

## JUNGLE JUSTICE IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA: A FOCUS ON DRIVING FACTORS, PATTERNS, LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE

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### Abstract

*There are multiple incidences of jungle justices in Akwa Ibom State; without moral justification for this heinous crime. This study evaluated the motivating force, patterns, legal frameworks and law enforcement response to episodes of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The investigation was guided by the assumptions of the social contract theory. A descriptive survey design was adopted in the investigation. Purposive and simple random sampling technique was employed and a total of 384 community leaders, law enforcement agents, human rights advocates and family members of victims of jungle justice in Uyo, Eket and Ikot Ekpene Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State formed the sample size. Structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews were methods of data gathering. Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the quantitative data and thematic analysis was utilised to analyse qualitative data. Findings showed that factors that influence jungle justice include lack of trust in the police and legal institutions, ignorance of the law and legal rights, nature of allegations, absence of the police, frequency of crime, cultural acceptance of retaliation or community-enforced punishment, and serving as a deterrent to other members of the society. The patterns of jungle justice included burning with tyres and fuel, beating the defendants to death, stoning and lynching, stripping them nude and using dangerous weapons or items to harm the suspects. The current legislative frameworks against jungle justice were unable to checkmate incidences of jungle justice due to insufficient application of the laws and police response to alleged jungle justice was ineffective due to logistical and institutional deficiencies. It is recommended that concerted efforts be undertaken to re-establish public trust in the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and the judicial system through transparent, responsible, and community-centred policing practices. In addition, extensive civic education initiatives that enhance understanding of legal rights, due process, and the risks of extrajudicial punishment should be put into place. Increasing police presence and responsiveness, especially in underprivileged areas, and promoting more engagement between law enforcement and communities might help to lessen the perceived necessity for vigilante activities and increase the legitimacy of formal justice systems.*

**Keywords:** *Jungle Justice, Driving Factors, Patterns, Legal Frameworks, Law Enforcement Response*

### Introduction

Jungle justice, otherwise called mob justice or action, is still a common form of extrajudicial punishment against suspected law or norm violators in many countries around the world, particularly in developing countries such as

Nigeria. It manifests in areas where individuals, often driven by frustration and mistrust of the criminal justice system (CJS), punish offenders without regard to the existing legal procedures (Asangausung *et al.*, 2023). Ukpong (2021) and Mac-Leva *et al.*

(2020) submitted that weak legal frameworks, systemic corruption, delayed judicial proceedings and insufficient policing have all contributed to the issues of jungle justice, which had become deeply ingrained in local responses to crime in many African societies.

In both rural and urban areas in Nigeria, jungle justice has become a distressing reality (Essoh *et al.*, 2024). In this practice, suspected criminals are publicly lynched, stoned, beaten or burnt without a trial or legal counsel (Mac-Leva *et al.* 2020; Esara *et al.*, 2023). According to the Daily Trust Editorial (2022), between 2020 and 2022, about 200 persons were reportedly killed through jungle justice. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended (LFN, 1999), particularly sections 33, 34 and 36 states that every citizen in the country has the right to life, dignity, personal liberty and a fair trial in the court of law (Asangausung *et al.*, 2023). However, despite these legal protections, jungle justice persists. Mob justice has become increasingly prevalent as a result of the public's declining faith in the criminal justice system. Ilori (2020) and Bassey and Asangausung (2023) opines that those who feel that the social contract has been compromised frequently believe that extrajudicial punishment is the only effective way to deal with suspected crime violators.

Esara *et al.* (2023), in their study, acknowledged the prevalence of jungle justice in parts of Akwa Ibom State. Odey (2021) submitted that the prevalence of jungle justice is attributed to a loss of confidence in the major players of the criminal justice system (CJS), including the police, the court and the correctional institution. They blamed CJS for lack of prompt judicial action,

accountability, transparency, victimisation and compromise in handling criminal cases. Balogun *et al.* (2023) noted that the targets of mob actions include robbers, thieves, rapists, murders, kidnappers, and those accused of practicing witchcraft. Balogun *et al.* (2023) pointed out that financial difficulties, ineffective law enforcement, public anger, a lack of knowledge about legal rights and deep-seated mistrust of the criminal justice system are some of the root causes.

This study, therefore, examined the driving factors, patterns, legal frameworks and law enforcement response to incidents of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study employed qualitative methods of data collection and analysis and the results provided well-informed, fact-based recommendations that can direct efforts to uphold the rule of law, rebuild public trust in formal justice mechanisms and eventually lessen the prevalence of jungle justice in the state.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In an ideal society, legally established institutions and individuals alike were supposed to uphold the rule of law and fundamental human rights (Abang *et al.*, 2025). Every suspected offender is supposed not to be brutally killed without a fair hearing and trial in the court of competent jurisdiction. However, the reality in Akwa Ibom State is very different from this ideal situation. Brown *et al.* (2024) submitted that in rural and urban areas of Akwa Ibom State, many people, including young and old, have lost their lives or properties or sustained temporary or permanent injury due to mob actions against the accused offenders without recourse to legal procedures.

Several people have lost confidence in Nigeria's criminal justice system (Bassey *et al.*, 2024) and a significant number of them

have become perpetrators of jungle justice. Jungle justice is barbaric and against the extant laws in Nigeria. It is true that several suspects have been murdered, injured and disgraced. In addition to breaking the constitution's guarantees of life, liberty, dignity and a fair trial, these actions feed a vicious cycle of social unrest and lawlessness. The formal justice system seems unapproachable, unaffordable, or unconcerned with the issues of many members of these communities (Asangausung *et al.*, 2024). Consequently, for perpetrators, mob justice is considered a viable alternative to formal criminal case adjudication, even though it is illegal and risky. Jungle justice has a wide-ranging effect on the victims, their families and the society at large.

Mac-Leva *et al.* (2020) and Esara *et al.* (2023) opined that the escalation of jungle justice is due to widespread public mistrust of the police and the judiciary based on perceived corruption, lack of accountability and transparency among those who are supposed to fight crime. In an effort to reduce jungle justice, the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly passed a resolution against jungle justice and advocated for increased public awareness and enforcement. Laws against homicide and injustice are enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (LFN, 1999) and the Criminal Code Act (LFN, 2004). In spite of the existing legal frameworks and policies and law enforcement mechanisms in Akwa Ibom State, jungle justice is on the increase.

Scholars have conducted studies on the issues of jungle justice in Nigeria. For instance, Balagon *et al.* (2023) examined the causes and trends of jungle justice in Nigeria. Esara *et al.* (2023) looked into jungle justice and governance in Akwa Ibom State. The issue of jungle justice in the Lagos metropolis was studied by Ilori (2020). Ishola (2024) compared the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Sharia law on religious blasphemy, jungle justice and legal

pluralism in northern Nigeria. Mackintosh *et al.* (2024) examined the effectiveness of community policing in curbing mob actions in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Based on the foregoing, previous studies relied heavily on analysing secondary data on jungle justice without obtaining first-hand information to look at the problem of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State, particularly giving attention to the driving factors, patterns, legal frameworks and law enforcement response to the phenomenon. This study has closed the gap in the body of literature.

### Objectives

The main objective of this study was to examine the driving factors, patterns, legal frameworks and law enforcement response to jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. examine the factors influencing jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State;
2. assess the patterns of Jungle Justice in Akwa Ibom State;
3. evaluate the legal frameworks against jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State;
4. appraise the law enforcement response to incidents of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State.

### Research Questions

- i. What are the factors influencing Jungle Justice in Akwa Ibom State?
- ii. What patterns of Jungle Justice exist in Akwa Ibom State?
- iii. How effective are the legal frameworks against jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State?
- iv. How effective is law enforcement response to incidents of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State?

### Literature Review

#### Conceptualisation of Jungle Justice

According to Kapae and Adishi (2017), jungle justice is the act of rejecting the rule of law

and taking laws into one's hands. It is also the act of handing suspected offenders over to the hands and compassion of an angry mob (Kapae & Adishi, 2017). It reflects a breakdown of law and order, and the perpetrators of this heinous crime assume the role of judge and executioner.

Abdulah (2016) comments that jungle justice is a metaphor for the failure of justice and the inability of society to apply consistent and equitable rules and processes to everyone. In jungle justice practices, the rule of law is undermined because individuals are controlled by their emotions instead of being guided by the extant laws.

Balogun *et al.* (2023) opined that jungle justice is an illegal act that undermines due process and proper treatment of crime suspects. Kolawole-Amao (2020) also added that jungle justice refers to total disregard for the rule of law by using extrajudicial methods to harm a crime suspect. Onuh (2012) opined that jungle justice is the act of an angry mob to avenge suspected criminals.

In this study, jungle justice, otherwise called mob justice, is a form of extrajudicial punishment against crime suspects, commonly executed by violent individuals or a community with total disregard for the rule of law, human rights and law enforcement agents. An accused person may suffer physical violence, including severe beatings, public humiliation, burning with tyres and petrol, poisoning, acid baths, and summary execution. It happens in areas where crime persists and residents believe that the major players of the criminal justice system (the police, the court and the correctional institution) are no longer acting in the

interest of the masses (i.e., violation of the social contract).

### **Factors Influencing Jungle Justice in Nigeria**

In Nigerian society, jungle justice is still a pervasive and problematic issue that is supported by a confluence of institutional, structural and socio-economic issues (Esara *et al.*, 2023). Many citizens still turn to mob actions in spite of the formal justice system that is in place to maintain order and safeguard human rights. This is primarily due to their frustration with the system's perceived shortcomings and inefficiencies.

Legal proceedings in Nigeria are frequently characterised by protracted delays, sometimes lasting years, as noted by Udemezue (2019). This deprives victims of prompt justice and fosters a sense of impunity. Some resentful people and communities are compelled to seek retribution outside of the law due to the slowness of the legal system and the pervasive notion that justice may never be served.

Mob justice is indiscriminately applied to both minor and serious crimes, such as theft, rape, witchcraft accusations, kidnapping and murder, frequently without any kind of investigation or chance for the accused to defend themselves, according to Balogun *et al.* (2023). Balogun *et al.* (2023) observed that jungle justice is on the increase due to public mistrust of the law enforcement mechanisms, weak institutions and socio-economic variables such as unemployment, poverty, inequality and public anger over high rates of crime.

Simwa (2018) concluded that escalation of jungle justice is due to incompetence and

logistic problems associated with the security agencies. In order to illustrate how citizens may organise vigilante groups to fill perceived security gaps, Simwa (2018) cited the rise of the Bakassi Boys in Anambra State as a direct response to the Nigerian Police's inability to prevent crime and uphold public order.

Esara, *et al.* (2023) further examined jungle justice and governance in Akwa Ibom State and discovered that many communities have taken matters into their own hands due to the lack of procedural fairness in the legal system. Ilori (2020) conducted a study in Lagos and found that persistent neighbourhood crimes and pervasive insecurity, particularly in urban areas like Lagos, have damaged public confidence in the police's capacity to obtain convictions, normalising jungle justice as a form of alternative justice.

Salihu and Gholami (2018) examined the relationship between mob justice, corrupt and unproductive justice system in Nigeria. The study had 904 respondents and findings showed that mob justice was on the increase due to perceived bias and corruption among the major actors in the criminal justice system. In a study conducted in Lagos State with 1152 respondents, Shodunke *et al.* (2023) found that mistrust of formal justice mechanisms, unethical practices among the security operatives, institutional inefficiencies, and socio-economic disparities and seeing jungle justice as the only method to curb crime are reasons for the spread of jungle justice.

The Daily Trust Editorial (2022) stated that in numerous instances, mobs have decided to exercise this type of justice because they

mistrusted the law, law enforcers and the legal process. This mostly derives from a lack of thorough investigation and prosecution of suspects, the involvement of law enforcement in suspects' flight from justice and the excruciatingly sluggish wheels of justice in Nigeria with court cases dragging for years as hundreds of suspects await trial.

Ruwan *et al.* (2020) evaluated the impact of police legitimacy perceptions on public support for jungle justice, which exacerbates the problem. According to their findings, public support for mob justice was significantly predicted by low perceptions of police effectiveness, fairness and lawfulness. In particular, 31% of the variation in public support for jungle justice was explained by perceived police effectiveness, whereas 20% was explained by perceived fairness and lawfulness. These findings highlight how communities are more likely to support or engage in extrajudicial violence when police are perceived as incompetent, unfair, or corrupt.

### **Patterns of Jungle Justice in Nigeria**

In their study, Balogun *et al.* (2023) examined the patterns employed mob in executing jungle justice. The study was based on secondary data obtained from academic articles and media reports. The results showed that the techniques used were hand beating, necklacing, lynching, burning, stripping, clubbing, and stoning of suspected criminals. As Bello (2019) correctly pointed out, mob actions include burning with fuel, beating, acid bath and beheading. The International Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA, 2019) submitted that women accused of crimes have experienced physical abuse, public humiliation and stripping them naked.



### **Legal Frameworks in Addressing Jungle Justice in Nigeria**

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended (LFN, 1999) provides fundamental human rights to all its citizens, including the right to life, the right to liberty and the right to a fair trial. These provisions are carefully spelt out in sections 33, 34 and 36 of the Constitution. According to these clauses, no one should be punished or have their life taken away without following the proper legal procedures. Therefore, at any point a crime suspect is exposed to extrajudicial punishment without a fair hearing and legal trial, it amounts to a total violation of legal provisions.

Furthermore, statutory codes like Section 220 of the Penal Code Act (2024) and Section 315 of the Criminal Code Act (2004) criminalise all forms of unlawful killings, including jungle justice. Section 8, Subsection 1 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) (LFN, 2015) guarantees every crime suspect to be humanely treated, without violating his or her rights. This implies that crime suspects are not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman manner. The above legal frameworks forbid jungle justice and emphasise the protection of human rights, including those who are accused of committing crime. Thus, it is the sole responsibility of the court to sentence any offender according to the provisions of the law. Therefore, jungle justice is illegal in Nigeria and the perpetrators have contravened the provisions of the law. In most cases, perpetrators of jungle justice intentionally ignore the legal frameworks and law enforcement agents to exercise summary execution.

In a study on jungle justice in the northern region of Nigeria, Ishola (2024) comparatively analysed the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Sharia Law. The study revealed that Sharia Law principles conflict with the constitutional provisions that guarantee the freedom of thought, freedom of expression

and freedom of religion, mostly in matters of religious blasphemy. It is safe to say that in the northern part of Nigeria, especially the core Muslim-dominated states, cases of blasphemy happened intermittently. For instance, on May 12, 2022, Deborah Samuel Yakubu, a female student of Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto State and a Christian by faith, was accused of blasphemy against Prophet Muhammed and she was stoned to death by a mob of Muslim students. A similar scenario took place in 2007 when Muslim pupils at a secondary school in northern Nigeria assaulted a female teacher and killed her for discrediting the Quran (The Guardian Editorial, 2022).

At the sub-national level, like Akwa Ibom State, Odey (2021) reported that the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly had passed a resolution against jungle justice in the state. Odey (2021) furthered that the resolution was based on incessant mob killings across the state and the Commissioner of Police was directed to arrest and prosecute perpetrators, while the Ministry of Information and the Ethical and Attitudinal Reorientation Commission (EARCOM) were asked to raise awareness about the effects of jungle justice. The legal frameworks and policies on jungle justice indicate that Nigeria is against this heinous practice, but public mistrust, conflicting normative systems, institutional inefficiencies and poor enforcement of the extant laws encourage the extrajudicial killings.

### **Law Enforcement Response to Incidents of Jungle Justice in Nigeria**

Akan (2023) pointed out that law enforcement response to incidents of jungle justice in Nigeria is sluggish. In a study carried out in River State, Mackintosh *et al.* (2024) found that officers of the Nigeria Police Force are finding it difficult to give swift responses to incidents of jungle justice due to logistic problems like poor maintenance of vehicles, lack of funding for fuel and communication gaps between the police and the public. Kolawole-Amao (2020)

conducted a study to examine the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in tackling the menace of jungle justice in Nigeria. The study relied on secondary data. The data were analysed using content analysis. The findings showed that police response to cases of jungle justice is very poor and other players in the criminal justice system are ineffective in tackling the menace. In sum, available literature revealed that law enforcement responses to incidents of jungle justice are slow in Nigeria. Police interventions have always been reactive instead of proactive.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Social Contract Theory of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau guided the study. These classical theorists argued that in the state of nature, human life is chaotic and insecure. In order to escape this anarchy, citizens agreed to surrender their freedoms to the government in exchange for protection and loyalty. The government and law enforcement agents were supposed to prevent crime and maintain law and order in the society. In most cases, failure to prevent and investigate crime and prosecute offenders, delays in court proceedings, extortion and unnecessary expenses and waste of time in going to police stations and courts are against the social contract with the government. Since the primary obligation of the government under the social contract has failed, citizens feel abandoned and insecure, prompting them to withdraw their allegiance to the government. This withdrawal is an attempt to restore order through jungle justice which is against the social contract.

Jungle justice is a breach of social contract between the government and the masses. It explains how perpetrators of jungle justice act outside the provisions of the law that guarantee the protection of life and property. These brutal communal reactions to criminal locations in Akwa Ibom State where cases of jungle justice have been widely reported.

allegations demonstrate a lacuna created by a failed justice system in the country. Such actions may not reflect a rejection of justice itself, but rather a desperate alternative to what is seen as an inaccessible or compromised system.

Although, Social Contract Theory has been criticised for being too idealistic and historically hypothetical and for assuming equal consent and benefit among citizens in a complex and unequal society like Nigeria, its explanatory value remains significant in this context, while the theory's origins are rooted in Western political thought, its principles of mutual obligation, consent and state legitimacy remain applicable in assessing governance failures and social responses in postcolonial states. It highlights the urgency of reforming institutions, rebuilding public trust and re-establishing the credibility of law enforcement in order to restore the broken contract between the state and the citizens. Thus, the adoption of Social Contract Theory in analysing jungle justice in Akwa Ibom is justified, as it underscores both the moral collapse of state authority and the sociological motivations for extrajudicial actions, ultimately calling attention to the need for responsive governance and functional legal frameworks.

### **Materials and Methods**

This study adopts a descriptive survey design to explore the socio-cultural and economic factors contributing to jungle justice in Nigeria, as well as the effectiveness of legal and institutional responses in curbing mob violence. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of the issue. The research focuses on selected These include urban and rural communities within Uyo, Eket and Ikot Ekpene Local

Government Area. These local government areas cut across the three senatorial districts of the State.

The target population includes residents in affected communities, victims' families, law enforcement officers and legal practitioners and human rights activists. A sample size of approximately 384 respondents was selected, including family members of victims of jungle justice, community members, law enforcement personnel, lawyers and human rights activists. Purposive sampling technique and simple random sampling technique were used in the selection of samples. Data were collected through structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews.

Quantitative data from questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, presented in tables. Qualitative data from in-depth interviews were analysed thematically to identify recurring patterns, themes and insights into the causes and legal responses to jungle justice. Ethical approval was obtained before conducting the research. Informed consent was secured from all participants and confidentiality was maintained to protect their identities. In order to minimise psychological distress during interviews, sensitive cases involving victims of jungle justice were handled carefully.

## Results

**Table 1: Participants' Socio-Demographic Information**

Characteristics	Frequency (n = 384)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age bracket (Years):</b>		
18-25	96	25.0%
26-35	120	31.3%
36-45	80	20.8%
46-55	58	15.1%
56+	30	7.8%
<b>Sex:</b>		
Male	212	55.2%
Female	172	44.8%
<b>Marital Status:</b>		
Single	154	40.1%
Married	186	48.4%
Divorced	26	6.8%
Widowed	18	4.7%
<b>Level of Education:</b>		
Primary	34	8.9%
Secondary	142	37.0%
Tertiary	174	45.3%
No formal education	34	8.9%
<b>Employment Status:</b>		
No employment	94	24.5%
Farming/Trading/Artistry/self-employment	112	29.2%
Civil/Public service	102	26.6%
Private organisation employment	76	19.8%



**Area of Residence:**

Uyo	158	41.1%
Eket	102	26.6%
Ikot Ekpene	124	32.3%

**Classification of participants:**

Perpetrators	38	9.9%
Victims	60	15.6%
Witnesses	226	58.9%
Others	60	15.6%

*Source: Field data (2025)*

Table 1 show the socio-demographic information of the 384 respondents who participated in the study. Results show that 96(25%) of the respondents were between 18 and 35 years old, 120 (31.3%) were between 26-35 years old, 80 (20.8%) were between 36 and 45 years old, 58 (15.1%) were between 46-55 years old and 30 (7.8%) were between 56 years old and above. The majority of the respondents were youths and this implies that youths might be more vulnerable to or participate in jungle justice, either as penetrators, victims or eyewitnesses. It was revealed that male respondents (55.25%) were the majority in the study. This aligns with the official statistics in Akwa Ibom State that shows that males are more than females and they are more likely to participate in jungle justice.

Further results show that 154 respondents (40.1%) were single, 186 (48.8%) of them were married, 26 (6.8%) of the respondents have divorced and 18 (4.7%) of the respondents were widowed. The data on respondents' level of education shows that 34 (8.9%) of them had primary education, 142 (37.09%) of them had secondary education, 174 (45.3%) of the respondents had tertiary education and 34 (8.9%) of the respondents had no formal education. This implies that the majority of respondents were literate and those who are well-educated may participate in jungle justice, perhaps due to their

dissatisfaction in the law enforcement agencies.

Employment status of the respondents shows 94 (24.5%) of the respondents were unemployed, 112 (29.2%) of the respondents were into farming, trading, artistry and self-employed, 102 (26.6%) of them work in private organisations and 76 (19.8%) were either civil or public servants. This implies that the respondents have diverse job statuses, with a significant proportion engaged in self-employment and private jobs, while a significant number of the respondents were unemployed, indicating varied economic participation and potential disparities in income stability. The data on areas of residents show that 158 (41.1%) of the respondents were living in Uyo, 102 (26.6%) in Eket and 124 (32.35) IN Ikot Ekpene respectively. This distribution draws attention to possible systemic flaws and economic annoyances that could create conditions that support jungle justice, particularly in areas where formal justice systems are viewed as unreliable, corrupt, or inaccessible.

Geographical balance in viewpoints and experiences was censured by the participants' equitable distribution within the three senatorial districts in Akwa Ibom State, viz: Uyo, Eket and Ikot Ekpene. This wide

distribution indicates that jungle justice is a problem that affects urban and semi-urban areas and is not limited to a single location.

Results also reveal that 38 (9.9%) of the respondents were perpetrators of jungle justice, 60 (15.6%) of them said that they

were victims of jungle justice, 226 (58.9%) of the respondents said that they were eyewitnesses and 60 (15.6%) of the respondents chose others. The most startling finding from the data on participants' classifications of jungle justice is that most of them had seen such incidents, while others identified as either perpetrators or victims.

**Table 2: Selected Incidents of Jungle Justice in Akwa Ibom State**

S/N	Year	Location	Incident Description	Outcome	Police intervention
1.	2018	Itam Junction, Itu	3 Suspected thieves using Keke to rob	Set ablaze by mob	No intervention recorded
2.	2020	Ikot Abang, Ibiono Ibom	Robbery using Keke	Set ablaze by mob	No intervention recorded
3.	2020	Ikpa Road, Uyo	Suspected robber	Lynched and set ablaze	No intervention recorded
4.	2021	Abak Road, Uyo	Accused of phone theft	Lynched	No intervention recorded
5.	2021	Ikot Oku Ikono, Uyo	Nursing mother allegedly stole money	Killed by mob	No intervention recorded
6.	2021	Nwaniba, Uyo	Suspected thief	Set ablaze	No intervention recorded
7.	2021	Ikot Ambang, Ibiono Ibom	Accused of stealing a goat	Set ablaze	No intervention recorded
8.	2021	Urua Okpokpo, Uyo	Allegedly stealing the sum of N2, 500 from a garri shop	The woman was beaten death	Police arrived after distress call but could not stop the incident
9.	2021	Ekpai Nduot, Abak	A-10-year-old child accused of wizard	Killed with rate poison	No intervention recorded
10.	2021	Ikot Oku Ikono, Uyo	Two alleged robbers of a POS attendant	Set ablaze	Police arrived the scene of crime after distress call
11.	2022	Afaha Oku, Uyo	Accused of killing youth of the area	Angry youths killed two Hausa scrap collectors	Police arrived after distress call but could not stop the incident
12.	2022	Obot Idim, Ibesikpo Asutan	Accused of stealing cables	Set ablaze	No intervention recorded
13.	2022	Barracks Road, Uyo	Serial robber caught in the act	Set ablaze	No intervention recorded
14.	2023	Aka Offot, Uyo	Petty theft	Set ablaze	No intervention recorded
15.	2023	Aka Offot, Uyo	Raped a child to death	Set ablaze	No intervention recorded
16.	2023	Itu Road, Itu	Phone snatching	Set ablaze	No intervention recorded

17.	2023	Ikot Ambon, Ibesikpo Asutan	Generator theft at a Church	Rescued by Police	Timely response prevented lynching
18.	2023	Ekpene Ukim, Uruan	Theft of 2 bottles of Campari	Rescued by Police	Quick police action prevented burning
19.	2024	EkidItam, Itu	Suspected armed robber	Set ablaze	No intervention recorded
20.	2025	Ikot Ambang, Ibiono Ibom	Broke into provision store	Set ablaze	No intervention recorded
21.	2025	Obio Offot, Uyo	Allegedly accused of theft	Rescued by Police	Police arrived after distress call and stopped mob action
22.	2016	Ikot Ekpene	Robbery suspect involved in a failed attempt to snatch a motorcycle	He was beaten and set ablaze by a mob	No intervention recorded

*Source: Field data (2025)*

Table 2 depicts selected cases of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State. The data demonstrate a worrying and continuous tendency of extrajudicial punishments across diverse sections of the state, particularly in areas like Uyo, Itu, Ibiono Ibom and Ibesikpo Asutan. The statistics were taken from 2016-2025 and a total of 22 occurrences of jungle justice were recorded at different places in Akwa Ibom State. The instances involved acts such as theft, robbery, rape, vandalism and many others. The suspects were ruthlessly punished without legal processes or trials and the methods of punishment include burning with tyres and fuel, beating to death, lynching etc. This suggests that in many communities in Akwa Ibom State, jungle justice is seen as a way to punish suspects without involving the criminal court system. In all the 22 cases of jungle justice recorded, 5 of them were rescued through police involvement. The police arrived at the scene

after the incidents had already taken place. Effective police involvement was seen in 3 cases that occurred, two in 2023 and one in 2025. This means that the police are always reacting rather than being proactive in their approach.

The data shows an unsettling victim profile, including vulnerable persons like a nursing mother and a juvenile (10-year-old child) accused of witchcraft. The deep-rooted nature of superstitious beliefs and frustration created by crime suspects in the afflicted places makes it difficult to reduce jungle justice. Most incidents of jungle justice occurred in pretty well-known and accessible regions where police stations and checkpoints are not too far. This evidence points to systemic challenges in law enforcement response to crime occurrences.

### Research Question I: What are the factors influencing jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State?

**Table 3: Factors Influencing Jungle Justice in Akwa Ibom State**

Precipitating Factors	Frequency (n = 384)	Percentage (%)
Absence of the Police	58	15.1
Lack of trust in the police and legal institutions	92	24.0
Ignorance of the law and legal rights	46	12.0

Cultural acceptance of retaliation or community-enforced punishment	38	9.9
Nature of allegations	74	19.3
Frequency of crime	42	10.9
Deterrence to others	34	8.8
Total	384	100

*Source: Field data (2025)*

Table 3 presents data on the factors influencing jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State. It reveals that jungle justice is prevalent because of absence of the police (15.1%), lack of trust in the police and legal institutions (24%), ignorance of the law and legal rights (20%), cultural acceptance of retaliation or community-enforced punishment (9.9%), nature of allegations (19.3%), frequency of crime (10.9%) and 8.8% of the respondents said that deterrence is the cause of it. This suggests a deep-rooted uncertainty toward

the ability of law enforcement to curb crime effectively, which in turn encourages communities to resort to extrajudicial measures. As reflected in the Table 2, the major cause of jungle justice is the lack of trust in the police and other players of the criminal justice system like the court, accounting for 24%. Closely following is the nature of allegations, such as theft, robbery, other serious crimes, which represents 19.3% and absence of the police (15.1%).

#### Research Question II: What are the patterns of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State?

**Table 4: Patterns of Jungle Justice in Akwa Ibom State**

Patterns	n (%)
Burning with tyres and petrol	142 (37.0)
Beating to death	96 (25.0%)
Stoning and lynching	121 (31.5)
Parading suspects naked or semi-nude before violence	3(0.8)
Use of sharp weapons (machetes, knives, office pins, etc.)	22(5.7)
Total	384(100)

*Source: Field data (2025)*

Table 3 presents data on the patterns of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State. These patterns include burning with tyres and petrol (37%), beating to death (25%), stoning and lynching (31.5%), parading suspects naked or semi-nude before violence (0.8%) and the use of sharp weapons like machetes, knives, office pins, etc., which accounted for 5.7%. The three most popular techniques, burning with tyres and petrol, beating to death and stoning and lynching, combined to

make 93.5% of all cases that happened. These figures imply that jungle justice is commonly carried out in a harsh manner, leaving little room for due process or presumption of innocence. These are public manifestations of wrath or discontent towards a suspected offender to serve as a deterrent to other members of the society who may want to go contrary, though unlawfully. In most cases, law enforcement personnel learn about such incidents only after they have occurred.

### Research Question III: How effective are the legal frameworks in Addressing jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State?

**Table 4: Effectiveness of Legal Frameworks in Addressing Jungle Justice in Akwa Ibom State**

Option	Frequency (n = 384)	Percentage (%)
Effective	29	7.6
Somewhat effective	61	13.3
Ineffective	168	43.8
Somewhat ineffective	73	19.0
No idea	63	16.5
Total	384	100

Source: Field data (2025)

Table 4 presents data on how effective the legal frameworks are in addressing cases of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State. The results demonstrate that there is often a lack of trust in the existing legal structures to prevent or effectively address cases of mob justice or violence. As indicated, a combined total of 62.8% of respondents perceived that the existing legal frameworks against jungle justice are either ineffective (43.8%) or somewhat ineffective (19%). This means that the legal systems in the country are weak, inadequately enforced, or divorced from the realities encountered by populations affected by jungle justice. It further demonstrates that only a small minority of respondents (7.6%) assessed the legal framework as effective and 13.3% claimed that it is moderately effective.

This minority opinion suggests that there may be instances that the law has been

Victims' family member said:

*"The legal frameworks are there in theory, but in practice, they often fail to protect people like my brother who was killed by mob action. After the incident, there was no swift justice and those responsible are still walking free. I feel like the system protects perpetrators more than the victims. If the laws were effective, we wouldn't be seeing this level of street violence in our communities even in the urban areas, it is still the same thing."*



Family member of one of the victims of jungle justice expressed disappointment with the legal system, pointing a critical gap between the existence of legal frameworks and their practical enforcement. The opinion shows a belief that while perpetrators of jungle justice frequently escape punishment even when an

accusing finger is pointed at someone; victims (dead or alive) receive little to no justice. In fact, when the legal frameworks or formal systems seems ineffective, members of the public may be compelled to take laws into their hands, contributing to the persistence of jungle justice in the country.

Law Enforcement Officer:

*"On paper, the legal system appears to be quite strong. We have laws that prohibit murder, assault and mob action. The real problem is enforcement. Our resources are insufficient, public cooperation is frequently poor and people would rather take matters into their hands due to their mistrust of the legal system. Both the government and the communities we serve need to do more to help us."*

The response of the law enforcement officer reveals that there is a vacuum between the existence of legal provisions and their actual execution or enforcement. In the Nigerian legislation, jungle justice is deemed illegal, but execution of these rules is complicated by institutional obstacles, including a lack of finance, manpower and public support. It might be claimed that enforcement of laws is

difficult due to popular choice for extrajudicial acts, motivated by ongoing lack of trust and faith in the Nigerian legal system. This means that legislative frameworks by themselves are not enough to address the prevalence of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State without an improvement in community trust and institutional competence.

Legal Practitioner:

*"Although acts of jungle justice are expressly illegal under the Nigerian Constitution, Criminal Code, Penal Code and the Criminal Justice Act, enforcement varies. Access to justice and legal provisions are also at odds. Witnesses are frequently reluctant to testify and cases involving mob violence are rarely prosecuted in their entirety. Public education, police reform and judicial will must all support the legal framework for it to be successful."*

The viewpoint of the lawyer draws attention to the stark discrepancy between Nigeria's official legal framework and how it is actually implemented. Even though the criminal code forbids mob violence, it is

rarely enforced and these cases are rarely fully prosecuted. Systemic obstacles like poor judicial follow-through, uncooperative witnesses and victims' restricted access to justice exacerbate this. The analysis shows

that the legal framework by itself is unable to effectively curb jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State without extensive police reform, a more

resolute judiciary and strong public education to alter attitudes and promote lawful behaviour.

Human Rights Activist:

*"Although there is a legal framework in Nigeria, it cannot prevent incessant occurrences of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State. It is my in my opinion that institutional response and accountability are lacking. Perpetrators of jungle justice are rarely held accountable and the majority of victims never receive justice. Mob actions will persist until the legal system is quick, open and dependable. Additionally, we require more grassroots legal literacy and human rights advocacy."*

The human rights advocate emphasises the discrepancy between the legal frameworks' existence and their real ability to stop jungle justice. Even though laws are in place, they do not work as deterrents because of a lack of accountability, inadequate institutional responses and structural delays in the administration of justice. The public's reliance on mob action is strengthened by the

belief that offenders go unpunished. The analysis emphasises how urgently the public needs a justice system that is not only effective and transparent, but also trustworthy. Additionally, to enable communities to pursue justice through legal channels rather than extrajudicial actions, human rights advocacy at the grassroots level and increased legal literacy are crucial.

Community Leader:

*"People's frustration leads to the occurrence of jungle justice. They believe the legal system is corrupt or too slow. Despite the existence of laws, the community lacks trust in the system's ability to administer justice. Nevertheless, more community involvement and education are required. To win back the public's trust, the laws must be perceived as fair and effective in addition to being enforced."*

The viewpoint of the community leader sheds light on the ingrained dissatisfaction and mistrust that local communities have for the legal system, which feeds jungle justice. Despite the existence of legal provisions, perceptions of injustice, inefficiency and corruption undermine them. The community takes matters into their own hands as a result of losing faith in official institutions. The

analysis highlights that in addition to enforcing the law, the justice system must endeavour to restore public confidence via openness, equity and proactive community involvement. To move away from extrajudicial punishment and towards legal justice procedures, public education and inclusive discourse are also crucial.

Overall, the data indicates that although Akwa Ibom State has legal frameworks against jungle justice, these frameworks are not

generally understood, trusted, or upheld. Significant reform is required if the legal system is to serve as a real deterrent. Public

legal education initiatives, fortifying law enforcement agencies, enhancing the speed and openness of court proceedings and exhibiting political will to consistently prosecute jungle justice cases are a few

examples. Without such efforts, legal instruments will remain largely symbolic and mob justice will continue to fill the vacuum created by institutional failure.

**Research Question IV: How effective is the law enforcement response to incidents of jungle justice Akwa Ibom State?**

**Table 5: Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Response to Incidents of Jungle Justice in Akwa Ibom State**

Option	Frequency (n = 384)	Percentage (%)
Effective	38	9.9
Somewhat effective	64	16.7
Ineffective	172	44.8
Somewhat ineffective	68	17.7
No idea	42	10.9
Total	384	100

*Source: Field data (2025)*

Table 5 show the effectiveness of law enforcement response to incidents of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State.

More than 60% of the respondents considered police response as either ineffective (44.8%) or somewhat ineffective (17.7%). This reflects the high level of dissatisfaction towards police response to distress calls to rescue victims of jungle justice. The overwhelming perception of ineffectiveness may not be far from the systemic challenges within the Nigeria Police Force. It also shows that 9.9% of the respondents consider the police response as effective or somewhat effective (16.7%). This implies that positive police interventions in incidents of jungle justice are slow in Akwa Ibom State.

This may be attributed to a number of factors, including delayed responses to reports of mob action, inadequate manpower, poor training on handling mob violence, or corruption that undermines the enforcement of law and order. The perceived lack of effectiveness may also result from more general institutional flaws like inadequate funding, a lack of logistical support, or the incapacity to function well in isolated or dangerous locations. It is also revealed that 10.9% of the respondents had no idea about how effective the response to incidents of jungle justice is, pointing to a lack of effective communication, partnership and collaboration between the police and the public.

The excerpts of the interviews show thus:

A victim's family member said:

*"In most cases, police response to incidents of jungle justice is too little, too late and unprofessional. In my instance, the police showed up after the incident had already taken place. We have not heard anything since no one was arrested. It seems that unless the victim is a powerful person, the authorities do not give these cases enough attention. I think so."*

A law enforcement officer said:

*We make every effort to the best of our ability. Incidents involving jungle justice frequently happen on their own and by the time we learn about them, the harm has already been done. To react quickly and stop these acts, we need more personnel, improved intelligence and faster public reporting.*

From the legal perspective, a Legal Practitioner opined thus:

*"In Akwa Ibom State, law enforcement's approach to jungle justice is more reactive than proactive. The majority of cases never reach court, investigations are conducted poorly and arrests are occasional. Jungle justice will persist until a concerted effort is made to enhance police accountability and case management."*

More so, a human rights activist added:

*The police frequently ignore the situation or show up after it has already happened and when they do, their follow-up is inadequate. This fosters a culture of impunity. Reorienting law enforcement to view mob violence as a grave human rights violation that requires immediate and comprehensive action is necessary.*

Community Leader submitted:

*The truth is that people do not trust or involve the police early enough, even though they do respond occasionally. If someone reports, there is also a fear of reprisals. Stronger police presence in local communities and mutual trust between communities and the police are necessary for more effective law enforcement.*

In sum, perspectives of the participants suggested that members of the public are unsatisfied with the way the Nigeria Police respond to reported occurrences of jungle justice. This stresses the general public's suspicion of law enforcement and the essential need for fast, unbiased and proactive police in order to re-establish public trust and maintain the rule of law. It is

also shown that the logistical and institutional limits affect prompt response, demonstrating the reactive character of police interventions instead of being proactive.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The results of the study showed that the major factors influencing jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State include lack of trust in the police and legal institutions, ignorance of the law and legal rights, nature of allegations, absence of the police, frequency of crime, cultural acceptance of retaliation or community-enforced punishment, and serving as a deterrent to other members of the society. The results are consistent with Udemezue (2019) findings' that the rise of mob justice is largely caused by the delay in legal proceedings. The results also align with the findings of Salihu and Gholami (2018), who argued that insincerity and corruption among the security personnel and financial burdens associated with prosecuting a suspected criminal to a logical conclusion make some people use illegal methods to obtain justice.

In their crucial human rights perspective, Shodunke, *et al.* (2023) highlight how the breakdown of justice institutions not only threatens the rule of law but also solidifies harmful norms in which mob action is accepted as a deterrent and control mechanism. The results are also consistent with the submission of Esara, *et al.* (2023), who blamed the government and law enforcement agencies in Akwa Ibom State for their inability to prevent and control occurrences of jungle justice in the state. These factors influencing jungle justice are against the social contract between the state and the citizens. This desertion explains why the public has chosen to enforce laws through illegal means. Therefore, the phenomenon of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State is a deeply ingrained response to institutional collapse rather than just an isolated or spontaneous cultural reaction.

The results also showed that burning with tyres and fuel, beating the suspects to death, stoning and lynching, stripping suspects naked and using dangerous weapons or objects to inflict pain and injury on the suspects were repeated patterns of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State. This argument aligns with the findings of Balogun *et al.* (2023), Bello (2019), and FIDA (2019), who found that hand beating, lynching, burning, stripping, battering, stoning, acid bath and beheading were techniques commonly used by perpetrators of jungle justice. This is a violation of human rights, as the victims of jungle justice were not given the opportunity to defend themselves. Jungle justice constitutes a violation of the social contract between the government and the citizens.

The government has failed to protect lives and property, making people take laws into their own hands. It is not a surprise that those who have not committed any crime have at some point become victims of jungle justice due to false alarms, hatred and suspicion. Many incidents of mob actions are carried out in the night and people wake up to see their corpses lying down in the streets in the daytime. These patterns are barbaric and inhumane, contradicting the principle of fair hearing and global advocacy of human justice.

The results further showed that the effectiveness of the existing legal frameworks that forbid killing of human beings, such as the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Criminal Code Act (2004), the Penal Code Act (2004) and the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (2015), is slow due to slow enforcement of these laws against lawbreakers. These legal processes were



designed to guide the behaviour of Nigerians against doing illegal crimes, especially jungle justice. The majority of respondents in Akwa Ibom State did not even grasp that jungle justice is a serious offence. If the public does not trust or understand the laws, they will not be able to prevent extrajudicial killings. This prevalent view indicates not only a crisis of enforcement but also a deeper collapse in the perceived legitimacy of legal institutions.

The high rates of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State caused the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly (AKHA) in 2021 to take a legislative resolution to stop extrajudicial killings in the state (Odey, 2021). Despite this regulatory structure put in place to checkmate jungle justice, this crime keeps repeating virtually on a daily basis. In fact, Ishola (2024), in his study, contended that the Sharia law in the Northern clashes with the provisions of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as amended. The underlying problem raised—the contradiction between formal legal systems and community-based justice responses—applies directly even though Akwa Ibom does not deal with Sharia law. In all instances, jungle justice thrives in defiance of the law due to legal diversity, inadequate enforcement, and cultural norms. Despite possessing statutes, the judicial system is considered as remote, dishonest and unable to defend individuals or hold perpetrators accountable. As a result, communities regard extrajudicial action as a

replacement for a broken promise as well as an act of desperation.

Finally, findings showed that law enforcement response to incidents of jungle justice is slow in Akwa Ibom State, revealing instances when distress calls were put across to the police to come and intervene in jungle justice and they arrived after the harm had been done and oftentimes the police complained of lack of vehicles, fuel and intelligent personnel. The public sees the police as their enemies because of extortion, poor intelligence, and inability to maintain confidential information given to them. This aligns with the work of Mackintosh *et al.* (2024), who emphasised that any significant intervention in cases of mob violence is undermined by the lack of communication and cooperation between the police and the public. This disconnect is exacerbated in Akwa Ibom State by the lack of proactive engagement tactics and the police slow or non-existent response to mob actions, which furthers the public's preference for jungle justice as a quicker—albeit illegal—alternative.

Ruwan *et al.* (2020) argued that the public chooses jungle justice due to police ineffectiveness in preventing, controlling, and investigating crime and arresting and prosecuting suspected offenders. This lack of faith in the police's competence and integrity makes the perpetrators of jungle justice take the role of judge and executioner. A lack of public trust in the Nigerian criminal justice system's procedures and results was another

institutional weakness noted by Kolawole-Amao (2020). This is similar to the results in Akwa Ibom, where perceptions of systemic inefficiency and inadequacy in law enforcement responses contribute to a cycle of impunity and the ongoing use of jungle justice.

The circumstances in Akwa Ibom State are indicative of a broken social contract between the government and its people, according to the Social Contract Theory. According to the social contract, in return for safety, justice, and order, people must cede some of their liberties to the government. Police fall short of this essential duty when they are unable to adequately respond to acts of violence or defend the rights of both victims and those who are accused. As a result, communities start to defend themselves in areas where the state is non-existent, which leads to the emergence of parallel, frequently violent, and disorderly systems of justice. It is argued that Nigeria's law enforcement inefficiency is not solely due to operational or legislative issues. It is an indication of a more serious crisis of legitimacy in which the fundamental tenets of the social contract have been compromised. Restoring order and curbing jungle justice will require more than reactive policing, as the findings and related literature make it clear. It calls for a conscious effort to rebuild trust, a demonstrable presence of justice, and a reaffirmation of the state's role as protector and enforcer of lawful redress.

## **Conclusion**

This study examined the driving force, patterns, legal frameworks and law enforcement response to incidents of jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Findings showed that factors that influence jungle justice include lack of trust in the police and legal institutions, ignorance of the law and legal rights, nature of allegations, absence of the police, frequency of crime, cultural acceptance of retaliation or community-enforced punishment, and serving as a deterrent to other members of the society.

These results have important implications for Akwa Ibom State's governance, public safety and administration of justice. The pervasive use of jungle justice is a sign of a serious lack of trust in the established legal system and the breakdown of state power in crucial spheres of legal protection and law enforcement. When people think the police and the legal system are ineffective, they are more likely to completely avoid them, which normalises mob violence as a form of justice. This undermines the rule of law and encourages vicious cycles of fear and retaliatory violence in local communities, in addition to endangering the lives of the accused, many of whom may be innocent. Initiatives to promote accountability, security, and peace may be undermined if the public's support for state institutions declines due to the perceived inefficiency of the legal system and police. Furthermore, ignorance of legal rights and existing legal protections against jungle justice underscores the urgent need for community involvement and public education. If these issues are not addressed, they could lead to more social unrest, promote criminal activity, and hinder the development of the state's judicial system as a whole.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical data on the underlying causes, trends, and institutional responses to jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State, an area that has gotten relatively little scholarly attention. It highlights how the continued use of mob violence as an alternative to conventional forms of justice is influenced by cultural norms, legal ignorance, and systemic mistrust of the judiciary and law enforcement. By identifying the unique patterns of jungle justice and assessing the perceived effectiveness of legal and police interventions, the research offers a thorough understanding of how and why communities resort to extrajudicial actions. Additionally, it draws attention to the disparities that exist between the law, its enforcement, and public opinion, underscoring the urgent need for institutional reforms and civic education. These observations provide a framework for future research on citizen-state relations, informal justice systems, and violence prevention in similar socio-political contexts, in addition to being beneficial to security services, lawmakers, and lawyers.

More research could be done on the deeper social and psychological factors—such as the impact of socioeconomic conditions, traditional beliefs, and community leadership—that inspire communities to practice jungle justice. Analysing the effectiveness of specific interventions, like community policing programs, legal awareness campaigns, and conflict resolution initiatives, would provide valuable insights into practical strategies for reducing mob violence. Longitudinal studies could also examine how changes in governance, law enforcement capabilities, and public trust impact the prevalence of jungle justice over time. Additionally, comparative studies

involving other regions with similar challenges might be able to identify best practices and contextual factors that either increase or decrease extrajudicial actions. It would be helpful to look into the perspectives of significant stakeholders, including victims, offenders, law enforcement, and community leaders, in order to address this complicated issue in a more thorough and culturally sensitive manner.

### **Recommendations**

1. To address the elements that lead to jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State, it is recommended that concerted efforts be made to rebuild public trust in the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and the legal system through transparent, accountable, and community-centred policing strategies. In addition, comprehensive civic education programs that raise awareness of legal rights, due process, and the dangers of extrajudicial punishment should be put into place. Increasing police presence and responsiveness, especially in underserved areas, and fostering greater collaboration between law enforcement and communities can help to decrease the perceived need for vigilante actions and strengthen the legitimacy of formal justice systems.
2. To prevent mob formation and escalation, authorities are advised to prioritise community policing and quick response systems, given the prevalence of extremely violent and group-based jungle justice practices such as beating, stoning, and burning. This should be paired with extensive public education campaigns that emphasise legal rights, the importance of due process, and the detrimental consequences of extrajudicial punishment. Such

programs would help rebuild public trust in formal justice institutions while also reducing the community's reliance on violent mob actions to maintain social order.

3. In order to successfully stop jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State, authorities should put in place a comprehensive plan that includes community policing, improved police training and extensive public education on due process and legal rights. By strengthening the rule of law and fostering social stability, this integrated approach will enhance police responsiveness to mob violence, decrease reliance on extrajudicial actions and foster trust between communities and law enforcement.
4. It is suggested that the police force implement specific reforms aimed at boosting operational capacity and community engagement in order to increase the efficacy of police response to jungle justice in Akwa Ibom State. This should include enhancing police presence in remote and vulnerable areas, providing specialised training in managing mob violence and conflict de-escalation and speeding up response times to mob action incidents. Rebuilding public trust and promoting cooperative partnerships also depend on the police and communities maintaining open and constant communication. In addition to improving immediate responses to jungle justice, strengthening these elements will contribute to the restoration of public trust in formal law enforcement as an accessible and trustworthy system of justice.

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