



Pre-Trial Detention Reform in Uganda: Challenges and Opportunities in Reducing Pre-Trial Incarceration

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Abstract

Pre-trial detention in Uganda's criminal justice system is a significant issue, with many accused persons being held in custody pending trial. The study employs a literature review approach to analyse existing legal frameworks and judicial decisions, supplemented by interviews with stakeholders from the criminal justice sector. Findings indicate that approximately 60% of accused persons are held in custody for over three months before trial, highlighting a substantial proportion of prolonged pre-trial detention. The current system is inefficient and disproportionately burdens public resources. Reform efforts should prioritise alternatives to incarceration such as bail or community service. Recommendations include reviewing legal thresholds for pre-trial detention, implementing alternative measures for low-risk detainees, and enhancing judicial oversight of these practices.

Keywords: *African criminology, detention reform, legal anthropology, jurisprudence, pre-trial detainee, social justice, trial advocacy*

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