

## Chapter 7: Security

Security and access to justice are included under the fourth pillar of the MPRSP – Good Governance. Members of the monitoring chapters of MEJN, based at local level, also felt strongest about the issue of security. The MPRSP (page 74) describes the potential impact of crime and insecurity on the poor as follows - *insecurity makes it too risky for the poor to accumulate assets and wealth, particularly in a rural setting, as any assets or wealth are likely to be stolen. This undermines the ability of the poor to generate their own incomes and reduce their own poverty. Crime has a disproportionate impact on the poor since they are the most vulnerable and least able to cope.*

The strategy (page 75) also gives an overview of the recent trends in the area of policing and security, highlighting the unfortunate reality that despite a number of recent efforts, there has been a *rising trend in crime, a continuation of political violence and a general decline in security.*

The MPRSP highlights the five following areas as being the major areas for intervention:

- (1) Crime control capacity will be increased by deploying more officers in rural and urban areas and building associated police infrastructure.
- (2) A crime prevention strategy will be reviewed and implemented, to include enhanced community involvement in policing,
- (3) Co-ordination with and regulation of private sector security firms
- (4) Improve the quality of investigation, using modern technology.
- (5) Organisational development of the Police, Prisons and Immigration services to ensure that they are transparent and accountable.

Community policing and training of police officers were highlighted as Priority Poverty Expenditures (PPEs) in the budgets for 2001-2 and 2002-3 – a total of 255 million kwacha was to be allocated to this area under the 2002-3 budget, with the bulk of the money (MK 163 million) being spent on community policing. The revised budget figure for the same PPE was MK 2.8 million in 2001-2, representing a major increase in funding between the two years.

It is against this background that specific questions were asked about the distance to the nearest police post and the number of officers available at this facility. They were also asked whether the presence of the police post made them feel secure. The second set of questions was targeted at community policing initiatives, and whether they exist in the areas in question, and if so whether they actually contributed to the security of the area.

### **7.1 Police Service**

On average, respondents in the six districts visited have to travel 17.6 kilometres to reach the nearest police post – not surprisingly, respondents in the urban district of Blantyre reported having the least distance to travel (under eight kilometres), while those from Salima had the furthest – almost 40km.

The enumerators were also asked to find out from the respondents, or, if they did not know, from the police station themselves how many officers were available at the station. On average, it was reported that there were 36 officers at the nearest station – however, it is recommended that this figure be used cautiously as it is apparent that enumerators and respondents had difficulties in realistically assessing this number. In the case of the respondents, this was due to the distances involved in getting to the station, while attempts by the enumerators to collect this information were met with resistance in a number of the facilities. One possible reason for the number of police officers per station being so high may be the centralised nature of the police service.

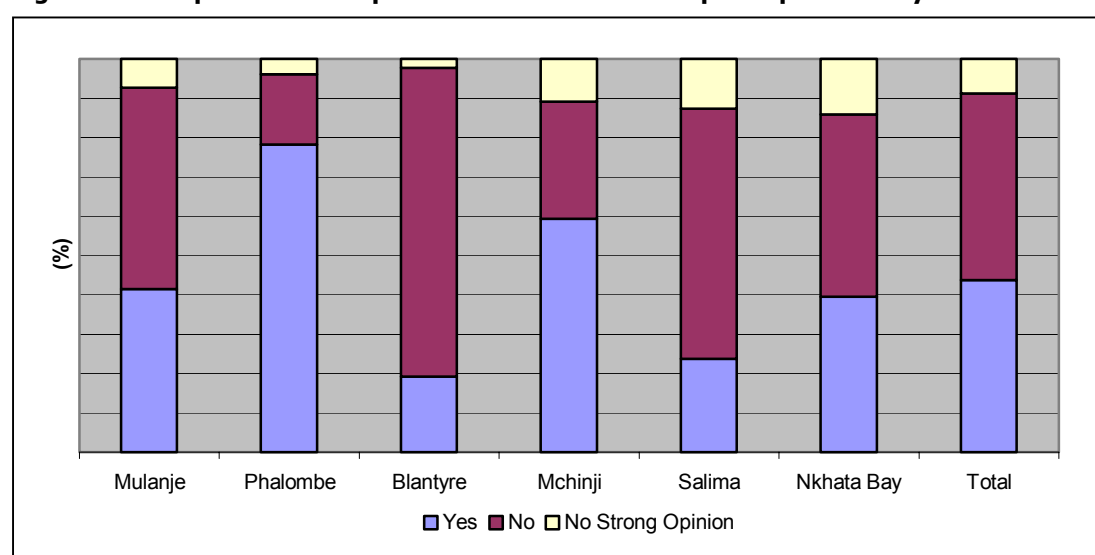
The mean distance travelled to the nearest police station for each of the districts and the numbers of officers reported at the station are included in Table 7.1.

**Table 7.1: Nearest police post to the respondent’s household**

	Distance (KMs)	Number of Officers
Mulanje	8.9	47.8
Phalombe	22.0	2.1
Blantyre City	7.9	17.3
Mchinji	10.4	31.0
Salima	37.7	49.1
Nkhata Bay	15.4	26.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>36.0</b>

Respondents were also asked whether they felt the presence of the police post made them feel secure – in total 43.7 per cent of respondents said that it did – the biggest discrepancy however was in Blantyre, where less than one in five respondents felt this was not the case.

**Figure 7.1: Responses to the question - does the nearest police post make you feel secure?**



Respondents were further asked whether they ever had occasion to seek assistance from the nearest police post – slightly more than one in four of all respondents answered that they had. Again, there are locational difference – only 15 per cent had sought assistance in Salima, whereas 38 per cent had to do the same in Nkhata bay – the survey did not ask questions about the reasons for seeking this assistance, and this may be an area of future investigation (See Table 7.2).

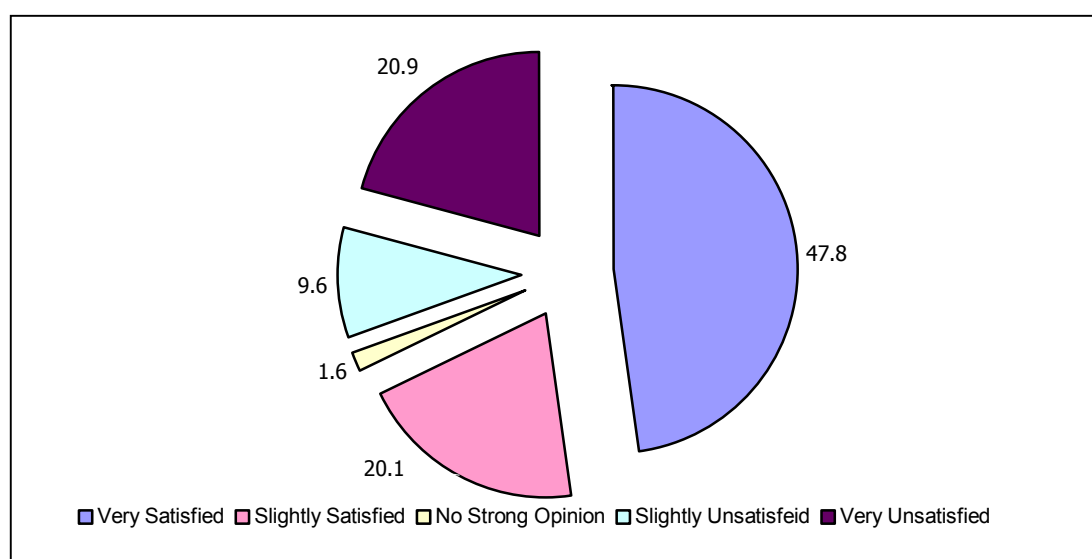
**Table 7.2: Proportion of Population Ever Seeking Assistance from the Police**

	%
Mulanje	26.8
Phalombe	22.4
Blantyre City	17.1
Mchinji	35.4
Salima	14.9
Nkhata Bay	38.0
<b>Total (n=1012)</b>	<b>25.5</b>

Those who had sought assistance from the police post were then asked to assess their level of satisfaction with the service they were given – almost half the respondents stated that they were very satisfied. At the same time, one in five complained that they were very unsatisfied, suggesting that contact with the police force provoked extremes in responses. Those who were unsatisfied cited instances of the police claiming to have no transport or

insufficient numbers to deal with all the complaints made to them. Because of the small number of respondents, it is somewhat difficult to assess this satisfaction by district, however the results are contained in Table A7.1 in the annex.

**Figure 7.2: Satisfaction with service offered by police last time respondent had contact**



Further to this respondents were asked whether they had ever been requested to make a payment to a police officer – in total, 4.6 per cent of respondents who chose to answer this question, did so positively. The average size of the payment requested was reported as MK 106. Due to the small number of respondents providing information on this question, the answers have not been broken down by district.

### 7.2 Community Policing

In addition to increasing the number of police officers available, the MPRS also commits itself to strengthening the role of community policing. If the success of this is to be judged purely by the number of communities who responded positively to the question ***Do you live in a community that has a community policing initiative*** then from the results in Table 7.3, it would appear to be quite positive. However, as the MPRS contains no indicator or baseline data on this it is hard to assess whether progress is being made or not.

In total, 66.9 per cent of people interviewed during the survey responded that they live in communities with policing initiatives – the largest deviation from this was in Blantyre, where the figure was 25.8 per cent. The fact that the urban and peri-urban areas score so poorly on this may be a reflection of the lack of community spirit in these areas, which makes the establishment of community initiatives difficult.

**Table 7.3: Proportion of Respondent’s who live in Communities that have Community Policing Initiatives**

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don’t Know (%)
Mulanje	55.1	39.9	5.1
Phalombe	80.9	15.9	3.2
Blantyre City	25.8	68.8	5.5
Mchinji	82.3	14.8	2.9
Salima	81.5	16.1	2.4
Nkhata Bay	59.2	32.4	8.5
<b>Total (n=1025)</b>	<b>66.9</b>	<b>28.8</b>	<b>4.3</b>

Further to this, it appears that the respondents living in communities with these initiatives very much see the positive side to this. Almost 90 per cent in four of the rural districts say that it made them feel secure – Blantyre and Nkhata Bay are the areas that seem to differ in

the attitude towards the success of these programmes, even then however the figures are quite impressive – 69.7 per cent in Blantyre and 73.8 in Nkhata Bay (See Table 7.4 below).

**Table 7.4: Respondents living in Communities with Community Policing Initiatives who feel this makes them secure (%)**

	Yes (%)	No (%)	No Response / Missing (%)
Mulanje	94.9	3.1	2.0
Phalombe	94.5	4.7	0.8
Blantyre City	69.7	24.2	6.1
Mchinji	87.2	10.5	2.3
Salima	87.2	9.3	3.5
Nkhata Bay	73.8	23.8	2.4
<b>Total (n=686)</b>	<b>87.2</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>2.5</b>

However, some respondents in Mulanje complain that the community policing groups are demanding a fee of MK25 a month, so that they can work efficiently, and respondents do not understand why they have to pay this. There were also complaints made to the enumerators that even though the community police do their job, and bring suspects to the police, they are often released almost immediately.

### **7.3 Conclusions and Recommendations**

While the proportion of respondents feeling that the existence of the nearest police post makes them feel secure is disappointingly low at less than 50 per cent, it is apparent from the responses given that the Community Policing Initiative is working in rural areas. One of the reasons that the nearest police post is not considered to improve the security situation is related to the actual distance from the communities the respondents live in. However, it should also be noted that those who have had actual need to contact the police are generally quite satisfied.

In this regard, emphasis should be put on ensuring that the community policing initiative is scaled up and expanded to all communities (at present it appears to cover only two-thirds), and the number of communities covered needs to be tracked. However, particular concern must be raised regarding the perception of people in the urban areas about the effectiveness of efforts to improve their security.

If the police posts are to contribute towards the feeling of improved security, particularly in rural areas, then improvements in terms of access to transportation, increasing the number of sub-stations actually located in the communities and improving policing numbers need to be addressed.

Further, with the amount of money allocated towards community policing initiatives, it should be clarified whether the communities are also expected to make contributions to the functioning of these groups. If this is the case, recommendations on what this should cover need to be clarified, to prevent instances of individuals taking advantage of the situation to extort “protection money” from the ordinary people.

Because questions on satisfaction were only asked to those who had received assistance from the police post, it is not possible to realistically assess which districts are more satisfied with the services on offer. However, at an overall level, an average rating of 0.643 can be assigned (the calculation for this figure is included in the methodology chapter), suggesting that the respondents were somewhat satisfied with the service received from the police.