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Combating Crime in the City of Soyo

Crime Control in the City of Soyo

João Zombo - Higher Polytechnic Institute of Soyo - PhD candidate in Education at Genesys International Higher Education/USA. Master's degree in Geological and Mineralogical Sciences. Bachelor's degree in Engineering Hydrogeology from the Azerbaijan State University. University Professor at the Higher Polytechnic Institute of Soyo, teaching Mathematical Analysis, General Mathematics, and Complementary Elementary Mathematics. Contact phone number: 924410018, Email:

joaozombo8@gmail.com

Antônio Marciano Mpiangu - Soyo Higher Polytechnic Institute. PhD candidate in Education at Genesys International Higher Education/USA. Master's degree in Educational Sciences from the IBRO-American University Foundation; Bachelor's degree in Educational Sciences with a specialization in Mathematics from the Uíge Higher Institute of Educational Sciences; University Professor at the Soyo Higher Polytechnic Institute, teaching General Mathematics and Mathematical Methodology; Contact phone number: 924426083, Email:

mpiangum20111@gmail.com

Mavambo Mpezo - Higher Polytechnic Institute of Soyo - Doctor of Technical Sciences from the Technical University of Saint Petroburg in the Russian Federation, in Mining Drilling Engineering; Professor at the Higher Polytechnic Institute of Soyo, teaching Mathematics I, II and III, Project Management I and II, Personal Professional Project I and II, Communication Techniques I, II and III, General Communication Techniques I and II and General Professional Communication Techniques; Contact: telephone 928288976, Email:

africampezmavambo@gmail.com

Summary

This article addresses the fight against crime in the city of Soyo, located in the Zaire province of Angola, focusing on the neighborhoods of Nona, Mbuku, Kami, Kintambi, Garra, and Pagala—areas facing high rates of urban violence and significant social challenges. The research aims to identify the main factors contributing to the growth of crime in these neighborhoods, such as unemployment, social exclusion, the absence of effective public policies, the precariousness of basic services, and the lack of educational and cultural opportunities.

Using a mixed methodological approach, with the collection of qualitative and quantitative data, interviews were conducted with residents, community leaders, and security agents, in addition to the analysis of official documents and local statistics. The results reveal that crime in these neighborhoods is strongly associated with social marginalization and the absence of integrated prevention strategies. Police repression actions, although necessary, prove insufficient when not accompanied by policies of inclusion and community development.

The study proposes the implementation of community safety programs, investments in education, culture, and infrastructure, as well as strengthening citizen participation in the formulation of public policies. It concludes that combating crime in Soyo requires a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach, capable of transforming vulnerable territories into spaces of safe coexistence and human development.

Keywords: crime, public safety, social exclusion, peripheral neighborhoods, Soyo.

Abstract

This article addresses the fight against crime in the city of Soyo, located in Zaire Province, Angola, with a focus on the neighborhoods of Nona, Mbuku, Kami, Kintambi, Garra, and Pagala — areas that face high levels of urban violence and significant social challenges. The research aims to identify the main factors contributing to the rise in criminal activity in these neighborhoods, such as unemployment, social exclusion, lack of effective public policies, poor basic services, and limited educational and cultural opportunities.



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Using a mixed methodological approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection, interviews were conducted with residents, community leaders, and security agents, alongside the analysis of official documents and local statistics. The findings reveal that crime in these neighborhoods is strongly linked to social marginalization and the absence of integrated prevention strategies. Police repression efforts, while necessary, prove insufficient when not accompanied by inclusive policies and community development initiatives.

The study proposes the implementation of community safety programs, investments in education, culture, and infrastructure, as well as the strengthening of citizen participation in public policy formulation. It concludes that combating crime in Soyo requires a multidisciplinary and collaborative approach capable of transforming vulnerable territories into safe spaces for coexistence and human development.

Keywords: crime, public security, social exclusion, peripheral neighborhoods, Soyo.

Introduction

1. Problem Contextualization

Urban crime is one of the greatest challenges faced by societies.

contemporary urbanization processes, especially in developing countries, are occurring.

Accelerated growth, social inequality, and institutional fragility intertwine, creating conducive environments.

leading to increased violence and insecurity. The city of Soyo, located in the province of Zaire,

Angola is no exception to this reality. As a strategic hub for oil exploration and...

With its rapid population growth, Soyo has become a space of intense social dynamics.

economic and cultural tensions, but also tensions that are reflected in public safety.

In the neighborhoods of Nona, Kami, Kintambi, Garra, and Pangala, a significant incidence is observed.

of criminal practices ranging from petty theft and robbery to organized crime, linked to

Drug trafficking, smuggling, and armed violence. These phenomena directly impact...

quality of life for the population, generating fear, contraction of local economic activities and

Weakening of the social fabric. Crime, therefore, is not limited to being a problem of order.

police work, but it takes on multidimensional dimensions, involving socioeconomic, cultural and other factors.

politicians.

2. Justification of the Study

Combating crime in Soyo requires a scientific approach that goes beyond simple police repression. It is

necessary to understand the social determinants that favor its emergence.

of criminal behaviors, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of public policies already implemented.

The choice of the Nona, Kami, Kintambi, Garra, and Pangala neighborhoods as the focus of this study is not random:

These are areas that concentrate a large portion of the recorded criminal occurrences, but also

They represent spaces of community resistance and potential for social transformation.

The relevance of this study lies in its potential to provide theoretical and practical support for the formulation of integrated strategies to combat crime, involving not only the



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security forces, but also educational institutions, community organizations and policies of social inclusion. By analyzing the specific reality of Soyo, the aim is to contribute to the debate. national agenda on public safety and sustainable urban development.

3. Research Objectives

The overall objective of this article is to analyze the factors that influence crime in neighborhoods. selected from the city of Soyo and propose combat strategies that are contextualized and effective.

Specific objectives include:

- Identify the main types of crimes committed in the neighborhoods under study;
- Assess the socioeconomic conditions that favor crime;
- To examine the actions of the security forces and their relationship with the community;
- To propose integrated prevention and repression measures, based on national best practices and international.

4. Theoretical Review and State of the Art

Several studies on urban crime indicate that factors such as poverty, unemployment, Social exclusion and the absence of consistent public policies are directly related to Increased violence. Classical criminological theories, such as the theory of social disorganization (Shaw and McKay argue that communities with weak social cohesion and a lack of strong institutions tend to exhibiting higher crime rates.

In the African context, recent research highlights the importance of considering the cultural and historical specificities of each region. In Angola, the legacy of the armed conflict, the Internal migration and economic inequality are elements that shape the crime landscape. Urban. The city of Soyo, being a center for oil exploration, attracts migratory flows. intense, generating pressure on public services and creating pockets of social vulnerability.

5. Social and Academic Relevance

This study is not limited to the academic field, but has direct implications for life. The daily life of the population of Soyo. By proposing strategies to combat crime, the aim is to... to strengthen community safety, promote trust between citizens and institutions, and create conditions for sustainable socioeconomic development.

From a scientific point of view, the article helps to fill gaps in the literature on crime in medium-sized Angolan cities, which is often neglected in favor of large urban centers such as Luanda. Detailed analysis of the neighborhoods Nona, Kami, Kintambi, Garra Pangala will allow us to understand how local dynamics interact with national phenomena and



global, offering a more comprehensive view of the problem.

Theoretical Framework

1. Fundamentals of Criminology

Criminology, as an applied social science, seeks to understand the causes, dynamics, and consequences of crime. Since the beginning of the 20th century, several theories have been formulated to explain criminal behavior. The **Theory of Social Disorganization**, proposed by Shaw and McKay (1942) argues that communities with weak social cohesion, a lack of strong institutions, and High rates of population mobility tend to be associated with higher crime rates. This model is particularly relevant for the city of Soyo, which, due to its rapid growth... Driven by the oil industry, it faces urban pressures that weaken its ties.

community members.

Carneiro (2025) highlights that “urban crime cannot be understood only as “Not the result of individual choices, but also a product of social structures that favor deviance.” Thus, the study of the Nona, Kami, Kintambi, Garra, and Pangala neighborhoods should consider not only the Criminal acts themselves, but also the social contexts that make them possible.

2. Structural and Process Theories

The **Anomie Theory**, developed by Merton (1938), argues that crime arises when there is a mismatch between the cultural goals valued by society and the means legitimate means are available to achieve them. In Soyo, the pursuit of economic advancement, coupled with scarcity... Lack of formal employment opportunities can lead individuals to resort to illegal practices such as survival alternative.

The **Differential Association Theory**, formulated by Sutherland (1947), emphasizes that the Criminal behavior is learned through social interaction. In the neighborhoods studied, the Living in environments where crime is frequent can normalize criminal practices, creating cycles of reproduction of violence. Carneiro (2025) reinforces that “crime is transmitted culturally, becoming part of the identity of certain social groups.

Additionally, **Social Control Theory** (Hirschi, 1969) suggests that individuals... They become involved in criminal activities when their ties to social institutions—family, school, The community—they are fragile. The absence of consistent public policies in Soyo, especially in peripheral areas contribute to the weakening of these ties, increasing vulnerability to crime.



3. Critical Perspectives and Social Conflict

Critical theories of criminology, such as **Labeling Theory** (Becker, 1963), point out that the criminalization process is selective and often targeted at marginalized groups. In Angola, studies such as those by Araújo and Gomes (2012) show that criminal policies Historically, they have prioritized repression over prevention. This reinforces the need for rethink strategies that not only punish, but also promote social inclusion and opportunities.

Herrera Masó and Figueredo Verdecia (2025) add that, in African contexts In contemporary times, it is essential to consider complexity and chaos as structuring elements of crime, highlighting that "urban violence in Angola cannot be dissociated from the dynamics "historical instances of inequality and exclusion." This perspective broadens the understanding of the phenomenon. showing that combating crime requires integrated policies adapted to specific needs. local.

4. Criminal Policies in Angola

The Angolan Justice Observatory (2012) emphasizes that the country lacks a policy. A structured criminal justice system capable of coordinating prevention, repression, and social reintegration. The city of Soyo, As a strategic center of the national economy, it demands special attention, because crime... It compromises not only the safety of citizens, but also the stability of activities. economic factors linked to oil.

The literature suggests that effective policies should combine **repressive actions** (strengthening of the security forces, improvement of criminal investigation) with **preventive actions** (programs social, education, job creation). Carneiro (2025) argues that "collective effectiveness is one of the central elements for reducing crime, as organized and participatory communities They are better able to withstand the pressures of crime.

5. Application to the Soyo Context

In the neighborhoods of Nona, Kami, Kintambi, Garra, and Pangala, the coexistence of factors can be observed. structural (poverty, unemployment, social exclusion) and procedural (social learning of crime, fragility of community ties). The theoretical framework outlined here allows us to understand that the The fight against crime cannot be reduced to isolated police operations, but must involve... long-term strategies, based on criminological theories that explain the phenomenon in its complexity.

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Thus, the study is based on three main pillars:

- **Structural:** socioeconomic inequality and social disorganization;
- **Processual:** social learning and fragility of community ties;
- **Critic:** selectivity of criminalization and the need for inclusive policies.

Conclusion of the Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the article highlights that crime in Soyo is the result of multiple factors. Interconnected factors, ranging from social disorganization to the selectivity of criminal policies. The integration of classical and critical theories provides a solid foundation for analyzing the problem and proposing solutions. contextualized solutions.

Materials and Methods

1. Type of Search

This study is characterized as **exploratory and descriptive** research, with an approach... **qualitative and quantitative**. The choice of a mixed model is justified by the need for to understand both the objective aspects of crime (statistics, police records, indicators) socioeconomic aspects as well as subjective aspects (perceptions of the community, experiences) individual, social representations about security).

According to Gil (2008), exploratory research is appropriate when the topic has not yet been... sufficiently studied, allowing for greater familiarity with the problem. In the case of crime. In Soyo, especially in the Nona, Kami, Kintambi, Garra, and Pangala neighborhoods, there is a scarcity of studies. systematized, which reinforces the relevance of this approach.

2. Study Area

The research was conducted in the **city of Soyo**, Zaire province, located in northern Angola. Soyo is a strategic center of the national economy due to its oil exploration, and it features... rapid population growth.

The selected neighborhoods — Nona, Kami, Kintambi, Garra, and Pangala — were chosen because they present:

- High incidence of criminal incidents recorded by local authorities;
- Socioeconomic and cultural diversity;
- Relevance for understanding peripheral and central urban dynamics.

Spatial delimitation is fundamental to ensuring the representativeness of the data and to enable comparative analyses between different realities within the same city.

3. Population and Sample

The target population of the study comprises:

- **Residents** of the neighborhoods under analysis, aged 18 or older;
- **Local authorities**, including representatives from the national police, community leaders, and members of the municipal administration;
- **Civil organizations** active in the area of security and social development.

The sample was defined through **stratified sampling**, considering:

- 50 residents per neighborhood (total of 250 participants);
- 10 institutional representatives (security forces and administration);
- 5 community leaders.

In total, **265 participants were interviewed**, ensuring a diversity of perspectives and greater robustness of results.

4. Data Collection Instruments

Different instruments were used, depending on the nature of the information:

- **Structured questionnaires:** administered to residents, containing closed and open-ended questions about perceptions of crime, personal experiences, and evaluation of security policies.
- **Semi-structured interviews:** conducted with local authorities and community leaders, allowing for a deeper exploration of issues related to institutional performance and community-based crime fighting strategies.
- **Direct observation:** visits to neighborhoods to identify social dynamics, critical points of insecurity, and daily practices related to crime.
- **Document analysis:** consultation of police reports, official statistics and documents. administrative staff of the Zaire province.

According to Lakatos and Marconi (2010), triangulation of methods increases the validity of research, as it allows for the comparison of different sources of information.

5. Collection Procedures

Data collection took place between **March and July 2025**, following organized steps:

1. **Initial contact** with local authorities to obtain authorization and logistical support;
2. **Community awareness-raising**, through meetings with neighborhood leaders, explaining the objectives. from the research;
3. **Application of questionnaires** in randomly selected households;
4. **Conducting interviews** in institutional and community settings;
5. **Record of direct observation**, with field notes and photographs of critical areas (without identification of individuals, while preserving ethics).

Data Processing and Analysis

The quantitative data were processed using **descriptive statistics** (frequencies, means, percentages), using SPSS software. Qualitative data were analyzed using **analysis**.



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of content (Bardin, 2011), allowing the identification of thematic categories related to crime.

and to combat strategies.

The integration of results followed the **mixed-methods analysis model**, as described by Creswell (2014), which recommends combining numerical and narrative data for greater depth.

Interpretive.

Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to the ethical principles of scientific investigation.

- **Informed consent:** all participants were made aware of the objectives and
They signed a consent form;
- **Anonymity and confidentiality:** the data was treated in aggregate form, without identification.
individual;
- **Cultural respect:** the interviews and questionnaires were conducted in Portuguese and, when necessary, in
local languages, ensuring full comprehension.

According to Resnik (2011), ethics in social research is essential to ensure credibility.
of the results and respect for human rights.

8. Methodological Limitations

Among the main limitations, the following stand out:

- Initial resistance from some residents to participate, due to fear of reprisals;
- Difficulty in accessing complete official statistics due to the lack of data systematization.
criminals;
- Potential for bias in responses, especially on sensitive issues related to violence.

Despite these limitations, the methodological triangulation and the diversity of the sample lend robustness and reliability to the study.

Section Conclusion

The outlined **Materials and Methods** ensure scientific rigor and suitability to the specific context.
from the city of Soyo. The combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments, along with mixed methods analysis,
It allows for a broad understanding of crime and the proposal of contextualized strategies for...
Nona, Kami, Kintambi, Garra and Pangala neighborhoods.

Results and discussion

Overview of Crime in Soyo

Analysis of data collected in the Nona, Kami, Kintambi, Garra, and Pangala neighborhoods revealed
that crime presents heterogeneous characteristics, varying in intensity and typology.
Depending on the neighborhood, police records and community reports point to three main types.

of crimes:

- **Crimes against property** (thefts, robberies, burglaries);
- **Violent crimes** (physical assaults, homicides, domestic violence);
- **Organized crime** (drug trafficking, smuggling, and fuel theft networks).

Residents highlighted that property crimes are the most frequent, especially in areas with higher population density and lower police presence. Organized crime, on the other hand, is concentrated in areas near transport routes and areas of economic activity linked to oil.

2. Quantitative Results

Of the 250 residents interviewed, 72% stated they had been victims of some type of crime in the last two years. Among these:

- 45% reported thefts or robberies;
- 20% suffered physical assaults;
- 7% had family members involved in trafficking or smuggling cases.

Furthermore, 68% of those interviewed stated that they felt **unsafe walking around at night** in the neighborhoods, and 54% consider the police presence to be insufficient.

Statistical data confirms the community's perception: police reports indicate that, Between 2023 and 2024, there was an 18% increase in recorded incidents in Soyo, with greater incidence in the Kami and Garra neighborhoods.

3. Qualitative Results

Semi-structured interviews with community leaders and local authorities revealed important aspects:

- **Institutional fragility:** the police face limitations in human and material resources, making regular patrols difficult.
- **Community distrust:** many residents reported a lack of trust in the authorities, due to perceptions of corruption and inefficiency.
- **Informal security strategies:** in some neighborhoods, such as Kintambi and Pangala, residents They organize community patrols to reduce crime.

A community leader from the Nona neighborhood stated: *"The police only show up after the crime has occurred." It happens. We, the residents, are the ones who try to protect ourselves with patrols and community surveillance.*"

The report highlights the gap between institutional action and local needs.

4. Discussion of Results

The results confirm the hypotheses raised in the theoretical framework:

- The **Social Disorganization Theory** (Shaw & McKay, 1942) explains the high crime rates in neighborhoods with weak community cohesion and a lack of strong institutions. In Soyo, intense migration and disorganized urban growth weaken social ties, favoring crime.
- The **Theory of Anomie** (Merton, 1938) is evident in the pursuit of economic advancement without means.

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Legitimate options are available. Many young people reported resorting to illegal practices as a means of survival.

- The **Differential Association Theory** (Sutherland, 1947) is confirmed by accounts of young people who learn criminal practices in local groups, reproducing patterns of violence.

Furthermore, the selectivity of criminalization, pointed out by Becker (1963), also occurs.

protest: residents stated that the police are focusing their efforts on certain social groups.

while larger-scale organized crime remains largely unchecked.

Comparison between the neighborhoods

- **Ninth**: higher incidence of thefts and robberies, with a strong perception of insecurity at night.
- **Kami**: This neighborhood has a high concentration of physical violence and homicides, and is considered the most dangerous.
- **Kintambi**: features community-based safety initiatives that partially reduce crime rates.
criminals.
- **Garra**: a hub for organized crime, especially smuggling and drug trafficking.
- **Pangala**: moderate crime rates, but marked by domestic violence and family conflicts.

This diversity demonstrates that the fight against crime in Soyo must be **contextualized by neighborhood**, avoiding generic solutions.

Implications for Public Policy

The results suggest that crime-fighting policies in Soyo should integrate three dimensions:

1. **Repressive**: strengthening of police forces, with a greater presence in critical neighborhoods.
2. **Preventive**: social programs aimed at young people in vulnerable situations, including
Education and job creation.
3. **Community-based**: encouraging patrols and residents' associations, promoting social cohesion and...
Mutual trust.

Carneiro (2025) reinforces that "collective effectiveness is one of the central elements for reducing the
"Crime is more effective because organized communities are better able to resist the pressures of crime."

This assertion finds support in the results from Kintambi and Pangala, where community initiatives

They showed a positive impact.

Limitations and Future Perspectives

Despite its methodological robustness, some limitations must be acknowledged:

- The absence of complete official statistics limits the accuracy of quantitative data.
- Fear of reprisals may have influenced residents' responses, especially in certain neighborhoods.
dominated by criminal networks.
- The research focused on five neighborhoods, not covering the entire city of Soyo.

For future studies, it is recommended to expand the sample size and include comparative analyses with...
other cities in the Zaire province and further investigate the role of companies.

Section Conclusion

The results and discussion demonstrate that crime in Soyo is multifaceted, varying among thefts, physical violence and organized crime. The analysis confirms classic criminological theories and criticisms, highlighting that combating crime requires integrated strategies adapted to specific characteristics of each neighborhood.

Conclusion and Recommendations

General Conclusion

The study conducted in the neighborhoods of Nona, Kami, Kintambi, Garra, and Pangala allowed us to understand that crime in Soyo is a **multifaceted phenomenon**, resulting from a combination of factors: structural (poverty, unemployment, social inequality), procedural (social learning of crime, fragility of community ties) and critical aspects (selectivity of criminalization and absence of consistent public policies).

The results confirmed that:

- **Crimes against property** are the most frequent, directly affecting the daily lives of residents.
- **Violent crimes** are concentrated in neighborhoods like Kami, where institutional fragility is more pronounced.
- **Organized crimes**, such as trafficking and smuggling, are more prevalent in Garra due to its proximity to strategic economic routes.
- The **perception of insecurity** is high in all neighborhoods, reflecting the insufficient police presence and lack of trust in institutions.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the fight against crime in Soyo cannot be reduced to actions. It should be thought of as an **integrated and sustainable process**, involving sporadic repressive measures, but it must be considered as such: security forces, community and social policies.

2. Strategic Recommendations

Based on the results and criminological theories discussed, the following recommendations are proposed:

2.1. Institutional Strengthening

- **Increased police presence** in the most critical neighborhoods, with regular patrols and a strong presence visible.
- **Ongoing training** for security agents, focusing on human rights and mediation of conflicts and the fight against organized crime.
- **Improvement of police infrastructure**, including vehicles, communication equipment and monitoring technology.



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2.2. Social Prevention

- **Youth inclusion programs**, offering cultural, sporting and vocational training activities to reduce the vulnerability of young people to recruitment by criminal networks.
- **Strengthening basic education**, guaranteeing access and quality, as a way to reduce social exclusion.
- **Creating job opportunities** in partnership with oil companies and others local institutions, promoting legitimate alternatives for economic advancement.

2.3. Community Participation

- **Encouraging community patrols**, formalizing and supporting existing initiatives in neighborhoods like Kintambi and Pangala.
- **Formation of community safety councils**, integrating residents, local leaders and police authorities to discuss joint strategies.
- **Awareness campaigns** on crime prevention and strengthening community cohesion social.

2.4. Integrated Public Policies

- **Creation of a municipal public safety plan**, coordinating repressive actions and preventive measures.
- **Interinstitutional integration**, involving municipal administration, police, schools, churches and civil organizations.
- **Continuous monitoring and evaluation**, with clear indicators to measure the reduction of crime and the increased feeling of security.

Expected Impact

Implementing the proposed recommendations could generate significant impacts:

- **Reduction in crime rates**, especially theft and robbery.
- **Increased community trust** in security institutions.
- **Strengthening social cohesion**, reducing the vulnerability of young people and families.
- **Economic stability**, by ensuring greater security for activities related to oil and gas. local businesses.

Final Considerations

Combating crime in Soyo requires a **holistic and contextualized approach**, which Recognize the specific characteristics of each neighborhood and involve multiple social actors. Police repression, Although necessary, it is not sufficient: it is necessary to invest in social policies, education, employment and community participation.

This study contributes to the national debate on public security in Angola, showing Medium-sized cities like Soyo deserve special attention because they concentrate complex dynamics. which directly impact regional development.



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Executive Summary

Context

The city of Soyo faces increasing challenges related to urban crime, especially in the neighborhoods of Nona, Kami, Kintambi, Garra, and Pangala. Population growth has accelerated, coupled with social inequality and institutional fragility, favoring the increase of thefts, robberies, physical violence and organized crime.

Main Findings

- **High incidence of property crimes** (thefts and robberies), directly affecting everyday life.
- **Physical violence and homicides** concentrated in neighborhoods like Kami.
- **Organized crime** (trafficking and smuggling) is prevalent in Garra, linked to strategic economics.
- **High perception of insecurity:** 72% of residents reported having been victims of crime in the last two years.
- **Institutional weakness:** insufficient police resources and low community trust in the authorities.
- **Community initiatives** (such as patrols in Kintambi and Pangala) have shown a positive impact on crime reduction.

Strategic Recommendations

Institutional Strengthening

The increase in police personnel and regular patrols.
Ongoing training in human rights and combating organized crime.
Improving police infrastructure.

Social Prevention

Youth inclusion programs (sports, culture, vocational training) .
Strengthening basic education.
Creating job opportunities in partnership with local businesses.

Community Participation

Support for existing community patrols.
The creation of community safety councils.
Awareness campaigns for crime prevention.

Integrated Public Policies

The development of a municipal public safety plan.
Integration between police, administration, schools and civil organizations.
Continuous monitoring with clear impact indicators.

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Expected Impact

Implementing these measures can significantly reduce crime rates.

To increase community trust in institutions and strengthen social cohesion. Furthermore, it will contribute...
for the economic stability of Soyo, ensuring greater security for oil-related activities.
and to local businesses.

This **Executive Summary** condenses the article into one page, serving as a practical guide for...
public managers and community leaders seeking concrete solutions to combat
crime in Soyo.

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