

Foreword

It is now slightly over six years since seven African Non-governmental research organisations; the African Security Dialogue and Research; Africa Peace Forum; Human Rights Trust of Southern Africa; Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa; South African Institute for International Affairs; West Africa Network for Peace building, and Institute for Security Studies met in Pretoria, at the invitation of the Institute for Security Studies, and agreed to establish a network to review and monitor African leaders' performance in respect of broad human security issues, taken at the levels of OAU and AU summits. This marked the birth of the African Human Security Initiative a year later. The University for Peace Africa Programme – UPEACE, has since joined the original seven organisations.

Because of the success of the studies and particularly, the cooperation and assistance from the countries monitored, namely, Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda, the African NGO research organisations decided to embark on a second phase of the African Human Security Initiative Project and to use the opportunity created by the African Peer Review concept to compliment the formal NEPAD/APRM process by focussing on Criminal Justice System in five selected countries; Benin, Mali, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Zambia.

Criminal justice systems in Africa tend to work slowly and are encumbered with bureaucratic procedures that hinder the effective delivery of justice. Crime and the defective justice systems have deterred development and prohibited Africans from realising their full developmental potential. The links between crime, the criminal justice systems, democracy and development have remained largely unexplored in the region and it is because of this that AHSI decided to draw attention to the need for reforms in the criminal justice system that enhance human security.

The African Union and its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity, have adopted over the years, far-reaching decisions in the form of Conventions, Treaties, Agreements, Resolutions or Declarations, the implementation of which should have had equally far-reaching and significant impact on enhancing the quality of criminal justice systems. The decisions touch on good governance and the respect for peoples' and human rights; the eradication of discrimination against women; the protection of the rights of the African child; economic growth and poverty reduction amongst others.

The African Human Security Initiative is indebted to the many researchers in the above five countries who have dedicated their valuable time in producing the country reports which, apart from complimenting the work of the African Peer Review Mechanism, also provides governments with empirical evidence on the status of criminal justice and its impact on political processes in their countries.

In order to maintain the momentum arising from these studies and also remain focused on the need to remind African leaders to comply with their commitments taken at summit levels, African Human Security Initiative will encourage dialogue and public awareness of the broader implications of the studies, particularly of crime and criminal justice on democracy.



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