

**LAW AND CRIME PREVENTION IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA: LEGAL
FRAMEWORKS, POLICING, JUSTICE AND THE CHALLENGE OF EFFECTIVE
ENFORCEMENT**

IDIBIA Daniel, PhD

Dept. of Public Law, City Campus,
Caleb University, Magodo, Lagos State.

AKHAZE Richard Ehiabhili, PhD

Newcity University, Ayetoro,
Ogun State, Nigeria

EZE Blessing

Department of Criminology,
Maranatha University, Lagos

Abstract

Crime prevention is fundamentally a legal and institutional enterprise because the effectiveness of crime-control strategies depends on the existence, clarity, legitimacy and enforcement of laws. In Lagos State, Nigeria, rapid urbanisation, population growth, socioeconomic inequality, informal settlements, youth unemployment, technological change and complex patterns of urban mobility have created a challenging environment for crime prevention. This paper examines the role of law in preventing and controlling crime in Lagos State, with particular attention to policing, community participation, criminal justice administration, police legitimacy, procedural justice, traditional and informal security structures, and the enforcement of state legislation. The paper adopts a qualitative doctrinal and conceptual approach, drawing on peer-reviewed scholarly literature published between 2015 and 2026. The analysis demonstrates that law contributes to crime prevention through criminalisation, deterrence, police powers, institutional regulation, prosecution, adjudication and the protection of fundamental rights. However, the existence of laws does not automatically produce effective crime prevention. Implementation capacity, police legitimacy, public trust, institutional coordination, investigative effectiveness and access to justice are equally important. The paper argues that Lagos requires an integrated legal approach to crime prevention in which criminal law is complemented by community policing, procedural justice, accountable policing, efficient criminal justice administration, regulation of private and informal security providers, and evidence-based law reform. The paper concludes that sustainable crime prevention in Lagos will depend less on the continuous creation of new offences and more on improving the implementation, legitimacy and institutional coherence of existing legal frameworks.

Keywords: law, crime prevention, criminal justice, policing, community policing, police legitimacy.