

‘Community Policing in Freetown, Sierra Leone: foreign import or local solution?’, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*,, 2, 1 (2007), 23-42.

Abstract

Though community policing is widely promoted by donors and criticised by academics, there has been little research on its practice in Africa. This paper examines one of the main elements of community policing, namely community forums, in Freetown, Sierra Leone. They were examined from the point of view of the police, Partnership Board executives and local communities. The triangulation of response provided an evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses. Positively they have improved communication between police and communities and provided intelligence, investigation, intervention, arrest and dispute resolution. Negatively they are elite dominated and most of the activities, initiatives and even finance are coming from the community. Despite the difficulties, the Partnership Boards are universally valued and are not seen as unwelcome foreign imports.