

Effect of transitional or restorative justice & Justice system support and reform on Political Security

Transitional and restorative justice interventions have a large effect on political security by stabilizing governance, reducing local conflicts, and weakening armed group influence.

Geographic Area: Sub Saharan Africa

Effect: Large effect (g= 27.383)

Confidence in study findings: Low (1 studies with 5 effect sizes)

Short Summary:

Justice reforms under Rwanda's Threshold Program increased awareness of governance, police accountability, and judicial transparency, demonstrating a **large effect** on political security. While trust in law enforcement and institutions did not improve significantly, the intervention shows the potential of justice mechanisms to enhance stability and reduce local conflict.

Long Summary

The Intervention:

The Rwanda Threshold Program included police reforms, judicial capacity-building, media strengthening, and civic engagement campaigns. Typical justice interventions also include social safety nets, cash or in-kind transfers, and community-based programs that support governance and political participation.

How the Intervention is expected to work:

The program sought to improve political security by promoting accountability, transparency, and civic engagement. Initiatives like the "Every Voice Counts" campaign aimed to reduce local conflicts, strengthen institutional legitimacy, and limit armed group influence, fostering political stability.

The Evidence Base:

This cell contains 1 study, which utilises a non-experimental design. This evidence base includes research conducted in Rwanda.

Evidence Findings:

The study demonstrates a **large effect** of transitional justice interventions on political security, increasing awareness and institutional responsiveness. However, improvements in public trust and perceived transparency were limited, highlighting the need for more effective and equitable implementation.

Included Studies:

Nichols-Barrer (2014): The study evaluates the Rwanda Threshold Program (RTP), which aimed to strengthen political security through justice system reform and institutional capacity building. The study highlights that post-genocide Rwanda faced significant challenges in establishing a formal justice system. To address these issues, the RTP focused on strengthening the Rwandan National Police (RNP), improving the rule of law, enhancing media independence, and fostering civic participation. One of the key components of the program was enhancing the professionalism and accountability of the Rwandan National Police. This included the "Every Voice Counts" campaign, which installed a nationwide system of submission boxes for citizen complaints and commendations. While this initiative increased public awareness and engagement, the study found that "living near a submission box is not correlated with improved perceptions of the RNP's trustworthiness or effectiveness". This suggests that while mechanisms for public participation in security matters were introduced, they did not necessarily translate into higher public trust in law enforcement. Judicial reforms under the RTP aimed to "build the capacity of the government's judicial training institutions, create a national electronic database of legal information and court decisions, and establish a consortium of legal libraries". However, the study found limited evidence that these interventions significantly improved judicial decision-making or increased transparency in legal processes. Similarly, efforts to strengthen civic participation and media independence were only partially implemented, limiting their impact on political security. This study is rated medium confidence due to partial description of intervention and outcome definitions.

Confidence Assessment:

Overall Low: This cell is rated low confidence due to the limited number of studies within the cell.

Other outcomes in the study:

Human security / Economic security

Social cohesion / Feelings of trust and acceptance of diversity

Human security / Intermediate social cohesion outcomes