



The
Responsible
Security
Association

WORKING CONDITIONS IN PRIVATE SECURITY COUNTRY REPORT: KENYA

A Market Research Prepared for the International Code
of Conduct Association by Consumers Options

ICoCA Research Paper Series on Working Conditions in Private Security

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About ICoCA

The International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA) is a multi-stakeholder initiative formed in 2013 to ensure that providers of private security services respect human rights and humanitarian law. It serves as the governance and oversight mechanism of the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (the “Code”).

The Code articulates the responsibilities of private security companies under human rights and international humanitarian law to ensure the responsible provision of private security services, particularly when operating in complex environments.

ICoCA’s mission is to raise private security industry standards and practices that respect human rights and international humanitarian law and to engage with key stakeholders to achieve widespread adherence to the Code globally.

1.2 The research project

ICoCA commissioned Consumer Options Limited, a full market research company with the ability to do research across Africa, to conduct a situational analysis of the private security sector. The objective of the research was to collect data on the working conditions of security personnel working for private security companies in Kenya to contribute to the identification of possible areas of improvement.

The target respondents for the survey were security officers/guards working for private security companies (licensed or not). The survey did not include other categories of security personnel (directly employed by establishments or private individuals).

The study was quantitative in nature with the security guards randomly selected in sampling points selected in urban setups including malls, schools, government facilities, private facilities, churches, hospitals, among others. The

study aimed at recruiting and interviewing a sample of 1000 security guards in six main towns in Kenya namely;

- Nairobi
- Mombasa
- Kisumu
- Nakuru
- Eldoret and
- Nyeri

This research covered a range of industry practices that can affect the rights and welfare of security guards, including:

- Recruitment fee payment
- Access to healthcare and advocacy channels
- Mental and physical health hazards
- Safety risks as well as
- Wages, working hours and benefits.

The report presents the results from a survey conducted with 1013 interviewees selected to be nationally representative, with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 3%. As such, these findings provide insight into the perspectives of security guards in major cities and employers throughout the country.

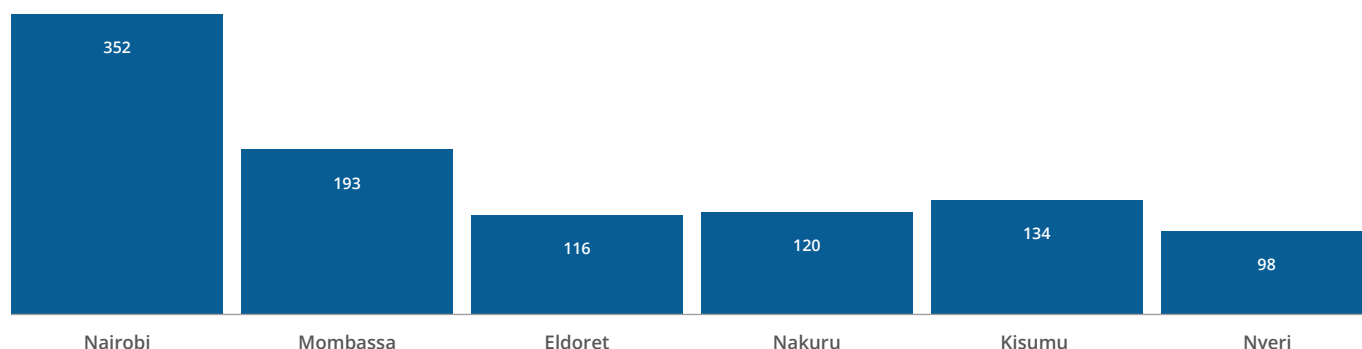
1.3 Data collection and analysis

The project team was briefed on 7th February 2023 via zoom and pilot surveys were done on 8th February. Fieldwork commenced on 10th Feb 2023 and was completed on 21st Feb 2023 for a total of 11 working days.

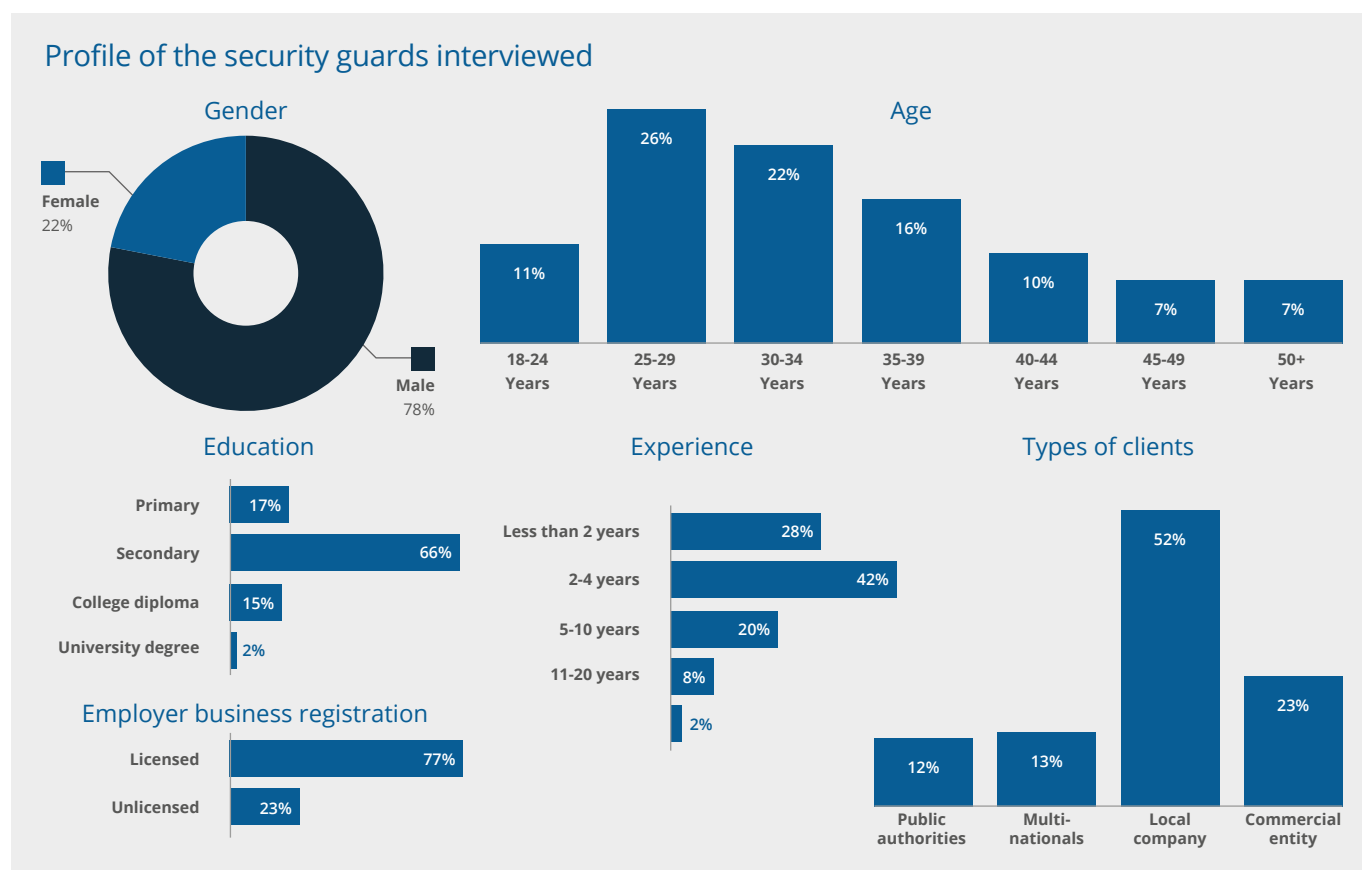
Computer-aided personal interviews (CAPI) were conducted where interviewers used handheld devices to collect and submit data in real-time. SurveyToGo platform was used to deploy surveys to tablets in the field and conduct surveys offline or online.

IBM’s SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software was used for data processing and analysis. The statistical software was used for data preparation management and analysis and reporting and more importantly, extracting actionable insights from the data.

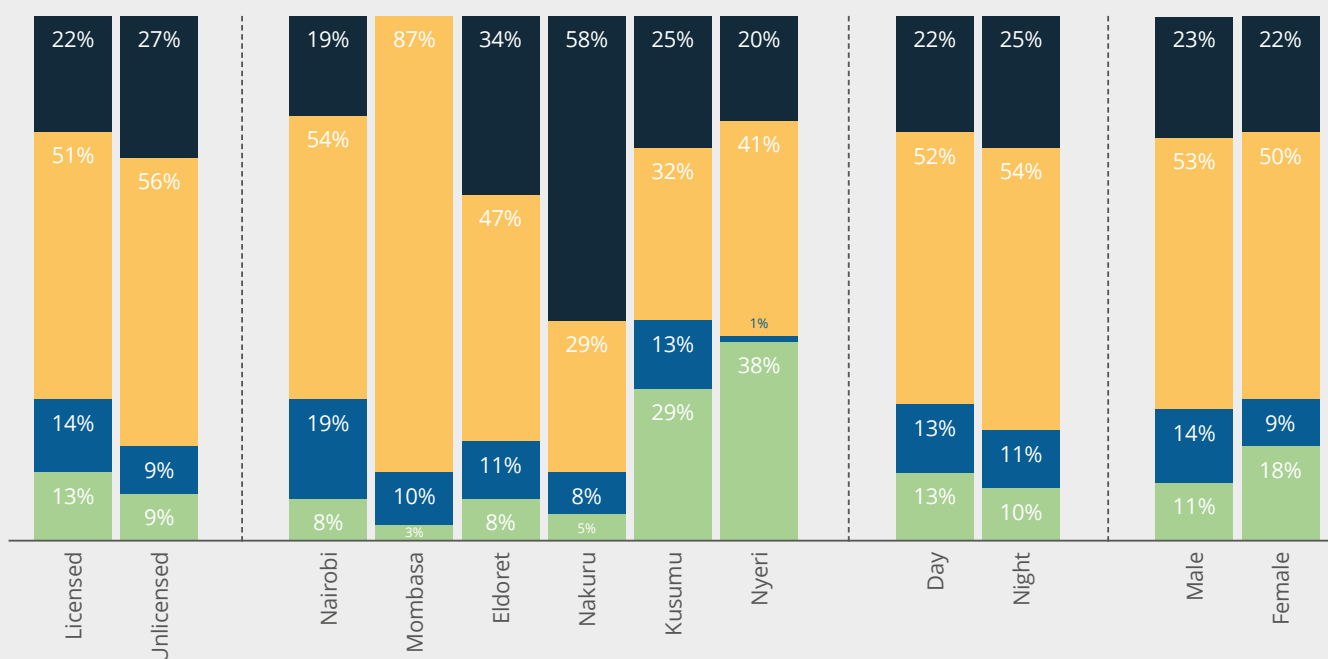
1.4 Achieved sample profile



A total sample of 1013 interviews was achieved across the 6 cities and towns with 352 interviews conducted in Nairobi, 193 in Mombasa, 116 in Eldoret, 120 in Nakuru, 134 in Kisumu and 98 in Nyeri. Nairobi was allocated a larger sample due to its high population size and number of security firms.



Types of clients



About 78% of the guards are male, 66% have secondary education while 42% have 2 – 4 years of experience as a guard; this implies that they are well conversant with the sector. These guards are predominantly employed by licensed security firms whose clients are mostly local companies.

Considering the security guards were randomly selected in sampling points selected in urban setups, Nakuru indicatively has about 58% of security guards working for commercial entities (industrial/manufacturing) while Mombasa has 87% of the guards working for local companies (trade sector). Kisumu and Nyeri have 29% and 38% of the security working for public authorities respectively.

Local companies refer to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) either in service and trade thus their security needs are basic to moderate. Commercial entities are large scale enterprises e.g. in manufacturing where they run warehouses or large farms, thus security needs are in scale.

1.5 Intent of the project

This research project is part of a broader research thread conducted by ICoCA on “People in Security”. It complements the report “When the Abused becomes the Abuser; Poor working conditions in the private security industry undermine human rights compliance”¹ published by ICoCA in 2023.

The research intends to inform civil society organisations, PSCs and authorities to contribute to their dialogue on the improvement of working conditions in private security, inform clients’ procurement/contracting practices and promote PSCs’ adhesion to the Code.

This is against a backdrop of key stakeholders, including donors, investors, banks and insurance companies becoming progressively aware of the need for private security companies to operate to internationally recognised industry standards.

¹ <https://icoca.ch/2023/12/14/when-the-abused-becomes-the-abuser-policy-brief-report/>



2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Summary of findings

Contracts, salary and benefits

The findings indicate that about 70% of Kenyan employers have an employment contract with their security guards. The high incidence of employees with contracts correlates with the high incidence of licensed employers in the survey. Only about 2% of the employers ask for recruitment fees.

About 68% of the security firms pay guards below the minimum wage of Ksh 15,000 yet the industry regulations expect a wage of about Ksh 25,000. Only about 17% are paid a minimum wage while 15% are paid above minimum wage.

Indicatively, 76% of the guards receive NHIF benefits while 73% receive NSSF benefits. However, the security guards claim that their employers do not remit the funds. Thus, they do not get to benefit from these initiatives.

The research team recommends a sensitisation drive targeting security firms and guards to formalise staff contracting and to address the gap in guards' contracting. There is a need for stakeholder engagement forums to address the minimum wage gap and terms of payment.

Gender and discrimination

About 12% of the respondents have noticed cases of discrimination while 5% have observed sexual harassment. About 80% of the employers do not have preventative measures in place or other processes to address these many challenges.

The research team recommends gender mainstreaming and training for security firms, enabling guards' ability to identify gender issues and to respond to them. Employers should create awareness of the various reporting mechanisms including appointing personnel to handle such matters and should create reporting platforms where victims can interact and get support.

Health, mental health, safety, work time

Half of the security guards (50%) work for 7 days a week, 97% work for 12 hours a day and only 22% can take a break during working hours. This means that most of these guards are fatigued and are less likely to be productive at their work.

About 87% of the guards can access amenities like toilets, water and shelter. Only 2% have their accommodation provided. However, about 74% of these guards have faced other challenges at their work that not only affect their mental health but also affect their performance. Low salaries, delayed payments, unnecessary deductions, long working hours without rest, extra responsibilities without overtime pay and no proper uniforms are some of the challenges they face.

The study demonstrates the need for better employee work schedule management systems and processes including scheduling for days off and leave days. To improve employee performance and physical and mental health, the study shows the need for an improvement in the quality of facilities like toilets, shelters, uniforms and drinking water and that companies develop mental wellness programs to monitor and support guards who are stressed and depressed. Employers and clients demonstrate little care

and concern in providing conducive work environment for the security guards. There's an opportunity to sensitise on the importance of the role of guards and of their well-being and change the attitude towards them.

Unions

The findings indicate that 36% of the security guards are aware they are allowed to join an employee union, however, only 25% are represented by a union partly due to fear of some employers not supporting it.

Employee training

About 89% of the employers provide training; of those trained 93% are trained in customer service, 75% on rules and use of force, 74% on health and safety and 61% on human rights.

The study recommends regular and more trainings, supporting trained guards and the provision of proper infrastructure and tools for guards to make use of their trainings. Trained guards should be awarded certificates for their career growth and to build their relevance in the sector.

2.2 Regional differences

Indicatively, Nakuru has a significant number of security guards working for commercial entities (industrial) while Mombasa has more local companies (trade). Kisumu and Nyeri have a considerable number of guards working for public authorities.

Nairobi and Kisumu employers have an above average incidence concerning employees having employment contracts, benefits and fair wage payment (minimum or above minimum wage) unlike in Nakuru and Nyeri where more employers have contracts and benefits but very few employers pay minimum or above minimum wages.

Nakuru has the highest incidence of guards who cannot take breaks during working hours while Nyeri has the highest incidence of guards working without a day off. There's a significant incidence of cases of work discrimination in Nakuru and a lack of employer training for guards in Kisumu.

Nakuru has the highest likelihood of poor working conditions affecting the physical health, safety and mental health of security guards. The region also has the most guards observing that if conditions are poor, security guards are likely to engage in unlawful behaviour. Mombasa guards are least likely to engage in unlawful behaviour due to poor working conditions.

Therefore, a regional approach will be instrumental considering different regions have different profiles of clients and security needs. Nakuru and Nyeri employers, for instance, stand out for higher cases of non-compliance to regulations on minimum wages, contracts and benefits compared to Nairobi and Mombasa cities.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 Security industry trends

Government goodwill

The government has put in place initiatives in favour of the private security industry and has prioritised security as a key pillar in the provision of services and the day-to-day running of businesses. This comes in the wake of a rise in crime across the country. According to the 2022 Economic Survey, the total number of crimes reported to the police in 2022 was 81,272 which showcased an increase of 16.7% from the year prior. In 2020/21, the number of cases filed in courts increased by 5.5 % to 362,332.

Recently, there was an uproar on social media regarding the rising insecurity in Nairobi city. This prompted the Government to implement new measures including the deployment of General Service Unit (GSU) officers and officers from the Administration Police Rapid Deployment Unit (RDU) to join in patrolling the city. Terrorist attacks and political violence have also contributed to the size of the private security sector in Kenya.

New registration

There are new regulations now with the Private Security Regulatory Authority (PSRA) in place. Private security firms will be subjected to vetting and clearance under the Private Security Regulations Act 2016.

If firms are to be licensed, they will be required to pay guards in their employment at least the minimum wage. Cities like Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu are to pay KSh 27,993 for a night guard and KSh 25,641 for a day guard. Municipalities like Nakuru, Nyeri and Kakamega will pay KSh 25,905 for a night guard and KSh 23,208 for a day

guard while small urban and rural areas will pay KSh 16,119 for a night guard and KSh 13,575 for a day guard.

Human capital

Industry statistics estimate this category to employ about 700,000 private security guards while about 1.2 million Kenyans depend on this sector. This industry has created jobs for the youth making an impact in the blue-collar jobs sector.

The security industry employs about 2% of the job market. The sector employs more people than transport & communications, construction and other sectors.

Tech and innovation

There are new technologies and innovations with solutions to empower private security in Kenya. For instance, Mart Networks introduced smart home security devices in partnership with an American company Ring (Owned by Amazon). This firm seeks to provide reliable, easy-to-install do-it-yourself home security systems.

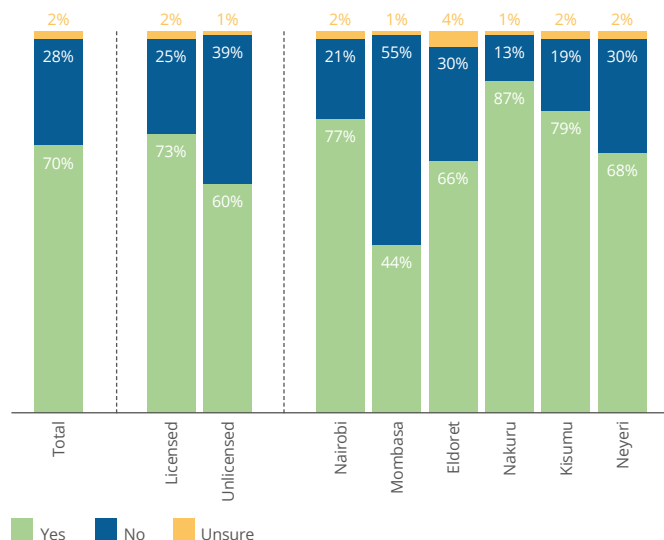
Faina Consultancy had developed a Machine Learning computer surveillance system known as JichoSmart. It can augment the existing infrastructure, including analysis of real-time footage of CCTVs and use the data to help the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) and the Police Department to not only control and monitor traffic but also enhance general security within the city.

Therefore, the private security sector can be said to be growing in demand and sophistication through technology and innovation. However, there's optimism with the new registration process to streamline and formalise private security firms.

3.2 Contracts, salary and benefits

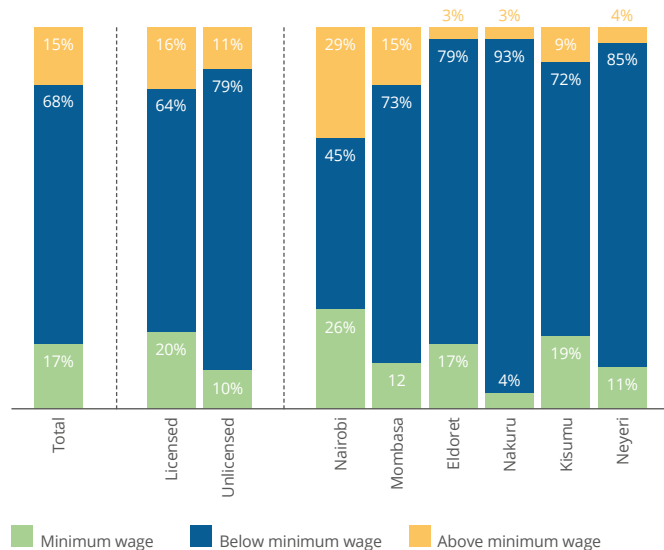
3.2.1 Key findings on contracts, salary and benefits

1. Do you have an employment contract with your employer?



About 70% of the security guards have an employment contract. The incidence is highest in Nakuru (commercial entities) and lowest in Mombasa (local companies). The majority of the companies interviewed in Mombasa were local entities and this indicates that local companies are less likely to have contracts.

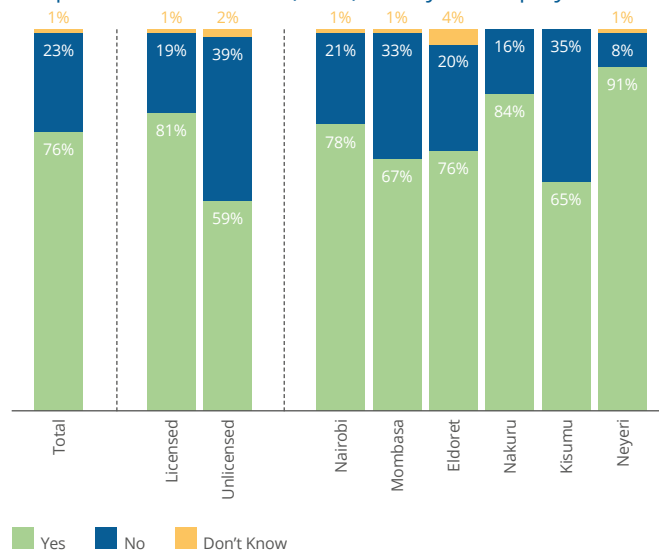
2. Salary levels compared to minimum wage



At least **two in every three security guards receive below minimum wage** salary from their current employer. Nairobi has about 29% of the guards paid above minimum wage which is the highest incidence across the regions.

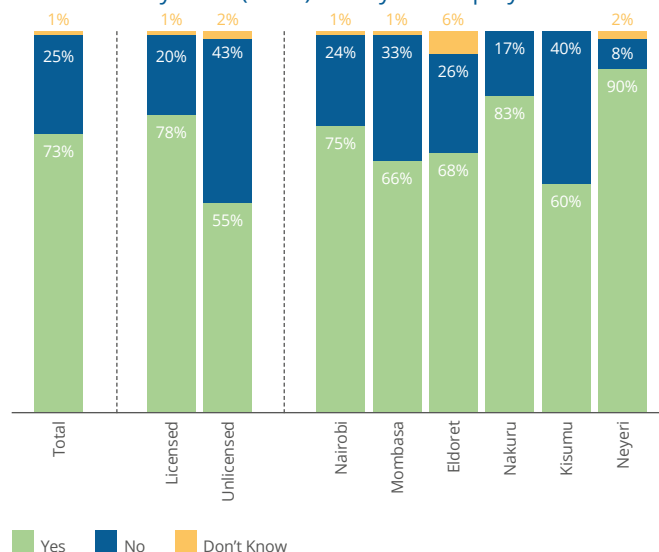
Nakuru has about 93% of the guards paid below minimum wage and yet the region has many commercial entities when compared to Nairobi with well-balanced clientele.

3. Do you receive social benefits such as the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) from your employer?



Three in every four security guards have an NHIF cover. The incidence is lower for unlicensed firms with about 39% not having medical coverage. Some guards mentioned that whilst the deductions are made, **it is not remitted** when they check on their phones (the social benefits providers allow for checking of remittances on digital platforms thus one can check on the mobile phone). Penalties then accrue making access to treatment difficult.

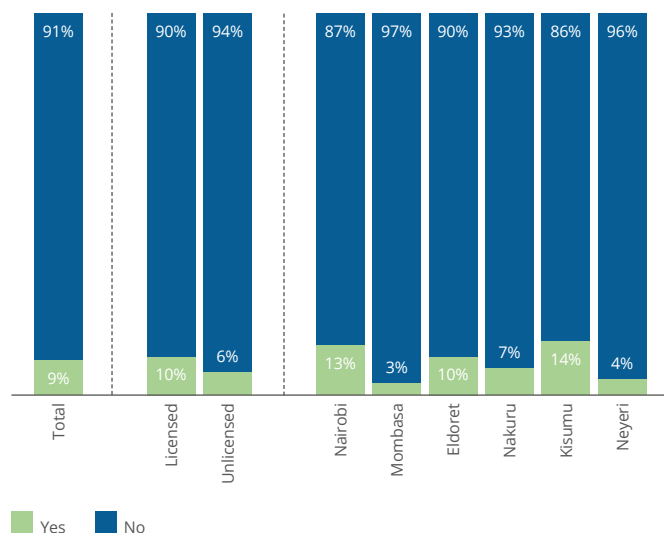
4. Do you receive social benefits such as the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) from your employer?



NSSF is also highly accessed with about 73% of the employers offering the benefit to their guards. Kisumu has

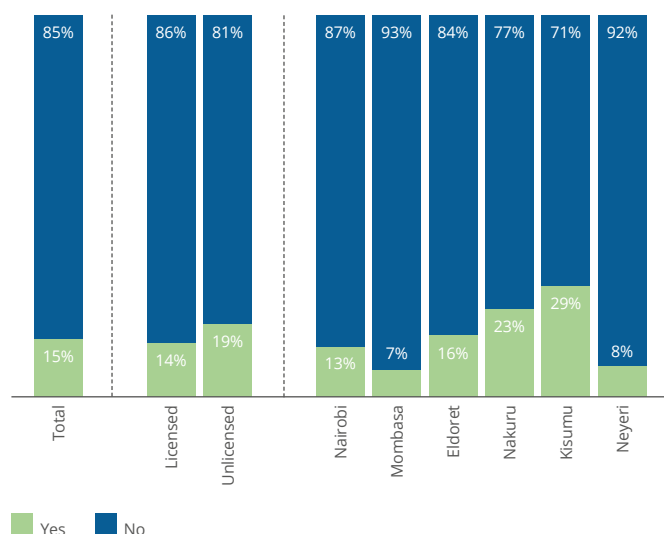
a significantly high incidence of security guards without NSSF (40%) followed by Mombasa. There is a higher incidence of unlicensed companies not paying NSSF. Registration of unlicensed employers would significantly increase access to NSSF.

5. Do you receive any other benefits?



Only about 9% of the guards receive other benefits. **Allowances are the most common benefits** security guards receive. Loans, advances, welfare and emergency funds are key benefits that security guards appreciate. Guards in the bigger companies mentioned they get a soap allowance for washing their uniform.

6. Do you have another activity to supplement your income?

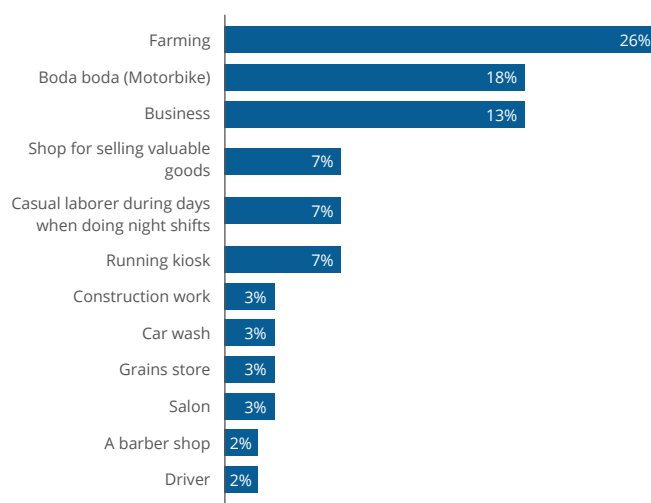


About 1 in every 5 security guards is paid for working overtime. The guards complained that their **employers assigned them work not included in their job**

responsibilities like washing vehicles and running errands like shopping without extra payment. The incidence is highest in Eldoret (good balance of local companies and commercial entities) and lowest in Mombasa (local companies) and Nakuru (commercial entities).

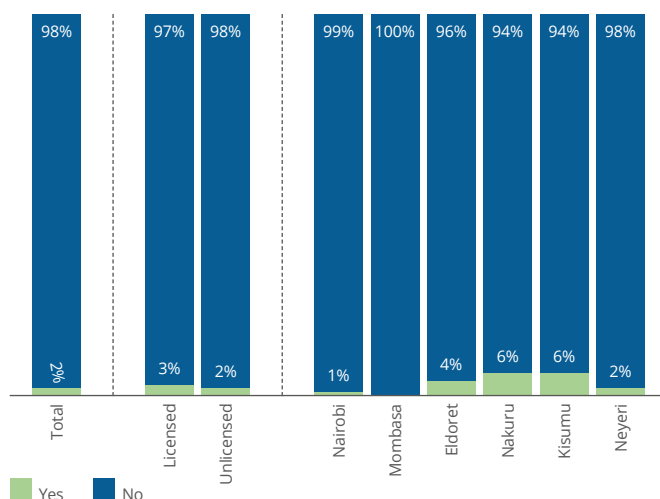
The findings indicate that **15% of the guards engage in other income generation activities** to boost their low income and more importantly to have a backup when there are salary delays. The guards working night shifts make use of the daytime to earn extra income and some work two shifts in two different companies.

7. Types of activity to supplement income



Top income generation activities are farming, boda boda (motorbike transportation) and running small businesses. While these activities indicate the **entrepreneurial mindset and relentless effort** by the guards, the risk remains that these activities are run during their resting hours and may have an impact on their work performance.

8. Did you have to pay recruitment fees?



The findings indicate a very low incidence of cases where the guards pay a fee to be hired. The cases are non-existent in Mombasa compared to Nakuru and Kisumu with 6% incidence each. In most cases the supervisors collect the fees from the recruits without the knowledge or authority of the employers.

3.2.2 Key challenges with contracts, salary and benefits

The core challenge with salaries is that they are low, delayed or not even paid. With low salaries, the guards are not able to manage day-to-day expenses like bus fare, especially for guards working far from home. Most of the guards are paid their month's salary past mid-month but sometimes it can get delayed up to 2 months. According to the employers, the delays are due to delays in payment by clients. Other employers have unfavourable terms where one is paid some amount and gets the balance later. For instance, a female guard was told that she would be paid after 6 months and in the meantime, she would be getting KSh 2,000.

The second challenge is that most guards do not have leave days due to fear of employers replacing them despite having contracts with them. The few who are allowed to take a leave day are not paid for that period. No leave days imply that the guards spend less time with their families and more importantly, miss out on family functions like burials.

The other challenge is that there is no employer protection whereby if an incident happens the employer tends to favour the client at the expense of the security guard. Also, the guards are tasked with other duties that are not security related like taking stock of goods delivered that are not in the contract terms nor are they paid for these extra services.

Another challenge is how social benefits like health coverage are not effective as employers do not remit contributions. There is a lack of sympathy and care by the employers especially when an employee is unwell or is injured at work.

Despite all these gaps in contractual terms, the guards are not able to air their grievances with their employers.

Unions would play a key role in filling these gaps, however, the guards fear they may be denied a job opportunity if they joined a union.

Therefore, the key challenges with guards' contracts are low, delayed or no salaries; no leave days and lack of employer compassion and protection.

3.2.3 Gaps and opportunities for contracts, salary and benefits

A significant number of both licensed and unlicensed firms do not have a contract with their employees. For those who have contracts, the terms are either not clear or are not honoured by the employer. There is an opportunity to shift the sector's mindset that security guards are easily replaceable by sensitising employers and clients on the role and importance of guard welfare and getting them to commit to favourable working terms and conditions.

The issue of minimum wage payment has been a key issue in the private security sector. Most guards are still paid low income. The gap remains as the law is being enforced without considering employer challenges. Therefore, the opportunity is to facilitate stakeholder engagement forums to address the minimum wage gap, pay delays and terms of payment, a shift from enforcement to consultative conversations.

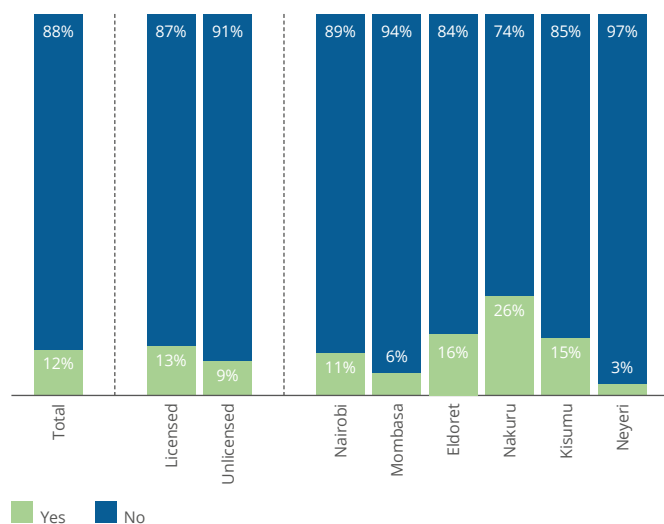
Salary payment delays are a key challenge with employers citing delayed payment by their clients. This indicates that employers lack efficient tools and resources to better manage their finances and clients. The opportunity lies in advocacy for the adoption of fast, convenient and affordable payment solutions to address the issue of delays in payments by clients and to the guards.

Security guards are engaging in other income-generating activities to supplement their low and delayed salaries. Some are investing in business with their spouses or running it when not at work. There's an opportunity for capacity building on finances and financial management, establishing a savings and investment culture to caution the security guards. Private sector employers should work with financial sector players like banks and insurance companies to develop financial tools and solutions targeting security guards.

3.3 Gender and discrimination

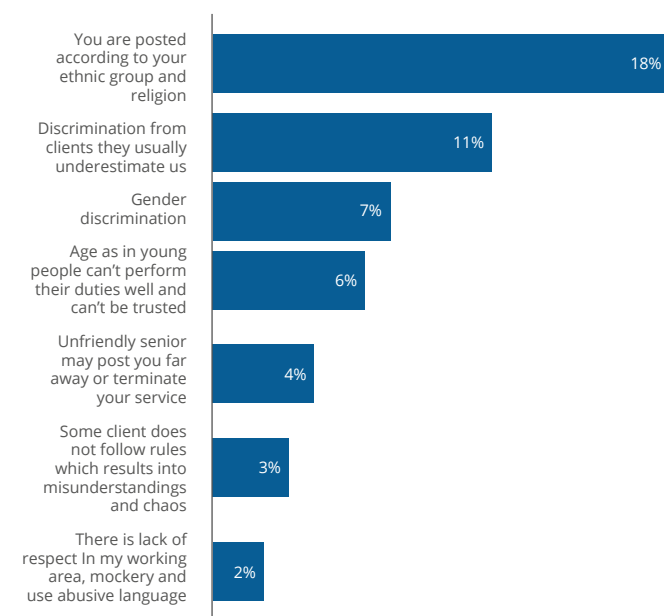
3.3.1 General findings on gender and discrimination

1. Do you notice any discrimination at work because of age, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, religion, etc.?

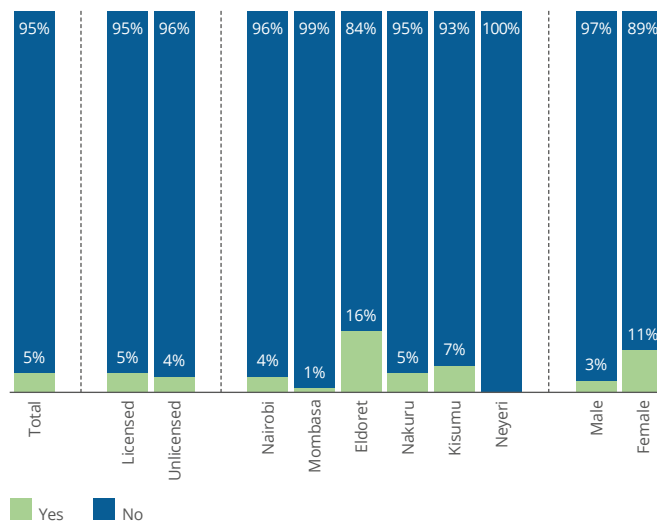


There's **evidence of considerable cases of discrimination** with Nakuru guards recording a 26% incidence. The core **issue is ethnicity** where the guards are posted based on their tribe. Younger guards are not trusted and are perceived not to have the adequate skills and experience required to deliver their roles. Discrimination is also at the client level not just at supervisor level. Beside discrimination some guards feel undermined by the clients. Clients use abusive language when addressing the guards.

2. Specify the types of discrimination noticed at work

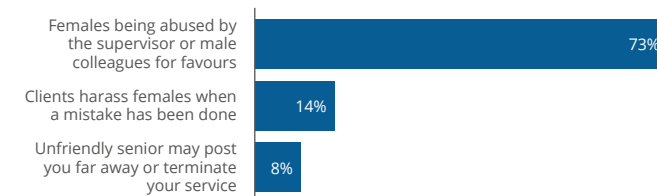


3. Do you observe any forms of sexual harassment at work?



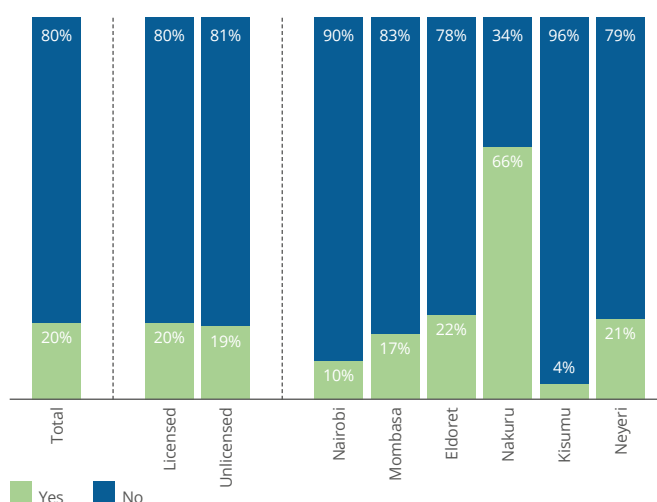
About **5% of the security guards have observed sexual harassment cases**, more so among female guards, by their supervisors and clients. These cases are observed in both licensed and unlicensed employers. The incidences are highest in Eldoret and lowest in Mombasa and Nyeri.

4. Specify the forms of sexual harassment observed at work



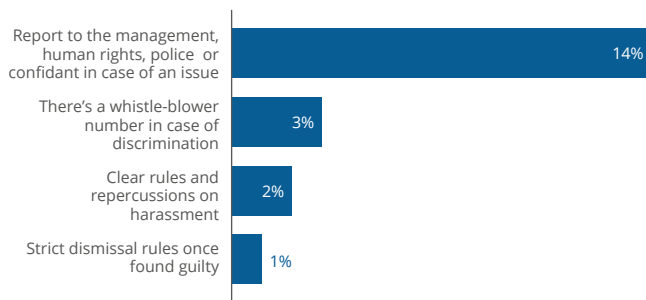
Most of the **sexual harassment incidences are based on favours** at work like when a guard wants a specific work post that is favorable. Work problems are also said to trigger sexual harassment at the workplace. On an extreme, a victim can be re-posted or sacked by their seniors.

5. Do you know if/what preventative measures are in place?



There's considerably low awareness of the preventative measures put in place to manage cases of discrimination and harassment with only 20% of the guards being aware. The low awareness can be attributed to a lack of proper processes and structures by the employers. The incidence is lowest in Kisumu (public authorities) and highest in Nakuru (commercial entities). CCTV cameras and alarm buttons are the most common.

6. Specify the preventative measures in place



The key measure to be put in place is to implement reporting mechanisms where one can report cases of discrimination and harassment to the management, human rights organisations, police or confidant in case of any issue. Other measures include having a phone number where one can report such cases, having clear rules and regulations on discrimination, as well as having strict measures to discipline perpetrators.

3.3.2 Key challenges with gender and discrimination

According to the security guards, supervisors take advantage of their positions to ask for payment or sexual favours. Some supervisors ask guards to pay some money for their worksheets to be signed. Some supervisors impose a fine on the security guards for not being at their workstations and deduct it from their monthly salary. Some guards have to pay a fee to be transferred to workspaces that are more favourable, such as a post where one can get tips.

There are cases of gender discrimination where women are not employed if they have children. Some female guards lie or are told to forget about their families to secure employment. Mothers are not given time off to take care of child-related emergencies. Pregnant guards are not given maternity leave and end up having to lose their job. Most employers do not have support systems for female guards with children with special needs.

There are incidences of female guards experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace. Some supervisors

pay female guards at the very end with the intent to ask for sexual favours before they pay them. Others ask for sexual favours in return for posting the female guard in a better location. Also, supervisors invite female guards to visit them before they authorise a request, like a day off to attend to a personal matter.

The findings also reveal that there are cases of age discrimination in private security firms. The older guards are asked to retire and sent away with no pension or benefits. These older guards are believed to be paid lesser wages as well. On the other hand, younger guards are not trusted to have the ability to deliver on their tasks.

Besides discrimination guards are generally looked down upon not just by employers and clients but also by the general public. There are cases where guards are harassed and abused by members of the public. Some guards have torn uniforms or don't look presentable, thus, lowering their confidence. The most affected guards are those employed by smaller security companies.

3.3.3 Gaps and opportunities for gender and discrimination

It is evident that there are cases of sexual harassment in private security firms and not much is being done to address this issue. Supervisors are seen to take advantage of their positions to demand for sexual favours. To better understand the magnitude of this issue, there is a need for further studies on sexual harassment at work. However, there is an opportunity to conduct gender mainstreaming and training for security firms and have the guards made aware of how to identify gender issues and how to treat them.

Ethnicity discrimination is a key challenge where security guards are posted based on their ethnic background.

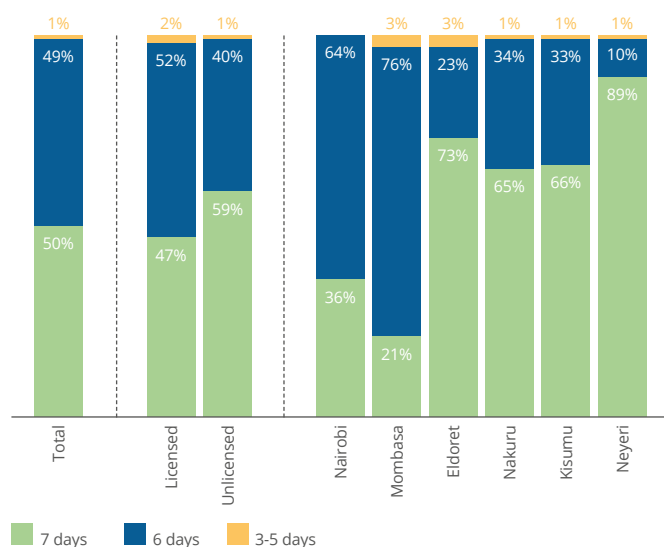
The opportunity is to conduct an internal culture audit to determine the risks and implications of ethnic and other forms of discrimination. Beside cases of discrimination, there are also cases where clients show disrespect of security guards due to their low opinion of them. There is an opportunity to improve client and guard working relationships by addressing their attitude and image.

The majority of the security guards are not aware of preventative measures put in place to address these gender and discrimination issues. The opportunity is to create awareness of the various reporting mechanisms including appointing personnel to handle such matters and creating reporting platforms e.g. dedicated phone numbers and social platforms where victims can interact and get support.

3.4 Health, mental health, safety, work time

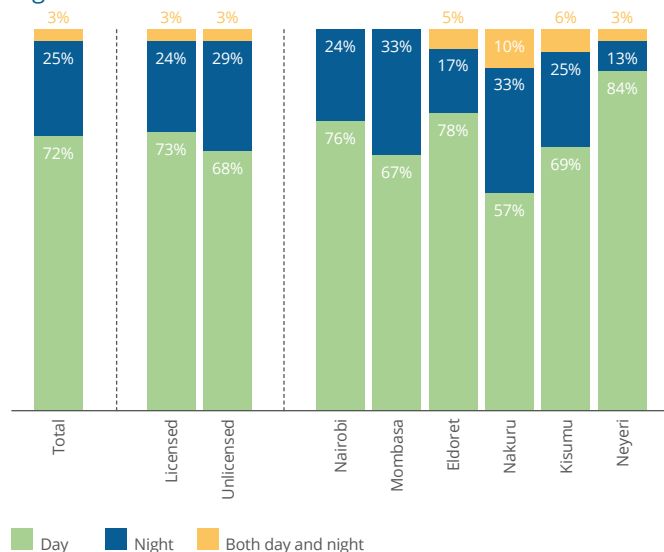
3.4.1 General findings on health, mental health, safety, work time

1. How many days do you and other security guards usually work in a week?



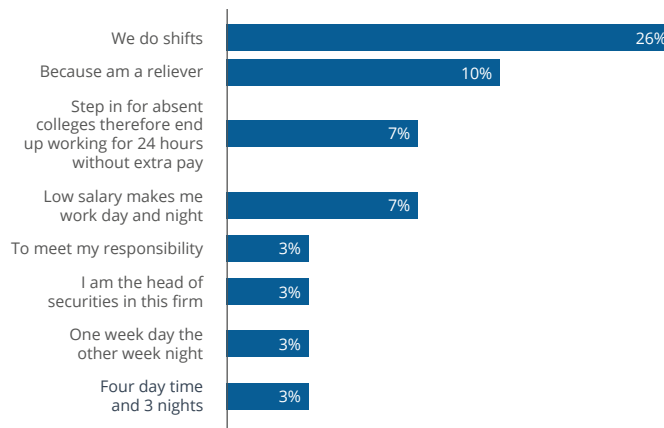
About **half of the security guards work without a day off in a week** while the other half have 1 day off. Mombasa guards are more likely to get a day off while guards in Nyeri are likely to work without a day off. This implies that the guards have no time to rest and more importantly have no time for personal and family matters.

2. Are you working during the day, during the night or both?



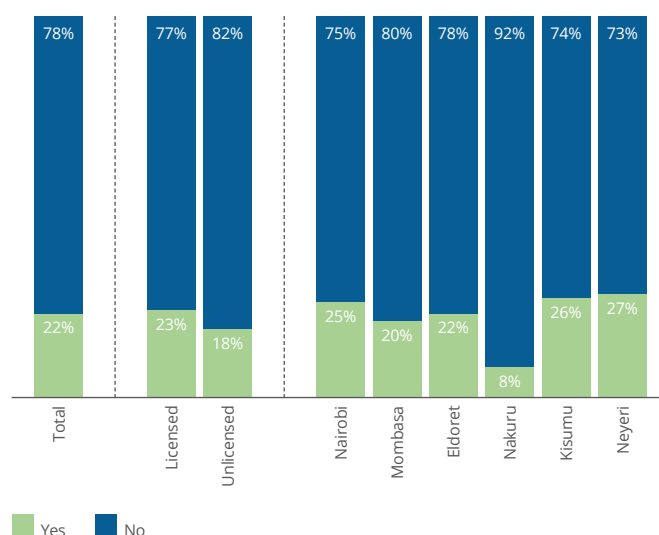
The majority of the security guards work on a day shift. The incidence is higher in the Eldoret and Nyeri regions, which is an indication that most employers in these regions are less likely to operate on a 24-hour basis and that businesses are shut at the end of the day. Night businesses are more likely to operate in cities with 24-hour economies.

3. Reasons for working both day and night



The guards who work both day and night are likely to be on a rotational shift. For instance, they may work day shifts for one week and night shifts the other week or work four day shifts and two night shifts in a week. Another reason for working day and night is to earn additional income to meet financial responsibilities. Heads of security firms have responsibilities that make them work day and night.

4. Can you take breaks during working hours?



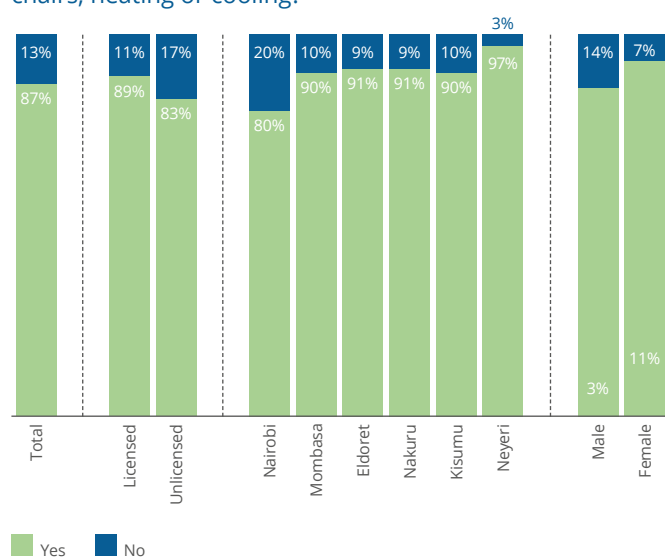
Indicatively, **78% of the guards do not take breaks during working hours**. Licensed security, day shift and female guards are more likely to take breaks during working hours. Regionally, Nakuru (commercial entities) has the lowest incidence of security guards allowed to take breaks.

5. How many hours do you and other security guards usually work in a day?



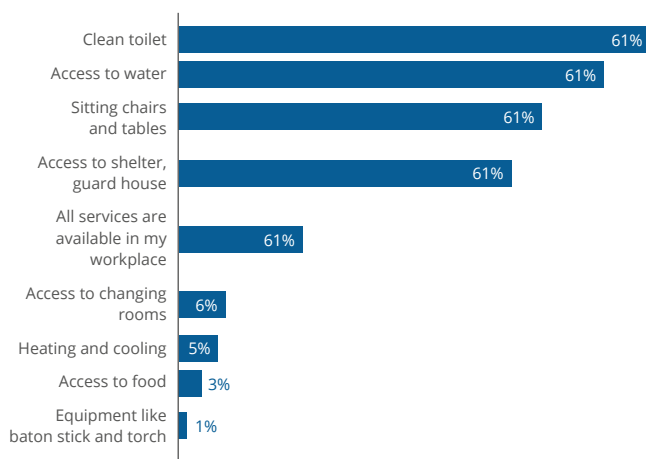
Almost all guards work for 12 hours a day. Considering the majority do not take breaks during working hours, a 12-hour shift implies that the guards are fatigued especially if they don't have a desk, chair or even a shelter.

6. Do you have access to toilets, drinking water, shelter, chairs, heating or cooling?



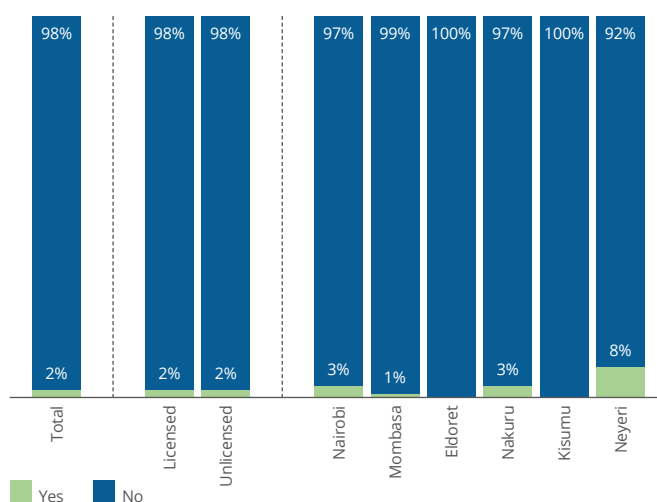
There's significantly high access to amenities with about 87% having access to facilities like toilets, drinking water, etc. The incidence is lower in Nairobi and higher in the other regions.

7. Specify what you have access to



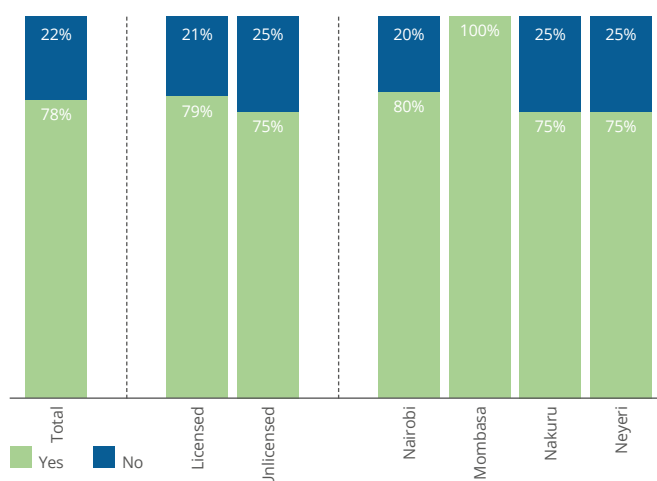
Only about 16% of the security guards have access to all services and facilities at their work station. The most common facility is a clean toilet, water, chairs/tables as well as shelter. Fewer have access to changing rooms, heating and cooling, access to food and equipment like baton sticks and torches.

8. Does your employer provide accommodation for you?



Only 2% of the security guards have access to accommodation provided by the employer. To the employer, providing accommodation means an additional expense. Thus, most are likely to deduct from the guard's monthly salary. Regionally, Nyeri has a slightly higher incidence of security guards who have access to accommodation.

9. Are you satisfied with the accommodation provided by your employer?

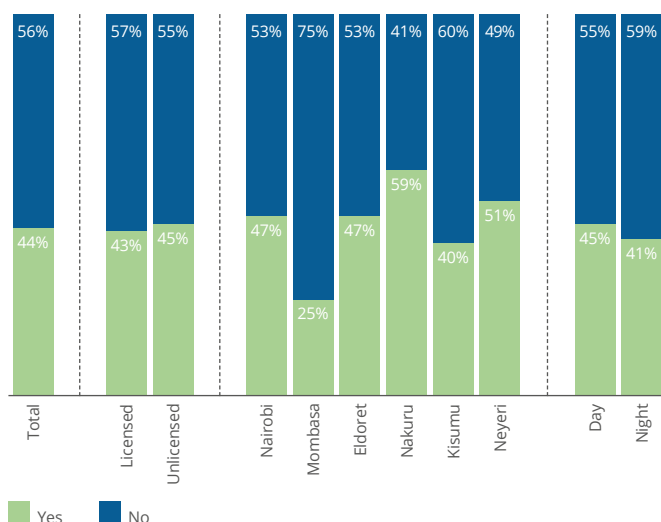


The few guards whose accommodation is provided for are highly satisfied, with 78% content with what they have. For a security guard in Mombasa, the employer's accommodation would significantly improve the guard's satisfaction and more importantly improve work relationships.

Why or why not?	%
I am okay with what they are providing for me	48%
It's what is offered	30%
The amount (salary) is very small	17%
It is not a good shelter that can guard me from heavy down pour or hot sun	4%

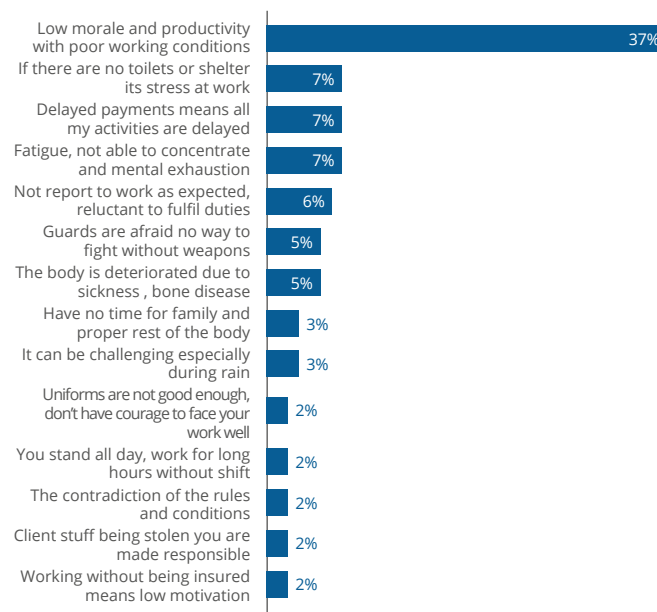
The majority of the **guards are content because of lack of better options** (*"it is what is offered"*). This sentiment indicates there's a gap in the kind of accommodation or terms that come with such an arrangement which are not very favourable to the guards. However, access to employer accommodation means saving from spending on other costs like transport to work.

10. Do working conditions affect the performance of security personnel at work?



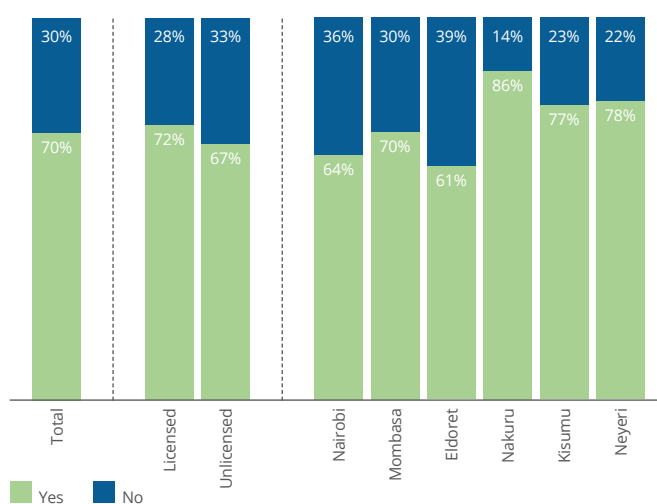
Close to half of the guards feel that the poor working conditions lower their morale and overall performance. The incidence is highest in Nakuru (59%) and Nyeri (51%) and lowest in Mombasa region (25%). There's no significant difference across licensed and unlicensed employers as well as day and night guards.

11. Specify how working conditions affect performance



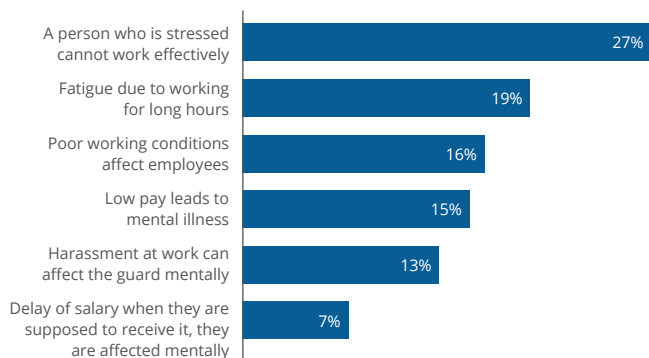
Poor working conditions mostly lowers guards' motivation to work. According to the guards, working in a place without toilets is stressful, delayed salary means they are stagnated, fatigue affects their concentration at work, lack of shelter exposes them to cold and sickness while old/torn uniforms lower their confidence. Low motivation results in guards not reporting to work as expected and makes them reluctant to fulfill their duties.

12. Do you think working conditions affect the mental health and relationships of security guards?



Poor working condition affects the mental health and relations of about 70% of the security guards. The incidence is highest in Nakuru at 86% and lowest in Eldoret at 61% and Nairobi at 64%. Licensed employers have a higher incidence than unlicensed employers, perhaps an indication that the **guards have a higher expectation from licensed employers.**

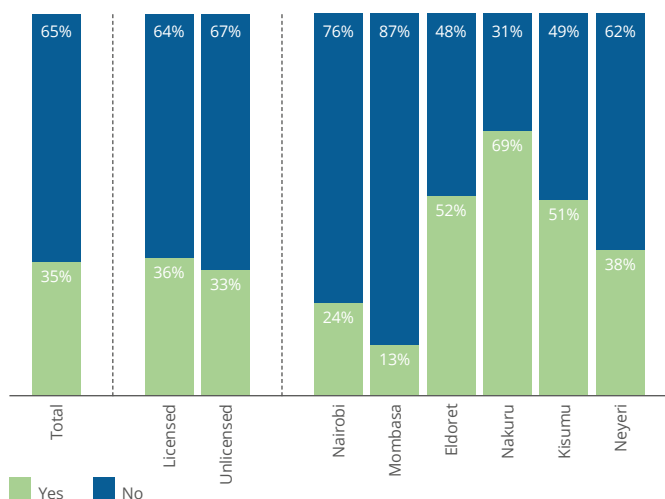
13. Specify the effects on mental health and relationships



Working in a poor environment often leads to stress.

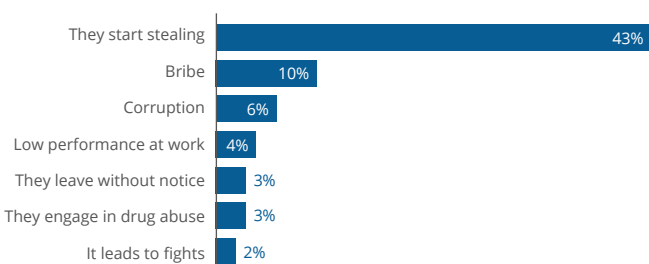
Mental fatigue, low pay and harassment at work mean that the guards are prone to stress and depression which not only affects their mental wellness but also affects their relationship with their colleagues and family. This leads to conflicts.

14. Have you noticed that guards are more likely to engage in unlawful behaviour if working conditions are poor?



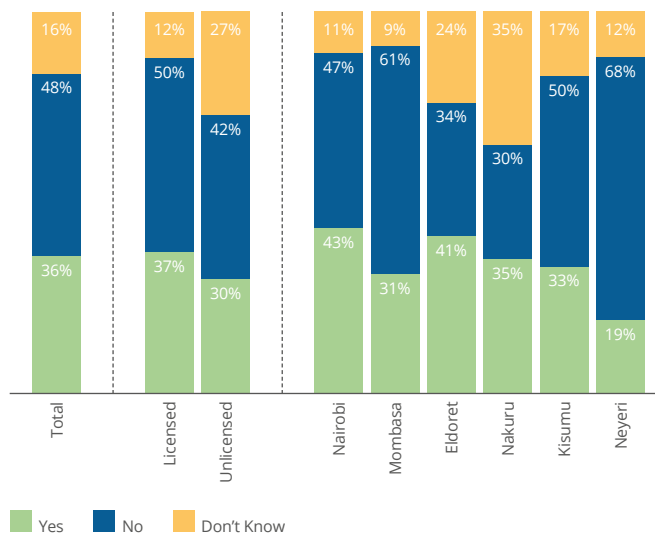
About a third of the security guards feel that poor working conditions are the leading driver for **guards engaging in unlawful behaviours**. **Low income levels and delays in payments are the other top drivers** for security guards engaging in unlawful behaviours. Other working conditions include a lack of equipment, uniforms and proper shelters as well as cases of discrimination at work.

15. Specify unlawful behaviour



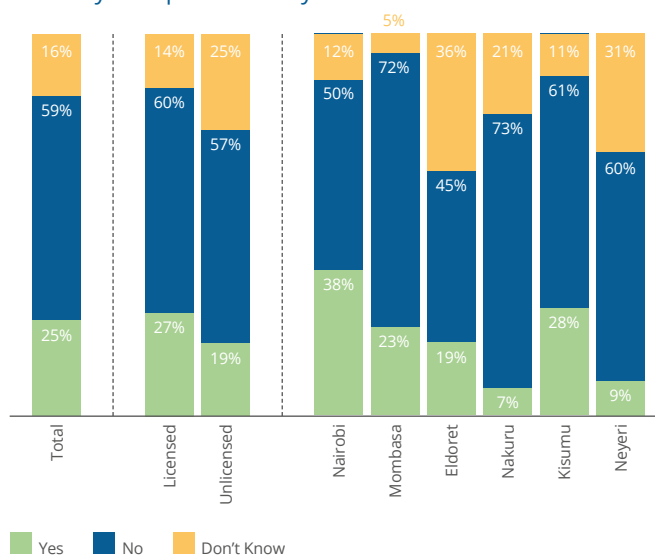
43% of the guards observed that poor working conditions could make guards steal from the client. 16% say that guards could take a bribe or ask for an incentive for a service rendered. Other behaviours include quitting work, drug abuse and engaging in fights. There's a need for employers to instill work values in the private security sector and more importantly address the poor working conditions triggering these behaviours.

16. Are you allowed to join a union?



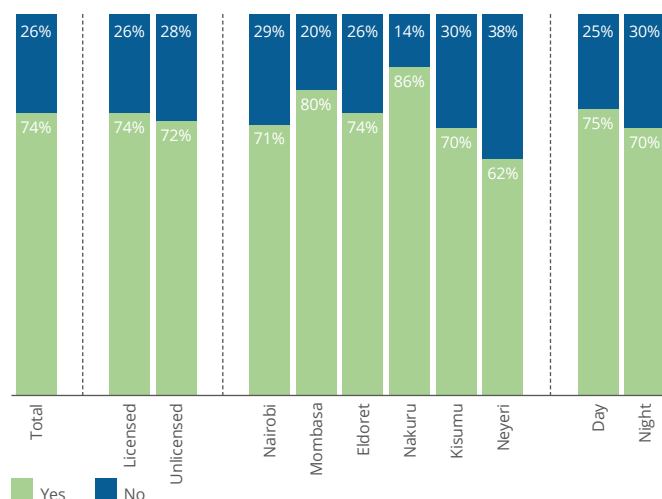
About **48% are not allowed to join a union** while another 16% don't know if they are allowed to. This implies an information gap, especially with unlicensed security firms. Nakuru leads in lack of awareness while Nyeri has the fewest who are allowed to. There were cases of employers being a barrier with an incidence where if one is heard talking about the union, there is a **likelihood of being fired**.

17. Are you represented by a union?



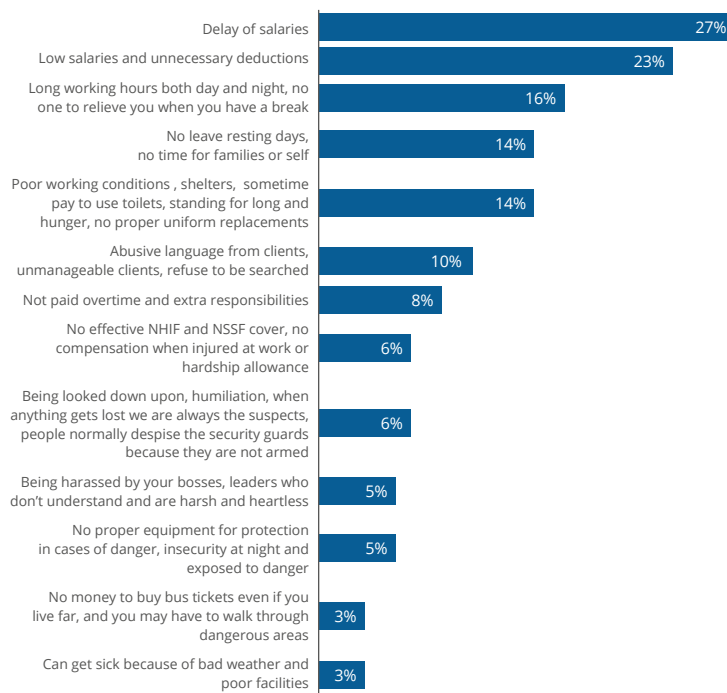
About 25% of the security guards are represented by a union, a drop from 36% who are allowed to. This indicates some level of **reluctance to join unions** by the security guards as there is fear of losing jobs. The security guards mentioned they pay around KSh 305 - 385 per month to the unions. There is also concern that the union's management favours companies and not the guards. Also, if one does not pay the union, some penalties accrue.

18. Do security guards face other challenges at work?



The findings show a significantly high incidence of security guards facing work challenges across all security firms and regions. About 74% mentioned they experience a challenge, a key indicator of some degree of **staff frustration with their employers**. The incidence is highest in Nakuru and Mombasa and lowest in Nyeri.

19. Specify other challenges at work



Salaries, delays and deductions account for about 50% of security guards' challenges. Long working hours and without days off or leave account for about 30% of the guards' challenges. Poor work environments account for 14% while unfriendly clients account for 10%. Long working hours without rest are the core challenges guards face.

3.4.2 Challenges with health, mental health, safety, work time

The main challenge guards face is working for long working hours and not being paid for working overtime. The working hours are long with almost all guards working for 12 hours a day. Sometimes this gets extended when one is not relieved or the night shift guard does not show up. The guard in charge then ends up working the whole night.

The guards also face challenges in accessing uniforms from the employers. When employed, the guards are issued with one pair of uniforms and without an extra pair. This means they cannot wash and dry it, especially during the cold season. Some guards are not provided with proper shoes. Others have to pay for the uniform which is deducted from their pay slip and after paying you must return it while leaving without a refund. The deductions are about Ksh 100 per month.

For the guards who are aware they can join a union, the majority are concerned that joining one will deny them a job opportunity. According to the guards, if one talks about a union there is a likelihood of being fired. Another reason for not joining a union is that unions are pro-management. For those who join a union, there is a fee of KSh 2,000 to join the union or a deduction of KSh 385. If you do not pay the amount, it accrues penalties.

Poor working conditions not only affect the guard's performance but also their physical and mental health. Lack of proper shelter means the guards are insecure, without jackets and raincoats the guards are prone to cold and sickness, without toilets the guards are distressed, without water to drink and access to food most guards are generally hungry, while low pay and harassment at work are stressful and demotivating.

3.4.3 Opportunities for health, mental health, safety, work time

Half of the security guards work without a day off, some work double shifts and the majority work without breaks. This implies that the guards are fatigued. The gap is in employers efficiently managing their workforce. Thus, there's an opportunity to explore better employee work schedule

management systems and processes including scheduling for days off and leave days.

While overall there's high access to facilities at the workplace, only about 16% of the security guards have access to all services and facilities. Some workstations don't have facilities like toilets, water, chairs, tables and shelter. Access to accommodation is negligible while the uniforms provided are either not enough or are old and tattered. The opportunity is to improve the quality of these facilities and ensure 100% access to these facilities.

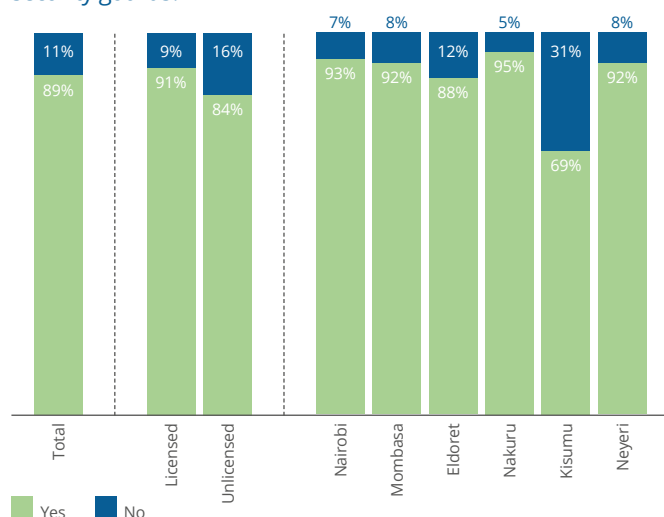
Harassment and discrimination at work, abuse and undermining of guards by employers, clients and the general public is a concern for most guards. There's an opportunity to sensitise employers, clients and the general public on the importance of guards and change the attitude towards security guards to display humanness towards them.

Stress and depression are also key challenges affecting guards' health and relationships. There is an opportunity to explore mental wellness programmes to monitor and support guards affected by poor working conditions.

3.5 Employee training

3.5.1 General findings on employee training

1. Does your employer provide any training for security guards?



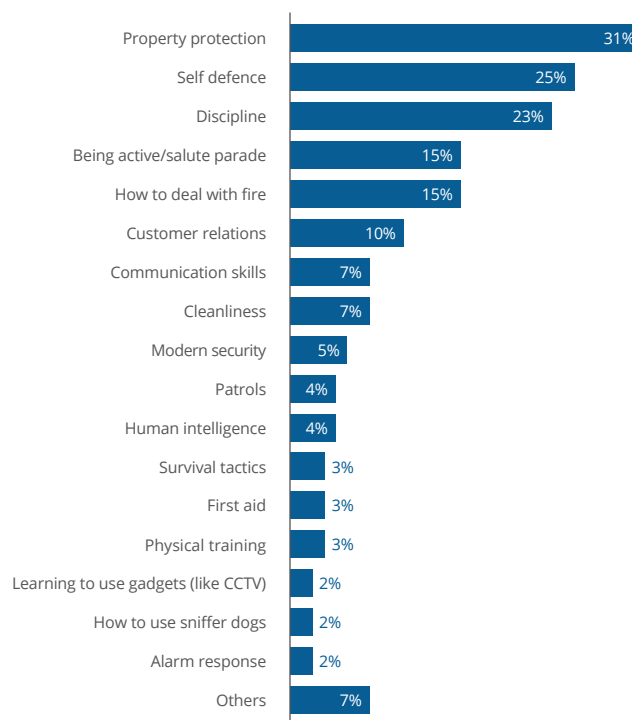
About 89% of the security guards are trained by their employers, however the training provided is basic and **only a few employers have achieved full training** of their employees. Regionally, Kisumu employers train their employees the least compared with regions like Nakuru where the incidence is highest.

2. What training do security guards receive?

	Total	Licensed	Unlicensed	Nairobi	Mombasa	Eldoret	Nakuru	Kisumu	Nyeri
Working with clients	93%	94%	91%	93%	97%	94%	91%	83%	98%
Rules on the use of force	75%	75%	76%	75%	82%	63%	77%	62%	88%
Health and safety	74%	76%	68%	71%	97%	58%	64%	56%	94%
Others, please specify	61%	63%	51%	59%	72%	44%	45%	60%	83%
Human rights	11%	10%	13%	1%	2%	46%	22%	18%	4%

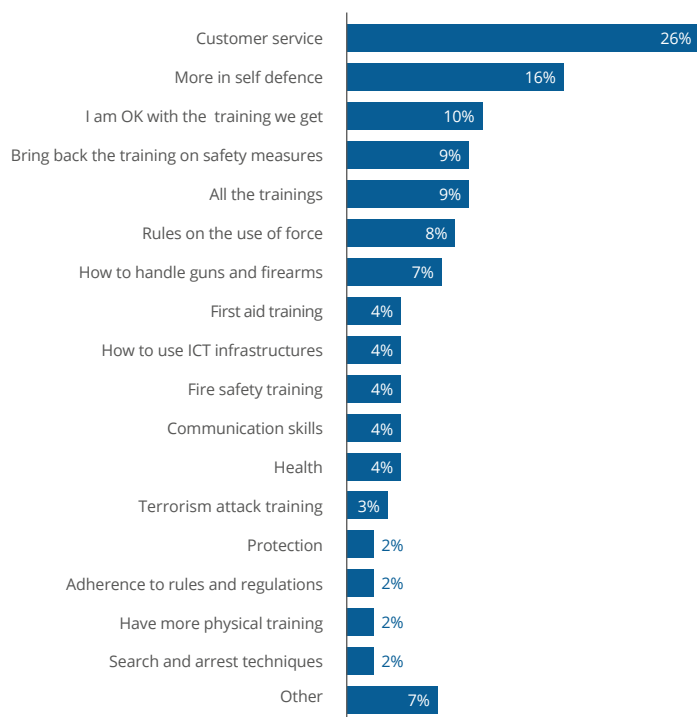
The majority of the guards are trained on customer care, rules on use of force as well as health and safety. **Fewer guards have been trained on human rights** which is a priority in ensuring their needs are met and addressed. Employers in the Nyeri region have prioritised human rights training alongside other training. However, the challenge is that no certificates are provided after the training.

3. What other training do security guards receive?



About 31% of the guards are **trained in property protection**, 25% on self-defense and 23% on discipline. Some guards identified modern security training like human intelligence, counter-terrorism, the use of tech gadgets as well as conflict management. Basic but necessary trainings include fire rescue, communication, banking, etc.

4. In your opinion, what training do security guards need to perform their role?



Customer service and self-defense are the core trainings needed. Additional areas of training needed include ICT training on the use of CCTV and surveillance; public relations training on good communication skills; training on basic etiquette at work; intelligence training on how to get information; precaution and response measure trainings like first aid training in case of emergency; as well as soft skills training instilling customer centricity and values; training on how to deal with stress; as well as inter-personal and relationships trainings.

3.5.2 Challenges and opportunities for employee training

Key challenges

The findings indicate that there is a training needs awareness gap among security guards. New employees are not aware of their training needs. The guards who are not trained do not even know where their offices are and thus cannot follow up on the training.

"I don't know any other training since I am still new in the security job."

For the guards who are trained, the trainings are only done at inception and only runs for about 3-5 days. This means the training is not sufficient since the training is short and there is no follow-up training after inception. For the guards who have been trained, there are no certificates given for training done.

Gaps and opportunities

For employers who provide training for their security guards, the trainings are insufficient and the employers fail to provide proper tools and equipment to enable the guards to make use of the learnings from the trainings. Therefore, the opportunity is in developing regular and more training, supporting trained guards and in the provision of proper infrastructure and tools for guards to make use of the training.

The findings also showed that training is being done but no certification is awarded to the security guards. Therefore, the guards are not able to make use of the training, especially for their career growth and progression. We observed that there was resistance to awarding certification by employers, arguing that those certificates will allow guards to change jobs leaving the company which trained them. However, the opportunity lies in the provision of certificates for trained guards to build their relevance in the sector.



4. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Situational analysis metrics

To allow for future trending of the study findings, the following metrics have been identified as key baseline metrics for the study.

Contracts, salary and benefits	Have an employment contract	70%
	Paid minimum wage	17%
	Paid below minimum wage	68%
	Paid above minimum wage	15%
	Receive NHIF benefits	76%
	Receive NSSF benefits	73%
	Receive Other benefits	9%
	Have an activity to supplement income	15%
	Paid for working overtime	19%
Gender and discrimination	Noticed discrimination at work	12%
	Observed sexual harassment at work	5%
	Preventative measures in place	20%
Health, mental health, safety, work time	Working days – 7 in a week	50%
	Working hours – 12 in a day	96%
	Cannot take a break during working hours	78%
	Have access to toilets, water, shelter, etc.	87%
	Faced other challenges at work	74%
	Work conditions affect performance	44%
	Work conditions affect mental health	70%
	Work conditions lead to unlawful behaviour	35%
Employee training	Employer provides training	89%
	Training needs – working with clients	93%
	Training needs – rules, use of force	75%
	Training needs – health and safety	74%
	Training needs – human rights	61%

4.2 Conclusion and way forward

Employment contract and recruitment fee

A significant number of both licensed and unlicensed firms do not have a contract with their employees. The research team recommends a sensitisation drive targeting security firms and guards to formalise staff contracting.

Minimum wage and social benefits

The minimum wage targets are way higher than the new regulation requirement and there are delays in payments as well. The research team recommends stakeholder engagement forums to address the minimum wage gap and terms of payment.

Current training and need gaps

While most employers offer training, they fail to provide proper tools and equipment. The research team recommends an upgrade of tools (batons) and more training/support on discipline and self-defence.

Working hours, days, shifts

Half of the security guards work without a day off, a few work double shifts, which leads to fatigue. The research team recommends an employee work schedule management, mandatory days off and leave days.

The public

There are cases of harassment, abuse and looking down on guards. The research team recommends that the public needs to be sensitised on the importance of the role of guards and their well-being.

Income generation and overtime payment

Low and delayed payments are the core reasons security guards engage in other income-generating activities. The research team recommends capacity building on financial management and establishing a savings and investment culture to caution the security guards.

Access to amenities, accommodation

There's high access to facilities like toilets, water and shelter. The research team recommends improvement of the quality of amenities and ensuring 100% access to these facilities.

Discrimination and preventative measures

Ethnicity is a key challenge and the majority of guards are not aware of preventative measures put in place. The research team recommends an internal culture audit to determine the risks and implications of ethnic discrimination and develop preventative measures.

Work challenges and impact on performance, mental health

Security guards' mental health and wellness are the most affected by poor working conditions. The research team recommends a mental health and wellness support program designed for security guards and forums to talk about their day-to-day challenges.

Appendices

5.1 Data collection tool

Draft Survey on Working Conditions of Guards

INTRODUCTION

Greetings from Consumer Options. Thank you for participating in our survey. The aim of the research is to understand the working conditions of guards across different regions of the world.

This survey is anonymous and confidential.

This survey will ask questions about the working conditions of security guards. In your answers, you can write about (i) your own experience, (ii) the experiences of other security guards in your company, (iii) the experiences of other security guards in other security companies.

This will take approximately 20 minutes of your time, your response will be kept confidential and will be analysed collectively with other responses from other participants.

Would you like to participate in the survey?

☐ YES > PROCEED

☐ NO > TERMINATE AND ASK FOR CONTACTS

Respondent's full names:

Contacts:

Date of the survey: _____

Start time: _____

Introduction

1. What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Other

2. What is your age?

3. What is your level of education?

- a. Primary
- b. Secondary
- c. College diploma
- d. University degree
- e. Post university degree

4. Which company do you work for?

5. How long have you been working as a guard?

6. What type of client you are currently working for?

- a. Public Authorities
- b. Multinational Company
- c. Local Company
- d. Commercial Entity
- e. For private individuals – Close
- f. Directly employed by establishments – Close

Workers Protection and Pay

7. Do you have an employment contract with your employer?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unsure

8. Do you receive social benefits such as National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) from your employer?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

9. Do you receive social benefits such as National Social Security Fund (NSSF) from your employer?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

10. Do you receive any other benefits? If yes, please specify.

11. The minimum wage in Kenya is KSh 15,000. Is your salary at.....?

- a. The minimum wage
- b. Below minimum wage
- c. Above minimum wage

12. Are you allowed to join a union?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

13. Are you represented by a union?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know

Training

14. Does your employer provide any training for security guards?

- a. Yes
- b. No

15. If yes, what training do security guards receive? (tick all that apply)

- a. Human rights
- b. Working with clients
- c. Rules on the use of force
- d. Health and safety
- e. Others, please specify

16. In your opinion what kind of training do security guards need to perform their role?

Working Conditions

17. How many hours do you and other security guards usually work in a day?

- a. Dropdown menu 1-16

18. How many days do you and other security guards usually work in a week?

19. Are you working during the day or during the night or both?

- a. Day
- b. Night
- c. Both day and night. If so, why?

20. Do you have another activity to supplement your income? If so, please specify

21. Are you and other security guards paid for working overtime?

- a. Yes
- b. No

22. Do you have access to toilets, drinking water, shelter, chairs, heating or cooling? Please specify

23. Can you take breaks during working hours?

- a. Yes
- b. No

24. Do you notice any discrimination at work because of age, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, religion, etc?

- a. If yes, please specify.

25. Do you know if/what preventative measures are in place?

- a. If yes, please explain.

26. Do you observe any forms of sexual harassment at work?

- a. If so, in what ways?

27. Do security guards face other challenges at work?

- a. If so, in what ways?

Consequences of Working Conditions

28. Do working conditions affect the performance of security personnel at work?

- a. No
- b. If yes, how so?

29. Have you noticed that guards are more likely to engage in unlawful behaviour if working conditions are poor?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- i. If YES, please specify.

30. Do you think working conditions affect the physical health and safety of security guards? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

31. Do you think working conditions affect the mental health and relationships of security guards? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

Living Conditions

(Skip to next section if not applicable)

32. Do employers provide accommodation for you?

- a. Yes
- b. No

33. Are you satisfied with the accommodation? Why or why not?

Recruitment

(Skip to next section if not applicable)

34. Did you have to pay recruitment fees? (Paying a fee to be hired)

- a. YesContinue
- b. No.....Close

35. If yes, how many months of salary did you pay in recruitment fees?

36. What do you receive for the recruitment fee?

Please write in any observations or comments noted or related to a question:

Thank you for your participation in our research survey. Please be assured that the information provided will be handled in a confidential and anonymous manner. Your name and contact details will not be communicated.

5.2 Sampling areas

Since the sampling method was purposive sampling, we choose sampling points where there is economic activity e.g. industrial areas, malls, office blocks and business centers and therefore require guard services. We also looked into residential areas of higher economic status that can afford guard services.

S/N	Urban SP- Nairobi	Sample
1	Nairobi CBD	140
2	Westlands	30
3	Industrial Area	30
4	Karen Shopping centre	15
5	Kilimani	25
6	Upper Hill	25
7	Nairobi West	15
8	Parkland	15
9	Thika Road	15
10	Langata	15
11	Ngong Road around Junction	15
12	Yaya centre	10
	Total	350

S/N	Urban SP- Mombasa	Sample
1	Mombasa CBD	30
2	Nyali	25
3	Likoni	25
4	Bamburi	25
5	Ganjoni	20
6	Tudor	21
7	Padya area	15
8	Vesco	15
9	Mvuta/majengo	15
	Total	191

S/N	Urban SP- Eldoret	Sample
1	Pioneer Estate	10
2	Elgon View	10
3	Kimumu	10
4	Racecourse	10
5	West Indies	10
6	Kapsoya,	10
7	Road block	10
8	Maili nne	10
9	Moi university main campus	10
10	University of Eldoret.	10
11	Munyaka	10
	Total	110

S/N	Urban SP- Nakuru	Sample
1	Racecourse	10
2	London	10
3	kabachia	10
4	Kiamunyi	10
5	Freehold	10
6	Afraha	10
7	Ngala	10
8	Mohammed Kahero	10
9	Bombay flats	10
10	Ngata	10
11	Section 58	10
12	Milimani	10
	Total	120

S/N	Urban SP- Kisumu	Sample
1	Kisumu CBD	30
2	Airport	16
3	Nyalenda	15
4	Kibos	15
5	Manyatta	15
6	Muhoroni	10
7	Ahero	10
8	Awasi	10
9	Katito	10
	Total	131

S/N	Urban SP- Nyeri	Sample
1	Othaya Town	8
2	Othaya Chinga	8
3	Othaya Mahiga	8
4	Ragati karatina	8
5	Ndima Karatina	8
6	Iria-ini Karatina	8
7	Nyeri town	10
8	Nyeri Kiganjo	10
9	Nyeri Mathari	10
10	Nyeri Gathuthi	10
11	Nyeri Aguthi	10
	Total	98

5.3 Briefing notes

Objective: The objective of the research is to collect data on the working conditions of security personnel working for private security companies in Kenya in order to contribute to the identification of possible areas of improvement.

Key target: Security officers/guards working for private security companies (whether licensed or not) in Kenya. The survey will not include other categories of security personnel (directly employed by establishments or private individuals)

Primary use: The research findings will be used to inform civil society organisations, private security companies and authorities in Kenya with a view to contribute to their dialogue on the improvement of working conditions in the private security industry.

This research will cover a range of industry practices that can affect the rights and welfare of security guards, including (i) recruitment fee payment, (ii) access to healthcare and advocacy channels, (iii) mental and physical health hazards, (iv) safety risks as well as (v) wages, working hours, and benefits.

Approach: The research should allow to compare conditions in:

- Licensed vs non-licensed companies -
- Large vs small companies
 - Large companies are;
 - *G4S, Securex, Security Group Africa, KK, Riley Falcon*
- International vs local companies
- Type of clients;
 - Extractive industry – Extraction of oil, metals, minerals
 - Manufacturing companies
 - Public institutions
 - commercial entities

DO NOT INTERVIEW;

- **The survey will not include other categories of security personnel (directly employed by establishments or private individuals or Maasais)**

The research should explore the possible links between working conditions and violations of the law (misbehaviour or crime)

While names of companies may be collected during the surveys, the results of the research should be anonymised (names of individuals and companies surveyed)

Time for interviewing

- We need both day and night guards in the sample, thus some interviews will have to be done after 6pm when shifts have changed.
- In each of the locations, we must have day guards and night guards.

Gender balance – Women and Men

For questions, comments

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Acknowledgments

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The survey and workshops were made possible thanks to a grant from the UK FCDO.

This research is part of a series conducted by ICoCA on working conditions in private security, based on the findings of the ICoCA report *“When the Abused Becomes the Abuser”*, published in December 2023.



The
Responsible
Security
Association

**International Code of
Conduct Association**

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