

The role of Uganda Police Force in the management of mob justice in Lira City: A case of Lira City West Division.

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ABSTRACT:

Background: The study examined the role of the Uganda Police Force in the management of mob justice in Lira City. The limited empirical study on the role of Police in the management of mob justice warranted this study which set out specific objectives to analyze the preventive role of police; to assess the police rescue effort; and to examine the crime investigation role of the police in the management of mob justice management in Lira City. Guided by the contagion theory and the emergent norm theory, The study provided empirical information that has added to the existing policies and mob justice management in Lira City West Division and Uganda at large.

Method: The study used a cross-sectional design and adopted a mixed research approach; and sampled 123 respondents using simple random and purposive sampling techniques which generated data from 102 respondents, yielding a response rate of 82.9% and data was analyzed using IBM SPSS version 23. The result revealed that the correlation between the preventive role and mob justice management ($r = .714, p < .05$) is positive, strong and statistically significant at 0.05 level; between police rescue effort and mob justice management ($r = .224; p\text{-value} < .05$) is positive, weak and significant and between crime investigation role and mob justice management ($r = .224; p\text{-value} < .05$) is positive, weak and significant.

Findings: The result of Linear regression analysis reveals that the preventive role, rescue role and crime Investigation have Beta coefficients of ($p < 0.05, \beta = 0.63$); ($p < 0.05, \beta = 0.29$); and ($p < 0.05, \beta = 0.11$), respectively and that only preventive role of police ($p < 0.05, \beta = 0.63$) significantly predicts the management of mob justice in Lira City (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.173$). The quantitative findings on the preventive role revealed that police undertake community policing through radio and outreach programmes to create awareness which is effective in reducing the prevalence of mob Justice; on the rescue role, there is usually delays in accessing mob justice scenes due to logistic limitations; and on investigation roles, the police investigation has not been effective in managing mob justice also due to limited capacity to apprehend the real suspected perpetrators of mob.

Conclusion: The study concludes that the preventive role of the police is more significant In the management of mob justice in the study area.

Recommendation: The study recommends that the Uganda Police Force should scale up their community liaison campaigns to cover all the cells in Lira City West Division and Lira City at large so as to ensure the complete elimination of mob justice in the area; provision of logistic support to the Uganda Police Force as an attempt to scale up their responses to emergencies such as the intended mob action; and that the police force should reward and scheme for persons who could reveal the true identity of perpetrators of mob in society as an attempt to scale –up crime investigation. Further study can be considered on an in-depth analysis of the factors causing high prevalence of mob justice in Lira City.

Keywords: Uganda Police Force, Management, Mob Justice,, Lira City West