ASSESSMENT OF CRIME INCIDENTS AND HOTSPOTS IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS OF MAKURDI TOWN, BENUE STATE, NIGERIA (2020–2025)

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Crime Hotspots; Residential Neighbourhoods; Spatial Distribution; Perceived Safety; Makurdi Town

Abstract

The study is designed to investigate reported crime and perceived neighborhoods security arrangements in six residential areas of Makurdi, Benue State, over the 2020–2025 period.. A descriptive survey methods design was used. The Population of the study is estimated to be 86,785 household heads, 400 respondents were selected using Yamane's formula. The study covered Wadata, North Bank, Nyiman, Lobi Quarters, Kanshio and Judges' Quarters. Instruments of data collections were questionnaires, 15 key-informant interviews, six focus-group discussions and police records. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were applied to the quantitative material, while interview and FGD data were analysed thematically. Burglary/theft (34.0%) and armed robbery (26.5%) were the leading incidents selected by surveyed residents. Police records listed 3,200 cases, of which physical assault accounted for 1,211, burglary/theft 788 and cult-related violence 443. Nyiman had the largest police-recorded total (760), followed by Wadata (700) and North Bank (639). In contrast, residents' frequency reports placed Wadata and North Bank among the principal areas of concern, with Kanshio and Lobi Quarters identified as secondary areas. Although 94.0% felt safe during the day, 40.5% felt unsafe at night; 64.25% assessed neighbourhood insecurity as moderate. The findings show that crime patterns differ according to neighbourhood and data source, and point to the need for locally informed security responses and better incident mapping.

1. Introduction

Crime in residential areas affects more than the immediate victims of an offence. It can influence whether people feel able to move freely, use shared spaces, protect their homes and maintain confidence in their neighbours.

For this reason, neighbourhood security is relevant to both public safety and the management of urban environments. An assessment of crime needs to consider the offences residents report, how often incidents are said to occur, where they are concentrated and how safe people feel in their everyday surroundings. These questions have a spatial dimension: incidents are not necessarily spread evenly across a town, and a relatively small number of streets or premises may account for a substantial share of recorded events (Sherman, Gartin, & Buerger, 1989; Lee, Eck, O, & Martinez, 2017).

Research on the geography of crime has shown why town-wide totals alone can conceal important differences between individual places. In their analysis of police calls in Minneapolis, Sherman et al. (1989) found that a limited share of addresses and intersections accounted for a substantial proportion of recorded calls. Lee et al. (2017) reached a similar conclusion in a review of studies examining crime concentration at specific places. Hipp and Williams (2020) further note that the scale at which incidents are measured affects the patterns that become visible. A hotspot study must therefore use a spatial unit suited to both its research question and the precision of its data. Where incident coordinates are available, point maps, density surfaces and spatial-cluster methods can support more exact identification. If such data are absent, neighbourhood totals and residents' accounts can still indicate places that merit follow-up, but they cannot establish statistically defined street-level hotspots.

Environmental criminology offers one explanation for why some places may experience repeated offences. Under routine activity theory, an offence becomes more likely when a motivated offender encounters a suitable target without effective guardianship at a particular time and place (Cohen & Felson, 1979). In residential neighbourhoods, features such as street lighting, sightlines, road connections, building density, fencing and the level of activity in public spaces may shape opportunities for offending and informal observation. None of these features should be treated as a cause of crime in isolation; their significance depends on social conditions, daily routines and the presence of formal and informal security. Evidence reviewed by Braga, Papachristos and Hureau (2012) indicates that concentrating policing in places with high levels of activity can reduce crime. This makes the identification of repeatedly affected locations relevant to prevention and resource allocation.

Nigerian studies likewise point to variation in the spatial distribution of urban crime. Badiora, Okunola and Ojewale (2016) applied geographic analysis to crime statistics in a traditional Nigerian city. In Ibadan, Afon and Badiora (2018) examined the spatial and temporal patterns of assaults, break-ins and robberies. Using Nigerian evidence, Umar, Johnson and Cheshire (2021) also reported that urban crime tends to cluster rather than occur uniformly. At a broader methodological level, the review by Butt et al. (2020) documents the use of spatio-temporal techniques to detect and anticipate crime hotspots.

Previous research in Makurdi provides a local foundation for the present assessment. Okon, Agorye and Aov (2021) mapped incidents across police divisions and found that recorded crime varied spatially within the metropolis. Adzande (2020) considered the relationship between the built environment and crime in Makurdi, while Adzande (2024) examined socio-spatial features associated with the distribution of crime. Tamen, Brown and Chukwuemeka (2025) also addressed crime occurrence and perceived insecurity across residential-density categories in the town. These studies underline the importance of place-specific evidence. They do not,

however, remove the value of updating the picture for clearly identified neighbourhoods and a defined period, using data sources whose differences are made explicit.

The issue addressed here is the need for a recent, neighbourhood-focused account of crime concerns in Makurdi that draws on household responses, police records and qualitative evidence for 2020–2025. The sources are complementary but do not measure the same thing. Survey responses reflect what sampled residents report or perceive, whereas police statistics represent incidents brought to police attention and entered into administrative records. Their results may therefore differ without either source necessarily being erroneous. Against this background, the study describes reported offences, differences between neighbourhoods, locations named by participants, the frequency with which crime was said to occur and residents' perceptions of safety during the day and at night. Because the supplied records do not include geocoded incident points, the analysis is descriptive rather than a formal statistical validation of street-level hotspots. The analysis addresses five questions: which security incidents were most frequently selected by residents; how police-recorded cases were distributed across the six neighbourhoods; which streets and localities were identified by study participants as areas of concern; how frequently respondents said crime occurred; and how residents assessed overall insecurity and their safety during daytime and night-time. These questions define the descriptive scope of the study. They do not constitute a causal model or establish the independent effects of neighbourhood characteristics.

2. The Study Area

Makurdi, the capital of Benue State, is also the headquarters of Makurdi Local Government Area in north-central Nigeria. The coordinates reported in the source manuscript place the town approximately between 7°38′ and 7°50′ North and 8°24′ and 8°38′ East. Government offices, public services, commercial activity, educational institutions and transport-related businesses contribute to the town's daily activity and draw people from surrounding settlements. The resulting movement of residents, workers, traders and visitors forms part of the setting in which neighbourhood life and security are experienced. Residential development in Makurdi includes both planned layouts and areas with less formal patterns of development. Housing density, street configuration and access to services differ across the town. Six neighbourhoods were selected for this study: Wadata, North Bank, Nyiman, Lobi Quarters, Kanshio and Judges' Quarters. In the source manuscript, these locations are grouped into high-, medium- and low-density categories. The map supplied with the original manuscript is reproduced as Figure 1. Population figures cited in that source are 151,515 for 1991 and a projected 439,132 for 2026. Both figures have been retained as supplied, but the authors should verify their definitions and source documents before publication.

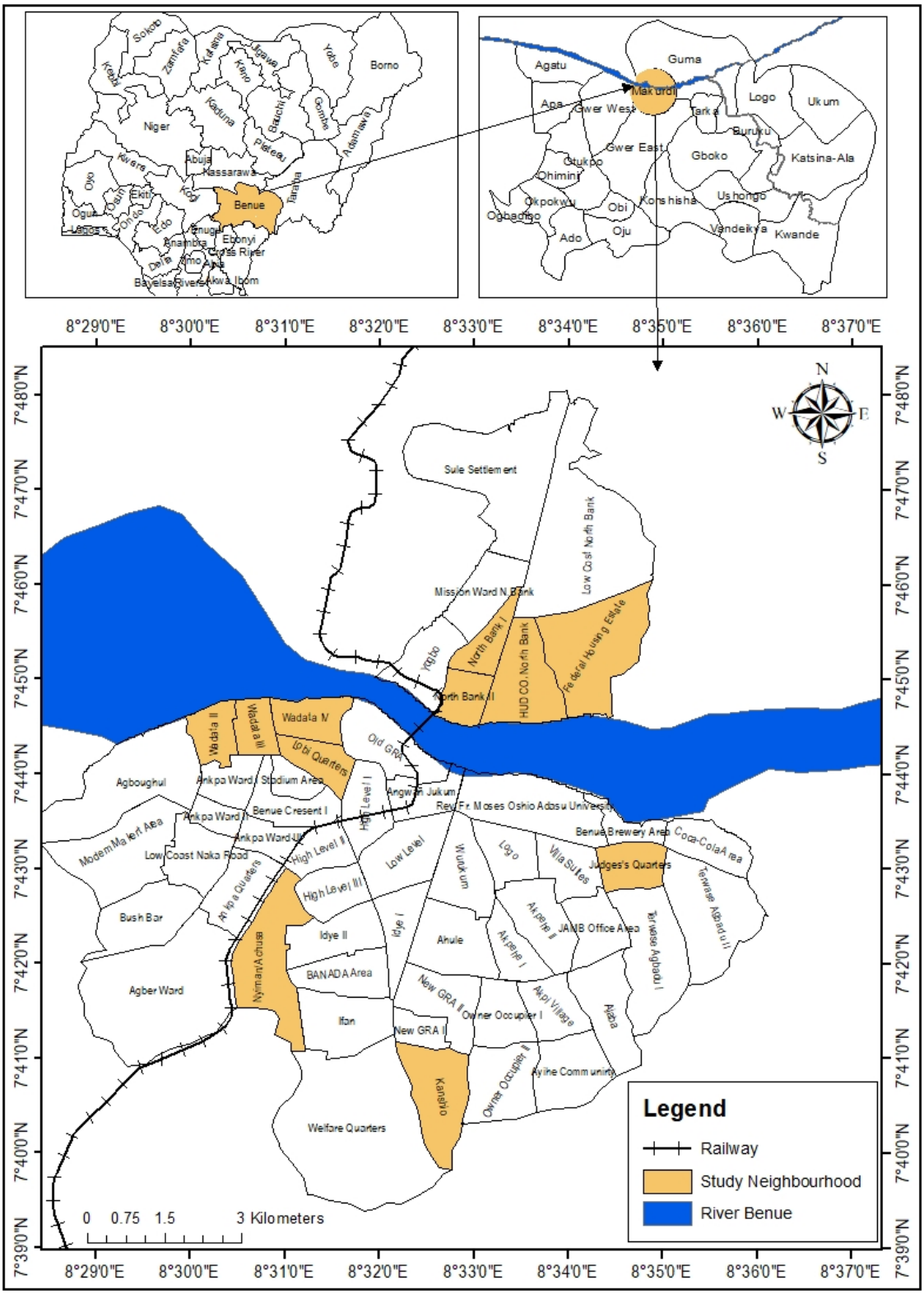


Figure 1. Makurdi town showing the study neighbourhoods

Source: Ministry of Lands and Survey (2026), as supplied in the original manuscript.

3. Materials and Methods

A descriptive survey design was used within a mixed-methods framework. Questionnaires provided the quantitative evidence from residents of the selected neighbourhoods. Key-informant interviews (KIIs) and focus-group discussions (FGDs) formed the qualitative component, while police records for 2020–2025 supplied administrative data on recorded incidents. The study states that its target population comprised 86,785 household heads in Makurdi. The study reports a sample of 400 household heads, calculated with Yamane's (1967) finite-population formula, $n = N/[1 + N(e^2)]$, where N represents the population and e the precision level. Substituting N = 86,785 and e = 0.05 gives approximately 398; the study rounded this figure to 400. The questionnaires were distributed as follows: 100 each in Wadata and North Bank, 60 each in Lobi Quarters and Kanshio, and 40 each in Nyiman and Judges' Quarters. These figures represent 50%, 30% and 20% of the sample across the high-, medium- and low-density groupings, respectively. Since the supplied manuscript contains no household-frame totals for the six neighbourhoods, the allocation cannot be independently confirmed as proportional to their actual household populations. It is therefore presented here as the allocation adopted by the study. The reported sampling process involved several stages. The town's residential areas were first classified as high, medium or low density. Two neighbourhoods were then selected from each category: Wadata and North Bank; Lobi Quarters and Kanshio; and Nyiman and Judges' Quarters. Household respondents were subsequently selected through systematic random sampling. The qualitative sample comprised 15 purposively selected key informants. The groups identified in the source include community leaders, vigilante coordinators, police officers and private-security managers. The study also reports six focus-group discussions, each with eight participants, drawn from the six neighbourhoods. The supplied material does not give a full demographic profile of these participants or explain whether the discussions were organised by gender, age or stakeholder type. If these details were documented during fieldwork, they should be added to improve transparency about the qualitative sample. The primary data-collection tools were a structured household questionnaire, a KII guide and an FGD guide. The questionnaire covered incidents experienced or identified by residents, how often crime was said to occur, overall perceptions of neighbourhood insecurity and feelings of safety during the day and at night. The interview and discussion guides elicited participants' views on common offences, locations of concern, timing of incidents, the work of formal and informal security providers and environmental conditions associated with safety. Police records showing reported incidents by offence category and neighbourhood for 2020–2025 served as the secondary data source. The complete instruments are not reproduced in the supplied manuscript, so their exact wording, pre-testing and validation procedures cannot be assessed here. Questionnaire responses were summarised using frequencies and percentages and displayed in tables. Police records were tabulated by offence type and neighbourhood; the annual pattern was presented in a figure retained from the original manuscript. Interview and focus-group material was transcribed, coded and organised into themes concerning common offences, the frequency and location of crime, neighbourhood security and perceived safety by time of day. These themes were used to provide context for the quantitative results.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Crime incidents reported by residents

Of the 400 household respondents, 136 (34.0%) selected burglary/theft, making it the most frequently identified incident in the survey. Armed robbery was selected by 106 respondents (26.5%), while 68 (17.0%) identified physical assault. A further 63 respondents (15.75%) selected none of the listed incidents. Kidnapping attempts, cult-related violence and property vandalism were selected less often. Taken together, the responses show that property-related offences featured prominently in residents' accounts, although the pattern differed from one neighbourhood to another.

The neighbourhood breakdown shows that burglary/theft was selected by 42.5% of respondents in Judges' Quarters, 40.0% in Lobi Quarters and 39.0% in Wadata. Armed robbery was most prominent in Lobi Quarters (40.0%), Wadata (39.0%) and Kanshio (33.3%). In Nyiman, physical assault was selected by 35.0% of respondents. These figures are proportions of the questionnaire sample in each neighbourhood, not population-based crime rates: the table records respondents' selections rather than independently verified incident counts.

Table 1. Security incidents reported by residents in the study neighbourhoods

Neighbourhood	Armed robbery n (%)	Burglary/theft n (%)	Physical assault n (%)	Kidnapping attempt n (%)	Cult-related violence n (%)	Vandalism n (%)	None n (%)	Total
North Bank	12 (12.0)	28 (28.0)	12 (12.0)	2 (2.0)	3 (3.0)	8 (8.0)	35 (35.0)	100
Nyiman	0 (0.0)	7 (17.5)	14 (35.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (5.0)	3 (7.5)	14 (35.0)	40
Lobi Quarters	24 (40.0)	24 (40.0)	7 (11.7)	1 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.7)	3 (5.0)	60
Wadata	39 (39.0)	39 (39.0)	16 (16.0)	2 (2.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (4.0)	100
Kanshio	20 (33.3)	21 (35.0)	11 (18.3)	2 (3.3)	0 (0.0)	2 (3.3)	4 (6.7)	60
Judges' Quarters	11 (27.5)	17 (42.5)	8 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.5)	3 (7.5)	40
Total	106 (26.5)	136 (34.0)	68 (17.0)	7 (1.75)	5 (1.25)	15 (3.75)	63 (15.75)	400

Source: Author's field survey (2026).

The household responses place burglary/theft at the top of the listed concerns, a pattern also discussed in studies of property crime in Nigerian urban settings. Adeyemi, Ibrahim and Olumoh (2024) examine neighbourhood and socioeconomic correlates of burglary, while Yahaya, Gyang and Jeje (2025) identify theft as a prominent category in their study of Katsina City. The present distribution is also compatible with research showing that exposure to crime can vary by place (Umar, Johnson, & Cheshire, 2021). These comparisons provide context; they do not demonstrate why the respondents in Makurdi selected particular offences.

4.2 Police-recorded crime, 2020–2025

The police data supplied for this study comprise 3,200 recorded cases across the six neighbourhoods over 2020–2025 (Table 2). Physical assault accounts for the largest share, with 1,211 cases (37.8%), followed by burglary/theft with 788 (24.6%). The remaining categories are cult-related violence (443; 13.8%), armed robbery (403; 12.6%), vandalism (180; 5.6%) and attempted kidnapping (175; 5.5%). This ordering differs from the household survey, where burglary/theft and armed robbery were the leading selections. The distinction matters: the survey records what respondents identified, while the police dataset counts cases reported to and classified by the police.

Table 2. Police-recorded crime by neighbourhood, 2020–2025

Neighbourhood	Armed robbery	Burglary/theft	Physical assault	Kidnapping attempt	Cult-related violence	Vandalism	Total
North Bank	95	175	192	35	106	36	639
Nyiman	102	189	251	32	123	63	760
Lobi Quarters	28	82	133	7	33	5	288
Wadata	80	161	262	46	107	44	700
Kanshio	57	98	170	32	46	15	418
Judges' Quarters	41	83	203	23	28	17	395
Total	403	788	1,211	175	443	180	3,200

Source: Nigerian Police Headquarters, Makurdi (2026), as reported in the supplied manuscript.

Nyiman has the largest police-recorded total, with 760 cases, followed by Wadata (700), North Bank (639), Kanshio (418), Judges' Quarters (395) and Lobi Quarters (288). By offence, Wadata (262) and Nyiman (251) recorded the highest physical-assault totals. Nyiman had the largest burglary/theft count (189), followed by North Bank (175). These are raw administrative totals rather than rates adjusted for neighbourhood population. Population size, residents' willingness or ability to report incidents, police access and recording practices may all affect the number of cases attributed to an area.

The neighbourhood differences in the police data reflect the spatial variation described in Nigerian crime studies (Badiora et al., 2016; Umar et al., 2021). Afon and Badiora (2018) similarly show that the geography of crime may differ by offence category. Earlier work by Okon et al. (2021) identified variation in recorded incidents across Makurdi police divisions. The present records extend the descriptive comparison to the six neighbourhoods and the stated 2020–2025 period. However, without incident coordinates, the data cannot establish which individual streets meet a statistical definition of a hotspot.

4.3 Annual pattern of recorded crime

The annual figure retained from the source manuscript shows recorded crime rising between 2020 and 2023, falling in 2024 and increasing again in 2025. The original text identifies 2022–2023 as the period with the largest year-on-year increase. Across the full six-year period, physical assault and burglary/theft together account for 1,999 of the 3,200 recorded cases (62.5%). The annual chart has been retained, but the source file does not provide the underlying annual counts in tabular form. Exact yearly values are

therefore not stated here. The authors should provide the data series used to prepare the figure so that the reported trend can be verified.

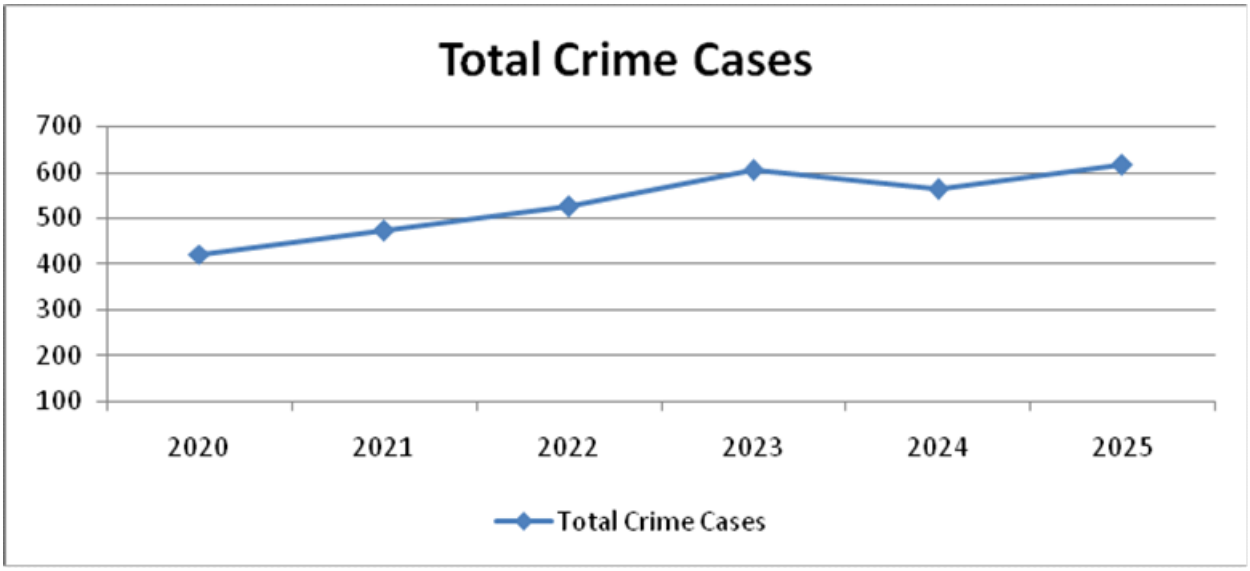


Figure 2. Annual trend in police-recorded crime cases, 2020–2025

Source: Nigerian Police Headquarters, Benue State, as reproduced in the supplied manuscript; annual numeric values were not supplied.

The movement shown in the figure describes changes in recorded cases, not necessarily equivalent changes in the actual incidence of crime. A rise or fall in police totals may also reflect shifts in reporting behaviour, police procedures, population or the geographical coverage of records. This qualification is important when comparing the current series with earlier Makurdi research, including Okon et al. (2021).

4.4 Neighbourhood locations identified as hotspots

Table 3 lists streets and localities that the study's sources identified as areas of concern. Several locations were named in Wadata, North Bank and Kanshio; participants also identified particular streets or adjoining areas in Nyiman, Judges' Quarters and Lobi Quarters. The table should be read as a record of locations reported during the study, not as a ranked GIS hotspot output. The supplied material contains neither geocoded incident points nor a statistical measure of spatial concentration.

Table 3. Locations identified by study sources as crime hotspots or areas of concern

Neighbourhood	Locations reported
Wadata	Kaduna Street and its junctions with Akure, Maiduguri and Port Harcourt Streets; Ikeja Street; Beach Road
Nyiman	Nyiman Layout; Katsina Street; Inikpi Street
Kanshio	Kanshio area; Victor Kpojime Road; Welfare Quarters Road; Navy Barracks Road; Awe Street and adjoining Wurukum–Kanshio axis
North Bank	Udei Street; Ter-Guma Street; Lafia Road around the Heavy-Duty Park; area behind CAPS; Yagba Village; Riverside
Judges' Quarters	Villa Suit Street; Terwase Agbadu Road; Judges' Quarters Extension; Kyabiz Hotel Street
Lobi Quarters	Hillary Ikima Street; Gondo Aluor Road

Source: Author's field survey (2026).

The frequency data help explain the study's descriptive classification of neighbourhoods. Monthly crime occurrence was reported by 62.0% of respondents in Wadata and 55.0% in North Bank, the two highest proportions in the sample. On this basis, the study treats Wadata and North Bank as principal areas of concern, while Kanshio and Lobi Quarters are classified as secondary areas. This resident-based assessment is different from the police-record ranking, in which Nyiman recorded the largest number of cases. The measures should not be collapsed into a single ranking: one reflects respondents' reported frequency, while the other represents six years of recorded police cases. Stronger hotspot conclusions would require triangulation and, where possible, adjustment for population and exposure.

This pattern is consistent with place-based research showing that crime can be concentrated in particular locations rather than distributed evenly (Sherman et al., 1989; Lee et al., 2017). It also points to the potential value of concentrating preventive activity where repeated incidents are documented, as discussed by Braga et al. (2012). The streets listed in Table 3 should nevertheless be checked against geocoded police records and community consultations before being treated as confirmed hotspots.

4.5 Frequency of crime in the neighbourhoods

Almost half of the respondents 195 people (48.75%) said crime occurred in their neighbourhood once in a while. A further 177 (44.25%) reported monthly occurrence; 22 (5.5%) selected weekly and six (1.5%) selected daily occurrence. Monthly reports were most common in Wadata (62.0%) and North Bank (55.0%). By comparison, 60.0% of Nyiman respondents, 68.3% in Kanshio and 67.5% in Judges' Quarters described crime as occurring once in a while. In Lobi Quarters, 55.0% selected the occasional category and 41.7% reported monthly occurrence.

Table 4. Respondents' reported frequency of crime

Neighbourhood	Daily n (%)	Weekly n (%)	Monthly n (%)	Once in a while n (%)	Total
North Bank	1 (1.0)	6 (6.0)	55 (55.0)	38 (38.0)	100
Nyiman	1 (2.5)	2 (5.0)	13 (32.5)	24 (60.0)	40
Lobi Quarters	1 (1.7)	1 (1.7)	25 (41.7)	33 (55.0)	60
Wadata	0 (0.0)	6 (6.0)	62 (62.0)	32 (32.0)	100
Kanshio	2 (3.3)	4 (6.7)	13 (21.7)	41 (68.3)	60
Judges' Quarters	1 (2.5)	3 (7.5)	9 (22.5)	27 (67.5)	40
Total	6 (1.5)	22 (5.5)	177 (44.25)	195 (48.75)	400

Source: Author's field survey (2026). Percentages recalculated from the supplied frequencies.

Participants in the KIIs and FGDs generally described crime as intermittent rather than a daily event. Some associated periods of heightened concern with festive seasons, economic hardship and unemployment. These comments represent participants' explanations and perceptions; the study did not statistically test whether these circumstances caused changes in crime. The pattern may be considered alongside research describing spatially concentrated and intermittent crime occurrence (Badiora et al., 2016; Umar et al., 2021).

4.6 Residents' perception of overall insecurity

A moderate level of neighbourhood insecurity was selected by 257 respondents, representing 64.25% of the sample (Table 5). Another 93 respondents (23.25%) chose the somewhat lower category, 37 (9.25%) selected somewhat higher, 12 (3.0%) selected much higher and one respondent (0.25%) selected much lower. Most respondents therefore placed insecurity around the middle of the response scale. Qualitative accounts conveyed a similar mixed picture: participants described the situation as manageable in general, while continuing to raise concerns about isolated incidents, burglary and other offences.

Table 5. Residents' perception of overall neighbourhood insecurity

Perceived level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Much higher	12	3.00
Somewhat higher	37	9.25
Moderate	257	64.25
Somewhat lower	93	23.25
Much lower	1	0.25
Total	400	100.00

Source: Author's field survey (2026).

The finding can be compared with studies in which residents' assessments of safety vary across neighbourhoods rather than indicating that all areas are uniformly secure or insecure. Adeleke and Balogun (2024) report differences in perceived safety among Lagos residents, while Yahaya et al. (2025) discuss residents' links between insecurity and wider socioeconomic conditions. In the present study, such explanations remain perceptions reported by informants; the descriptive design does not test them as determinants.

4.7 Perceived safety during the day

Daytime responses were strongly weighted towards feeling safe. In total, 376 respondents (94.0%) chose safe, four (1.0%) chose very safe, 16 (4.0%) were neutral and four (1.0%) reported feeling unsafe (Table 6). In the qualitative discussions, participants associated daytime safety with busier streets, commercial activity, schools and workplaces, better visibility and the presence of people able to observe what was happening nearby. These accounts are consistent with the role of guardianship and informal surveillance in routine activity theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979), but they remain explanations offered by participants.

Table 6. Residents' perceived safety during the day

Level of safety	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very safe	4	1.00
Safe	376	94.00
Neutral	16	4.00
Unsafe	4	1.00
Total	400	100.00

Source: Author's field survey (2026).

Adeleke and Balogun (2024) also describe a relationship between daytime activity and residents' sense of safety. The result is compatible with the proposition that active public spaces can improve visibility and opportunities for informal observation (Badiora et al., 2016). It should not be taken to mean that every part of the study area is safe during daylight. A small proportion of respondents selected unsafe, and qualitative accounts referred to isolated locations, indicating that experiences may differ within neighbourhoods.

4.8 Perceived safety at night

Responses about night-time safety were considerably less positive. A total of 166 respondents (41.5%) said they felt safe, while 162 (40.5%) reported feeling unsafe. Fifty-three (13.25%) were neutral, 14 (3.5%) felt very unsafe and five (1.25%) felt very safe (Table 7). Relative to the daytime results, fewer respondents felt safe and a substantially larger share expressed insecurity. Participants attributed their night-time concerns to inadequate street lighting, fewer pedestrians, isolated roads and limited security presence. Some said they avoided unnecessary travel after dark or preferred not to travel alone.

Table 7. Residents' perceived safety at night

Level of safety	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very safe	5	1.25
Safe	166	41.50
Neutral	53	13.25
Unsafe	162	40.50
Very unsafe	14	3.50
Total	400	100.00

Source: Author's field survey (2026).

The contrast between the day and night responses suggests that the time at which residents use neighbourhood spaces is relevant to their sense of security. Participants'

concerns about darkness, isolation and reduced movement are compatible with routine activity theory, which highlights the role of guardianship in shaping opportunities for crime (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Adeleke and Balogun (2024) also report lower perceived safety after dark, while Buremoh, Adimula and Onimago (2025) discuss security concerns associated with incidents in isolated places and at unusual hours. The present findings support consideration of lighting and patrol coverage, but they do not measure the separate effect of either intervention.

4.9 Integrated interpretation and implications for neighbourhood security

The combined evidence shows why neighbourhood security should be assessed with attention to both the source of information and what that source measures. Household respondents identified incidents they had experienced, observed or considered relevant to their immediate surroundings. Police records, by contrast, count cases that reached the police and were administratively classified. It is therefore unsurprising that the two sources produce different offence rankings: burglary/theft and armed robbery were most often selected in the household survey, whereas physical assault formed the largest category in police records. Neither ranking should automatically be treated as the definitive account. Their value lies in the different perspectives they provide when interpreted together with qualitative evidence.

The geographical findings also need to be read in light of these different measures. Nyiman leads the police-recorded totals, whereas Wadata and North Bank stand out in residents' reports of monthly crime occurrence. This is not necessarily a contradiction. Police totals accumulate cases recorded over six years; the household questionnaire captures the perceptions and reported experiences of the sampled residents at the time of the survey. Differences in population, exposure to risk, reporting practices, police access and awareness may influence the two patterns. Security planning should therefore consider both: administrative records can indicate where police caseloads are high, while resident accounts can help identify locations where people experience recurring concern.

The gap between daytime and night-time perceptions is another notable result. The share of respondents who felt safe declined from 94.0% during the day to 41.5% at night, while 40.5% reported feeling unsafe after dark. Participants connected night-time unease with poor lighting, isolated routes and fewer people being outdoors. These accounts are compatible with the routine activity perspective, particularly its emphasis on guardianship. They suggest that prevention measures should take account of both location and time. Patrol schedules, lighting maintenance and communication with residents may be more responsive when planned around local patterns rather than applied identically throughout the town.

The implications extend beyond the deployment of police personnel. The condition of streets, lighting, access routes and shared public spaces can influence residents' confidence in their surroundings. Residents' associations may contribute local knowledge about places and times of concern, while the police can provide verified incident information and coordinate lawful responses. These roles are complementary. Community involvement should strengthen communication, trust and safe reporting; it must not be used to justify extrajudicial punishment, intimidation or discriminatory monitoring.

This neighbourhood-level assessment makes differences visible that may be obscured by town-wide summaries, and it identifies issues that warrant more detailed investigation. Its spatial conclusions remain limited by the data supplied. A more rigorous

analysis would require consistently coded incident records containing dates, offence categories and geographic coordinates, reliable population denominators and repeated household surveys. Those resources would support population-adjusted rates, temporal comparisons and formal spatial statistics. Until such information is available, the results are best treated as an initial evidence base for screening and follow-up, not as proof of causal relationships or precisely delineated statistical hotspots.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined crime incidents and residents' sense of security in six residential neighbourhoods of Makurdi between 2020 and 2025. The evidence indicates that reported concerns differ by neighbourhood and by source. In the household survey, burglary/theft and armed robbery were the most frequently selected incidents. Police records, however, contained the largest number of physical-assault cases, followed by burglary/theft. Nyiman had the highest police total, with Wadata and North Bank next in the ranking. Residents' frequency responses instead identified Wadata and North Bank as the principal areas of concern, while Kanshio and Lobi Quarters were treated as secondary areas. The study also documented streets and localities named by participants as places requiring further attention.

Most respondents rated overall neighbourhood insecurity as moderate. Perceived safety differed sharply by time: 94.0% felt safe during the day, compared with 41.5% at night, and 40.5% said they felt unsafe after dark. Qualitative accounts associated night-time concern with inadequate lighting, reduced pedestrian activity and limited surveillance. The findings point to security planning that is responsive to local conditions, uses both administrative and community evidence, and recognises differences between daytime and night-time experience. The locations listed as hotspots in this study are areas reported by participants; confirmation through geocoded police data and formal spatial analysis remains necessary.

5.1 Recommendations

The Benue State Police Command and other relevant security agencies should review incident records regularly when planning patrols. Wadata and North Bank warrant attention because of residents' reported frequency patterns, while the high police-recorded total in Nyiman should also inform deployment. Patrol priorities should be based on the combined evidence rather than a single neighbourhood ranking.

Police units and lawful community-security organisations should adopt a consistent incident-recording procedure that captures the location, date, time and offence category for each report. Subject to privacy and operational safeguards, records should be geocoded and reviewed at regular intervals to identify recurring clusters and emerging areas of concern.

Public works agencies, residents' associations and property owners should jointly inspect streets and access routes where participants reported poor illumination or isolation. Streetlights should be installed, repaired and maintained according to documented local need, with follow-up checks to establish whether the improvements remain functional.

Security agencies and neighbourhood associations should improve communication and reporting arrangements among residents, police, vigilante groups and other lawful providers. These arrangements should promote prompt reporting, accountability and respect for human rights. Community security activity must remain within the law and should not

involve vigilantism or punishment outside established legal processes.

Further studies should bring together police administrative records, household victimisation surveys and geocoded incident data. Researchers should publish annual case counts, use population-adjusted rates when suitable denominators are available, explain household-frame construction and sampling intervals, and report the full statistical procedures and outputs for any hypotheses tested. This would make neighbourhood comparisons more reliable and allow hotspot boundaries to be assessed using transparent spatial methods.

6. References

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