



Criminal Justice Reforms and Pre-Trial Detention in Uganda: An Ethnographic Inquiry

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Published: 10 November 2009 | **Received:** 15 July 2009 | **Accepted:** 29 September 2009

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DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18900471](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18900471)

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Abstract

The Ugandan criminal justice system has been under scrutiny for its pre-trial detention practices, which have been criticized for being lengthy and harsh. Data was collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews with stakeholders including judges, prosecutors, defence attorneys, and community members; and document analysis of court records and policy documents. Community members reported significant reductions in pre-trial detention times following reform initiatives, where the proportion of cases reduced from 80% to 45% over a year. Reforms have shown promise in decreasing pre-trial detention periods but face challenges related to resource allocation and community engagement. Further research into sustainable community involvement is recommended alongside improvements in judicial resources.

Keywords: *African geography, pre-trial detention, legal anthropology, criminal justice reform, contextual analysis, ethnography, indigenous knowledge systems*

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