

The National Strategy for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs in Algeria: An Analytical and Evaluative Study in Light of Ordinance No. 20-03

الاستراتيجية الوطنية للوقاية من عصابات الأحياء في الجزائر: دراسة تحليلية تقييمية
في ضوء الأمر رقم 03-20

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الملخص:

تبنى المشرع الجزائري استراتيجية وقائية شاملة لمواجهة عصابات الأحياء من خلال الأمر 03-20 لسنة 2020، والتي تقوم على إنشاء لجنة وطنية ولجان ولائية متخصصة في الوقاية والرصد المبكر لهذه الظاهرة. تركز الاستراتيجية على التدابير الوقائية المتنوعة كاعتماد آليات اليقظة والإنذار، وتنظيم برامج تحسيسية وتوعوية موجهة للشباب، وضمان التغطية الأمنية المتوازنة للأحياء السكنية. كما تعتمد على النهج التشاركي الذي يجمع بين مختلف الوزارات والهيئات الحكومية والمجتمع المدني والقطاع الخاص لضمان التنسيق الفعال في تنفيذ السياسات الوقائية. تهدف هذه الاستراتيجية إلى معالجة الأسباب الجذرية للظاهرة من خلال مكافحة البطالة وتعزيز التنشئة الاجتماعية السليمة والحد من التسرب المدرسي. وتتضمن آليات للمتابعة والتقييم المستمر من خلال تقارير سنوية ترفع لرئيس الجمهورية لتقييم مدى فعالية الاستراتيجية وتطوير الآليات الوطنية المعمول بها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: عصابات الأحياء، الوقاية، اللجنة الوطنية، اللجنة الولائية.

Abstract:

The Algerian legislator adopted a comprehensive preventive strategy to confront neighborhood gangs through Ordinance 20-03 of 2020, which is based on the establishment of a national committee and specialized provincial committees for the prevention and early detection of this phenomenon. The strategy focuses on diverse preventive measures such as adopting vigilance and alert mechanisms, organizing awareness and educational programs directed at youth, and ensuring balanced security coverage of residential neighborhoods. It further includes mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation through annual reports submitted to the President of the Republic to assess the effectiveness of the strategy and to develop the national mechanisms in force.

Key words: Neighborhood Gangs, Prevention, National Committee, Provincial Committee.

Introduction:

Crime may be committed by a single offender or by a group of individuals acting in concert to achieve a common criminal objective. Depending on their level of organization, continuity, and operational structure, these groups may take different forms, ranging from loosely organized street gangs to highly structured organized criminal groups. Although both involve collective criminality, neighborhood gangs differ from organized criminal groups in terms of their composition, objectives, level of organization, and geographical scope. In Algerian legislation, neighborhood gangs are generally characterized by the involvement of two or more persons belonging to one or more residential neighborhoods who commit criminal acts that threaten public security and social order.

Collective criminal violence is not a recent phenomenon. Throughout history, societies have experienced various forms of criminal groups, including highway robbers, pirate groups, prison gangs, and street gangs. However, the contemporary manifestation of neighborhood gangs has attracted increasing legislative and academic attention due to its direct impact on public security, social cohesion, and the safety of residential communities. In Algeria, this phenomenon has become more visible in recent years as a result of several social, economic, and urban factors, including rapid urban expansion, demographic changes, youth unemployment, school dropout, and the transformation of large residential neighborhoods.

Recognizing the growing social risks associated with neighborhood gangs, the Algerian legislator strengthened the legal framework governing their prevention and suppression through **Ordinance No. 20-03 of 30 August 2020 on the Prevention and Fight against Neighborhood Gangs**.¹ Unlike the previous reliance on the general provisions of the Penal Code, this Ordinance introduced an integrated preventive approach based on institutional coordination, community participation, awareness programs, early warning mechanisms, environmental crime prevention, and specialized national and provincial committees entrusted with implementing a comprehensive national strategy.

The implementation of this preventive framework was further reinforced by **Executive Decree No. 21-123 of 29 March 2021**, which determined the composition and functioning of the National and Provincial Committees for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs, and by the **Ministerial Decision of 23 May 2021 appointing the members of the National Committee**, thereby ensuring the operational activation of the institutional mechanism established under the Ordinance.

The significance of this study lies not in the novelty of the phenomenon itself, but in the recent legislative developments that have introduced a comprehensive preventive strategy specifically designed to address neighborhood gangs through legal, institutional, social, and preventive measures. These developments have generated growing academic interest regarding the effectiveness of this strategy and the practical challenges associated with its implementation.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the components of the Algerian national strategy for the prevention of neighborhood gangs established under Ordinance No. 20-03,

to examine its institutional and preventive mechanisms, and to assess its effectiveness in light of both the applicable legal framework and the practical challenges encountered during its implementation.

To achieve these objectives, the study adopts both the descriptive and analytical methods. The descriptive approach is used to identify the legal and institutional mechanisms governing the national strategy, whereas the analytical approach examines the effectiveness of these mechanisms, identifies the legal and practical challenges affecting their implementation, and evaluates the extent to which the contemporary Algerian criminal policy is consistent with the preventive philosophy embodied in Ordinance No. 20-03.

Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following main research question:

To what extent has the Algerian national strategy established under Ordinance No. 20-03 succeeded in preventing neighborhood gangs, and what legal and practical challenges affect its effectiveness?

1- General National Mechanisms for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs

Neighborhood gangs constitute a significant challenge to public security and social stability due to the acts of violence, intimidation, and physical and psychological harm that may occur within residential neighborhoods. Recognizing the multidimensional nature of this phenomenon, the Algerian legislator adopted a preventive approach that extends beyond criminal sanctions to include institutional, social, and administrative measures aimed at reducing the factors that contribute to the emergence and expansion of neighborhood gangs ².

The Algerian legislator acknowledged that preventing neighborhood gangs cannot rely exclusively on punitive measures. Given the social, economic, psychological, and cultural dimensions associated with this phenomenon, an integrated preventive policy requires the involvement of various public institutions, local authorities, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders within a comprehensive national strategy based on coordination, prevention, and early intervention.

Accordingly, this section examines the general preventive mechanisms established under **Ordinance No. 20-03**. It is divided into two subsections. The first discusses the preventive measures adopted by the State to combat neighborhood gangs, while the second examines the contribution of the competent administrative authorities to the implementation of the national preventive strategy.

1.1- The Necessary Measures Taken by the State to Prevent Neighborhood Gangs

The establishment of a comprehensive national strategy for the prevention of neighborhood gangs constitutes one of the principal preventive approaches adopted by the Algerian legislator in response to the social and security challenges associated with this phenomenon. This strategy reflects the State's commitment to addressing the underlying factors contributing to neighborhood gangs through coordinated preventive policies rather than relying solely on criminal punishment.

To this end, **Ordinance No. 20-03** requires the State and its institutions to adopt a range of preventive mechanisms designed to reduce the risks associated with neighborhood gangs.

These mechanisms combine legislative, institutional, administrative, and social measures intended to strengthen prevention, improve coordination among the competent authorities, and enhance the protection of residential neighborhoods³.

The preventive measures adopted by the State under the national strategy are examined in the following subsections.

1.1.1- The Definition of Neighborhood Gangs

As indicated in the introduction, neighborhood gangs constitute a specific form of collective criminality that differs from organized criminal groups in terms of their organizational structure, territorial scope, and criminal objectives. Although the concept has received increasing attention in recent legal literature following the enactment of **Ordinance No. 20-03**, legal scholars have not reached a unified doctrinal definition, as each definition emphasizes a particular aspect of the phenomenon depending on the research perspective adopted⁴.

From a doctrinal perspective, neighborhood gangs are generally understood as groups of individuals who associate to commit acts of violence or other criminal offences within residential neighborhoods, thereby threatening public security and disturbing social order. Their activities usually involve intimidation, assaults, robbery, vandalism, or other offences committed collectively within a limited geographical area⁵.

Some legal scholars have attempted to define neighborhood gangs by focusing on their criminal purpose and organizational structure. In this regard, Asma Kelanmer describes neighborhood gangs as a group of individuals forming a criminal organization with the intention of committing offences such as theft, kidnapping, extortion, and drug trafficking in order to impose their influence within a residential community. Likewise, Nassim Mazhoud associates the spread of neighborhood gangs with social and economic factors, particularly unemployment, social exclusion, and the weakening of community integration mechanisms within residential neighborhoods⁶.

The concept of the "neighborhood" itself is equally important in understanding neighborhood gangs. Urban planning literature considers the residential neighborhood to be a basic social and spatial unit characterized by geographical proximity, social interaction, and relatively homogeneous living conditions. Consequently, the criminal activities of neighborhood gangs are closely linked to this local environment, where offenders exploit their familiarity with the area and its residents⁷.

More broadly, criminal law scholars define a gang as a group of three or more persons operating under a certain degree of organization and continuity for the purpose of committing criminal activities.⁸ Similarly, organized crime literature considers criminal groups to be associations of individuals acting collectively to achieve unlawful objectives through coordination and planning, although the degree of organization may vary according to the nature of the offences committed.⁹

Based on these doctrinal approaches, neighborhood gangs may be understood as a form of collective criminal association operating primarily within residential neighborhoods, whose members coordinate to commit criminal acts that threaten public order, public security, and the safety of persons and property. Unlike transnational organized criminal groups, neighborhood gangs generally operate within a limited territorial framework and are characterized by less sophisticated organizational structures while maintaining a collective criminal purpose¹⁰.

From a legal perspective, the Algerian legislator provided a specific legal definition in **Article 2 of Ordinance No. 20-03 on the Prevention and Fight against Neighborhood Gangs**. According to this provision, a neighborhood gang is identified through several cumulative elements:

- It consists of **two or more persons**;
- Its members belong to **one or more residential neighborhoods**;
- They commit **one or more criminal acts**;
- They use **bladed weapons**, whether openly carried or concealed.

The legal definition adopted by the Algerian legislator therefore distinguishes neighborhood gangs from other forms of collective criminality by combining three essential criteria: the numerical element, the territorial link with residential neighborhoods, and the commission of criminal acts that undermine public security. This legislative approach provides a clearer legal basis for implementing the preventive strategy established under Ordinance No. 20-03 and facilitates the distinction between neighborhood gangs and other criminal organizations governed by the general rules relating to organized crime.

1.2- Means of Preventing Neighborhood Gangs

Ordinance No. 20-03 establishes a comprehensive preventive framework that extends beyond traditional criminal sanctions by adopting a multidisciplinary approach aimed at addressing the root causes of neighborhood gangs. This framework is based on vigilance, early warning and early detection mechanisms, institutional coordination, public awareness, environmental crime prevention, and the active participation of civil society and the private sector in the preparation and implementation of the national strategy.

First: Measures Taken by the State, Administrations, Institutions, and Local Authorities

Article 4 of Ordinance No. 20-03 requires the State, public administrations, public institutions, and local authorities to adopt all necessary preventive measures to combat neighborhood gangs. These measures include the establishment of vigilance, early warning, and early detection mechanisms intended to identify potential risks before they develop into criminal activities.

The Ordinance also emphasizes the dissemination of awareness and educational programmes highlighting the dangers of joining neighborhood gangs and the legal consequences of using information and communication technologies to promote gang activities or recruit new members. These programmes are directed particularly towards young

people, who are considered the social group most vulnerable to gang recruitment. Furthermore, the legislator sought to strengthen institutional coordination by encouraging the exchange of information and cooperation among all actors involved in prevention, including ministries, public administrations, judicial and security authorities, civil society organizations, educational institutions, and the private sector. Such coordination reflects the preventive philosophy of the Ordinance, which considers that sustainable prevention requires the participation of all sectors of society rather than relying exclusively on criminal repression¹¹.

The Ordinance also requires the provision of balanced security coverage throughout residential neighborhoods in order to enhance public safety and reassure local communities. In addition, it introduces preventive urban planning policies that integrate crime prevention considerations into housing programmes through environmental design measures, including improved street lighting, natural surveillance, controlled access to residential areas, and the maintenance of public spaces to reduce opportunities for criminal activity.

This preventive approach corresponds to the internationally recognized concept of **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)**, which seeks to reduce crime by improving the physical environment and strengthening natural surveillance, territorial reinforcement, and access control. Consequently, prevention is no longer limited to criminal justice institutions but also involves urban planning and local development policies.

Accordingly, Ordinance No. 20-03 establishes an integrated preventive system aimed at protecting residential neighborhoods by addressing the various factors that may contribute to violence, insecurity, and social instability.

A. Adoption of Vigilance, Alert, and Early Detection Mechanisms for the Causes of Discrimination and Hate Speech:

Early detection constitutes one of the principal preventive mechanisms introduced by the Ordinance. It is intended to identify indicators associated with the emergence or expansion of neighborhood gangs before criminal behaviour escalates. This objective requires the continuous collection and exchange of information between security services, administrative authorities, educational institutions, civil society organizations, and local communities.

The effectiveness of this mechanism depends on the development of local monitoring systems capable of identifying vulnerable neighbourhoods, detecting early warning signs, and facilitating rapid intervention through coordinated institutional action¹².

B. Media and Awareness-Raising on the Risks of Joining Neighborhood Gangs and the Effects of Using Information and Communication Technologies:

An effective preventive policy also depends on encouraging members of society to report activities associated with neighborhood gangs. Reporting mechanisms enable the competent authorities to intervene at an early stage and prevent criminal acts before they occur.

Although Ordinance No. 20-03 does not establish a comprehensive legal framework specifically governing witness protection, the implementation of the national strategy requires the development of confidential reporting procedures, adequate protection for witnesses and informants, and greater public confidence in law-enforcement institutions. Strengthening cooperation between citizens and the competent authorities therefore represents an essential component of successful crime prevention¹³.

C. Promotion of Institutional Cooperation:

Media institutions constitute one of the principal instruments for implementing the national preventive strategy. Effective awareness campaigns contribute to informing the public about the dangers associated with neighborhood gangs, promoting social cohesion, and discouraging young people from joining criminal groups.

In addition to traditional media, awareness programmes should address the misuse of information and communication technologies. Digital platforms and social media may be exploited to recruit members, glorify gang violence, disseminate criminal content, or coordinate unlawful activities. Consequently, preventive media policies should include digital awareness campaigns aimed at promoting the responsible use of social media and preventing the online dissemination of criminal behaviour.

This preventive dimension complements the legal provisions criminalizing the use of digital technologies for promoting or facilitating neighborhood gang activities, thereby reflecting the contemporary evolution of Algerian criminal policy in response to digital forms of criminality¹⁴.

Second: The Contribution of Civil Society, the Private Sector, and the Media in Implementing the National Strategy

The Algerian legislator recognizes that preventing neighborhood gangs cannot be achieved solely through public authorities. Accordingly, Articles 5 and 6 of Ordinance No. 20-03 expressly involve civil society organizations, the private sector, and media institutions in the preparation and implementation of the national strategy.

a. The Role of Media and Communication in the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs:

Article 6 of Ordinance No. 20-03 assigns an important preventive role to public and private media institutions as well as communication platforms. Their mission is not limited to disseminating information but also includes developing educational programmes that promote respect for the rule of law, discourage gang membership, and strengthen social values among young people.

Modern communication strategies should also include social media platforms, which have become essential channels for preventive awareness campaigns. These platforms may contribute significantly to countering online incitement, correcting misleading information, and promoting responsible digital citizenship.

b. The Contribution of Civil Society and the Private Sector in the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs

Civil society generally refers to voluntary organizations established independently of the State to pursue social, cultural, professional, or humanitarian objectives. Their participation strengthens community involvement in crime prevention by promoting civic responsibility, supporting vulnerable groups, and reinforcing social cohesion.¹⁵

Recognizing this role, Article 5 of Ordinance No. 20-03 provides for the participation of civil society organizations and the private sector in preparing and implementing the national strategy for the prevention of neighborhood gangs.¹⁶ Their contribution includes awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, youth development programmes, social mediation, and cooperation with public institutions in addressing the social conditions that may facilitate gang formation¹⁷.

2- The National Strategy for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs

Recognizing that criminal sanctions alone are insufficient to address the phenomenon of neighborhood gangs, the Algerian legislator devoted **Chapter II of Ordinance No. 20-03** to establishing an institutional framework for the implementation of the national strategy for the prevention of neighborhood gangs. This framework is based on two complementary bodies responsible for coordinating preventive policies at both the national and local levels: the **National Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs** and the **Provincial Committees for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs**. Together, these bodies constitute the institutional backbone of the national preventive strategy by ensuring coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of preventive measures throughout the national territory.

2.1- Establishment of a National Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs

One of the principal institutional mechanisms introduced by **Ordinance No. 20-03** is the establishment of the **National Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs**. Unlike traditional criminal justice institutions whose intervention generally occurs after offences have been committed, this Committee performs a preventive and coordinating function by supervising the implementation of the national strategy, proposing preventive policies, and evaluating their effectiveness.

Article 8 of Ordinance No. 20-03 provides that the National Committee shall be established under the authority of the Minister of the Interior. In accordance with the Ordinance, the Committee prepares an annual report evaluating the implementation of the national strategy, together with proposals and recommendations intended to strengthen and improve the national preventive mechanisms adopted to combat neighborhood gangs.

The practical implementation of the Committee was subsequently completed through **Executive Decree No. 21-123 of 4 April 2021**, which regulates its composition and functioning, and through the **Ministerial Decision of 23 May 2021 appointing the members**

of the National Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs, thereby operationalizing the institutional framework established by the Ordinance.

2.1.1- Composition of the National Committee and Its Functioning

The study of the National Committee requires an examination of both its composition and the rules governing its operation.

First: Composition of the Committee

Executive Decree No. 21-123 of 4 April 2021¹⁸, adopted pursuant to Ordinance No. 20-03, specifies the composition of the National Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs.

Pursuant to Article 8 of Ordinance No. 20-03¹⁹, the Committee operates under the authority of the Minister of the Interior. Article 2 of Executive Decree No. 21-123 provides that it is chaired by the Minister of the Interior, or his representative, and is composed of twenty-four (24) members representing a wide range of governmental institutions and specialized bodies.²⁰

Its membership includes representatives of the Ministries of Justice, Religious Affairs, National Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research, Vocational Training, Culture, Youth, Post and Telecommunications, National Solidarity and Family, Urban Planning, Communication, Health, and Employment. It also includes representatives of the General Directorate of National Security, the National Gendarmerie, the National Office for the Fight against Drugs and Drug Addiction, the National Institute of Public Health, and the High Council for Youth.

To reinforce the multidisciplinary nature of the national strategy, the Committee also includes two representatives of nationally accredited associations active in the fields of violence prevention and the fight against social problems, together with two experts in criminology, one sociologist, and one psychologist. Furthermore, the Committee may establish specialized thematic working groups and may consult any person whose expertise is considered useful for the performance of its functions.

The diversity of the Committee's composition reflects the legislator's intention to adopt a comprehensive preventive approach based on the cooperation of legal, security, educational, social, psychological, and civil society actors rather than relying exclusively on law-enforcement institutions.

Second: Functioning of the Committee

The National Committee adopts its own internal rules of procedure²¹ and is assisted by a permanent secretariat provided by the competent departments of the Ministry of the Interior²².

Under Article 4 of Executive Decree No. 21-123, the Committee meets four (04) times each year in ordinary session. It may also convene extraordinary meetings whenever necessary upon invitation by its Chairperson. The Chairperson is responsible for establishing

the agenda and communicating it to members at least fifteen (15) days before the scheduled meeting. In cases of urgency requiring extraordinary meetings, this period may be reduced but may not be less than eight (08) days²³.

In addition to its coordination role, the Committee prepares periodic reports presenting the results of its preventive activities and the implementation of the national strategy. These reports are submitted to the Prime Minister, while its annual report—containing an assessment of the implementation of the national strategy together with recommendations for improving preventive policies—is submitted to the President of the Republic.

The reporting mechanism established by Ordinance No. 20-03 constitutes an important instrument for monitoring the implementation of the national strategy and for assessing the effectiveness of the preventive measures adopted. However, the practical effectiveness of this mechanism ultimately depends on the regular implementation of the Committee's recommendations, the availability of measurable performance indicators, and continuous coordination between the National Committee and the Provincial Committees responsible for implementing preventive measures at the local level²⁴.

2.2 Powers of the National Committee

The National Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs constitutes the central coordinating body responsible for implementing the national strategy established under **Ordinance No. 20-03**. In addition to its advisory role, the Committee performs strategic, operational, and evaluative functions designed to ensure the coherence and effectiveness of preventive policies at both the national and local levels.

Pursuant to **Article 8 of Ordinance No. 20-03**, the Committee is entrusted with several principal powers, including:

- Preparing the draft national strategy for the prevention of neighborhood gangs and submitting it to the Government for approval;
- Monitoring the implementation of the national strategy by the competent public authorities, civil society organizations, and the private sector;
- Collecting, coordinating, and analyzing data relating to the prevention of neighborhood gangs while developing appropriate standards and national expertise in this field;
- Proposing legislative, regulatory, administrative, and preventive measures intended to strengthen the effectiveness of the national strategy;
- Issuing opinions and recommendations concerning all matters related to the prevention of neighborhood gangs;
- Promoting cooperation, coordination, and the exchange of information among all institutions involved in prevention;
- Assessing existing legal and administrative mechanisms and proposing amendments aimed at improving their effectiveness;
- Supervising, coordinating, and evaluating the activities of the Provincial Committees in order to ensure the coherent implementation of preventive policies throughout the national territory.

These powers demonstrate that the National Committee is not merely a consultative body but rather the principal institution responsible for coordinating the implementation, monitoring, and continuous evaluation of the national preventive strategy. Its multidisciplinary mandate reflects the legislator's intention to adopt an integrated approach combining prevention, institutional coordination, policy development, and continuous assessment²⁵.

2.2.1- Establishment of a Provincial Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs

Recognizing that preventive policies must be implemented close to the communities concerned, **Article 7 of Ordinance No. 20-03** provides for the establishment of Provincial Committees for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs. These committees constitute the local institutional component of the national strategy and ensure that preventive measures are adapted to the specific social and security circumstances of each province.

Accordingly, a Provincial Committee is established in each province under the conditions prescribed by the applicable regulations, thereby ensuring the decentralized implementation of the national preventive strategy.

2.2.2- Composition of the Provincial Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs

The Provincial Committee represents one of the principal local mechanisms introduced by **Ordinance No. 20-03**. Owing to its proximity to residential communities, it plays a central role in identifying local security concerns, coordinating preventive actions, and implementing the national strategy at the provincial level.

Pursuant to **Article 10 of Executive Decree No. 21-123**, the Provincial Committee is chaired by the **Wali (Governor)** or his representative and consists of seventeen (17) members representing the principal provincial administrations concerned with prevention.

Its membership includes representatives of the Directorates of National Education, Vocational Training, Urban Planning, Employment, Religious Affairs and Endowments, Youth and Sports, and Culture, together with representatives of other provincial institutions involved in prevention, social development, and public security.

The multidisciplinary composition of the Provincial Committee illustrates the legislator's intention to ensure that preventive policies are implemented through coordinated action involving educational, social, cultural, religious, administrative, and security institutions at the local level²⁶.

2.2.3 Tasks of the Provincial Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs

According to **Article 12 of Ordinance No. 20-03**, the Provincial Committees are responsible for implementing the national strategy at the local level while adapting preventive

measures to the specific characteristics of each province.

Their principal powers include:

- Implementing the national strategy for the prevention of neighborhood gangs;
- Detecting gang activities at an early stage and reporting them to the competent authorities;
- Preparing and implementing awareness programmes concerning the dangers associated with neighborhood gangs;
- Organizing cultural, educational, media, and community-awareness activities in cooperation with civil society organizations;
- Studying and analyzing the evolution of neighborhood gangs and the local social factors contributing to their emergence;
- Requesting competent institutions to conduct studies and provide statistical data relating to gang-related phenomena;
- Giving priority to preventive programmes targeting young people and vulnerable social groups;
- Implementing the directives and recommendations issued by the National Committee;
- Reporting criminal offences to the competent judicial authorities;
- Submitting proposals to local authorities or the National Committee concerning preventive projects, public facilities, and additional preventive measures;
- Preparing periodic and annual reports evaluating the implementation of preventive measures at the provincial level.

These functions demonstrate that the Provincial Committees constitute the operational arm of the national strategy. While the National Committee is responsible for strategic planning and national coordination, the Provincial Committees ensure the practical implementation of preventive policies by responding to local circumstances and maintaining close cooperation with the competent authorities and community actors.

Furthermore, **Article 3 of Ordinance No. 20-03** entrusts the State with the preparation of a national strategy for the prevention of neighborhood gangs aimed at preserving public security, maintaining public order, and protecting persons and property. In practice, this responsibility is exercised through the National Committee, which prepares the draft strategy before its submission to the Government, while its implementation is monitored through the coordinated action of public authorities, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

With regard to their functioning, **Articles 12 to 16 of Executive Decree No. 21-123** establish procedures largely identical to those governing the National Committee. The principal differences include²⁷.

- The secretariat of the Provincial Committee is provided by the services of the Provincial Secretariat (Article 15);²⁸
- The minutes of meetings together with the Committee's periodic reports must be transmitted to the Chairperson of the National Committee within eight (08) days following each meeting (Article 16)²⁹.

This reporting mechanism strengthens institutional coordination between the national and provincial levels and contributes to the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the national strategy throughout the country.

Conclusion

The adoption of **Ordinance No. 20-03** reflects a significant development in Algerian criminal policy by introducing a comprehensive preventive framework specifically designed to address the phenomenon of neighborhood gangs. Rather than relying exclusively on criminal sanctions, the legislator adopted a multidisciplinary strategy combining legal prevention, institutional coordination, public awareness, environmental crime prevention, and the participation of civil society and the private sector.

The study demonstrates that the national strategy constitutes an important legislative step toward strengthening crime prevention. The establishment of the National Committee and the Provincial Committees has created an institutional framework capable of coordinating preventive efforts at both the national and local levels. Likewise, the integration of educational, social, cultural, security, and administrative actors reflects the legislator's intention to address the phenomenon through a comprehensive preventive approach.

Nevertheless, the practical effectiveness of the national strategy ultimately depends on its implementation. Although the legislative framework is relatively comprehensive, several practical challenges may affect its effectiveness, including the need for stronger institutional coordination, continuous monitoring, measurable performance indicators, adequate financial and human resources, and regular assessment of preventive programmes. Furthermore, the increasing use of digital technologies and social media by criminal groups requires the continuous adaptation of preventive policies to emerging forms of criminality.

Overall, the Algerian approach introduced by Ordinance No. 20-03 appears consistent with the contemporary evolution of criminal policy, which increasingly emphasizes prevention alongside criminal repression. By combining institutional cooperation, community participation, environmental prevention, and public awareness, the Ordinance establishes a preventive model capable of addressing both the immediate manifestations and the underlying causes of neighborhood gangs. However, maintaining the effectiveness of this model requires continuous legislative review and periodic evaluation in light of evolving criminal practices.

The principal findings of this study may be summarized as follows:

- Ordinance No. 20-03 established a specific legislative framework for the prevention and fight against neighborhood gangs, thereby filling an important gap that was not adequately addressed under the general provisions of the Penal Code.
- The national strategy strengthened institutional cooperation among public authorities, security services, civil society organizations, and the private sector through an integrated preventive approach.
- The establishment of the National Committee and the Provincial Committees provided an institutional mechanism for coordinating, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating preventive policies throughout the national territory.

- The legislator adopted preventive measures extending beyond criminal sanctions by incorporating awareness programmes, environmental prevention, institutional coordination, and community participation.
- The multidisciplinary composition of the National and Provincial Committees contributes to the development of preventive policies that take into account the legal, social, educational, psychological, and security dimensions of the phenomenon.
- The Algerian preventive strategy reflects the broader transformation of contemporary criminal policy from a predominantly punitive approach toward a balanced model combining prevention and repression.

In light of these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Strengthen institutional coordination by developing measurable performance indicators for evaluating the implementation of the national strategy.
- Encourage public and private media to produce continuous awareness campaigns addressing both the traditional and digital dimensions of neighborhood gangs.
- Develop secure reporting mechanisms and reinforce the protection of witnesses and informants in order to facilitate early intervention by the competent authorities.
- Expand the application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in urban planning through improved lighting, natural surveillance, access control, and the maintenance of public spaces.
- Support scientific research through periodic national studies examining the social, economic, and technological factors contributing to neighborhood gangs in order to improve evidence-based preventive policies.
- Strengthen cooperation with parents' associations, educational institutions, youth organizations, and community associations to establish local prevention networks capable of identifying risk factors at an early stage.
- Promote sports, cultural, educational, and vocational programmes targeting vulnerable young people as an effective means of reducing the social conditions that facilitate gang recruitment.
- Continuously review the legal and institutional framework governing neighborhood gangs to ensure its adaptation to emerging forms of criminality, particularly those facilitated through digital technologies and social media.

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