

National Security and Crime Prevention in Nigeria: Leveraging Soft Power and Soft Policing

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Abstract

National security and crime prevention are pivotal towards achieving national stability, development and security. Conventional use of hard power approaches, such as military force (hard power) and strict policing were the norm in national security and policing. However, the increasing complexity of security threats in the 21st century has necessitated the integration of soft power and soft policing strategies. Through a critical review of existing literature, this study aims to contribute to the development of a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of national security and crime prevention, highlighting the potential benefits and limitations of soft power and soft policing approaches in addressing contemporary security challenges in Nigeria. The Broken Windows and Collective Governance theories were adopted to explain the ripple effect of crimes on national security, and how the infusion of soft power and soft policing would help improve national security and crime prevention. The paper concludes that by moving beyond traditional hard power approaches, soft power and soft policing tools, such as cultural diplomacy, quick impact projects, economic development, and social engagement, can be leveraged to prevent crime and promote national security. Consequently, the paper recommends an increased investment in community programmes, enhanced trust-building initiatives by the government and relevant security agencies, increased public participation in crime prevention, strategic media coverage and communication, and continuous evaluation and adoption of strategies fit for a given area.

Keywords: Crime Prevention, National Security, Soft Power, Soft Policing, Nigeria

Introduction

National security and crime prevention are pivotal aspects of Nigeria's stability and development. The concept of national security has evolved significantly over the years, expanding beyond traditional notions of military defence to encompass a broader range of threats and challenges (Buzan, 1991; Nye, 2004). Over the years, Nigeria has experienced a range of security challenges such as terrorism, insurgency, communal conflicts, and organized crime. The country's national security strategy aims to address

these issues through a combination of traditional and innovative approaches (National Security Strategy, 2019). In today's interconnected world, national security is intricately linked with crime prevention, as transnational organized crime, terrorism, and cybercrime pose significant threats to global stability and security (Shelley, 2014; UNODC, 2010).

The concept of soft power and soft policing are common features that have been extensively researched on in most developed countries. Traditional approaches to national security and crime prevention have often relied on hard power measures, such as military force, policing, and punishment (Bayley, 2006; Kelling & Bratton, 1998). However, these approaches have been criticised for their limitations in addressing the root causes of crime and insecurity, as well as their potential to exacerbate social tensions and human rights abuses (Braithwaite, 2002; Goldstein, 1990). It is an approach away from the traditional ways that leads crime reduction and prevention. They have become viable tools to supplement the conventional hard approaches usually utilised in the policing context (Alhanaee, 2018). With the 21st century came growing concern about ways of improving national security and preventing crimes that would be less reactive but rather focus on the preventive.

The adoption of soft power and soft policing in crime prevention marks a significant shift away from traditional coercive methods, embracing a more preventive, collaborative and community-focused approach. This paradigm shift recognises that preventing crime is a shared responsibility, requiring active engagement and partnership among communities, organisations and institutions (Nye, 2004). By prioritising prevention, collaboration and community engagement, soft power and soft policing strategies aim to address the root causes of crime and promote safer, more resilient communities.

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, has been grappling with various security challenges, including terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, and communal clashes (Adebayo, 2017). These security threats have undermined national security, hindered economic development, and exacerbated poverty (Omede, 2016). Traditional hard power approaches to security have yielded limited results, and there is a growing recognition of the need to adopt alternative strategies that prioritize prevention, community engagement, and cooperation (Alemika, 2013). The aim of this paper is to explore the application, effectiveness and implications of soft power and soft policing in crime prevention and enhancing national security in Nigeria so as to provide a comprehensive understanding of how they contribute to creating safer communities and curbing criminal behaviours.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

National Security: The concept of national security is broad and multifaceted, and often described in various ways by various security scholars. Some scholars equate national security with national defence, but national security encompasses a considerably broader range of issues than often presented. In reality, while security is comprised of various components, strong military readiness is a basic necessity ingredient in the cutting edge, without which any discussion of security would be meaningless (Singh, 2015). Defence is a small but important part of a country's overall security. Military security is the most visible aspect of National Defence, but it is far from being the only one. In common usage, national security refers to the safeguarding of a country's territorial integrity (Abdullahi, et. al, 2024).

National security is defined as being a “nation's ability to preserve its internal values from external dangers is still inadequate (Berkowitz and Bookes, 1968). This definition implies that the basic danger to a country's security is the one from the outside. According to Ullman (1983), national security is defined as a condition where the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the well-being of citizens are safeguarded against threats posed by both state and non-state actors. Here, the emphasis of national security has shifted from state-centric approaches to a broader understanding that integrates political, economic, social, environmental and other dimensions.

The United Nations explains the concept of security to include many critical spheres of human existence when it perceived it as “protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards” (UNDP, 1996). The national security of any nation encompasses other vital areas which include human security, environmental protection, social and food security, and the provision of peace in the nation, among others. Without adequate security of lives and property, the system will be rife with lawlessness, chaos, and eventual disintegration. It might be military, economic, ideological, or cultural (Nwolise, 2006; Omede, 2011).

In the 21st century, threats to national security are no longer limited to conventional kinetic warfare and interference. Cyber-attacks, terrorism, pandemics, and climate change have emerged as critical concerns. For example, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States highlighted the vulnerability of even the most powerful nations to asymmetric threats (Betts, 2005). Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how global health crises could disrupt national security by overwhelming healthcare systems and crippling economies. In most African countries like Nigeria, the major threats to national security are from within (internal). Crimes, terrorism, insurgencies and widening

economic inequities, as well as cultural, linguistic, and ethnic animosity are common threats to national security.

Crime prevention: The concept of crime prevention is a multidimensional approach towards securing the lives and properties. Crime prevention refers to strategies, measures, and initiatives aimed at reducing crime, deterring criminal behavior, and enhancing community safety. It encompasses a proactive approach to address the root causes of criminal activities, focusing on reducing opportunities for crime and minimizing the risk factors associated with criminal behaviour (Brantingham & Faust, 1976).

Crime prevention, as defined by the National Crime Prevention Institute, (1986) is the anticipation, recognition and appraisal of a crime risk and the initiation of some action to remove or reduce it. The Prevention of Crime comprises “strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring, and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes” (UNODC, 2010). Crime prevention can be categorised into three levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention focuses on addressing the underlying social and environmental factors that contribute to crime, such as poverty, lack of education, and unemployment. Secondary prevention targets individuals or groups at a higher risk of engaging in criminal behaviour, while tertiary prevention deals with rehabilitating offenders and preventing recidivism (Brantingham & Faust, 1976).

Crime prevention involves social, situational, and rehabilitative strategies. To achieve effective crime prevention, collaboration, innovation, and a deep understanding of the socio-economic factors that contribute to criminal behaviours are required. In recent years, technological advancements, including surveillance systems, data analytics, and predictive policing, have significantly enhanced crime prevention efforts. However, ethical concerns regarding privacy and surveillance must be carefully balanced against security needs (Welsh & Farrington, 2012).

Soft Power: Soft power in the context of criminology is best understood as a non-penal kind of influence which allows criminal justice authorities to act ‘at a distance’ with the use of normative controls (Garland, 2017). Whilst soft power is normally utilised in criminological discourse to describe the use of more diplomatic power relations, it is also implemented in the context of policing, where it is usually referred to as the non-coercive elements of police work such as engagement with the community or situational knowledge (Wooff, 2017).

Although traditionally policing relies upon 'hard power' and the existence of certain power structures which afford police officers the ability to maintain order and control in society, with the shift toward a softer approach has come the realisation that both might work in harmony with one another in continuing a push toward normative influence alongside a penal response to unacceptable behaviours (McCarthy, 2014). Soft power operates through cultural diplomacy, international cooperation, and the promotion of values such as democracy and human rights. Nye (2004) posits that countries leveraging soft power can achieve strategic goals by winning the "hearts and minds" of both domestic and international audiences. For instance, public diplomacy initiatives, such as educational exchange programs, can reduce anti-state sentiments and enhance global alliances.

Soft policing: Soft policing is also known as community policing as described by Skolnick & Bayley, 1988. It is lauded as one of the most important developments in policing over the last century in terms of the work that it allows police officers to do in building community relations. The popularity of soft policing cuts across the globe including developments in this style of policing in the United Kingdom, United States of America and Australia. The growing popularity of soft policing signifies the general consensus of the usefulness of soft measures in crime prevention and reduction strategies. Skolnick and Bayley's (1988) review of community policing in police departments across the world found that there was an increased reliance on community prevention measures including neighbourhood watch schemes and education initiatives, rather than a reliance purely on police patrols to prevent crime.

Soft policing prioritises proactive, community-based approaches to law enforcement. It draws from the principles of procedural justice, which emphasize fairness, transparency, and respect in police interactions. Tyler (2006) highlights that communities are more likely to cooperate with law enforcement when they perceive it as legitimate and equitable. This approach can prevent crime by addressing underlying socio-economic factors and strengthening community resilience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The discourse on national security and crime prevention in Nigeria has often been dominated by the use of hard power (kinetic interventions), policing crackdowns, and punitive laws. However, recent scholarship has begun to highlight the relevance of soft power and soft policing as complementary strategies.

Joseph Nye (2004) conceptualises soft power as the ability of a country to achieve desired outcomes through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion. Although his work focuses on international relations, scholars such as Ogbonnaya & Ehigie (2019)

have attempted to apply Nye's ideas to domestic security issues in Nigeria. Their study suggests that cultural diplomacy, community engagement, and public trust in law enforcement can significantly enhance internal security. However, the work remains largely theoretical and fails to connect soft power instruments directly to crime prevention outcomes in practical terms. Alemika & Chukwuma (2005) examined crime control mechanisms in Nigeria and criticised the heavy reliance on reactive policing. They advocated for preventive policing models that prioritise intelligence gathering, community collaboration, and proactive interventions. However, their research did not fully explore the role of soft policing, which includes non-coercive community engagement, psychological presence, and behavioural influence, as distinct from traditional community policing.

In their study on alternative policing models in Sub-Saharan Africa, Tankebe & Leibling (2013) discussed the emergence of soft policing as an effective means of enhancing police legitimacy and reducing fear of crime. They noted that in post-authoritarian societies, where public trust in law enforcement is low, strategies that emphasise persuasion, procedural justice, and empathy have yielded more cooperation from the community. However, while the study touches on Ghana and South Africa, it did not focus specifically on Nigeria, thus leaving a contextual gap. Ede and Igwe (2021) explored the intersection between youth marginalisation and insecurity in Nigeria. They argued that empowering young people through education, employment, and participation in governance can reduce susceptibility to criminal activity and extremism. While the paper aligns with soft power strategies, it did not link such youth-focused interventions with formal policing frameworks or elaborate on the broader policy integration of soft tools into security architecture. Ajayi (2020) investigated public perceptions of police legitimacy in Nigeria and found a strong correlation between perceived fairness and public cooperation. The research supported the notion that soft policing enhances state legitimacy, but it lacks a theoretical grounding in soft power principles and did not connect these perceptions directly to measurable reductions in crime.

While these studies have laid important groundwork, they fall short in integrating soft power theory and soft policing practices into a unified framework for national security and crime prevention in Nigeria. Most works treat soft power as abstract or external to policing operations, and soft policing as a tactical rather than strategic tool. There is a lack of empirical research that examines how the deliberate deployment of soft power instruments, such as cultural outreach, strategic communication, community collaboration, and psychological operations, can be systematically embedded in Nigeria's security policies. This study seeks to bridge that gap by offering a conceptual level analysis of how soft power and soft policing can be leveraged jointly to enhance national security and reduce crime in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Three theories were considered relevant to the discussion. They are Social Cohesion Theory, Broken windows Theory and Collaborative Governance Theory. Social cohesion theory asserts that crime can be reduced by promoting community bonding, social networks, and collective efficacy. This theory views that when communities are cohesive, residents are likely to look out for one another and respond collectively to crime. Collaborative Governance theory was developed by many scholars such as Koppenjan Joop, Eric-Hans Klihn, Chris Ansell and Jacob Torfing but originally emerged in the 1990s. According to Ansell and Gash (2008), collaborative governance refers to "a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative, and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programmes or assets." This definition underscores the importance of inclusivity, transparency, and shared power in governance processes. This theory explains that public agencies, private organisations and civil society groups can work together to address complex social, economic and political problems.

Broken Windows Theory, on the other hand, is a theory of criminality which emphasises the importance of maintaining urban environments to prevent crime. The theory was proposed by James Q. Wilson and George Kelling in 1982. The theory is named after an analogy used to explain it. If a window in a building is broken and remains unrepaired for too long, the rest of the windows in that building will eventually be broken too (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). The theory emphasises the importance of addressing minor crimes and maintaining social order to prevent more serious crimes.

According to Wilson and Kelling, the unrepaired window act as a signal to people in that neighbourhood that they can break windows without fear of consequence because nobody cares enough to stop it or fix it. Eventually, Wilson and Kelling argued, more serious crimes like robbery and violence will flourish linking disorder and incivility within a community to subsequent occurrences of serious crimes. Critics of the theory argue that policing based on Broken Windows theory do not really work in marginalised neighbourhoods and with people of low socio-economic status as it fails to address the root cause of crime (Harcourt & Ludwig (2006).

This paper adopted the Broken Windows and Collaborative Governance theories due to their relevance in explaining the subject matter. Crimes are known to be prevalent in urban areas and emerging communities, and continues to spread, if not stopped early as explained by the Broken Windows theory. To achieve better success in crime prevention,

there is the need for a whole of society approach and this would involve collaborative effort involving every sphere of the society.

LEVERAGING SOFT POWER IN NATIONAL SECURITY

The modern global landscape has transformed the nature of international relations. While traditional hard power, relying on military strength and economic coercion, remains relevant, soft power has emerged as a very significant complementary tool. Soft power leverages culture, values, and policies to shape influence and attract support. For Nigeria, a nation marked by its rich cultural diversity, economic potential, and regional influence, soft power diplomacy presents a strategic avenue to address security challenges, prevent the escalation of crimes, foster sustainable development and achieve a secured nation (Nweke & Enwere, 2024).

Soft power offers a promising approach to enhancing national security in Nigeria. It encompasses a wide array of tools, including cultural diplomacy, educational exchanges, international broadcasting, and the promotion of political values and ideals. Unlike hard power, soft power relies on persuasion and the cultivation of mutually beneficial relationships. Nigeria has for decades leveraged on soft power through its vibrant music and film industry to its rich cultural heritage and political influence in Africa. These have enhanced its national security and promote development. For instance, cultural diplomacy initiatives have been used to foster international goodwill and cooperation, while educational exchanges have helped to build strong ties with other nations (Nweke & Enwere, 2024).

In the fight against insurgency and terrorism, the Nigerian military, from the past and current Chiefs of Defence Staff, has recognised the importance of soft power in its counter-insurgency and counter-extremism operations. The current Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. CG Musa, has emphasised the use of non-kinetic efforts, such as psychological operations and strategic communication, to win the hearts and minds of the local population. These efforts have resulted in the surrendering of thousands of Boko Haram members and their family members, contributing to the overall stability of the region (Atungwu, 2024).

The Nigerian military has continued to be at the fore front in the use of soft power in addition to hard power, but the onus lies on the government to promote the involvement of soft power in communities through relevant agencies and departments. The introduction and sustenance of community engagement is a veritable soft power tool that would help build national security (Adebayo, 2017). Security agencies increasingly rely on intelligence which often come from individuals in communities. Community oriented initiatives would build relationships with residents. These programmes focus on

mutual respect and cooperation, involving citizens in crime prevention efforts, such as neighbourhood watch schemes and reporting. Research indicates that neighbourhoods with strong community ties tend to experience lower crime rates (Skogan & Hartnett, 1997).

Education and counter-awareness campaigns are also soft power tools that aim at educating communities and countering the narratives of criminals, insurgents and terrorists. By empowering the public with knowledge, the government and law enforcement agencies can foster a sense of collective responsibility and vigilance (Adebayo, 2017). Addressing the root causes of crimes, insurgencies and terrorism such as poverty, poor education, and unemployment through social programmes is a key application of soft power. By investing in youth mentorship programmes, vocational trainings, addiction recovery services, and strategic communication programmes, the government can reduce the likelihood of criminal behaviours (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

LEVERAGING SOFT POLICING IN CRIME PREVENTION

Soft policing is an evolvement of conventional policing which involves more of the use of force in preventing and controlling crime. It refers to law enforcement strategies that emphasise community engagement, relationship building, and non-coercive methods to maintain public safety and prevent crime (Innes, 2005). Soft policing diverges from conventional law enforcement methods by shifting the focus from authority and enforcement to fostering trust, open communication, and collaborative partnerships between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. According to Innes (2005), soft policing focuses on fostering social cohesion, addressing the underlying causes of crime, and building partnerships with community stakeholders. This approach is rooted in the principles of community policing, problem-solving policing, and intelligence-led policing. The goal is to create an environment where community members feel safe, heard, and actively involved in public safety efforts.

Soft policing can be initiated to prevent crimes through restorative justice. This technique emphasises repairing the harm caused by criminal behaviours through mediated dialogue between the offender and the victim. Restorative justice practices have been shown to reduce recidivism and improve victim satisfaction (Zehr, 1990). It can help to build trust and partnerships with local communities, reducing the likelihood of conflict and promoting cooperation (Bayley, 1994). Another technique of soft policing is the use of preventive patrols. This is common in Nigeria as seen on highways and around communities. Instead of aggressive enforcement, police departments can employ proactive patrols, where officers engage with community members and businesses to

establish a presence that deters crime. This approach allows police to become familiar figures in the community, facilitating trust and cooperation.

Some law enforcement agencies partner with social service organisations through social support programmes to address factors that lead to crime. By connecting individuals with mental health resources or substance abuse programmes, these strategies aim to reduce criminal behaviour at its source (Bennett, 2010).

BENEFITS OF SOFT POWER AND SOFT POLICING

The use of soft power and soft policing in building national security and crime prevention presents several benefits. One of the most significant benefits of soft power and soft policing is their ability to build trust and legitimacy within communities. Building public confidence in law enforcement and government institutions is a linchpin for securing cooperation and promoting adherence to laws. Cultivating this trust is essential for effective governance and community engagement. People are more likely to obey laws and cooperate with authorities when they perceive them as legitimate and fair (Tyler, 2006). Soft policing initiatives, such as community outreach programmes, youth engagement activities, and neighborhood policing, help bridge gaps between authorities and marginalised populations. These strategies humanise law enforcement, reduce fear, and create a shared sense of responsibility for public safety.

The use of soft power and soft policing in crime prevention enhances community collaboration and encourages intelligence gathering which ultimately eases the job of the military and other security agencies thereby improving national security. Proactive engagement and community partnerships can provide law enforcement with timely and actionable intelligence (Lum et.al, 2016). Furthermore, when individuals feel respected and valued by authorities, they are more likely to report suspicious activities and cooperate in investigations.

Unlike traditional reactive policing, soft policing focuses on addressing the root causes of crime, such as poverty, social exclusion, and lack of educational opportunities. Programmes that promote education, employment, and community well-being are essential components of soft policing (Tyler, 2006). These strategies do not merely respond to crime but aim to prevent it from occurring in the first place. Soft power, through diplomacy, cultural exchanges, and public diplomacy campaigns, complements these efforts by fostering values of cooperation, inclusion, and non-violence at broader societal levels (Weisburd, et. al, 2010). As a proactive method, the use of soft power ultimately leads to winning the hearts and minds of the people which is a veritable part of winning wars on insurgency and terrorism (Utsaha, 2024). Studies from the United Arab

Emirates (UAE) and some communities in USA shows that soft power policing led to reduction and prevention of crimes (Alhanaee, 2018).

Another key advantage of soft power and soft policing is the emphasis on de-escalation techniques and conflict resolution. By prioritising dialogue and non-aggressive approaches, military and security agents can reduce the likelihood of confrontations escalating into violence. This approach is especially beneficial in diverse and multicultural societies where cultural misunderstandings can quickly escalate tensions (Weisburd et. al, 2010). De-escalation techniques not only improve the safety of security agents but also enhance public confidence in law enforcement.

CHALLENGES OF SOFT POWER AND SOFT POLICING

While soft power and soft policing are beneficial in the prevention and reduction of crimes and subsequently improving national security, there are some challenges that mitigate their usage and success. One of the fundamental challenges in the application of soft power and soft policing is the establishment of legitimacy and building trust among communities. Often, the military and police forces face historical distrust, particularly in marginalised communities that have experienced the usage of hard power and instances of misconduct. According to Tyler (2006), trust in law enforcement is a cornerstone of voluntary compliance with the law. However, overcoming deep-seated mistrust requires long-term commitment, consistency, and transparency. Inconsistent application of soft power and soft policing strategies can further erode public confidence, undermining their effectiveness. Some communities may exhibit skepticism or resistance to non-traditional policing methods, particularly in areas with a history of strained police-community relations (Lum, 2016).

Poor resource allocation and training are also challenges mitigating against the usage of soft power and policing. Effective implementation of soft power and policing demands significant resources, the whole of society approach, which also include specialised training for military and law enforcement personnel. Officers must acquire skills in conflict resolution, cultural competence, and communication to effectively engage with communities (Lum, 2016). However, resource constraints often limit the implementation of effective and efficient soft power and soft policing because resource allocation frequently lean towards reactive measures, leaving soft efforts underfunded (Tyler, 2006).

Culture and structure are another major barrier to successful implementation of soft power and soft policing strategies. Traditional policing culture often emphasises authority, coercion, control, and measurable outcomes. Soft policing, on the other hand, prioritises community relationships and qualitative prevention measures of success, such

as improved perceptions of safety. This cultural shift requires strong leadership and institutional buy-in, which are often lacking in rigid hierarchical structures (Lum, 2016). The results of soft approaches sometimes take longer to manifest, making it challenging to measure their success compared to immediate enforcement actions.

Conclusion

Leveraging soft power and soft policing strategies in crime prevention and national security offers a proactive, community-focused, and sustainable solution to mitigating modern security threats, promoting a more collaborative and effective approach to ensuring public safety. Soft power, exercised through cultural diplomacy, education, and media influence, cultivates trust and cooperation at both domestic and international levels. By tackling the underlying causes of crime, such as poverty, inequality, and educational disparities, soft power initiatives can foster resilient societies that are less vulnerable to criminal activity. In tandem, soft policing strategies prioritise relationship-building, transparency, and community engagement, thereby strengthening public confidence in law enforcement agencies. This collaborative approach not only enhances intelligence gathering but also mitigates the risk of violent confrontations, ultimately contributing to a safer, more harmonious society.

The strategic fusion of soft power and soft policing offers a comprehensive paradigm for mitigating security threats in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. To foster a resilient societal foundation, governments and security agencies must prioritise investments in education, community development, and diplomatic engagement. Moreover, law enforcement agencies should continue to adopt community-centric policing models that emphasise collaboration, dialogue, and mutual understanding over coercive measures. By achieving a nuanced balance between soft and hard approaches, nations can establish a robust security framework that not only addresses immediate threats but also proactively prevents future risks through sustainable, inclusive, and forward-thinking strategies.

To enhance crime prevention and national security while using soft power and soft policing, this paper recommends:

1. Policy frameworks should be reoriented to prioritise soft power and soft policing as foundational elements of national security strategies, recognising the critical role these approaches play in preventing crime, building trust, and fostering community resilience. To address the root causes of crime, the government of Nigeria should allocate increased resources to educational programmes, community development initiatives, and social services that target socio-economic inequalities, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to

- education. By investing in these initiatives, governments can help mitigate the underlying factors that contribute to crime, creating a more stable and secure environment for all citizens.
2. The government of Nigeria should facilitate collaborative partnerships among diverse stakeholders, including civil society organisations, academia, private sector entities, and international organisations, to leverage their expertise and resources in addressing crime and insecurity. These multi-stakeholder partnerships can foster a cohesive and comprehensive approach to crime prevention and mitigation, promoting a culture of shared responsibility and collective action. By working together, governments and stakeholders can develop innovative solutions, share best practices, and amplify their impact in creating safer and more resilient communities.
 3. Law enforcement agencies should prioritise comprehensive training programmes that emphasise soft policing techniques, including peacebuilding, conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, and community engagement. These programmes should be able to equip officers with practical skills to manage high-pressure situations, foster inclusive relationships with diverse communities, and promote a culture of peace and respect. By investing in soft policing training, agencies can improve officer-community relationships, reduce conflict and violence, and increase public trust and confidence in law enforcement.
 4. Media campaigns and strategic communication should be leveraged to promote positive narratives around law enforcement and community cooperation in crime prevention and national security. Community members should be actively involved in crime prevention strategies through neighbourhood watch programs, forums, and collaborative decision-making.
 5. To ensure the success and sustainability of soft policing initiatives, the Ministry of Defence and Police Commission should establish robust evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to continuously assess their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. Regular assessments and adaptations of soft policing methods should be informed by community feedback, effectiveness studies, and emerging best practices, allowing for data-driven decision-making and refinement of strategies. By prioritising continuous evaluation and adaptation, soft policing initiatives can remain responsive to evolving community needs and threats, ultimately enhancing their impact and effectiveness in promoting public safety and trust.

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