

# Strengthening the police in Kenya

## Support to the reform process of national police structures

### What is the initial situation?

Kenya is one of the most economically stable countries in East Africa. The peaceful transfer of power after the elections in September 2022 was an important sign of the country's political stability. Nevertheless, Kenya continues to experience significant security threats, ranging from **terrorist attacks** to **organized crime**. The Kenyan police can only counter the destabilizing effect of these activities to a limited extent.

The organised **abduction of children** and an increasing number of reported cases of **domestic and sexual violence** also show that the police lack the capacity to create a safe environment for the population. This undermines citizens' trust in state law enforcement agencies and jeopardizes peaceful coexistence. The low level of cooperation between the police and the population also means that measures for the prevention and investigation of crimes are not very efficient, which is reflected in **high crime rates and low rates of successful criminal proceedings**. This overall situation has a negative effect on the state's claim to the monopoly on the use of force.

Since 2010, however, Kenya has been undergoing a **reform process** with the aim of establishing a professional, citizen-oriented police service committed to the principles of the rule of law. The latest reform underlines efforts **to increase efficiency and transparency in police work** while at the same time embracing the model of a "**human-centred police service**". In addition, the **fight against sexual and gender-based violence** (SGBV) and child abduction is being given higher priority.

Programme title	Programme to build and strengthen the police structures in selected partner countries in Africa
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Commissioned by	Federal Foreign Office
Lead executing agency	Kenya Ministry of the Interior
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Budget (2023-2026)	Approx. EUR 1.6 Mio.

To achieve these goals, cross-stakeholder and cross-agency cooperation is essential. There is still room for improvement at many interfaces. In addition, most police stations are not yet sufficiently prepared to process SGBV cases.

### What is the goal?

Kenyan and regional police authorities have sufficient institutional and human resources to curb sexual and gender-based violence, serious crime, and transnational organised crime. They act according to the principles of the rule of law and citizen-orientation.



Pictures from left to right:  
Certificate presentation after successful training  
Police officer crime scene training

Pictures from left to right:  
 Movie poster "Supastaz"  
 Premiere party of the film  
 "Supastaz" in Nairobi

Dr. Mark Mattner  
 Mark.Mattner@giz.de



## How do we work?

GIZ has been supporting police reform processes in Africa on behalf of the German Federal Foreign Office since 2009. To date, it has cooperated with 27 national and regional partners. The current "Programme to build and strengthen police structures in selected partner countries in Africa" comprises **three country components in Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Kenya and a regional AU component.**

The **Kenya country component** has been in place since 2019 and contributes to improving cooperation between law enforcement and judicial authorities as well as with the Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA). In addition, the capacities of the Criminal Investigation Department in the areas of **crime scene work and forensic evidence** are being supported.

The professional seizure of evidence is a prerequisite for its usability in criminal proceedings and contributes to the objective assessment of the course of events. This is enormously important, especially in sensitive contexts and in SGBV cases. **Evidence-based trials** also help to uphold the human rights of suspects, as any judgments are more often based on scientific or physical evidence and are less likely to be based solely on witness testimony.

One focus of the country component is therefore on the state-wide training of police officers in basic crime scene management and forensic evidence. Trainers are trained within the Kenyan police force for this purpose. The Kenya country component works closely with representatives of the German Federal Criminal Police (BKA) in various areas.

## What have we achieved so far?

As a result of the continuous training of trainers, the Kenya Police has well-trained forensic personnel and the skills to independently determine the level of knowledge of its specialists and to organise appropriate training if necessary. To foster training and analytical skills, crime scene simulation rooms have been set up at various police locations.

Special attention was attracted by the short film "Supastaz", created for the Criminal Investigation Department. Initially created as an awareness-raising tool and to educate people about child abduction, it became so popular that it was shown at international festivals and won several awards. As such the film reached a very wide audience and was able to inform about the role of the police in such cases.

## What more do we want to do?

Further awareness-raising activities both among the police and within the population lead to strengthen the prevention work of the police; especially around SGBV and child abduction.

These issues are also moving into the focus of the criminal investigation authorities. The conditions for being able to collect and use material evidence professionally have improved. Cooperation between law enforcement authorities (including IPOA) is established, e. g. through joint training courses.

The regional networks and cooperation of Kenyan law enforcement authorities, especially regarding SGBV and serious crime, have been further expanded. The exchange on regional security threats is also consolidated through successful networking with other forensic institutes in the region.

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Programme to build and strengthen the police  
 structures in selected partner countries in Africa  
 Potsdamer Platz 10  
 10785 Berlin, Germany  
 T +49 30 338424 - 475  
 F +49 30 338424 - 22475  
 mark.mattner@giz.de  
 www.giz.de/en/worldwide/15637.html

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Text Ruth Langer

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

Commissioned by Federal Foreign Office  
 Werderscher Markt 1  
 10117 Berlin, Germany  
 T +49 (0)3018 17 - 0  
 F +49 (0)3018 17 - 3402

poststelle@auswaertiges-amt.de  
 www.auswaertiges-amt.de