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### The Impact of Deployment of National Police Reservists on the Overall Security Incidents in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya

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#### Abstract

The use of police reservists has been recognized as a key strategy in enhancing security, especially in conflict-prone regions like Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. Their unique advantage lies in their proximity to the local community, quick response capabilities, and familiarity with both the terrain and the people they serve. These traits, combined with their role in community policing, have proven vital in addressing resource-based conflicts and cattle rustling. Despite challenges such as limited personnel and the presence of firearms, reservists have significantly contributed to reducing violence and fostering better relations between law enforcement and local communities. The data used in this paper was part of a study that examined the relationship between the deployment of National Police Reservists and security incidents in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. Through a cross-sectional survey, data was collected from community members through a questionnaire ( $n = 362$ ), interviews (the County Commander, Subcounty Commanders, Officer Commanding Police Stations and Administrative Chiefs;  $n = 7$ ) and FGDs ( $n = 7$  police reservists). The Friedman Test

was conducted to evaluate whether the deployment of NPRs led to reduction in the frequency of security incidents. Qualitative data, was analysed thematically. The study established that the deployment of National Police Reservists (NPRs) had a significant impact on crime reduction ( $\chi^2(4) = 11.800$ ,  $p = .019$ ). The community considered the police reservists as effective in maintaining peace and security, with residents reporting increased safety and expressing strong trust in their abilities. There was a high level of trust in the reservists' ability to protect the community. The potential challenges in the deployment of National Police Reservists include logistical constraints, inadequate communication infrastructure, limited training and resource shortages. The study recommends the continued deployment of NPRs while monitoring and evaluating their impact regularly. In addition, there is need to build on the strong community trust in NPRs by enhancing community engagement and communication. There is need to invest to increase resource allocation to the NPRs as well as address the logistical constraints faced by reservists.

**Keywords:** Police Reservists, Cattle Rustling, Cross - Border Security, Community Policing, Resource Based Conflicts, Security Collaboration, Government Engagement in Security, Pastoralist Community, and Security Dynamics

#### 1. Introduction

The use of police reservists has been recognized as a key strategy in enhancing security, especially in regions prone to conflict. Their unique advantage lies in their proximity to the local community, quick response capabilities, and familiarity with both the terrain and the people they serve. These traits are particularly beneficial in remote and insecure regions such as Elgeyo Marakwet County in Kenya.

Police reservists play a crucial role in community security across various regions, particularly in pastoralist areas where formal state security forces are often absent or stretched thin. Reservists are essential in protecting local populations against both internal and cross-border attacks due to their deep integration within the community (Leparie, *et al*, 2021)<sup>[6]</sup>. Their ability to quickly respond to security threats and navigate challenging landscapes makes them indispensable in regions where official police forces face logistical challenges. Furthermore, the work of police reservists aligns closely with community policing initiatives. Police reservists act as vital links between formal law enforcement and local populations, helping to foster trust and

cooperation (Kruis, *et al*, 2020) <sup>[5]</sup>. This relationship is critical in pastoralist communities where historical tensions between state forces and local residents often exist.

In Kenya, the deployment of police reservists has been particularly effective in addressing security issues in pastoralist regions, particularly cattle rustling (Mkutu & Wandera, 2013) <sup>[10]</sup>. Cattle rustling, driven by competition over limited resources such as water and grazing land, frequently results in loss of life and property. The involvement of reservists in mitigating these conflicts not only reduces human casualties but also alleviates the financial burden on the government by utilizing local volunteers. Kenya Police Reservists (KPRs) play a significant role in addressing the unique security challenges in pastoralist regions, such as cattle rustling and disputes over natural resources (Kruis, *et al*, 2020) <sup>[5]</sup>. Their intimate knowledge of local customs, geography, and security dynamics makes them uniquely positioned to handle such conflicts more effectively than external security forces.

Conflicts in Elgeyo Marakwet County and other parts of Northern Kenya are predominantly resource-based, with communities vying for access to pasture and water. Over time, these low-intensity conflicts, often centred on cattle rustling, have been exacerbated by the availability of automatic firearms. The proliferation of small arms, combined with long-standing cultural practices, has intensified the scale and impact of these conflicts (Lind, 2018) <sup>[7]</sup>. The conflicts have been transformed from traditional cattle raiding to violent confrontations that result in significant loss of life and displacement. The government's engagement of reservists in these regions aims to address both the immediate security threats and the broader social issues underlying these conflicts. By drawing on the support of local reservists, the government is able to enhance security in a cost-effective manner while promoting peace and stability in the region.

While reservists provide numerous benefits, their deployment also faces challenges. One major issue is the inadequate number of security personnel to cover vast, sparsely populated areas (Cole & Mia, 2021) <sup>[3]</sup>. Despite their familiarity with the local terrain, reservists are often outnumbered or outgunned by well-armed bandits and rival groups, limiting their ability to fully mitigate security threats. Additionally, the influx of firearms from neighbouring countries has further complicated efforts to reduce violence (Okumu & Kioko, 2021) <sup>[11]</sup>. Nevertheless, the deployment of National Police Reservists has helped to foster better relations between the community and law enforcement. By involving local actors in security efforts, the government has been able to tap into the social capital and local knowledge of these communities. The use of reservists has contributed to a reduction in security costs and improved collaboration between state forces and local populations, a key factor in the overall success of security initiatives (Kachope, 2021) <sup>[4]</sup>.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Elgeyo-Marakwet County, Kenya. The county is situated in North-Western part of Kenya and covers an area of 3030 km<sup>2</sup>. The region is characterised by a rugged topography with hills and valleys and its main economic activity in its rural areas is pastoralism. Elgeyo-Marakwet County was ideal since it has experienced numerous security challenges, including

resource-driven intra- and intercommunal conflicts, cattle raiding, banditry, and the spillover of conflicts from neighbouring counties. Additionally, its remoteness, poor infrastructure, and limited external investment further aggravate these issues. Within this complex security landscape, the National Police Reserves are considered the most dependable form of community security.

Marakwet East, part of Elgeyo-Marakwet County, was purposefully selected due to it hosting the largest number of National Police Reservists (NPRs) because it is prone to cattle rustling incidences. Two wards, Embobut/Embolot Ward and Endo Ward, were purposely sampled for inclusion due to the rampant incidents of cattle rustling.

The data for this paper was both primary and secondary in nature. Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires from adult community members (n = 385). A sampling frame was created for both Embobut/Embolot (12,539) and Endo (3,973) wards. Through proportionate sampling the sample for each ward was 291 and 94 respectively. Simple random sampling was used to select the 385 community members. Qualitative data was collected through key informant interviews (n = 7) and FGDs (n = 7). Secondary data on selected crime incidents was collected from Liter Police Post in Endo Ward and Embobut and Maron Police posts in Embobut ward. Key topics explored in the key informant interviews were perception of the community towards the effectiveness of national police reservists in improving security in Elgeyo Marakwet County, operational capabilities and resources allocated to national police reservists, and deployment challenges of national police reservists. The key topics for the police reservists were operational capabilities, challenges affecting their effectiveness, support and training, and personal experiences and community perceptions.

Data on crime incidents was analysed through the SPSS software version 25 to generate frequency distributions to examine and compare crime data across multiple time periods following the deployment of NPRs. The emerging trends and patterns in crime incidents were visualized using bar charts. To assess whether there were statistically significant differences in crime incidents across the different time periods after the deployment of NPRs, the Friedman Test, a non-parametric statistical test, was used. Qualitative data from the interviews and FGD was analysed through the thematic framework approach. The researcher read through the transcripts of interviews and FGDs multiple times to understand the content and context. The next step was to develop initial codes through the NVIVO software. The coded data was organized into broader themes by grouping related codes together. Each theme was defined by outlined its essence and contribution to the overall analysis. Names were assigned to each theme to convey its focus and significance. Finally, direct quotes from the data were used to illustrate each theme.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Data was collected for the following crimes: Armed conflict, stock theft, banditry and assault. The selected crimes – armed conflict, stock theft, banditry, and assault – are directly related to the security challenges that NPRs are deployed to address. Other types of crime, such as property crime or petty theft, may not have the same direct link to NPR effectiveness or may be less impacted by their deployment. The second approach was through Likert scale

data, which rated the opinions of study participants on various aspects of security in relation to the deployment of police reservists in Elgeyo Marakwet.

The deployment of National Police Reservists in Marakwet East aimed to enhance security and address various types of crime. To evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions over time, it was essential to assess whether there have been significant changes in the frequency of reported security incidents across different years. Table 1 presents the impact of the deployment of National Police Reservists (NPRs) on the overall security incidents in Marakwet East from 2019 to 2023. The table includes data on four types of security incidents: Armed conflict, stock theft, banditry, and assaults.

**Table 1:** Frequency of selected crime incidents in Elgeyo Marakwet County (2019 – 2023)

Type of crime	Year					Total
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Armed conflict	144	60	122	48	43	417
Stock theft	36	24	31	30	29	150
Banditry	30	36	39	24	17	146
Assaults	264	216	420	240	204	1344
Total	474	336	612	342	293	2057

The results from Table 1 show that in 2019, armed conflict incidents were notably high, with 144 recorded cases. Following the deployment of NPRs, there was a significant decrease in armed conflict, dropping to 60 incidents in 2020 (a 58.3% reduction). Although there was a slight increase to 122 cases in 2021, the numbers again fell in the subsequent years, reaching 48 in 2022 and further reducing to 43 in 2023. This represents an overall 70.1% decrease in armed conflict incidents from 2019 to 2023. The decrease from 144 incidents in 2019 to 43 incidents in 2023 suggests a significant improvement in mitigating violent clashes, which could be attributed to the NPR's role in crime control in the region.

Stock theft incidents showed a more stable trend over the years. In 2019, there were 36 reported cases, which decreased to 24 in 2020 (a 33.3% reduction). The numbers slightly fluctuated in the following years, with 31 cases in 2021, 30 in 2022, and 29 in 2023. While the overall reduction from 2019 to 2023 is not as dramatic as with armed conflict, there is still a 19.4% decrease in stock theft incidents over the five-year period. While NPR deployment may have had some impact in keeping these numbers lower, the persistence of stock theft suggests that it remains an ongoing challenge. NPR efforts may have helped contain the situation, but further strategies may be needed to reduce this type of crime significantly.

Banditry incidents displayed a somewhat fluctuating pattern. The number of incidents initially increased from 30 in 2019 to 36 in 2020 (a 20% increase) and 39 in 2021. However, the deployment of NPRs seems to have had a positive effect in the later years, as the incidents decreased to 24 in 2022 and further down to 17 in 2023. Overall, banditry incidents declined by 43.3% from 2019 to 2023. This sharp decrease in the last two years indicates that NPRs may have played a vital role in disrupting banditry activities, possibly through heightened security presence, intelligence gathering, or community policing efforts.

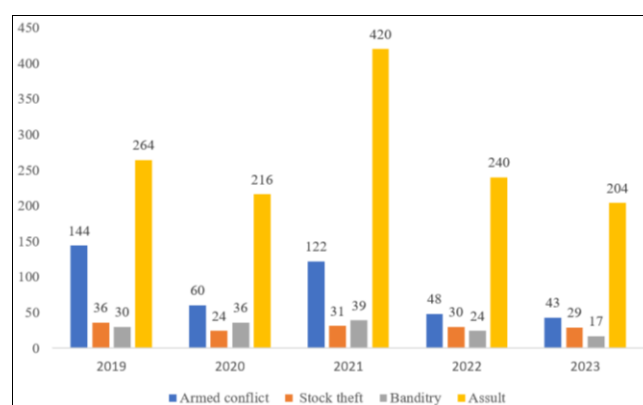
Assault cases saw the highest numbers among the different types of security incidents. In 2019, there were 264 reported cases. After the deployment of NPRs, there was a noticeable

reduction in 2020 to 216 cases (an 18.2% decrease). However, the number of assaults surged to 420 in 2021, more than doubling from the previous year. Despite this spike, the incidents decreased significantly in the following years, with 240 cases in 2022 and 204 in 2023. The overall reduction in assault cases from 2019 to 2023 is 22.7%. The rise in 2021 might suggest a breakdown in local security or other factors beyond NPR control, but the consistent decline thereafter may indicate NPRs successfully restoring order and reducing violence in the community.

The deployment of National Police Reservists in Marakwet East has had a generally positive impact on reducing security incidents over the five-year period like in other arid and semi-arid areas (Ariel, *et al*, 2024) [1]. (ASALs). NPRs were regarded as more effective than the police in many situations since they were familiar with the local context – be that political or geographical (Macharia, 2021) [8]. These findings also established that NPRs were effective since they are present in the area of deployment. This factor meant that they were conversant with the security situations around the environment and they respond immediately.

The data on these selected crime incidents reveals that the deployment of National Police Reservists (NPR) has likely had a positive impact on the overall security situation in Elgeyo Marakwet County. The most notable improvements are seen in the reduction of armed conflict, banditry, and assault incidents, particularly from 2021 onward, suggesting that NPR interventions are contributing to enhanced security. However, stock theft remains relatively stable, highlighting an area where additional focus may be required. The gradual reduction in banditry and armed conflict suggests that NPRs are effective in handling organized and violent crimes, while the fluctuations in assault point to some underlying community safety challenges that NPRs are addressing progressively.

A comparison of the crime incidents per year is presented in Fig 1.



Source: Field data, 2024

**Fig 1:** Comparison of crime incidents across years

The results in Fig 1 show that there is a significant decline in the total number of crimes from 2019 (474) to 2023 (293). This trend suggests that security interventions, including the deployment of National Police Reservists (NPRs), could have positively impacted crime reduction over time.

There was a notable 29.1% drop in total crimes from 2019 to 2020, with the most significant reductions seen in armed conflict (58.3% decrease) and stock theft (33.3% decrease). This sharp decline may reflect the immediate effectiveness

of NPR deployment, especially in reducing armed conflict (from 144 to 60 incidents) and assault (from 264 to 216).

In 2021, however, there was a spike in crime. The overall number of crimes increased sharply by 82.1%, with assault nearly doubling (94.4% increase). This may indicate a temporary loss of control over crime, possibly due to local tensions or diminished NPR presence or effectiveness. Another explanation for this spike could be operational limitations, as assaults are often tied to community tensions that require sustained intervention.

After the spike in 2021, crimes began decreasing steadily, with 44.1% fewer crimes in 2022 and another 14.3% decrease in 2023. This shows that overall crime rates were consistently declining post-2021, possibly due to NPR stabilization or improvements in law enforcement coordination. Armed conflict and banditry saw consistent reductions after 2021, suggesting that NPR interventions might have been particularly effective in these areas. By 2023, armed conflict dropped by 70% from its 2019 levels, while banditry decreased by 43.3%.

These preliminary observations indicate that there are varying trends in the frequency of different types of crimes over the years, suggesting that the interventions may have had differential impacts on different crime types. However, to determine if there are statistically significant differences in crime counts over the years, a Friedman Test was conducted. The test evaluated whether the differences in crime counts between the years are greater than would be expected by random chance alone. The results are presented in tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2:** Mean ranks of crime counts across years in Elgeyo Marakwet County

	Mean Rank
Count_2019	4.25
Count_2020	2.50
Count_2021	4.50
Count_2022	2.50
Count_2023	1.25

A Friedman Test was conducted to examine differences in crime counts across the years 2019 to 2023. The results from Table 2 show that the years 2021 and 2019 had the highest average crime counts, both with a mean rank of 4.50, indicating that these years had higher crime counts compared to the other years. The years 2020 and 2022 had similar, lower average crime counts with a mean rank of 2.50. The year 2023 had the lowest average crime counts with a mean rank of 1.25.

**Table 3:** Friedman Test Statistics

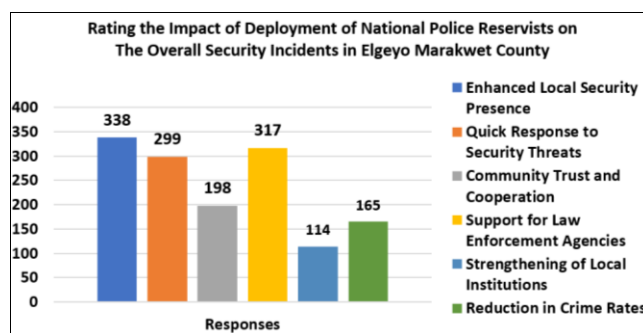
Test Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
N	4
Chi-Square	11.800
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.019

The null hypothesis (H0) in the Friedman Test was that there are no differences in ranks (i.e., the crime counts are the same across all years). The results of the Friedman Test (Table 3) indicated a significant effect of year on crime counts,  $\chi^2(4) = 11.800$ ,  $p = .019$ . This p-value is below the conventional alpha level of 0.05, and thus we reject the null hypothesis. Consequently, we conclude that there are

significant differences in the ranks of crime counts across the years. Specifically, this result suggests that the deployment of National Police Reservists in Elgeyo Marakwet County had a measurable impact on the distribution of crime counts over time.

The descriptive analysis, Friedman Test, and mean ranks collectively suggest that the deployment of National Police Reservists had a significant impact on crime trends in Elgeyo Marakwet County. While the descriptive analysis shows a general decline in crime rates, the Friedman Test confirms that these changes are statistically significant. The mean ranks provide additional detail, indicating that the highest crime counts were observed in 2019 and 2021, with a notable decrease in 2023. These findings support the conclusion that NPRs likely contributed to reducing crime, although specific years, such as 2021, showed deviations that warrant further investigation.

To further establish the impact of deployment of national police reservists on the overall security incidents in Elgeyo Marakwet County, the participants were asked to mention and comment on any impacts of deployment, and also rate them. The findings are presented in Fig 2.



Source: Field data, 2024

**Fig 2:** Rating the impact of deployment of national police reservists on the overall security incidents in Elgeyo Marakwet County

As shown in Fig 2, most of participants mentioned Enhanced Local Security Presence and are represented by  $n = 338$  (97.1%), followed by Support for Law Enforcement Agencies at  $n = 317$  (91.1%), at the third position was Quick Response to Security Threats represented by  $n = 299$  (85.9%). Fourth was Community Trust and Cooperation at  $n = 198$  (56.9%), fifth was, Reduction in Crime Rates represented by  $n = 165$  (47.4%), and lastly, Strengthening of Local Institutions represented by  $n = 114$  (32.8%). These findings are discussed in the subheadings below.

Enhanced local security presence signifies a proactive approach to bolstering safety and protection within communities, neighborhoods, or specific areas. By increasing the visibility and readiness of law enforcement personnel, security officers, or community watch groups, this strategy aims to deter criminal activity, respond swiftly to incidents, and foster a sense of reassurance among residents and businesses. Through strategic deployment, advanced technologies, and community engagement initiatives, enhanced local security presence not only addresses immediate security concerns but also promotes a collaborative effort towards maintaining a safe and secure environment for all stakeholders involved. One of the area local chiefs explained...



*"The deployment of National Police Reservists in Elgeyo Marakwet County has been a game-changer for our community. Before their arrival, we often felt vulnerable to crime, especially theft and cattle rustling. Now, with NPRs stationed strategically and working closely with local police, there's a tangible sense of security. Incidents have noticeably decreased, and we can go about our daily activities without constant worry. The NPRs have not only deterred criminals but have also become trusted members of our community, fostering better relations between residents and law enforcement. Their presence has truly made a difference, creating a safer and more stable environment where businesses can thrive and families can feel protected."*

The deployment of National Police Reservists (NPRs) in Elgeyo Marakwet County has significantly enhanced local security presence, leading to a notable reduction in security incidents across the region. The NPRs, drawn from the local community and trained to supplement regular police forces, have brought a heightened level of vigilance and responsiveness to various areas within the county. Their presence has not only deterred criminal activities such as theft, cattle rustling, and illicit brewing but has also provided a rapid response to emergencies, ensuring swift intervention in potential security threats.

This bolstered security framework has had a transformative impact on Elgeyo Marakwet County, fostering a safer environment that encourages economic activities and community development. With NPRs stationed strategically in vulnerable areas and collaborating closely with local law enforcement agencies, instances of crime have seen a noticeable decline. Other security staff and police officers' collaboration was beneficial and efficient in combating crime and disorder (Syamsu, 2023) <sup>[12]</sup>. Residents have reported feeling safer and more confident in going about their daily lives, contributing to a more stable and prosperous community atmosphere.

Moreover, the integration of NPRs into the local security architecture has strengthened community-police relations, facilitating better intelligence gathering and crime prevention efforts. Through community engagement programs and regular patrols, NPRs have not only become familiar faces within neighborhoods but also trusted guardians of public safety. This synergy between local residents and security forces underscores the effectiveness of enhanced local security presence through the deployment of NPRs in Elgeyo Marakwet County, serving as a model for proactive crime prevention and community empowerment in similar regions nationwide.

Support for law enforcement agencies encompasses a critical framework of assistance and resources aimed at enhancing their capabilities, effectiveness, and overall impact on community safety. From financial allocations and personnel increment to public policies and community partnerships, this multifaceted support ensures that law enforcement personnel are equipped to uphold the law, prevent crime, and respond swiftly to emergencies. By fostering a collaborative environment between agencies, governments, and the public, support for law enforcement not only strengthens operational capacity but also promotes trust and transparency within communities. This finding explored the diverse strategies and initiatives aimed at

bolstering law enforcement agencies, emphasizing the integral role they play in maintaining public order and safeguarding the well-being of society at large in the study area. As a general public responded elaborated...

*"The introduction of National Police Reservists in Elgeyo Marakwet County has been a tremendous relief for our community. Before their deployment, we faced constant insecurity from theft and cattle rustling, which significantly hindered our daily lives and economic activities. With the NPRs on the ground, there's been a noticeable improvement in security. They are not just patrolling; they have integrated themselves into our communities, earning our trust and ensuring that we can go about our lives without fear. Their collaboration with local police has been seamless, leading to quicker response times and a real reduction in crime. Thanks to their presence and the support they have received, we finally feel like we are building a safer future here."*

Support for law enforcement agencies, particularly through the deployment of National Police Reservists (NPRs), has yielded substantial benefits in reducing security incidents across Elgeyo Marakwet County. The introduction of NPRs has significantly bolstered the operational capacity of local police forces by augmenting manpower and extending security coverage to previously underserved areas. This strategic deployment has led to a marked decrease in criminal activities such as theft, cattle rustling, and illicit brewing. The presence of NPRs has not only deterred potential perpetrators but has also enabled quicker response times to emergencies, ensuring a more robust and proactive approach to maintaining public safety.

Furthermore, the support provided to law enforcement agencies through the NPR program has fostered closer collaboration between community members and police forces in Elgeyo Marakwet County. NPRs, drawn from and intimately familiar with local communities, have built trust and rapport, enhancing intelligence gathering and crime prevention efforts. The same is corroborated by Batara and Retno (2023) <sup>[2]</sup> in their findings that, showed that collaborative governance is a collaborative concept that is important for organizations in achieving organizational goals, these findings also show the dimensions, antecedents and consequences of collaborative governance. This community-oriented policing approach has empowered residents to actively participate in safeguarding their neighborhoods, thereby creating a more resilient and secure environment. By bridging the gap between law enforcement and the community, support initiatives like the NPR deployment not only mitigate security threats but also strengthen social cohesion and mutual accountability.

Moreover, the tangible results of enhanced law enforcement support through NPRs extend beyond immediate security gains. The reduction in security incidents has facilitated economic growth and social development in Elgeyo Marakwet County, as businesses thrive in a more secure environment and residents feel safer engaging in everyday activities. This comprehensive approach to supporting law enforcement agencies underscores the importance of proactive strategies and community engagement in achieving sustainable peace and prosperity across regions affected by security challenges.

Quick response to security threats is a critical component of effective law enforcement and emergency management strategies aimed at swiftly addressing and mitigating potential risks to public safety. Whether stemming from criminal activities, natural disasters, or other emergencies, the ability to react promptly can prevent escalation, minimize harm, and protect lives and property. This finding explored the frameworks that enable rapid responses by law enforcement agencies, and community stakeholders. By emphasizing preparedness, coordination, and proactive measures, quick response to security threats plays a pivotal role in ensuring resilience and fostering a secure environment for individuals and communities alike. members. As an administrative officer elaborated...

*"The presence of National Police Reservists in Elgeyo Marakwet County has been a game-changer for us. Before their deployment, security incidents like theft and cattle rustling were rampant, and the response from regular police could sometimes be slow. Now, with the NPRs on the ground, they've not only reduced crime but also respond quickly when something does happen. Their knowledge of the area and close collaboration with local police mean that issues are addressed before they escalate. It's made a real difference in residents' daily lives and has even boosted the local businesses, creating a more stable and prosperous community overall."*

The deployment of National Police Reservists (NPRs) in Elgeyo Marakwet County has significantly bolstered the quick response to security threats, leading to a substantial reduction in security incidents across the region. NPRs, strategically stationed throughout the county, have played a pivotal role in enhancing law enforcement's ability to swiftly address and mitigate various security challenges. Their presence has ensured a rapid response to criminal activities such as theft, cattle rustling, and other forms of illicit behavior, thereby minimizing the impact on local communities and businesses.

Moreover, the integration of NPRs into the local security framework has fostered a more proactive approach to handling emergencies and crises. By collaborating closely with regular police forces and leveraging their knowledge of local terrain and community dynamics, NPRs have enabled quicker identification and containment of security threats (Macharia, 2021) <sup>[8]</sup>. This enhanced coordination has not only improved response times but also instilled a sense of confidence and safety among residents, empowering them to report incidents promptly and participate actively in maintaining security.

Furthermore, the quick response capabilities facilitated by NPRs have had broader implications for social and economic development in Elgeyo Marakwet County. As security incidents decrease and response times improve, businesses have flourished amid a more stable environment, and residents have been able to engage in daily activities without the constant specter of insecurity. This comprehensive approach to quick response to security threats underscores the transformative impact of NPR deployment in bolstering resilience, fostering community trust, and ultimately contributing to the overall well-being of the region.

Community trust and cooperation are foundational elements essential for fostering a secure and cohesive society. These aspects denote the mutual confidence and collaboration between individuals, local institutions, and public authorities within a community. Trust within a community is built upon transparency, reliability, and a shared sense of responsibility for collective well-being. Cooperation involves active participation, communication, and joint efforts to address challenges and achieve common goals. Together, community trust and cooperation form the bedrock of effective governance, social stability, and resilience in the face of adversity. This finding, explained the dynamics, importance, and strategies for cultivating and maintaining community trust and cooperation, highlighting their pivotal role in promoting safety, unity, and sustainable development. As an administrative officer elaborated...

*"The deployment of National Police Reservists in the county has really strengthened the community's trust in law enforcement. Before they came, we often felt disconnected, especially with rising crime rates. Now, with NPRs who understand the local issues and actively engage with us, there's a evident sense of collaboration and support. They've not only reduced crime but also encouraged us to work together in keeping the neighbourhoods safe. It's refreshing to see their quick response to incidents and their willingness to listen to our concerns. This partnership has not only made the community to feel safer but has also brought us closer as a community, reinforcing the importance of trust and cooperation in building a resilient society."*

The deployment of National Police Reservists (NPRs) in Elgeyo Marakwet County has not only contributed to a reduction in security incidents but has also fostered significant improvements in community trust and cooperation with law enforcement. NPRs, drawn from and intimately familiar with local communities, have played a crucial role in bridging the gap between residents and the police. Their presence has built a foundation of trust through consistent engagement, proactive policing, and responsive communication. This has empowered community members to collaborate more effectively with NPRs and local police in identifying and addressing security concerns promptly.

Moreover, the community-oriented approach of NPRs has encouraged residents to actively participate in safeguarding their neighborhoods. By involving community members in crime prevention strategies and encouraging them to report suspicious activities, NPRs have strengthened the overall security infrastructure. As Mesok (2022) <sup>[9]</sup> concluded, such a strategy is intended to build the capacity of individuals to police themselves and each other, a form of lateral surveillance, as well as to develop greater trust between communities and police to enable greater reporting of individuals suspected of radicalizing toward violent extremism. This increased cooperation has not only improved intelligence gathering but has also facilitated quicker responses to emerging threats, thereby creating a more resilient and vigilant community.

Furthermore, the positive impact of NPR deployment on community trust extends beyond security concerns alone. It has fostered a sense of empowerment among residents, who

now feel more confident in engaging with law enforcement to address broader community issues. This collaborative effort has led to the establishment of meaningful partnerships between NPRs, local police, and community organizations, reinforcing a shared commitment to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all. As a result, Elgeyo Marakwet County has seen not only a reduction in security incidents but also a transformation in community resilience and cohesion, illustrating the profound social benefits of NPR deployment in enhancing public safety.

The strengthening of local institutions is pivotal to fostering sustainable development and enhancing governance at the grassroots level. Local institutions, ranging from municipalities and community organizations to local government bodies and non-governmental organizations, form the backbone of effective public service delivery, democratic governance, and community resilience. Empowering these institutions involves bolstering their capacity, transparency, and accountability mechanisms to ensure they can effectively respond to the needs and aspirations of their constituents. By investing in and supporting local institutions, societies can achieve more equitable development outcomes, promote civic engagement, and build the foundation for inclusive and participatory decision-making processes that truly reflect the interests of local communities. As a subcounty commander elaborated...

*"Since the National Police Reservists were deployed in Elgeyo Marakwet County, we've seen a remarkable transformation in the local. The NPRs' presence has not only enhanced security but has also restored our governance structures. We now have stronger collaborations between security agencies, local authorities, and community policing forums, which have empowered us to address security challenges more effectively. This partnership has built trust and engagement among residents, making us feel more connected and involved in decision-making processes."*

The deployment of National Police Reservists (NPRs) in Elgeyo Marakwet County has catalyzed a significant strengthening of local institutions, profoundly impacting the overall reduction of security incidents. These NPRs, deeply embedded within the community fabric, have not only enhanced law enforcement but also revitalized local governance structures. Their presence has spurred collaboration between security agencies and local authorities, leading to the establishment of community policing forums and joint initiatives aimed at addressing security challenges proactively. This partnership has empowered local institutions by equipping them with the tools and resources needed to engage effectively with residents, address concerns, and implement targeted interventions that promote safety and stability. Furthermore, the involvement of NPRs has bolstered trust and civic participation among community members. By engaging with NPRs in security planning and decision-making processes, local institutions have gained credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the populace. Community involvement in the planning and decision-making process of public management is a key principle in democratic and

participation-based governance (Syamsu, 2023) <sup>[12]</sup>. He continued to indicate that, community participation helps to strengthen local institutions by creating a government that is more transparent, accountable, inclusive, and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people. This engagement has extended beyond security matters, influencing broader governance issues such as infrastructure development, resource allocation, and social services provision. As a result, residents feel more invested in local governance processes, leading to increased accountability and responsiveness from their leaders and institutions.

Moreover, the strengthening of local institutions through NPR deployment has fostered economic growth and resilience in Elgeyo Marakwet County. As security improves, businesses have flourished, tourism has increased, and agricultural activities have expanded. Local institutions, now better equipped to manage and mitigate risks, have facilitated an environment conducive to investment and entrepreneurship. This economic vibrancy not only improves livelihoods but also enhances the capacity of local institutions to sustainably manage resources and deliver essential services, thereby laying a foundation for long-term development and prosperity in the region.

#### 4. Recommendations

The National Police Service should continue the deployment of NPRs while monitoring and evaluating their impact regularly to ensure that the observed crime reduction is sustained.

#### 5. Suggestions for Further Research

This study was carried out in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The study focused on the impact of deployment of National Police Reservists on the overall security incidents in Elgeyo Marakwet County. The study employed cross sectional survey design. The researcher recommends further research be done through longitudinal survey since the study was done through cross sectional survey to investigate innovative community engagement strategies employed by National Police Reservists to enhance trust, cooperation, and collaboration with local residents.

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