come back to us”

“Seriously speaking, we are very happy with this. First and foremost that our community was selected and to have the opportunity to voice and air our views. Thank you”

In this respect, participants stressed their hope that this consultation should not, like so many others they have experienced, be in vain. I.e. it should go beyond rhetoric and good intentions, and lead to tangible, practical change for them.

“There have been a lot of programmes like this where people voice out their views but at the end nothing, nothing at all comes out of it. So it is when we will see that something comes of it that we will be really happy”

“I have really appreciated this discussion because safety and security are the babies of our peaceful coexistence and ... I hope the situation should not be in vain, that we should benefit from it”

### 3. Communities' Conceptions of Safety and Security, and Their Importance to Their Lives

Participants' conceptions of safety and security centred on two main aspects.

First, participants conceived of safety and security as the protection of property and lives from crime, and the feeling of being safe that come with it.

“Security refers to ourselves while safety refers to our properties”

“Checking the activities of the bad eggs in the community is part of security. For safety... refers to how safe one feels in relation to... one’s property. Security is the protection of your property...and your self”

In this context they emphasised the importance of poverty and unemployment – especially among youth – as the primary cause of crime in their communities.

“We, the different community based organisations...because [we] believe that poverty drives the youth to crime”

“When the economy of Nigeria was buoyant, people could rely on themselves. But since the economy has declined, the youth especially have increasingly resorted to crime”

Second, participants emphasised that safety and security also means the freedom from violence or intimidation, and the absence of fear that comes with it.

“To me, security refers to how somebody feels secure from violence and intimidation”

Participants highlighted over and again the vital importance that the presence of safety and security, in particular the protection of crime, has to their livelihoods and to the economic and social welfare and progress of their community.

“The aims of any human being or groups in going about their day to day life, depend on there being safety and security. If there is no safety and security in a society it is just like a man who is sick. So safety and security is just like health. A sick person cannot do anything, he cannot feed himself, and so a society where there is no safety and security cannot progress, cannot be self-reliant. They are very very necessary in any society”

“Safety and security are important to all aspects of our life”

“It is only when you can...curb the activities of criminals... that you have a viable society”

“They are the two things that determine the quality of our lives”

#### *4. Nature of Current Informal Policing Structures: Organisation, Function, Activities, Approach*

The group participants described six principal types of informal policing structure or process that currently operate in their communities to ensure safety and security. These are:

- a) Community Vigilante Group
- b) Community 'Watch Groups'
- c) Religious Groups Focusing on 'Immorality' (e.g. Hisbah)
- d) Processes of Public Shaming/Punishment of Wrongdoers
- e) Traditional Rulers
- f) Community Elders /Senior Individuals

In a sense, these structures or processes can be seen as forming an informal policing system, together covering most aspects of crime prevention (including primary prevention), detection, investigation and initial corrective justice.

Most important among these informal policing structures, as participants explained, are the so-called vigilante groups and the hisbah. They are the two groups primarily concerned with ensuring safety and security and they are the only two groups that wear uniform.

##### *a) Community vigilante groups*

The participants mentioned the vigilante group as the first, and most prominent of the IPS in their community.

“We have the vigilante group!”

Importantly, the term 'vigilante' evidently has no negative connotation in this community, as participants used it without any qualification.

##### *Function*

The vigilante groups, as the participants explained carry out two major functions.

First, they routinely patrol and guard residential areas and roads during the day and especially at night – the time considered most dangerous in terms of risk of theft or armed robbery. Through their patrols the vigilantes work in particular towards the prevention and apprehension of crime or criminals.

“The vigilante work...in shifts, day and night”

“In a situation whereby someone who stole property elsewhere and is attempting to come into your community... the vigilante ...will arrest him. So as criminals are approaching they will go and arrest them, confiscate the property, tie him down and leave him there, and inform the owners of the property for them to collect it.”

Second, and in addition to crime prevention, the vigilante engage in the detection and investigation of crime, either in response to their own observations, or community members' reports of crime or suspects. Identified culprits are arrested and interrogated to establish their culpability. Suspects may be driven out.

“They...investigate cases ...also they don't wait for people to report cases to them. They go after them...”

“The vigilante...will make sure they will follow the case and ensure something is done”

“We report criminals to them, thieves ... who are among us”

“The vigilante will be informed of...criminals in the area and they will make sure that the criminals do not operate”

Civil cases – e.g. financial disputes between two community members – too, are at times brought to the vigilante for resolution. However, as participants made clear, such disputes are usually reported to, and solved within the other community based organisations

“Sometimes we also report cases to them where there is a financial dispute between two members of the community. For example if one owes money to the other. But not all people go to them on this issue...”

“Most of these cases, because community based organisations have committees that such cases can be reported to, that is where most people go with such issues. And sometimes these committees invite the elders to come and reconcile”

Once arrested, as participants explained, culprits are usually subjected to an initial measure of corrective justice - either through a process of public shaming and punishment of the offender through beating, or, if the offence was particularly grave, through disowning of the offender. Participants emphasised the deterrent effect, especially of the latter process.

“The vigilante groups, when they catch a criminal, they make him carry the stolen property around the community. So everyone will see him and he will be shamed”

“Another way is for the society to disown the criminals completely. Even his family members will be made to hate the criminal. So the lucky ones among the criminals become reformed because they want to be accepted in the community”

Following such initial measures of corrective justice, cases may or may not be referred to the police, depending on the gravity of the offence. In cases of minor offences, further referral to the police is often not deemed necessary, and the initial punishment seen as sufficient. Grave offenders, however, as participants explained are usually handed over to the police.

“When ...they make him carry the property round the community...and...shame him... after that they take some to the police, especially major cases. But some, more minor cases they don't take to the police. If the culprit is not from the community he will be thrown out and forced to go in an opposite direction to the one he came from”

Participants emphasised that the vigilante in their community do not administer jungle justice to such grave offenders.

“No, they don't do that here”

#### *Organisation*

The vigilante group in Kanya Babba, as participants explained, has its own constitution and is well structured

“They are well structured and they have their own constitution”

[awaiting more follow-up information on detailed structure/organisation of vigilante from key informant]

The vigilante group is supported by Local Government through a monthly allowance. Vigilante members do not receive a formal salary. However, they receive a modest token stipend provided by the Local Government allocation, as well as, sporadically, donations from better-to-do members of the community or 'philanthropists'.

“They don't get paid as such... It is not a profit making venture for them...it is just a sacrifice because they are not getting anything from it”

“The Local Government does assist the groups as a whole on a monthly basis and philanthropists sometimes give them something from time to time. So when they get such donations they will distribute a little to all the members”

In addition to local government support, the vigilante have received material support from community based organisations, which have provided uniforms, and basic equipment such as torches, batteries, sticks and local arms. The vigilante do not use firearms or other more sophisticated equipment.

“The were provided with uniforms, torch lights, and sticks for self protection and they also used some local arms to protect themselves against criminals”

“And they don't even have sophisticated weapons – just swords and sticks”

**c) Boy scouts and other community 'watch' groups**

The vigilante's crime prevention and apprehension functions are supplemented by the activities of several, what may be termed 'community watch groups'. These groups, including boy scouts or groups of 'trusted members of the community' in particular neighbourhoods, keep watch over the behaviour especially of youth and apprehend any wrongdoing. The boy scouts, as participants explained, operate mostly during the day – especially when people have gone to prayer. The other groups operate predominantly at night.

“The boy scouts patrol the market and other gatherings usually during *sallah* festivities. They patrol areas when people have gone for their prayers”

“In some communities they form a group which comprises trusted members of the communities, who serve to regulate the behaviours of the youth in that particular part of the community. What they usually do is that they make sure they are there outside, discussing issues till midnight or even beyond so that criminals who want to go to that community are deterred. At the same time they watch and question the youth who come back late... If there is any theft they will team up to trace the culprit”

**d) Traditional rulers**

The community ward heads and other traditional rulers can be seen as fulfilling a complementary function to the crime prevention and detection provided by the vigilante. As participants explained, it is the traditional rulers who decide on and direct the initial course of corrective justice to be taken with an arrested offender.

“We have also the traditional rulers, who comprise the ward head, the district head and the village head up to the emir. This group work toward establishing law and order in the society and protecting the integrity and cohesion of the people. Whatever decision they take in relation to any criminal, they will make sure it serves as a deterrent to others”

**c) Community elders or senior individuals**

The activities of community elders or concerned senior individuals can be said to supplement that of the vigilante specifically in the area of crime prevention. The elders and individuals contribute to this, specifically through advising and warning wayward youth and their parents.

“There is also the elder's council. They don't really sit as a council but they are represented in all the different quarters of the community and in each quarter they are recognised. The role they play is that of advice. They advise parents on how they should handle their children”

“Even on an individual basis, there are individuals who sacrifice their time to listen to the conversations of certain groups of youth to find out what they are actually discussing. If they are planning mischief, he or she will advise them on what is supposed to be good

against what they are planning. In the process some of them become reformed because that person will also go to their parents and inform them.”

*d) Religious groups*

Participants described three types of religious based groups, who focus on immorality in the broadest terms. They, too, contribute to primary crime prevention in the communities through efforts aimed at changing people’s mindsets and behaviours in line with Koranic principles. Members voluntarily give of their time to preach to various groups or individuals perceived to be in need of guidance or counsel. Such religious groups include:

- (i) Hisbah, formed in 2000 with the advent of Sharia Law in Jigawa State
- (ii) Group of Mallams
- (iii) Women’s Group

“There is also the Hisbah, a religious organisation”

“They are a group of Mallams who are separate from the hisbah. But just like the hisbah, they go to different places and preach. It is through their preaching that they will show you that this is bad and this is good. From such preachings some criminals become reformed in the process”

“There are also women’s organisations who enlighten the women how to live happily with their families, and they reconcile if there are any matrimonial conflicts”

*e) Community based development organisations*

Finally, some of the secular community based organisations in the community engage in activities, which may be seen as contributing to primordial crime prevention. In light of their view that poverty and unemployment are major causes of youth crime, they aim to provide work opportunities for young people in order to reduce their incentives for engaging in crime.

“The different community based organisations have created certain job opportunities for the youth because they believe that poverty drives the youth to crime. So they try to make sure that all the youth in their community at least have something doing”

**5. Current Informal Policing Structures: Extent of Current Role and Mandate vis à vis the NPF**

The participants left no doubt at all, that the IPS and above all the vigilante group play the *central and dominant role* in ensuring safety and security in their communities.

It is to them, rather than the NPF, that the communities entrust the mandate and the responsibility for preventing and detecting crime in their midst.

“Their importance to us is more than that of the police”

“In any gathering ...people from the community will call on the chief Mallam to pray for the protection of the vigilante group. That is a great honour for them, which reflects the

satisfaction the community has for them and the confidence they have in them. But in contrast, we have no such confidence in the police”

Importantly, however, as participants described, the NPF retains the major responsibility and, in theory, the main mandate for instigating the process of corrective justice for caught offenders.

In practice, however, this mandate commonly appropriated by the IPS in two ways and with explicit approval of the community. First, as we have seen, serious offenders are usually subjected to an initial punishment before being handed over to the police. Minor offenders are punished and not referred to the police at all.

In the same vein, as participants described, the vigilante have also, in the past, attempted to bypass the police mandate and refer cases directly to the courts.

“Before there was a time when the vigilante group in Kanya decided, after shaming the criminal, to just directly take him to the court, instead of the police. And the reason for this was the instant release of the criminals by the police”

The reasons why the IPS or vigilante commonly usurp the mandate for corrective justice in cases of grave offences, as the above quote already indicates, are part of the rationales that originally gave rise to the formation of the vigilante. They are discussed below.

## 6. Current Informal Policing Structures: Emergence, Origin and Rationale

In reflecting on the reasons that underlay the formation of the vigilante in 1990 and underpin their central role today, participants pointed to two main rationales.

First, and most importantly, it was (and is) the evident failure of the police to effectively protect the communities against crime. At the time, as participants described, the ineffectiveness of the police resulted in the escalation to such high levels that communities were forced to come together to find ways to protect themselves against it. In essence, the formation of the IPS, especially the vigilante, thus, represented a self-help measure of communities aimed to ‘fill’ or compensate for the gap’ left by failure of the police. In a sense, it expressed communities’ profound loss of confidence in the police.

“It is because of the failure of the police that gave rise to the formation of the vigilante”

“We [had] high rates of crime. So it was very necessary that such organisations should be formed”

“We lost confidence in them [and] In the end we resorted to establishing our own groups...we withdrew our support from the police”

“There were rampant theft cases before the advent of these groups... we used to have sleepless nights because during the night people would come and steal [our things]”

“There were [many] criminal activities in our communities... you could not leave your property anyhow, even in your house because while you were sleeping they will take it, even in full view of you”

The group participants highlighted two principal aspects to this police failure and the resulting loss of confidence in the NPF.

As the first aspect, participants described an apparent ineffectiveness of the police in preventing or apprehending crime. They saw this ineffectiveness as the result of two factors.

On the one hand, participants saw it as being caused partly, by the lack of sufficient police personnel and equipment - i.e. an *inability* to effectively apprehend crime.

“The number of the police is too small compared to the size of our population.”

“Because of the insufficient number of the police they don’t have enough men to man all the areas”

They...don’t have adequate logistics and equipment”

On the other hand, however, the participants saw the ineffectiveness of the police in apprehending crime as also being caused by an element of *unwillingness* or lack of inclination or dedication on their part.

“The formal police don’t have much dedication and devotion...they police don’t patrol well during Harmattan season and especially not when it is raining”

“There was a time when armed robbers attacked Kanya. We reported to the police but they even with all their weapons, refused to go, said there is no fuel and so on. But the vigilante were the ones that went to our aid. If the police heard the sound of a gun, they would never come out until the next day, but the vigilante would even move in that direction”

As the second and major aspect of police failure participants underscored the apparent unwillingness of the NPF to do all, always, to justly enforce the law and bring caught guilty offenders to justice. In their experience, police commonly release caught or arrested criminals, in return for monetary rewards. The result of this has been a continuous exposure of communities to repeat crimes from such offenders, thus further undermining their security.

“The other reason why we formed these groups was the fact that the police instantly released criminals. In just a very small time, after an hour or two, they will release him, and within one or two days he will come back to you and will be bragging”

“Then we discovered that the Nigerian police have become corrupt, now they take bribes...even from criminals”

If there is any criminal act in our community or a criminal is caught by the police, there will be problem because the police will release that criminal”

The second major rationale for communities' loss of confidence in the police and formation of the vigilante is very closely linked to the problem of corruption. Communities, as the participants explained, became profoundly disillusioned with the Nigerian government and the blatant self-interest of those power. As a corollary they also lost confidence in the NPF as a government institution, which, they feel, exhibits the same flaws of government.

“Here in Nigeria...we the masses question the integrity of our leadership, then automatically they will not respect that government. Consequently, all government institutions such as the police are no longer respected. We see the leaders as selfish. They consider only themselves and not the plight of the masses, and the security forces are similar. This is what made it necessary for people to form their own groups at different levels”

#### *Reasons for Police Corruption*

In reflecting on the nature and reasons for corruption in the police force, participants stressed that not all police officers are corrupt and there were some men of integrity in the force.

“We know that there are some who go into the force to bring some positive changes. However, others go for their own selfish interests”

In discussing the direct causes of the corruption among police officers, participants pointed to two main factors.

Most importantly, they highlighted the poor conditions of service in the NPF, especially the inadequate and irregular remuneration of police officers, which in a sense ‘forces’ them to seek remuneration elsewhere. They noted that if these problems were addressed corruption would largely cease. Ultimately, they saw police corruption as the result of government to ensure adequate working conditions for officers.

“The problem with the police is also the inadequate salary...there is no...conducive atmosphere for the police to operate in so they can avoid taking bribes”

“The police are not promptly paid and they are not well paid”

“In countries like the UK, US, Germany, they take very good care of the police...so they are well paid and promptly paid. They don't need anything from anybody. So it is the fault of the government”

“Because today if you give the police what they want, to carry out their responsibilities, I am sure wherever you take a policeman he will perform up to expectations”

However, participants also emphasised the presence of an intrinsic corrupt or even criminal mind-set or ‘orientation’ in certain officers, which is made possible, amongst others, by the faulty recruitment process for the NPF, specifically the lack of sound scrutiny of applicants.

“There is a problem with the recruitment of the police. There should be an extensive screening before someone is recruited as a policeman. But this is not happening at present. Anybody can be recruited, anybody, including criminals, hoodlums and others. From our experience in Kanya, those that were recruited recently, were not supposed to be recruited because most of them are drug addicts and some are criminals. We had a hand in the recruitment because we organised the youth to go for the training. We thought some of them would be rejected but in the end all were recruited. So I don't expect anything positive from them. Somebody who used to be against law and order is now recruited to protect law and order”

Ultimately, the participants strongly agreed that the presence of all corruption in the police force is the result of, and engendered by, the corruption of those at the topmost positions of the NPF and of government itself.

“The leaders [are] selfish. They consider only themselves and not the plight of the masses, and the security forces are similar. And that is why they are all corrupt”

“It is the corruption at the top that is the problem. Corruption is at its peak in the villa, so we can't expect the policemen not to do it”

## 7. Current Informal Policing Structures: Perceived Effectiveness, Trustworthiness

### *a) Perceived level of effectiveness and trustworthiness*

Given the important role that the IPS, and especially the vigilante, currently play in safeguarding the communities, what is their effectiveness? How successful are they in combating crime and working in the interests of the communities? And what are the reasons for this?

The participants left no doubt at all, that especially the vigilante are effective, and have had a tangible and significant impact on crime in their communities in recent years.

“It is only after their advent that crime has reduced”

“There were rampant theft cases before the advent of these groups... But now with the vigilante that is a thing of the past”

“They are even performing beyond our own expectations. Before there were criminal activities in our communities but with the vigilante groups all the criminals within the town and outside deserted Kanya. Now you can drop anything anywhere and it will be safe”

Moreover, participants expressed communities’ profound trust in the vigilante. They are trusted to work in and protect the interests of the community and not to engage in corrupt practices.

“They are trustworthy and can be relied upon ...we know they are always protecting our interests”

“They don’t expect anything from anybody. It is not a profit making venture like it is for the police. The things you do as a criminal to get off the hook with the police, like giving them bribes, you cannot do that with the vigilante. Instead you are even making matters worse for yourself”

*b) Reasons for perceived effectiveness and trustworthiness*

When asked about the reasons for the effectiveness of the vigilante, group participants highlighted two major factors, both of which root in the fact (i) that vigilante members are from and are paid by the communities, and (ii) that the communities themselves are close-knit.

“We are absolutely sure they won’t because they are from within us”

Together, this ensures the following:

First, there is a strong sense of community ‘ownership’ and control of the vigilante group. As members of the community themselves, vigilante members are under close supervision and community control, beginning, most importantly, with the recruitment process. In recruiting vigilante, as participants emphasised, the community strictly assesses candidates ‘character’ and previous conduct. As a result, the community can be sure of the vigilante’s integrity. Moreover, whilst in service the community can direct and check vigilante’s operations.

The vigilante are under the control of the immediate community”

“The confidence we have in the vigilante group is very high, because we are the ones that selected them and we are the ones who give them orders where appropriate”

“We are the ones who recruit and screen the members of the vigilante and we make sure that anybody fulfils the conditions and standards before he is recruited...[so] we know the calibre of people that are ... in the group”

“Before you are recruited ...they will make sure you are... trustworthy and healthy and you don’t have any problem that will affect your duties. The screening starts from your family to the immediate neighbours and then through the wider community. So it is through this that we can ensure that the members have good characters”

Second, by protecting the communities of which they themselves are members, vigilante members are protecting also their own kin and friends. Thus, they, as opposed to the NPF, have a determination to, and vested interest in carrying out their tasks as effectively as possible and in the interests of their community.

“Due to the fact that vigilante group come from within our community they have dedication, devotion and sacrifice, much more than the formal police”

*c) Areas of limitations in vigilante’s effectiveness or approach*

Participants did not mention any specific area of limitation in the vigilante’s effectiveness at present.

8. Views on the *De Jure* Mandate and Ideal Role of Informal Policing Structures vs. NPF

Given that communities have lost confidence in the police, and presently entrust so much of the charge of ensuring their safety and security especially to the vigilante, what are their views on the mandate of these informal structures vs. the NPF *in principle*? And what are their visions or wishes for the relative roles *ideally* played these groups?

Participants made very clear that, ideally, they would wish to see the NPF and the vigilante groups working ‘hand in hand’, and playing complementary roles in ensuring safety and security in their communities.

On the one hand, participants clearly recognise that the legal and constitutional mandate for all aspects of policing lies with the police, and that the police should, thus, play a dominant role in carrying out these functions – provided it is able to do so effectively and justly.

“The police force ...are the constituted authority that are responsible for establishing safety and security in the society”

This notwithstanding, however, participants argued strongly that in spite of the importance of the NPF, the vigilante, too, have an essential role to play in effectively ensuring the safety and security of their community. They emphasised that the vigilante should be formally recognised as important partners to the NPF in the task of ensuring safety and security in their communities.

“Even if the police can perform very well, it would be good if the vigilante can assist them”

“Even if you improve the police we still want to maintain the vigilante ... [and] government should be serious about the vigilante groups. They should consider the vigilante group as partners in progress and support them”

Participants saw the need for a continued strong role of the vigilante as arising, on the one hand, because of the trust and loyalty of the communities that the vigilante enjoy.

“Because the masses have lost confidence in the police and ...people are more loyal to the vigilante than the police”

On the other hand, they saw the need as arising in view of the insufficient number of NPF officers, and their inability to adequately man all villages:

“Because there may not be sufficient policemen to reach all villages. So where they can't reach the vigilante should take over”

“Because the number of policemen in our area is not enough so we must resort to the services of the vigilante groups so that they can help the police”

Furthermore, in reflecting on the collaborative roles of NPF and vigilante, participants emphasised that as long as the police failed to fulfil its mandate for corrective justice *justly*, the vigilante should be given a legal mandate empowering them to solve certain cases themselves.

“At the moment they don't have a legal basis or backing...they should be empowered by law to treat specific cases”

## 9. Concrete Visions/Requests for Change or Improvements *in Practice*

In line with their views on the ideal roles of the vigilante and NPF, group participants' visions and requests for concrete change centred on the need for improvements in the effectiveness of both.

Such change, they argued, would require the following:

First, efforts to effect a reorientation in the police – an elimination of corruption through the following measures:

- g) Most importantly, the institution of mechanisms to punish and bring to justice those in the police who engage in corrupt practices, beginning from the top.

“Like in the Murtala and Buhari eras, they... made sure they were not bribed. Those in the high positions did not encourage bribery and they punished whoever did it, and those in the lower ranks could thus also not take bribes. So this is what we need now”

- h) Changes to the current recruitment policies and processes to ensure only men of good character are recruited into the NPF

“Before you are recruited into the police you must come from a special group of people who have characters worthy of emulation”

- i) The provision of adequate remuneration and equipment for the police officers

“There is a need for improvements their service condition”

“[If they were] paid promptly and [had] adequate logistics and equipment... they would perform to expectations”

“They should be well equipped”

Second, measures to support the vigilante, in order to maintain and even enhance their effectiveness. Such measures would include:

- i) Provision of more equipment and improved arms to enable them to better apprehend criminals. This includes the use of more traditional protection methods

“[They need] help... with some firearms for self-defence. Before they were using sticks and they were all right. But now, these weapons are almost useless because the criminals have ever more sophisticated weapons. So they should be well equipped”

“They should try as much as possible to source the traditional medicine for their self-defence, to make themselves bullet proof”

- j) Provision of better remuneration to the vigilante members, in order to ‘boost their morale’

“One should redouble our efforts towards supporting the vigilante. This would boost their morale [and] the remuneration is central”

- k) Legislation at Local Authority or State level, to legally recognise and empower the vigilante to administer justice themselves in certain cases. Given current police practices, this would enable them to achieve the ultimate goal of their actions – i.e. to bring the offender to justice and reduce the crime threat to the community.

“[There is a need for] the enactment of a law that will recognise and legitimise the operations of the vigilante. A law should be promulgated...that empowers them to treat specific cases themselves. Such a law can be a bye law by the local authorities and/or state legislature”

## 10. Perspectives and Wishes on Ways to Work Towards Change

### *a) Who and what should be involved?*

In reflecting on approaches to achieve the envisioned change in the NPF, participants strongly perceived a primary responsibility on the part of government to effect such change:

“Let the government look after the police”

Referring to the successes of the ‘war against indiscipline’ policies of the Buhari/Idiagbon government, as well as the effective policies in the Murtala Muhammed era, participants argued that if government were genuinely willing – they could effect the necessary reorientation in the NPF easily and swiftly.

“If the government were serious it could change the situation. Like in the Buhari era. There was a good security system at the time and the policemen were not corrupt.”

“In the Murtala and Buhari eras, they were not giving much money to the police but they made sure they were not bribed”

Importantly, however, while putting the onus on government, participants also strongly urged, even pleaded, for a critical role of NGO such as A2J in achieving the change in the NPF. They saw the need for NGO involvement specifically on two levels:

First, they urged for NGO advocacy efforts to effect a necessary change in the attitude of government towards the needs of the poor – i.e. to influence government to become more open to, and genuinely willing to respond to the needs of communities such as theirs. Second, they saw the need for NGOs to supervise the implementation of any government measures to ensure that no self-enrichment can occur.

“If they really want to help us they should try all they can to influence and convince the Nigerian government to have the interest of the masses at heart. So that when you bring anything for the masses the government will be ready to implement it rather than eating the money”

“It is very important that the NGO is [involved] because usually the government develops deaf ears in listening to the plight of the masses. So with NGOs in the picture it will be a different thing. So if the NGOs are party to it...the government will not take it lightly”

Participants emphasised the need especially for NGO advocacy efforts in view of the seeming lack of interest and will of those in government to listen to their communities’ needs and to improve their welfare – and, in doing so, to grant them some of their constitutional rights.

“The problem we are having is that we are practicing democracy now ... we have representatives of our own people in the government...They... know that we the rural dwellers are the people who voted them into power. But when they get into power, they forget about us. They are so selfish. They don’t even want to give us our constitutional rights. They don’t even want to say these rural dwellers deserve to have this and that and deserve to have a good life. So we want that opportunity”

Importantly, participants also requested NGO advocacy support in helping them to engage effectively in a dialogue with the NPF and relevant policy makers.

“There should be a consultation should be between the government, the members of the community, the police and the NGOs. These four should come together to redefine the safety and security measures in the society”

Participants specifically expressed the wish for the institution of a consultation forum – in which ordinary citizens such as themselves can freely express their views to, and be heard by the relevant authorities. They saw this as one, important way to exercise their constitutional right to freedom of expression.

“We want this opportunity to sit with the representatives of the government to tell them our own views on the issue of security and safety... at least we have the right of freedom of expression... So we want that opportunity”

However, participants also feared that without NGO advocacy, government would not be ready to take seriously and respond to their needs. Thus they requested specifically that A2J should facilitate, and support their communities in such dialogues in order to add strength and influence to their voice.

“The ... thing is that we people have to go hand in hand with you people who have volunteered to come to us. Because you know how weak our community based organisations are and how government sometimes sees them as challenges to them. But if we go together with you, we will get the very recognition we need from the government”

Finally, participants expressed a clear wish for NGO, rather than government, to take the lead in initiatives to support the vigilante groups. They stressed however, that any initiative should be undertaken with explicit government approval so as to not run the risk it being undermined later on.

*“The NGOs should look after all community based organisations. But before this the NGOs must go to the government to get permission to do this...[because]...if you [don't] the government will suspect something and undermine your efforts”*

b) What are the needed first steps?

In reflecting on first steps to work towards the envisioned change, participants, as mentioned initially, expressed a strong wish for further consultations between their communities and the Access to Justice Programme to discuss subsequent steps to be taken. They noted that such further consultation should involve them, as well as other relevant community members, including,

- (i) District head
- (ii) Various relevant community leaders

The female group participants, moreover, expressed a strong wish for future consultations to be held separately for men and women, as they would feel freer to discuss issues amongst their own gender.

#### 4. Main Findings For Hadejia LGA (Urban)

##### 4.1 HADEJIA: SUMMARY STATEMENT

###### Safety, Security and Informal Policing: Current Situation

- Safety and security - the protection of property and life from crime and intimidation - are of vital importance to the lives and livelihoods of community members, and the development of the community as a whole
- The safety and security situation today is greatly improved on what it was a few years ago, owing to the successful operation especially of the community vigilante groups
- These groups were formed as a measure of self-help in view of the failure of the police to adequately safeguard the communities, both as a result of an inability to prevent and detect crime, and a seeming unwillingness to do all to bring offenders to justice – i.e. to justly enforce the law
- The general effectiveness of the vigilante groups lies primarily in the fact that members, being from within the communities themselves, have a determination to and vested interest in curbing crime, as well as in depth knowledge of local characteristics, customs, norms – including in relation to Islamic law.
- Having lost confidence in the police, communities now entrust the main responsibility of protecting their lives and property through crime prevention and detection to the vigilante.
- The police presently retains the responsibility of controlling, and protecting residents from community violence
- In addition, the NPF retains the mandate and responsibility for initiating the process of corrective justice for caught offenders. However, the communities usually administer an initial measure of corrective justice to offenders through a process of public shaming
- Although all offenders are referred to the NPF, and despite having the mandate, there is a current failure of the police to justly enforce the law and bring guilty parties to justice. Caught offenders are commonly released in return for monetary rewards. This enhances communities' exposure to repeat crimes from such offenders, further undermines their security and creates a sense of injustice suffered at the hands of the police.
- There remains a great need for change to the policing of communities in order to better ensure their safety, security and access to justice

### Vision of Needed/Desired Change

- The community recognises the NPF's legal mandate for all policing functions and accept that ideally, it should largely be the police to carry out these functions, provided it is able to carry them out justly and effectively. Nonetheless, they consider a continuation of vigilante group operations as essential for ensuring safety and security in their midst, given the vigilante's superior local knowledge that is vital for wholly effective crime prevention and detection. The ultimate vision and desire for change is thus for an effective partnership and collaboration between NPF and vigilante, in which each plays a specific role, and which is under the lead of the NPF
- This requires, above all, change to effect a reorientation of, and elimination of corruption in the police.
- In addition, and especially in the meantime, until a change in the NPF has been effected, there is a need for efforts to maintain and bolster the effectiveness of the vigilante. Importantly, until the NPF is able to justly carry out its mandate for corrective justice, there is a need to empower the vigilante to access the formal court process without needing to go through the police

### Practical Support/Change Requested

- Practical support requested to maintain and bolster the effectiveness of the vigilante include:
  - Provision of improved arms
  - Provision of improved remuneration to vigilante members, to boost morale
  - Provision of more basic equipment, e.g. torches
  - Provision of protective gear, e.g. raincoats, blankets
  - Legislation at state level to empower vigilante to refer cases directly to courts without having to go through the police
- Concrete Actions/Initiatives requested to contribute towards change in NPF include:
  - Initiatives to punish corruption in the NPF, beginning from the topmost positions and effected by government
  - Initiatives to effect the provision of sufficient equipment and to improve conditions of service for police forces on the ground
  - Facilitation of fora in which communities can freely express their grievances and needs to NPF and policy makers with relevant jurisdiction (providing there is a true willingness for dialogue on the part of the NPF and policymakers)

### *First Steps in Working Towards Change*

- Further consultation and engagement with the community to discuss subsequent steps to be taken in working towards the envisioned change. Consultation should involve the FGD participants as well as other relevant community members, specifically:
  - (i) Community vigilante chairmen

- (ii) Vigilante themselves
- (iii) Other community leaders

- Separate consultations should be held for women and men

## 4.2 HADEJIA: DETAILED FINDINGS

### 1. HOMOGENEITY OF PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS

Participants' views and perspectives on safety, security and informal policing in their communities displayed a marked degree of homogeneity and agreement. On all topics, participants expressed the same principal values, experiences and attitudes.

#### *2. Poor Communities' Reactions to Focus Group Discussion*

Reflecting on the focus group discussion, participants expressed their appreciation of having had the opportunity to discuss their views, and be consulted on a topic of such vital importance to them. In light of this, they conveyed a sincere wish for further A2J consultations with their community with a view to truly working towards the change they envision.

“We feel alright as we are freely saying our views as you are seeing our faces. Because we are living within this community... we know our problems and you have come to us to identify the problems with the aim of finding solutions. So we appreciate it very much”.

“We would like it if you could come back to discuss with us how now we can move things, so that we really see some tangible outcome of this.... Anytime! Anywhere! If we alive we are ready!”

### 3. Communities' conceptions of Safety and Security, and Their Importance to Their Lives

Participants' conceptions of safety and security centred on three main aspects.

First, participants conceived of safety and security as the protection of property and lives from crime. They highlighted the vital importance of such protection to their livelihoods, and to the economic well-being of communities as a whole.

“It is very important to us because when we find out that somebody suffered to acquire some capital, if there is no safety and security, if there is no protection of his property and his life, what he has suffered, somebody will come to just steal it away, and that means that this person has suffered in vain. So it is very important to us. For a human being, for a business man, there is no way we can do without safety and security”

“It is the bedrock of our economic status!

Second, participants emphasised that safety and security also means the freedom from violence or intimidation, and the absence of fear that comes with it. This emphasis may reflect the history of crises and outbreaks of often politically motivated violence along ethnic or religious lines in the LGA.

“Security is freedom from torture or intimidation and freedom from danger”

“Safety is...how somebody feels safe from violence”

“There will be no violence if there is adequate security, no intimidation in the society”

“ I want to add...that part of the security relates to protection from crises like the two crises we had in Hadejia that involved a Hausa and an Igbo man... Instead of letting those people just reconciling or settling their dispute accordingly, even if it means going to court, instead of that, they just escalated the whole thing. I as an Igbo man could not even enter Hadejia. Many churches were burnt and they looted many other things. So apart from crimes like theft, there are these crises that at times just occur unexpectedly and though at the beginning the persons involved maybe just two or three, at the end the who town will burn”

Finally, participants conceived of safety and security in moral terms. Specifically, they saw it as the absence of ‘immorality’- and its attendant consequences (including crime), in their society. As such, they perceived it as fundamental to the stability and welfare of their communities as a whole.

“Safety and security are very important in our communities. Without safety and security, the level of immorality would be very high. This will breed criminals and drug addicts in the society. So it affects aspects of our health, family coexistence and our lives and properties... It affects everything! Without safety and security, everything would get spoilt”

It is only with safety and security that we come to respect ourselves and can coexist, and can have morality...among us. So safety and security affect all aspects of our life. Nothing good is possible without safety and security in the communities”

#### *4. Nature of Current Informal Policing Structures: Organisation, Function, Activities, Approach*

The group participants described four principal types of informal policing structure or process that currently operate in their communities to ensure safety and security. These are:

- a) Community Vigilante Groups
- b) Community ‘Watch Groups’
- c) Religious Groups Focusing on ‘Immorality’ (e.g. Hisbah)
- d) Processes of Public Shaming/Punishment of Wrongdoers
- e) Traditional Rulers (Ward Heads)
- f) Community Elders

In a sense, these structures or processes can be seen as forming an informal policing system, together covering most aspects of crime prevention (including primary prevention), detection, investigation and initial corrective justice.

*a) Community vigilante groups*

Most important and prominent among the IPS, as participants explained, are the so-called community vigilante groups.

“We have the vigilante group who sacrifice their lives”

“We the traders’ association of Hadejia really rely on the vigilante group”

For us (Miyetti Allah, Fulani) [the vigilante] are very important.

Importantly, the term ‘vigilante’ evidently has no negative connotation in this community, and participants were clear to distinguish their vigilante groups and their restricted operation, from that of the Bakassi Boys.

“[Our vigilante] ... have their own restrictions... But this is contrary to what the Bakassi Boys do”

*Function*

The vigilante groups, as the participants explained carry out two major functions.

First, they routinely patrol and guard residential areas and roads especially at night – the time considered most dangerous in terms of the risk of crime or armed robbery. Through their patrols the vigilantes work in particular towards the prevention and apprehension of crime.

*“Their main job is [to patrol at night]...and they usually they get somebody red-handed, on the act”*

“The vigilante groups usually work during the night, especially when people go to bed. Then they will come out. When they come out... they usually go to some strategic points and hide there. Either the vigilante catch the criminals red handed or, if not, they catch them once the criminals on their way back to their bases with the stolen goods. So they hardly escape. When they arrest them, what they usually do is to take the stolen property to their office; they will tie the criminal to a tree or something of that sort...till the morning”

Moreover, in certain cases of public gatherings or events, the vigilante guard and patrol also during the day.

“In other situations, like when they are festivities, or other instances where there are gatherings, or during the elections, the vigilantes will be deployed there to ensure safety and security”

Second, and in addition to crime prevention, the vigilante engage in the detection and investigation of crime, either in response to their own observations, or community members' reports of crime. Identified culprits are arrested and interrogated to establish their culpability.

“[If someone discovers something is stolen from him], people will go to... the vigilante to find them, then if they arrest him [they will] take the statement

If a person among us [Fulani (Miyetti Allah)] suspects a criminal is stealing goats, sheep or any type of animal, he prefers to alert the vigilante rather than the police.

Mostly, as the participants described, the function of the vigilante ends with crime prevention and detection. Any criminals caught or identified are handed over to the police for prosecution. Thus, the vigilante's function complements that of the NPF who are responsible for bringing offenders to justice.

“If they arrest [somebody]... they will take him to the police to take the matter over.

However, as participants made clear, before culprits are handed over to the police, they are usually subjected to an initial measure of corrective justice, through a process of public shaming and punishment of the offender through beating.

“When they arrest them... they will flog him very well in front of the community. After that he will be made to carry the stolen property around, especially within the market and then later to the larger community, so as to shame him. From there they will take him to the police station. So the police will now take him to the court”

“If somebody is caught stealing someone's goose, that person will be forced to carry the goose around so that people witness that is the kind of crime he has committed. Then after that he will be taken to the police station from where they will either take him to court or otherwise”

Participants emphasised the potency of such shaming and the grave impact it has on offenders and their families in the context of their community's values and norms. As such, it also acts as a deterrent to other potential offenders, thus contributing to crime prevention.

“Yes, before taking a person to the police we shame them. And that is a serious punishment to them because you will find out that a certain man who steals, he will definitely have relatives in the area so if you go round with him, it will be a shame to all the relatives, and it will be an exemplary. Because even if you wants to marry someone, they will say ‘ah I saw you last time, your brother is a thief “

“This ... serves as a deterrent to others”

### *Organisation*

The vigilante groups in Hadejia, as participants explained, were developed from the traditional 'hunters' group' who customarily carried out the function of ensuring safety and security in communities. In certain smaller communities these hunters' groups still exist and carry out this function.

“Before the responsibilities were taken by the hunter group in each community. They are still found in some communities. Here in Hadejia it was this group of hunters that developed into the present vigilante groups with time. But in other communities the [hunter groups] are still existing”

Today, as participants described, there is one umbrella vigilante organisation responsible for Hadejia emirate. It is headed by an overall zonal commander for Hadejia emirate, assisted by a commander in each of the eight local government areas comprised in the zone.

“They have their zonal commander for Hadejia emirate, and in each of the eight local governments they have a commander who is answerable to the zonal commander”

In each local government, the vigilante have an office, manned during the day by a few 'officers' to whom people can report cases for investigation, and who work in shifts assigned by the respective commander.

“During the day they will just assign somebody, maybe one or two people to their office... Those two that are there during the day, it is to them that you can report a case. So if a case is reported to them, they will go and make all necessary investigations”

“They have their own timetable. Today is your duty, tomorrow is somebody's duty. It is these commanders who assign the timetables”

The remainder of the vigilante typically have their own jobs during the day and gather only during the night for their patrols.

“The remaining people only gather in the night...they do not work 24 hours in most cases. They have their own things, their own jobs. They only gather at night”

The vigilante group is supported by local government through a monthly allowance. Vigilante members do not receive a formal salary. However, they receive a token stipend of N2000 provided by the Local Government allocation.

“The local government gives [an] allowance to the group as a whole”

“The local government established a standing order for an allowance to be paid to the vigilantes when they are paying their workers...they get N2000”

In addition to local government support, the vigilante have received material support from community based organisations, which have provided uniforms, protective gear such rain coats and blankets for the rainy and harmattan seasons and basic equipment such as torches and batteries. The vigilante do not use firearms or other more sophisticated equipment.

“We, the Hadejia development circle ... provided them with uniforms”

“We the trader’s association assist the vigilantes. We buy things like batteries and torch lights for them. During the rainy season we bought raincoats for them and during the harmattan, we buy overalls and blankets for them”

“ The vigilante groups don’t have firearms, and other equipment and facilities”

#### *b) Satellite community watch groups*

As the number of vigilante are relatively limited, the vigilante group acts as an ‘umbrella group’, which is assisted by several ‘satellite’ ‘community watch groups’ who operate and patrol in smaller communities.

“Besides the [main] vigilante there are also community based...ad hoc vigilante groups. They are just supplementing the efforts of the vigilante groups in the absence of the vigilante groups in some areas. Because of the shortage of members in the vigilante groups they cannot man all areas in Hadejia, so these other community groups supplement their efforts”

These smaller community watch groups, as participants described, may, for example, comprise of youth groups who patrol their respective area and watch in particular over the behaviour of other youth, giving warnings to parents of those considered wayward. In doing so they work primarily towards crime prevention

“One [such] community based group we had... was made up purely of youths who were strong and healthy, they were called ‘kungiyar kula da matasa ‘ (‘security group by and for youth’) and they were checking the behaviour of the youth. They will usually call the father of the culprit and the father will bring his child, and then they will tell him to warn his child or else they, the youth group would take care of it and he would have nobody to blame”

#### *c) Traditional rulers (ward heads)*

The activities and function of the community ward heads can be seen as complementing that of the vigilante in two ways.

First, in the absence of a vigilante officer, the ward head acts as the port of call for the reporting of crimes and directs the primary investigation of the case.

“In the village we have two authorities, you either report to the district head or the ward head or the vigilante, whichever one is there”

“The [ward head] will investigate at the primary stage.”

Second, the ward head actively collaborates with the vigilante in making decisions on the process of corrective justice to be followed once an offender is caught. Thus, vigilante typically bring the culprit to the ward heads who then decide what further to do.

“The district and ward heads are cooperating with the vigilante group there. Even the vigilante group they arrest the criminals, they take him to the ward or district head and then...they give ... order [where] to take them.”

*d) Community elders*

The activities of community elders can be said to complement that of the vigilante specifically in the area of crime prevention. The elders contribute especially to primary crime prevention through the warning and admonishment of the parents of wayward youth.

“There is also the elder’s forum. They usually invite the father of a culprit and warn him of the dangers because others in the community would emulate what his son is doing. Because in the event of any criminal act it will be his child that will be suspected to be party to it”

*e) Religious based groups (Hisbah and Muslim Women’s Organisation)*

The activities of the Hisbah (formed in 2000 with the advent of Sharia Law in Jigawa State), and the Muslim Women’s Organisation, focus on immorality in the broadest terms. They contribute to primary crime prevention in the communities through efforts aimed at changing people’s mindsets and behaviours in line with Koranic principles. Members voluntarily give of their time, to preach to groups or individuals perceived to be in need of such guidance.

“Our own (Hisbah) is to preach...nothing more than that because we have no authority to catch anybody. We consider immorality in general. We go to any criminal centre or any business centre and preach to them... and we go to any organisation or community involved in business or schools or civil servants, we go to them and preach to them, to show them how they can defend our interest islamically and socially... And in the end this contributes to safety and security”

“In our organisation (Muslim Women) we form groups who go to Islamic schools (‘Islamiya’) where married women are taught and they give them lectures on certain issues related to morality – to improve the level of morality in society... In addition, there are some festivities during the naming ceremony, and [often] there are some immoral acts associated with these festivities... and we use that opportunity to also teach them about morality to reduce this”

## 5. Current Informal Policing Structures: Extent of Current Role and Mandate vis à vis the NPF

The participants left no doubt at all, that the IPS and above all the vigilante groups play the *central and dominant role* in ensuring safety and security in their community.

It is mostly to these informal policing structures, rather than the NPF, that communities entrust the mandate and the responsibility for preventing and detecting crime in their midst.

“It is them we have confidence in. We have a better relationship with them. We are very close to them and they have the interests of the community at heart”

Importantly, however, as participants described, the NPF retains a major responsibility and mandate in two areas.

First, the police retain the primary responsibility for handling and responding to community violence, especially violence that arises spontaneously and escalates from disputes. The lack of involvement of the vigilante in such cases, as participants explained, is mainly due to the fact that most members are not on during the day.

“The crises that at times just occur unexpectedly and.... at the end the who town will burn. The vigilante groups do not intervene on this part. It is only the police. At times we strangers even run to the police. The other time that happened we even spent the whole day in the police and before they could calm the situation it took a long time.”

“The reason why the vigilante don’t involve themselves in these kinds of crises is because they happen instantly. And the vigilante do not work 24 hours in most cases”

Second, whilst crime prevention and detection are entrusted to the vigilante, the formal mandate for initiating the process of corrective justice for caught offenders remains with the NPF. And, as participants explained, apart from the initial corrective measure of public shaming, the vigilante usually honour this mandate out of respect for the law and constitution.

“The [vigilante] have their own restrictions. [They] know that whenever they catch any criminal they have to hand him over to the police. There is no alternative”

“The right people to administer justice are the police. So in all cases we must abide with the Nigerian constitution”

In practice this also means, as participants emphasised, that the vigilante in Hadejia do not engage in the administering of jungle justice.

“They don’t do that. They hand over all cases to the police”

## 6. Current Informal Policing Structures: Emergence, Origin and Rationale

In reflecting on the reasons that underlay the recent formation (earlier in 2003) of the vigilante and underpin their central role at present, participants pointed to one main rationale.

This was (and is) the evident failure of the police to effectively protect the communities against crime. At the time, as participants described, the ineffectiveness of the police resulted in the escalation to such high levels that communities were forced to come together to find ways to protect themselves against it. In essence, the communities this formed the IPS, especially the vigilante, as a self-help measure aimed to 'fill' or compensate for the gap' left by failure of the police. In a sense, it expressed communities' profound loss of confidence in the police.

"I cannot tell exactly when they were formed but the reason was that the crime got too high, at an alarming rate. People felt that the formal police were not able to control it. Police alone could not contain it, so they decided to form these groups"

"We have no confidence in the police at all"

The group participants highlighted two principal aspects to this police failure and the resulting loss of confidence in the NPF.

As the first aspect, participants described an apparent ineffectiveness of the police in preventing or apprehending crime, especially armed robbery. This, they saw as being caused by two factors.

On the one hand, participants saw it as being caused partly, by the police's lack of equipment, arms and personnel – i.e. an *inability* to effectively apprehend crime.

"The...crimes were too frequent – the number of the police was not able to cover the whole area. Their number was not adequate"

"There is also the issue of logistics... You report [a crime] it to them and... they will complain that there is not enough fuel or not enough money at the station for them to use to fight the crime. So they don't have adequate equipment and they don't have sophisticated weapons. The firearms they use are too old. And the criminals usually have more sophisticated weapons than the police"

On the other hand, however, and more importantly, the participants also saw the ineffectiveness of the police as being caused by an element of *unwillingness* or lack of inclination on their part. More specifically, police officers' unwillingness to capture criminals, from whom they expect monetary rewards. In other words, they saw the apparent ineffectiveness of the NPF not only as a result of lacking equipment or personnel, but also, and more importantly, as a result of police corruption.

"As for the policemen, if the criminal gives them something, they will... not even arrest him"

"The police connive with the criminals. If you report any case to the police, maybe in relation to a specific person or group, they will not arrest them immediately"

"It is disheartening. The police are actually involved in most of the armed robberies in our area because they collect money from the robbers. So when you are reporting any case to them, especially that of armed robbery, they will tell you that is no fuel, and they are too few in number... or something like that. It is so disheartening. So some people resorted to tricking the police. Like one day there was a case of armed robbery along one road close to Hadejia. So the driver decided to trick the police. If he had told the police that armed robbers were there they would not have come there. So instead, they decided

to go and tell the police that there was a car carrying money for one bank that had an accident and the money was all over the place and the inhabitants of the area were busy policing all the money up and taking it. So the police were very happy and responded promptly. There was no question of ‘no fuel’, ‘no weapons’ or anything like that. They responded so promptly”

As the second major aspect of police failure, – again as a result of officers’ corruption and interest in self-enrichment, participants underscored the apparent unwillingness of the NPF to do all, always, to justly enforce the law and bring caught guilty offenders to justice. In their experience, police commonly release caught or arrested criminals, in return for monetary rewards. The result of this has been a sense of suffering injustice at the hands of the police, as well as a further exacerbation of communities’ risk of crime and intimidation - especially for those who initially reported the offender.

“If they arrest them they will tell them that you are the one who reported them. And this situation leads to a situation where you the reporter will be in great danger, because the criminals will come back to you”

“Both the police and court they are getting money from the criminals and they release them, that is the main problem. They release all the criminals, after they take a certain amount of money. This is what is happening”

Importantly, as the last quote indicates, participants saw the failure to bring to justice offenders who offer for monetary rewards not just as confined to the police. They saw it as a grave problem affecting the court system as a whole and, ultimately, the political leadership.

“So you see they, the police and the court, are all the same... We have no confidence in ...even the court!”

“Here in Hadejia, even you see many criminals who are taken to court on Monday or Tuesday and on Wednesday they are out”

“ And it is such criminals that the politicians are using to intimidate people in the community. So the politicians, the government or the chairman will stand for them if they are arrested, no matter what the nature of their offence”

### *Reasons for Police Corruption*

In reflecting on the reasons underlying the interest in self-enrichment and corruption among the police force, participants pointed to two main factors.

On the one hand, they highlighted the poor conditions of service in the NPF, especially the inadequate and irregular remuneration of police officers, which in a sense ‘forces’ them to seek remuneration elsewhere. They also pointed to the role played by the unsatisfactory system of promotion within the force. Both of these factors, they noted, are for many officers the main and only reason for engaging in corrupt practices.

“It is poor payment. The police complain about salary”

“There is the issue of their salaries – their salaries are very little and it takes a long time before they are paid. But then there is also the issue of promotion. You find out that somebody is in the service for over 20 years and he is not promoted. So you find out that

the police are very discouraged about their welfare. When you go as a police, and maybe armed robbers kill you, at the end of the day your family will suffer. They will not receive any benefits in time. It will take more than 2 or 3 years. So you find that the police are so discouraged about their welfare and that is why they are not putting yourself into their service. When you go to them they will say ‘okay go and bring’”

On the other hand, however, participants emphasised the presence of an intrinsic corrupt or even criminal mind-set or ‘orientation’ in numerous officers.

“And sometimes even they themselves are too bribed. They have already been bribed and they become bribed people, corrupt people. That is why they behave like that”

“The corruption is in their blood”

Participants noted that this is enabled by the apparent immunity that police officers enjoy from prosecution or punishment for engaging in corrupt practices.

“If a policeman cheats you or takes bribes, maybe there is a place you can report him to. But the question is once you report him, will he really be judged? At the end of it will he really receive punishment for that? He won’t”

Above all, participants strongly agreed, that the presence of all corruption in the police force is, ultimately, engendered by the corruption of those at the topmost positions:

“So even...their boss cannot tell us that he is not corrupt”

Participants saw the corruption of officers at the top, as engendering the corruption of those on the ground in two principal ways:

First, it effectively forces officers on the ground to extort money from civilians, in order to service their superior’s needs

“You will find that it is even the boss who is sending the younger ones on the road to collect money and he will take his share”

Second, and importantly, corruption at the top, undermines the checks and balances that should be inherent in the recruitment process. Using their influence, those in the top positions effect the recruitment of their family members or others friends, without the need to pass rigid tests or scrutiny of their character and suitability. As a result many officers are recruited despite having criminal or corrupt intentions.

“The issue of the way they recruit the police... they will recruit criminals because at the end of the day you will find that a criminal is a boy of the boss or of a big man, they will just sign and nobody will screen”

## 7. Current Informal Policing Structures: Perceived Effectiveness, Trustworthiness

### a) *Perceived level of effectiveness and trustworthiness*

Given the important role that the IPS, and especially the vigilante, currently play in safeguarding the communities, what is their effectiveness? How successful are they in combating crime and working in the interests of the communities? And what are the reasons for this?

The participants left no doubt at all, that especially the vigilante are effective, and have had a tangible and significant impact on crime in their communities.

“The vigilante are very effective.... the criminals are even afraid of the vigilante members”

“All: Yes, truly. The rate of crime has reduced. M: Specifically their night patrols have reduced the rate of crime”

Moreover, participants expressed communities’ profound trust in the vigilante. They are trusted to work in and protect the interests of the community and not, for example, to engage in corrupt practices.

“They are not collecting anything from anybody. They are not expecting anything from you. They are not corrupt”

*b) Reasons for perceived effectiveness and trustworthiness*

When asked about the reasons for the effectiveness of the vigilante, group participants highlighted three major factors. The first two root in (i) the fact that vigilante members are themselves from the communities, and (ii) the familiarity between community members. This ensures the following:

First, by protecting the communities of which they themselves are members, vigilante members are protecting also their own kin and friends. Thus, they, as opposed to the NPF, have a determination to, and *vested interest* in carrying out their tasks as effectively as possible and in the interests of their community. Moreover, they derive a certain sense of pride in protecting the community effectively.

“Determination! Because they are determined to control the crime within their community. Because they are...from the communities themselves”

“Yes, and they have the community at heart. They are serving their own community, they are protecting their own family and friends”

“Because of the pride of the members is to catch and arrest a thief or criminal and so they are out for it, and they are proud of it”

Second, the vigilante, by virtue of their being from within and familiar with the communities, have a detailed knowledge of potential criminal perpetrators or plans as well as of the local terrain, community customs and norms.

“The vigilante [are] effective because they know all the nooks and corners of the area, because they come from the area”

“The vigilante know. They are within the community. So they also know how to handle criminals in the community... if there is a criminal who is stubborn the ... vigilante will use traditional knowledge or traditional ways to catch this man”

The third, major, reason for the current effectiveness of the vigilante, as the participants made clear, is the support they receive from Local Government and community based organisations. It is on this support, in particular the material support that the vigilante’s success greatly depends.

“Government support and support from the community, materially. These two are the things that their effectiveness rests on”

Recalling a strike that was called by the vigilante because they were given no uniform, participants argued further that if such support were withdrawn, the motivation of the vigilante might erode.

“If the incentives given to them by the local community or authority or other organisations stops, then they are bound to fail us. If the local government stops giving them allowances and the protection they need, they may fail us at any time...the vigilante were on strike at one time because of the problem of uniform. Up to that moment the local government had refused to provide a uniform for them. We, the Hadejia development circle then provided them with uniforms and we presented them to them in the presence of the DPO, and then they resumed their work”

### *c) Areas of limitations in vigilante’s effectiveness or approach*

Participants did not mention any specific area of limitation in the vigilante’s effectiveness at present.

However, their accounts indicated that though the crime rate has reduced it remains a problem.

“We have made all necessary security arrangements at our level...but it is not yet sufficient”

In this context, interestingly, participants raised the thought that the vigilante’s policy of refraining from administering jungle justice may be limiting their effectiveness in truly deterring criminals – in contrast to the vigilante group in Nguru who, it seems, administers jungle justice frequently.

“The vigilante in Nguru are even more effective than the vigilante in Hadejia, because they can apply jungle justice. They can kill an armed robber!”

## 8. Views on the *De Jure* Mandate and Ideal Role of Informal Policing Structures vs. NPF

Given that communities have lost confidence in the police, and presently entrust so much of the charge of ensuring their safety and security especially to the vigilante, what are their views on the mandate of these informal structures vs. the NPF *in principle*? And what are their visions or wishes for the relative roles *ideally* played these groups?

Participants made clear that, ideally, they would wish to see the NPF and the vigilante groups working ‘hand in hand’ and playing complementary roles in ensuring safety and security in their communities.

“It should be a cooperative effort between police and vigilante ...Everyone has a role to fill. The police controls law and order, while the vigilante save the lives of the members of the community. So there should be collaborate between the two. They should work together.

“The two of them should be doing their work hand in hand”

Participants did recognise that the legal mandate for all aspects of policing lies with the police and, in view of this, indicated that the police should play a leading role – providing, of course, it is able to fulfil the role effectively and justly.

“It is their work officially. They are supposed to discharge their work”

“Policemen should be in full control and there should be vigilante to assist them”

However, participants argued that the vigilante’s input remains necessary because of their detailed knowledge of local customs and traditions, including Islamic norms, and hence their greater effectiveness in crime prevention and detection. Police officers usually lack such knowledge, given the present posting policy within the NPF (which participants largely accepted as necessary for the maintenance of national unity). Thus, participants they likened the envisioned complementarity between NPF and vigilante to the complementary roles played by western and traditional medicine.

“We still want our own vigilantes because of... the issue of knowing the area. The police here do not know the environment well, because they are not from here. But the vigilante know. They are within the community. So they also know how to handle criminals in the community. There are some problems; if there is a criminal who is stubborn the police cannot even deal with them. The policeman will be afraid to go and arrest him because he is bullet proof. But the vigilante will use traditional knowledge or traditional ways to catch this man and hand him over to the police”

“Some of the policemen are posted from outside...[so] they don’t know anything about what is happening here.... and maybe [they] don’t have courage to do anything because it is not your own home town. But the vigilante are indigenes of the place and they will have courage to improve their own society... There is also the issue of language barriers. You find that a policeman can speak Igbo and English only but he doesn’t know Hausa. And he can sit down with criminals and they can say criminal words and he won’t be able to understand...and they won’t know what is prohibited based on Islamic jurisdiction”

“You see the police was established by the colonial forces. So it is like a medicine, we have western medicine in the hospitals, but we also have to use our own traditional medicine for some things. So we also have to rely on our vigilante to some extent”

In further reflecting on the collaborative roles of NPF and vigilante, participants emphasised that as long as the police failed to fulfil its mandate for corrective justice *justly*, the vigilante should be given a mandate to take offenders directly to the courts. Not empowering them to do so, would ultimately undermine and frustrate their effectiveness and purpose

“All their efforts are limited if they don’t have legislative backing. Let them have a law that will specifically state that if they arrest or catch a criminal they don’t necessarily have to take him or her to the police. This law should be such that it gives them the power to directly take the criminal to the court to initiate the proceedings”

## 9. Concrete Visions/Requests for Change or Improvements *in Practice*

In line with their views on the ideal roles of the vigilante and NPF, group participants’ visions and requests for concrete change centred on the need for improvements in the effectiveness of both.

“Both should be improved”.

Such change, they argued, would require the following:

First, efforts to effect a reorientation in the police – an elimination of corruption through the following measures:

- a) Most importantly, the institution of mechanisms to punish and bring to justice all those in the police who engage in corrupt practices and act as a potent deterrent to others.

“[They should]... establish a sort of court where, if a policeman were caught taking bribes or committing crime, that policeman would be sentenced, and the outcome of it would be publicised. If it is jail, let the government make sure he serves that 2 or 3 years, so it will be exemplary. I think if it happened to one or two or three, others would be deterred”

- b) Changes to the current recruitment policies and processes to ensure only men of good character are recruited into the NPF. This would need to involve ‘certifications’ of character from trusted individuals/bodies from within the applicant’s community.

“The issue of recruitment has to be standardised in a sense that the form will be structured. Such that if you are employed as a policemen, it must be certified that you are a good man. Your district head or the ward head should attest this because they know you better than the government. So when they attest that you are a good man you can be recruited”

- c) The provision of adequate remuneration and equipment for the police officers

“They need to be maintained properly and equipped”

“The problems of maintenance and pay in the police need to be ...solved“

Second, measures to support the vigilante, in order to maintain and even enhance their effectiveness. Such measures would include:

- a) Provision of more equipment, protective gear and improved arms to enable them to better apprehend criminals

“They should be well equipped. The criminals now have more sophisticated weapons than the vigilantes. So if they are to perform very well they need better weapons”

“One needs to provide rain coats and boots and torch lights during the rainy season, and during the Harmattan they should provide more blankets and overalls”

b) Provision of better remuneration to the vigilante members, in order to ‘boost their morale’

“The N2000 they get from the government is too small. If the local authority can employ an attendant and pay him N7000, there is no reason why they should give only N2000 to the members. They should get at least the same amount as the messenger if not more”

Importantly, in discussing this measure, two divergent views emerged among participants on the extent to which vigilante’s remuneration should be improved and formalised.

Thus, some participants argued that vigilante should become formal, salaried civil servants. They noted that this would not undermine their effectiveness or their drive to work in the interests of the community.

“They should become fully fledged civil servants”

“Even if we institutionalise them, they will not get out of control. They will not fail us...because even now most of the members are not the type that will be corrupted”

Others, in contrast, perceived a danger in such institutionalisation. They argued that it may lead to a loss of communities’ control over, and ownership of the vigilante and, consequently, to corruption on their part. In other words, they did not wish for a public ‘institutionalisation’ of these groups, which may lead them to become interest groups in their own right.

“They may not protect the interests of the community as they are doing now, but the interests of their employer (i.e. the government)...They will end up not delivering the goods”

“They might get out of control if they were institutionalised...and they may eventually become corrupt”

Legislation at state level, to allow the vigilante to bypass the police and bring caught offenders directly to court to initiate a formal process of corrective justice. Given current NPF practice, this would sustain their motivation to continue the service, and help to achieve the ultimate goal of their actions – i.e. to bring the offender to justice and reduce the crime threat to the community.

“ A law should be promulgated in Jigawa State...a law that will specifically state that if they arrest or catch a criminal they don’t necessarily have to take him or her to the police. This law should be such that it gives them the power to directly take the criminal to the court to initiate the proceedings. The state assembly can do this; it can legislate to this effect. This would boost their morale”

- c) Recruitment of more personnel for the vigilante, coupled with a sound process of screening and scrutiny of recruits.

“[They need] to recruit more members of the vigilante group. Hadejia should have at least 150 men in the group”

“There should be collaboration between the local authority and the traditional rulers and elders in the community in screening them”

## 10. Perspectives and Wishes on Ways to Work Towards Change

### a) *Who and what should be involved?*

In reflecting on approaches to achieve the envisioned change in the NPF, participants strongly perceived a primary responsibility on the part of government to effect this change.

“It should be the government because it is the one who is in charge of law and order”

Referring to the successes of the ‘war against indiscipline’ policies of the Buhari/Idiagbon government, participants argued that if government genuinely wanted to – they could effect the necessary reorientation in the NPF easily.

“If you remember the time of the Buhari regime. If you as a policeman would come and take bribe you would be punished because they had their own decree and law and they have their own punishment, and there was law and order. If the government would change, everything would change”

“Yes...if government really wanted it, there is nothing impossible. The Buhari regime it came out with the war against indiscipline. Wherever you were as a Nigerian you had to discipline yourself... You should be an example to people. And the crime rate clearly became less. So if government wanted to, the leaders should set an example. So that we at the grassroots level copy it. So if government were serious about this indiscipline, it could change”

In principle, participants saw the institution of a consultation forum – in which ordinary citizens such as themselves can engage in a joint dialogue with the police and relevant policy makers – as an important way to influence and foster change in the NPF. In practice, however, and speaking from previous experience, they expressed a deep scepticism about the willingness of police and policy makers to truly hear and respond to communities’ needs.

“It would be very useful but they will not work with it! The problem is acceptance. There was a time when the local government organised a similar workshop or forum between policemen and all the NGOs on the issue of safety and security it was last year. In the presence of the chairman of the local government and the DPO because the issue of armed robbery in the town here had become worse. So all the NGOs voiced all their grievances to the police, and the policemen responded. They stated the issue of welfare and logistics of the reason why they couldn’t solve the crime problem...rather than addressing the problem of corruption”

“As you have called us here, and assuming you are the IG. You call us and we tell you everything clearly. You record it but then you go and dump it. So you don’t take seriously what we say. You don’t care. You come you waste your time, you waste our time for nothing”

As regards the envisioned measures to improve the vigilante groups, participants emphasised that such initiatives should not come from government, but rather from NGO. In their view, any government involvement would inevitably result in appropriation of funds and thus, ultimately, in disappointment. Thus, they expressed a clear wish for the involvement of NGOs, like A2J, truly interested in assisting their communities.

“These organisations like the Access to Justice. People need them because they are doing it with determination. They want to assist people. And they will do it well. But not through government. They are corrupt. As we are discussing our views with you, so we would want assistance to be directly from the NGO, with the presence of the government. So we hope that the Access to Justice should come and assist”

*b) What are the needed first steps?*

In reflecting on first steps to work towards the envisioned change, participants, as mentioned initially, expressed a strong wish for further consultations between their communities and the Access to Justice Programme to discuss subsequent steps to be taken. They noted that such further consultation should involve them, as well as other relevant community members, including,

- (i) Vigilante commandants
- (ii) Vigilante themselves
- (iii) Ward heads
- (iv) Community elders

The female group participants expressed a strong wish for future consultations to be held separately for men and women, as they would feel freer to discuss issues amongst their own gender.

“At whatever level we performed in any discussion together with men, it would be better if we were treated separatel

Annex A: Distribution of Personnel Responsibilities, Collaboration and Issues of  
Capacity Building

*A: Distribution of personnel responsibilities, collaboration and issues of capacity building*

Collaboration

Throughout, the research attempted to ensure a close collaboration between lead researcher and local research assistants in each state. In a sense, the research assistants became ‘co-researchers’, fully involved in the purpose and approach of the research and the questions to be explored. This did not only ensure a locally appropriate data collection and insightful data analysis. It also contributed to the building of research capacity on the part of the research assistants

Overall Distribution of Responsibilities

The lead researcher was responsible for the overall design, conduct, analysis and reporting of the focus group research. The assistant in each state played a key role in informing and enabling the successful preparation, data collection and in-field data analysis stages, by providing information on and insights into the local communities and assisting in the translation and interpretation of discussions.

Consultative support from State Justice Advisers (SJA) was required in the preparation phase of the research especially in terms of the recruitment of the local research assistants and selection of LGA. Involvement of the SJA will be central in the stage of data reporting and dissemination to the primary audience of group participants and their communities.

Specific Roles and Responsibilities

The specific distribution of responsibilities was as follows:

*Lead researcher (Isabella Aboderin):*

- Development of a methodology for group participant selection, data collection, analysis and reporting
- Briefing of SJA on criteria for recruitment of local research assistants and selection of LGA
- Training of local research assistants on the purposes, approach and methods of the research, and their responsibilities
- Management of the selection, recruitment and organisation of focus group discussions
- Conduct, transcription and analysis of all focus group discussions, where necessary in close consultation with the local assistants
- Development of ‘reports’ of the research findings for both primary and secondary audiences

*Local Research Assistants:*

- To act as local key informants in producing community profiles and issues regarding informal policing
- To inform, prepare and implement the selection and recruitment of group participants
- To make the logistical arrangements for, and organise the scheduling of the focus group discussion
- Where necessary, to assist in moderation of focus groups in the local language and/or in translation during discussions
- Where necessary, to take part, in close consultation with the lead researcher, in the transcription of recorded group discussions

*Annex B: LGA Profiles*

*BENUE: Profiles of LGA and Focus Communities*

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1. Ushongo LGA (rural)

**History:**

Ushongo LGA was created in 1991 during the time of the then Military Head of State, General Ibrahim Babangida. The Local Government was carved out of Kwande LGA both of which are from zone “A” part of Benue State. It is one of the 23 local governments of the State.

**Geography and Economy:**

The LGA is located South-East of Makurdi, the Benue State Capital. The headquarters of the LGA, Lessel is situated about 110 km away from the State capital. Sharing boundaries with the local government are Gboko to the North, Kwande to the South, Buruku to the east and Vandeikya to the West.

The primary occupation of the population in the local government is farming. The most commonly cultivated crops are yam, rice, cassava, groundnuts and soyabeans. There is little government presence as it is the case with most rural LGA. Even farming, the primary occupation of the LGA has in recent times suffered considerable set back. This is attributable to government’s inability to make fertilizer available and affordable to the real or actual farmers. The trickle down effect of this is poor harvest, poor or diminishing business activities and hence the resultant high rate of unemployment.

**Population Composition:**

Apart from a few non-indigenes, mainly Igbos, who have settled for business, the LGA is wholly settled by the Tiv tribe. The communities that make up the local government are: Mbaviende; Mbakuhwa; Mbayem and Mbaagwa. Others are Mbagwaza, Utange and Ikyov. These communities are homogeneous in culture. The predominant religion commonly practiced in these communities is Christianity. There are still some sporadic cases of traditional religious worshipers as well. Tiv is the local language spoken.

**Focus Community:**

The community focused on for this research was Lessel, the headquarters of Ushongo LGA. Most participants came from Mbaagwa a community within Lessel. Four participants were each from different communities.

**Police station with jurisdiction:** Name: Lessel Police Station.

Distance from community: Varies depending on community, ranges from 25-50 km.

**Main Community Based Organisations:**

The main community based groups or organisations in Lessel are the following:

1. National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Lessel branch.
2. Motor Cycle Transport Union
3. Mbaagwa Youths Development Association.

4. Mbaagwa Sisters Unit (Community Development Union).
5. Ushongo Cultural Troupe.
6. Market Women Traders Association.
7. Car Charter Association
8. Catholic Youth Organisation (CYO )
9. “Markeranta u Iyange Memen” (Mim – N.K.S.T. Religious group).

## 2. Gboko LGA (urban)

### History:

Gboko LGA is one of the oldest in the state. Before 1976 it was known as Gboko Native Authority, when Benue State was still part of Plateau State. About 5 different local government areas have been carved out of Gboko LGA.

### Geography and Economy:

The local government is bounded by five other local governments. These are Buruku; Ushongo; Tarka; Konshisha and Gwer East LGA. Gboko town, the LGA headquarter used to be the largest commercial city in the state, with inhabitants engaged in the various commercial enterprises. Many companies existed within the LGA, providing considerable employment opportunities to the state at large and the immediate communities in particular, and creating a high rate of business activities in the LGA. These companies included, most importantly, Benue Cement Company (BCC) PLC, Benro Packaging Company Ltd, Yuteco Foods, Nig. Ltd.

In recent years, BCC and its subsidiary Benro have ceased operations, resulting in a high rate of unemployment both from the skilled and unskilled labour. Neighbouring communities in the LGA are mostly farmers. Yam, rice and cassava are the main farm crops cultivated.

### Population Composition:

The LGA is made up of five communities, these are: Ipiav; Mbayion Yandev; Mbatyerev and Mbatyav. All these communities speak Tiv. However, other different ethnic tribes are also settled in the LGA. They are predominately the Igbos, Hausas and few others.

### Target Community:

Participants mainly involved members from the Ipiav and Mbayion communities in Gboko Town.

Police station with jurisdiction:      Name: Gboko Central, in community itself

### Main Community Based Organisations:

The main community groups or organisations in Gboko are the following:

1. Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies

2. Motor Cycle Hire Association
3. Ethnic/Tribal Association (e.g. Igbo, Hausa)
4. Students' Union
5. Religious groups – N.K.S.T
6. Market Traders Association'
7. National Automobile Technician Association (NATA)
8. National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW)

*EKITI: Profiles of LGA and Focus Communities*

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1. Ileje-Meje LGA (rural)

History:

Ileje Meje LGA is one of the 16 LGA of Ekiti State. It was created in December 1996 by executive fiat of the then Head of State, late General Sani Abacha. The headquarter is located at Iye-Ekiti.

Geography and Economy:

The LGA comprises seven small rural based towns and villages. The main occupation of the population is farming, especially of staple and food crops such as Yam, Cassava, Rice, Coco-Yam, and Maize

Population Composition:

The population in the towns and villages is culturally and linguistically homogeneous. The dominant religion is Christianity and Yoruba is the local language spoken.

Focus Community:

The community focused on for the research was *Iye-Ekiti*, the LGA headquarter.

Police station with jurisdiction:      Name: Iye-Ekiti, located within community

Main Community Based Organisations:

The main community based groups or organisations in Iye-Ekiti are the following:

1. Traditional Age Grade Groups
  - a) Oba-in-council
  - b) Egbe
  - c) Omodewa
  - d) Emese
  
2. Occupational Associations
  - a) Farmers' Association
  - b) Market Women
  - c) NURTW/Okada
  - d) NATA (National Automobile Technicians Association)
  
3. Women's Groups
  - a) Obirin Ile
  - b) Omodidan
  - c) Obirin Ile (women married into a family)

4. Community Development Associations
  - a) Iye Community Development Association
  - b) Co-operative Association
  - c) Students' Union
  - d) Youth Association
  - e) Non-Indigenes Association (e.g. Igbo)

## 2. Oye LGA (urban)

### History:

The LGA is one of the 16 LGA of Ekiti State. It was created on 1 October 1989 from the then Ekiti North LGA of the old Ondo State of Nigeria

### Geography and Economy:

The LGA is bounded in the North by Ikole LGA, in the West by Ileje-Meje LGA, in the South by Ido/Osi LGA and in the East by Irepodun/Ifelodun LGA. The LGA comprises about 17 towns and villages. . The LGA has its headquarter at Oye-Ekiti. The location of the town, which serves as an transit point to the state capital (Ado-Ekiti) makes it an urban area.

### Population Composition:

The population in the towns and villages is culturally and linguistically homogeneous. The dominant religion is Christianity and Yoruba is the local language spoken.

### Target Community:

The community focused on for the research was *Oye-Ekiti*, the LGA headquarter . The occupation of most inhabitants is farming. However, there are numerous civil servants based in Oye, because of its closeness to Ado-Ekiti. In addition, migrants and low income workers are settled in Oye.

Police station with jurisdiction:            Name: Oye, located within community

### Main Community Based Organisations:

The main community groups or organisations in Oye are the following:

1. Trade Union Associations
  - a) NURTW
  - b) NATA
  - c) Lumbering Association
2. Market Women Association

3. Religious Groups
  - a) CAN
  - b) Bible Society of Nigeria
  - c) Muslim Organisation
  - d) Traditional Religious Groups
4. Youth Organisation
5. Multi-purpose Co-operative Society
6. Non-Indigenes Associations (e.g. Igbo, Ibara)
7. Town Union Associations
8. Women's Groups
9. Students' Union

*ENUGU: Profiles of LGA and Focus Communities*

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1. Nkanu East LGA (rural)

History:

The LGA is one of the 17 LGA of Enugu State. It was created out of the old Nkanu LGA on 1 October 1996 by executive fiat of the then Head of State, late General Sani Abacha.

Geography and Economy:

The LGA is located about 40km south of Enugu, and is bounded by Enugu East, Nkanu West, and Aninri LGA in Enugu state, and Oha-Ozalla LGA in Ebonyi state. The LGA is rural in nature, the majority of the population being farmers. Rice, Yam, and Cassava are the main staple and farm crops.

Population Composition:

Many communities are found in the LGA including Ugbawka, Nara, Amagunze, Mburubu, Nkerefi, among others. These communities are broadly homogeneous in nature, tracing descents from common ancestry. They are also culturally and linguistically homogeneous. The main religion is Christianity and Igbo is the local language.

Focus Community:

The community focused on for the research was *Ugbawka*, which comprises six autonomous village communities.

Police station with jurisdiction:      Name: Ubawka, Nkanu East, Abagunze  
Distance from community: 15-20 km

Main Community Based Organisations:

i) The main community based groups or organisations in Ugbawka are the following:

1. Community Development Unions
2. Otu Umunna (Kindred Association, Men's Wing)
3. Otu Umuada (Women's Organisation)
4. Otu Uyomuji (Kindred Association, Women's Wing)
5. Multi-purpose Cooperative Society
6. Commodity Union
7. Trade's Union
8. Age Grade Masquerade Group
9. Farmer's Association
10. Okada Motorcyclist Union
11. Youth Organisation
12. Christian Women's Organisation

## 2. Enugu East LGA (urban)

### History:

The LGA is one of the 17 LGA of Enugu State. It was created out of the old Enugu North LGA on 1 October 1996 by executive fiat of the then Head of State, late General Sani Abacha.

### Geography and Economy:

The LGA is one of the metropolitan LGA of Enugu State and is bounded by Enugu North , Isi-Uzo, and Nkanu LGA, all in Enugu State.

Major layouts and settlements include Trans-Ekulu layout, Community Layout, Phase 6 Housing Estate, Abakpa Nike Housing Estate, Abakpa-Nike, Emene, and other Nike Community settlements.

### Target Community:

The community focused on for the research was *Abakpa-Nike*, inhabited mainly by low income groups. Main economic activity of inhabitants: trading, schooling, civil service. There is a large proportion of unemployed men, women and youth. Most live in the large number of 'rooming houses' (face-me-I-face-you-type) in the area, which offer relatively cheap accommodation. Abakpa-Nike is the earliest layout settled on by migrants from other, mainly rural, areas of the state, and thus comprises a mixture of communities. The main religion is Christianity.

Police station with jurisdiction:      Name: Abakpa-Nike  
Distance from community: 2-3 km

### Main Community Based Organisations:

The main community groups or organisations in Abakpa Nike are the following:

1. Trade Union Associations
2. Town Union Associations
3. Various Church Organisations (incl. youth groups)
4. Organisations in Charge of Road Maintenance



## 2. Hadejia LGA (urban)

### History:

The LGA is one of the metropolitan LGA, and the most developed among the 27 LGA in Jigawa State. The present Hadejia LGA was created in August 1991 by the then Head of State Gen. Ibrahim Babangida

### Geography and Economy:

The LGA is about 140km East of Dutse, the State capital. It is bounded by Malam Madori, Kaugama, Auyo, Guri, Kirikasamma and Nguru LGA in Yobe State. The communities in this LGA are homogeneous in nature culturally, religiously and linguistically. Islam is the dominant religion, and Hausa the local language spoken.

The main economic activity of the inhabitants include civil service, trading and farming. Farming activity is carried out throughout the year, with rice, wheat, maize, millet and beans the major farm crops.

### Target Community:

The community focused on for the research was *Hadejia Town*, the LGA headquarter .

Police station with jurisdiction:       Name: Hadejia, located within community  
(The Police Area Command HQ is also located in Hadejia)

### Main Community Based Organisations:

The main community groups or organisations in Hadejia are the following:

1. NURTW (National Union of Road transport Workers)
2. Miyatti Allah (Fulani)
3. Motorcycle Association of Nigeria
4. Traders' Association
5. Hadejia Emirate Consultative Forum
6. Hadejia Development Circle
7. Youth Progressive Association
8. Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA)
9. Women's Cooperatives
10. Hisbah
11. Federation of Muslim Women's Association

## ANNEX C: LISTS OF PARTICIPANTS

BENUE STATE: LIST OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Ushongo LGA (rural)

1. Emmanuel Biam, National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW)
2. Joseph Amoior, Motor Cycle Transport Union
3. Emmanuel Gbuugba, Mbaagwa Youths Development Association.
4. Nwar labe, Mbaagwa Sisters Unit
5. Linus Iorpuu Uji, Ushongo Cultural Troupe.
6. Bridget Iambo, Local Women Market Traders' Association.
7. Terwase Gbuuga, N.K.S.T. (Religious Association).
8. Terna Orpin, Catholic Youth Organisation (CYO)
9. Vincent Nande, Car Charter Association.
10. Larzarus Apande, Former vigilante member.
11. Mark Ayavga, Independent
12. Henry Gbuuga, Independent

Gboko LGA (urban)

1. Mike Sase, Motor Cycle Hire Association
2. Alexander Saaondo Iorlaha, Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies
3. Hassan Hassan, Hausa Community (Tribal Association)
4. Gaav Zua Mue, National Union of Benue State Students (NUBESS)
5. Masekaven Kornya, N.K.S.T (Religious Group)
6. Richard Ayoosu, National Automobile Technician Association (NATA)
7. Mr. Aende, Market Traders Association
8. Emmanuel Amase, National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW)

EKITI STATE: LIST OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Ileje-Meje LGA (rural)

1. Prince Timoteu Ajayi, National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW)
2. Archdeacon F. Olatunde, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)
3. Chief S. Awoyemi, Awo (Traditional Religious Group)
4. Mrs. Banji Sule, Muslim Association
5. Chief Durotoluwa, Oba in Council
6. Mr. Ayo Taiwo, Egbe (Age Grade Group)
7. Chief Mrs. A.O. Fasanmi, Obirin
8. Ms. Eunice Oyedele, Omodidan (Age Grade Group)
9. Mr. Ibitoye Elijah, Farmers' Association
10. Mrs. F. Kehinde, Cooperative Society

Oye LGA (urban)

1. Mrs. Comfort Longe, Cooperative Society
2. Chief Mrs. B. Adegboyega, Market Women's Association
3. Mr. I.K. Ezema, Igbo Community
4. Mr. Olu Ariselogun, Traditional Religious Group
5. Chief Mrs. Daodu, J.P., Ilupeju Women's Group
6. Mr. Stephen Oribamise, Lumbering Association

ENUGU STATE: LIST OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Nkanu East LGA (rural)

1. Mr. Michael Nwodo, Amaodudo Village, Community Development Union, (Convenor)
2. Ms. Tessy Nwodoc, Amaodudo Youth Organisation
3. Mr. Nwodo Chibuzo, Okada Motorcyclist Union
4. Mr. Nwankwo Ozoemena, Ozo Farmer's Association
5. Mr. Sunday Edeh, Masquerade Group
6. Mr. Sunday Eze, Nkerefi Progressive Union (Migrant Farmer's Union)
7. Ms. Juliana Amos, Christian Women's Organisation
8. Mr. Sunday Onyeabor, Wine Tapper's Union
9. Ms. Elisabeth Onyeabo, Kaoramalu Women's Union
10. Ms. Theresa Onyeabor, Family Union, Women's Wing
11. Ms. Theresa Nwodoede, Chekwube Chukwu (Umuada Union)

Enugu East LGA (urban)

1. Mr. Chikezie Ugwu, Towns Union (Convenor)
2. Mr. Linus Chinde, Okada Motorcyclists Union
3. Mrs. Obi Ozonyia, Catholic Women's Organisation
4. Mrs. Nkechi Ozioko, Teacher's Union
5. Mrs. Georginia Ani, Market Women's Association
6. Mrs. Comfort Eyo, Market Women's Association
7. Mr. Pius Ani, Towns Union
8. Mr. Kenneth Ene, Youth, unemployed graduate
9. Mr. Adiele Osuagwu, Youth, unemployed graduate
10. Mr. Boniface Ewo, Methodist Church Association

JIGAWA STATE: LIST OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Babura LGA (rural)

11. Alhaji Abdu Mammani, National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW)
12. Haja Ladi Zubairu, Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA)

13. Haja Dare, Food Sellers
14. Ms. Barira A. Halliru, Independent
15. Mallam Aminu Abdullahi, Hisbah
16. Mr. Mohammed Ibrahim, Committee of Friends
17. Mr. Ibrahim Hashim, Voice of Friends
18. Mr. Zuhairu Dabo, KANYODEA
19. Mr. Usman Mukhtar, Self Help
20. Mr. Auwalu Sale, Independent

Hadejia LGA (urban)

1. Alhaji Tijjani Dodo, Motorcycle Association
2. Alhaji Aminu Ahmed, Traders' Association
3. Mr. Mohd Gali, Youth Progressive Association
4. Mr. Aloysius Anigbogu, Igbo Association
5. Mr. Yusif Mohd, Hadejia Development Circle
6. Mr. Mohd Haruna, Hisbah
7. Ms. Binta Mohd, Federation of Muslim Women's Association (FOMWAN)
8. Ms. Aishatu Dumba, Independent
9. Haja Sabuwa Shehu, Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA)
10. Mr. Ahmed Yusif, Hisbah

Annex D: Consent Form for Participation in the Research

*D: Consent form for participation in the research*

We are inviting you to participate in a focus group research study on:

“Safety, Security and Informal Policing in Access to Justice Focal States”

The main researcher on this study is: Dr. Isabella Aboderin

Her address and contact details are: 21, Kainji Street

Maitama, Abuja

Tel: 09-4138463 (landline) or 0803-4536537

(mobile)

Email: [aboderini@hotmail.com](mailto:aboderini@hotmail.com)

The organisation responsible for the study is: Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN)

Centre for Law Enforcement Education

Its address and contact details are:

1, Afolabi Aina Street

Off Allen Avenue, Ikeja

P.O. Box 15456, Ikeja

Lagos

Tel: 01-4933195; Fax:01-4935339

Email: [cleen@cleen.org](mailto:cleen@cleen.org)

The contact person is:

Innocent Chukwuma

What is the Purpose of the Research?

We are carrying out this research in order to find out the experiences and views of poor people regarding safety and security in their communities the role played by ‘informal policing groups’, that is groups who work separately from the police in trying to ensure safety and security.

This research is part of a bigger programme called Access to Justice, which operates in four ‘focal’ states (Benue, Ekiti, Enugu and Jigawa) and is trying to help Nigeria find ways to improve safety and security and justice for ordinary Nigerians. In order to do this well, the programme needs to learn how ordinary poor Nigerians view and experience policing in their communities, and what they think is necessary to improve their safety and security.

To this end the focus group research will be carried out in all four ‘focal’ states. In each state, we will choose two Local Government Areas (LGA) and in each LGA we will hold one focus group discussion. In total we will thus hold eight focus groups.

The findings will be compiled into a report to the Access to Justice programme and we will recommend that the will come back to you to discuss them with you.

WHAT ARE FOCUS GROUPS AND WHAT DO THEY INVOLVE?

Focus group discussions are very often used in research to find out the views and attitudes of people. In each focus group, 8-10 people are brought together to discuss a range of topics and questions. The discussion usually lasts about 1.5 to 2 hours and is led by one or two researchers. They introduce the topics for discussion, make sure that the discussion stays focused and that all participants get to express their views. The discussions are usually tape-recorded and later transcribed onto paper, so that the researchers have an accurate record of what the participants expressed and can then write a report that truthfully reflects this.

WHAT WOULD IT INVOLVE FOR YOU?

As a focus group participant, we would expect you to be willing to express and discuss openly your views about the topics raised, so as to help us and the other participants to understand them. However, at no time will there be pressure on you to speak if you do not wish to do so, and any problems you may have will be responded to. The views you express will be held in total confidence at all times, and at no time will they be reported in such a way that they can be identified with you.

Your focus group will be held either in the capital of your state or in your LGA. Transport to the venue will be made available or the costs will be remunerated to you. You will be provided with small refreshments and, as a small appreciation for your willingness to give of your time and take part in the research, with a sum of N500.

SHOULD YOU PARTICIPATE?

Though we would very much hope that you will agree to participate in this study, there is no pressure on you and you are absolutely free to refuse. If you do agree, moreover, you will be free to withdraw at any time without any penalty or jeopardy.

If you have any further questions about the study before or after you decide on whether or not to participate, you may contact Dr. Isabella Aboderin or Innocent Chukwuma at CLEEN at any time.

Signed, Dr. Isabella Aboderin, principal researcher:

Signed, Innocent Chukwuma for CLEEN:

For, and on behalf of yourself:

I have read and understood the information provided above and, in light of this, agree to take part in the study as a focus group participant.

Signature:

Date:

Annex E: Issues of Language and Translation in the Research

*E: Issues of Language and Translation in the Research*

The issue of language is of critical importance in qualitative social research. In this investigation language issues presented a real challenge, given the multitude of local languages spoken in the A2J focal states (in addition to the ‘official’ language of English), and the lead researcher’s insufficient familiarity with either of these.

Careful considerations of how to respond to this challenge were required in the planning of focus groups and the selection of group participants.

In each LGA a fundamental decision was made on whether the group discussion could be held in English (the preferred option in terms of the lead researcher’s ability to moderate the focus group), or whether it needed to be conducted primarily in the local language.

This decision rested on the degree of ability and willingness of identified prospective participants to express their views in English, even if in broken or pigeon English. (Language considerations were not a criterion for participant selection).

Where participants were able and willing, discussions were held in English, though participants were able, where necessary, to elaborate on or pinpoint their views in their local language. In this case, the local research assistant acted as an interpreter, by either providing direct translation between participants and the lead researcher or subsequently assisting in the transcription (and translation into English) of the relevant parts of the discussion.

In cases where most participants were unable to discuss their views in English, groups were moderated by the local research assistant in the local language. Again, the local research assistant acted as interpreter by providing occasional translation between lead researcher and group to signal the stage of the discussion, or highlight particularly important issues or questions and by transcribing the group discussions (and translating them into English) jointly with the lead-researcher.

Where translation was necessary it undoubtedly took away some of the depth and spontaneity of communication between the lead researcher and group participants. However, an attempt was made to minimize this disadvantage, as well as any impact on the lead researcher’s understanding of participants’ views through the close collaboration between her and the research assistants in transcription and translation.

In contrast to the traditional positivist approach to the use of interpreters in research, which aims to minimise their role thus allowing the researcher to work *through* rather than *with* the interpreter (Edwards, 1993, 1998), this research engaged the interpreter (i.e. the research assistants) as co-investigators. This involved a) fully involving them in the questions to be explored and b) encouraging them to translate fluently in whatever form of speech comes most easily to them and where necessary to explain or clarify their translations in discussion with the lead researcher.

Annex F: Topic and Question Guides for Focus Groups

## F1. PROVISIONAL TOPIC GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

### A. Introduction to Group Discussion (20 minutes):

#### 1. Introduction of group facilitators

#### 2. Brief introduction of the subject, purpose and process of the research

We are carrying out this research in order to find out your experiences and views of safety and security in your communities. We are especially interested in hearing of your views and experiences of the work that local groups in your community do against crime, in addition to, or separate from the formal police service. ( We call such groups 'informal policing groups'). We would also like to hear your wishes and ideas on what needs to change to improve safety and security in your communities, and how you may want to get involved in working towards such change.

This research is part of a bigger project called Access to Justice, which is operating in four states (Benue, Ekiti, Enugu and Jigawa) and is trying to help Nigeria find ways to improve safety and security and justice for ordinary Nigerians like yourselves. For communities like yours, the project aims at present to support you in clarifying your ideas and wishes for improved safety and security, and in identifying ways in which you may wish to work towards such change.

#### 3. Procedure and 'Ground Rules' of Group Discussion

We envisage that our discussion today will last for about 1.5 to 2 hours. I will put to you a series of questions or issues, which we may then discuss. It is important that all of you express your views openly and the reasons why you hold these views. This will allow us to understand the different experiences or ideas that you all may hold, and the areas where you agree. It is also important that everyone should get the chance to voice their views. Thus, I urge all of you to be considerate when someone else is speaking and not to interrupt. During the discussion I will try to ensure that we keep focusing on the important questions and that also those of you who might feel shy, speak out.

We will conduct our discussion in.....(clarification of language to be used and possible required translation procedure)

With your permission we will tape record our discussion and later on transcribe it on to paper, so we have a word for word record of your views. (ask for objection) We will then read it very closely, and try to draw out a picture of the main points and ideas, wishes and plans you have raised, areas where your views differ and areas where you agree.

We will compile a report of your views and experiences, and those of the other groups, for the access to justice programme. This will allow the programme to understand your ideas and needs, and to understand what this means for their work with you, but also with the policing groups in your LGA.

We will also compile a short report for you. We will recommend that the Access to Justice programme will come back to you and discuss this with you, to confirm that it really represents your views, or where it may need to change, and to discuss what steps may be taken next.

Finally, I want to assure you that whatever you say will at all times be treated with absolute confidence. It will be reported in such a way that the views you express cannot be identified with you.

#### *4. Clarification of participants' queries*

At this point, do you have any questions either about our discussion today or the research in general, or another issue?

If at any time during the discussion you wish to stop, or have a problem or questions about the discussion, please let me know.

#### *5. Participants' Introductions*

What will help us discuss with each other, is for all of us to introduce ourselves. So I will now ask each of you to introduce yourself, your name, where you live, what you do and what group, if any, you represent, and what you expect from this discussion. Let's keep this brief, so we can have all the more time to discuss the important issues we are here to look at. I will start with myself...

#### **B. MAIN DISCUSSION TOPICS (60-80 MINUTES)**

##### *1. Group's definitions of issues/concepts to be discussed*

What we need to do first of all, before we discuss your experiences or views on safety, security, justice or policing in your communities, is for us to clarify what these terms mean to you.

- Safety and Security in your Community
- Justice

##### *2. Current Experiences of Safety and Security*

2a: I would now like to spend some time for you to talk about what your experiences or main problems are with safety and security in your communities?

2b: We would be interested to know whether your safety and security problems affect your ability to make a living, and if so how? What are your experiences of this? How important are issues of safety and security to you compared to other everyday problems you may have?

##### *3. Current Experiences of (Informal) Policing*

3a: Now I would like to spend some time talking about the groups in your communities that are working against crime. I would first like to start with groups that are separate from the police, and I would like to you to describe what kinds of groups there are, what they do, and how they work, and what do you call them?

3b: I would now like us to discuss how you view these groups? What do you think about the way in which they carry out their work? Are you happy with it? Do you feel they are working for your interests? What do you think about these groups compared to the work the formal police do in your communities? What was the reason they were formed in the first place?

##### *4. Needs and Visions for Change*

4a: Now that we have discussed the situation as it is at present, I would like you to talk about whether you think the safety and security in your communities needs to be improved, and if so what are the most important things that need to improve ?

4b: I would now like you to talk about your views on how policing should change in your communities to improve safety and security. *Who* needs to change and *what* needs to change?

*5. Expectations and Ideas of Working Towards Change*

5a: You have described things that you feel need to change or improve in the security and policing in your communities. I would like you to talk about whether you feel you have a right to expect or demand change? Who you think should be responsible for effecting such change?

5b: Finally, I would like you to talk about your ideas or thoughts on whether you yourself could get involved in take steps to work towards such change? And if so, how?

C. Conclusion of the Discussions (20 minutes):

Thank you to respondents for participation, invitation of and response to queries or comments

We have reached our time limit and need to stop our discussion here. I thank you all for sharing your views so openly, and taking the time to participate in this group. In the last few minutes it is your turn to make comments or ask questions about this discussion or anything else and I will try my best to respond

## F2. REFINED QUESTION GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

1. WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND BY SAFETY AND SECURITY, AND HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO YOUR LIFE?

*Probe: If not mentioned spontaneously by respondents, probe on:*

- a) *Their understanding of safety and security in relation to crime*
- b) *How important the issues of safety and security are to their livelihoods and economic well-being*

2. Now that you have defined what safety and security mean to you , please describe in what ways your community works to ensure such safety and security, apart from the formal police?

*Probe: If not mentioned spontaneously by respondents, probe on:*

- a) *Any informal policing groups that may be operating*
- b) *Any other processes, e.g. 'public naming and shaming of wrongdoers' that may operate*

3. Which, among these groups or processes are the most important to ensuring your safety and security, and why?

Ask remaining questions for each of the two most important informal policing groups/processes identified by the participants

4. When, how and why did this group/process emerge?

*Probe: If not mentioned spontaneously by respondents, probe on:*

- a) *Who took the initiative to form the groups/processes*
- b) *If the reason was some kind of police 'failure' or fault ask respondents to reflect on the underlying reasons for this failure*

5. Now that you have formed these groups/processes, please describe how they operate. How are they organised and how do they work? What do they do to ensure safety and security in your community?

*Probe: If not mentioned spontaneously by respondents, probe on:*

- a) *How members of the group are recruited, what remuneration, logistical support they receive, the structure and organisation of the group*
- b) *What, if anything they do to prevent crime*
- c) *Are cases are brought to them for settlement or investigation and, if so, what kinds of cases*
- d) *What they do once they have identified or caught a criminal? Do they administer some kind of justice themselves or not? If so, in what kinds of cases,*

- and why?*
- e) *Whether they work with the formal police and, if so, how?*
  - f) *For informal policing processes (e.g. public naming and shaming) ask what form they take and what effect they have*

**6.** In your view how effective have these groups/processes been in ensuring safety and security in your community?

*Probe: If not mentioned spontaneously by respondents, probe on:*

- a) *Why they feel the groups/processes have been effective/not effective and in what areas?*
- b) *How does their effectiveness to date compare with that of the police?*

**7.** What are the reasons why they have been effective/not effective?

**8.** Do you have confidence in these groups/processes, that they will not fail you?

*Probe: If not mentioned spontaneously by respondents, probe on:*

- a) *Why they have confidence/no confidence in them?*

**9.** Is there anything that you think could be better in the way these groups/processes work to ensure safety and security? And how could this be achieved?

*Probe: If not mentioned spontaneously by respondents, probe on:*

- a) *Any areas they may have mentioned earlier where the informal policing groups/processes are not so effective*

**10.** What are the most important things that would need to be done to improve safety and security in your communities and why do you hold this view?

*Probe: If not mentioned spontaneously by respondents, probe on:*

- a) *What they think is more important: to improve the working of the formal police or improve/support their informal policing groups/processes*
- b) *The reasons for their views on this*

**11.** Assuming the formal police could be improved in such a way that they could be effective in combating crime. In such a case, would you then want the police to be fully responsible for safeguarding your communities? And why do you hold this view?

*Probe: If not mentioned spontaneously by respondents, probe on:*

- a) *What degree of responsibility, if any, they would want their informal policing groups/processes to carry*
- b) *The reasons for their preferences*

**12.** You have mentioned the most important changes that are necessary to improve safety and security in your community. How do you think these changes could be achieved?

*Probe: If not mentioned spontaneously by respondents, probe on:*

- a) *Whether they think it should be government or NGO initiatives, and in what areas*
- b) *Whether their communities should be involved in working towards change and if so how? (probe on whether they think joint discussions between them, the police and policymakers would be useful and desirable, and if so why?)*

**13.** Now that we have come to the end of the discussion, we would like to know your honest view on this focus group so we can learn from it in future. To what extent have you appreciated it and why?

*Probe: If not mentioned spontaneously by respondents, probe on:*

- a) *Whether they would appreciate further discussions on improving their safety and security, and why?*
- b) *Assuming A2J came back to them to discuss these issues further, who else from their community would be important to include in the consultation?*