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**REPORTED CRIME VOLUMES AND PROSECUTION EFFICIENCY IN
UGANDA: A TIME SERIES ANALYSIS AND FORECAST**

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DECLARATION

I, Mboowa Rajab, declare that this dissertation titled "Reported Crime Volumes and Prosecution Efficiency in Uganda: A Time Series Analysis and Forecast" is my own original work. It has never been submitted to any other university or institution for any academic award.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family, friends, and colleagues whose endless love, sacrifices, and unwavering belief in my capabilities served as a constant source of motivation and strength throughout my academic journey at Makerere University.

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ABSTRACT

Crime remains a significant challenge to economic development, social cohesion, and public trust in governance institutions, particularly in developing countries where law enforcement resources are limited. In Uganda, despite the availability of annual crime reports from the Uganda Police Force, there has been limited systematic analysis of crime trends, prosecution efficiency, and future crime projections to support evidence-based policymaking. This study addressed this gap through a secondary analysis of crime data from 2020 to 2023.

The study adopted a quantitative, longitudinal, and retrospective research design. Secondary data were extracted from annual crime reports published by the Uganda Police Force for the years 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. Data were collected for 14 crime categories, capturing reported cases and prosecuted cases for each category. Descriptive statistics, percentage change calculations, and prosecution rate computations were performed using Microsoft Excel. Forecasting was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics, employing linear trend extrapolation for thefts (non-stationary series) and Simple Exponential Smoothing for other crimes and assaults (stationary series). Model fit was evaluated using Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) and Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE).

The findings revealed that total reported crimes increased by 16.4% from 195,931 in 2020 to 228,074 in 2023, peaking at 231,653 in 2022. Thefts recorded the highest absolute and percentage increase (57.1%), rising from 41,950 to 65,901 cases, and remained the most dominant crime category throughout the study period. Breakings increased by 43.8%, robberies by 46.6%, and economic crimes by 28.2%. In contrast, sex-related offences declined by 8.0%, homicides by 4.8%, and political/media offences by 87.9%. The overall prosecution rate averaged 32.2% over the study period, with significant variation across categories: narcotics/drugs (65.3%), other laws (52.7%), theft (43.3%), sex-related offences (40.9%), and child-related offences (7.3%). Corruption recorded the lowest prosecution rate at 5.2%. The overall prosecution rate improved from 28.9% in 2020 to 37.2% in 2023.

The forecasts revealed divergent trajectories across the three highest-volume categories. Thefts are projected to increase from 75,680 thousand in 2024 to 84,658 thousand in 2025, representing a 28.5% increase from 2023 levels. The linear trend model explained 89.7% of the variance in theft cases ($R^2 = 0.897$).

The study concludes that Uganda faces a growing property crime challenge, particularly theft, while the criminal justice system exhibits significant case attrition, with only one-third of reported crimes resulting in prosecution.

Recommendations include: (1) prioritizing targeted anti-theft interventions in high-risk urban hotspots; (2) strengthening prosecution capacity for theft, assault, and other high-volume categories.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIC: Akaike Information Criterion

ARIMA: Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average

BIC: Bayesian Information Criterion

DPP: Director of Public Prosecutions

GPSJS: Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey

SARIMA: Seasonal Autoregressive Integrated Moving Average

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UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UPF: Uganda Police Force

UBOS: Uganda Bureau Of Statistics

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Reported Crime: A criminal incident officially recorded by the Uganda Police Force.

Prosecution: The legal process of bringing a criminal case before a court of law.

Prosecution Rate: The percentage of reported crimes that are taken to court, calculated as:
 $(\text{Number prosecuted} \div \text{Number reported}) \times 100$.

Crime Category: A classification of offences based on their nature.

Forecasting: The use of statistical methods to predict future values based on historical data.

Theft: The unlawful taking of property without the use of force.

Assault: An act that causes or threatens physical harm to another person.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Crime remains one of the most significant challenges facing societies worldwide, with far-reaching effects on economic development, social cohesion, and the overall well-being of citizens. In developing countries, this relationship is particularly complex due to limited law enforcement resources and weak institutional frameworks, which may exacerbate criminal activities (UNODC, 2020). Understanding crime trends, patterns, and the effectiveness of criminal justice systems is therefore essential for evidence-based policymaking and efficient resource allocation.

Uganda, like many Sub-Saharan African countries, has experienced fluctuations in crime rates over the past decade. The Uganda Police Force, mandated to maintain law and order, publishes annual crime reports that document the nature, extent, and distribution of criminal activities. These reports provide valuable insights into offence types, geographical patterns, and case outcomes (Uganda Police Force, 2023).

Available data indicate notable changes in crime patterns between 2020 and 2023. Reported crimes increased from 195,931 in 2020 to 231,653 in 2022, representing a rise of 18.1 percent (Uganda Police Force, 2023). This increase was largely driven by property-related offences, particularly theft, which rose from 41,950 cases in 2020 to 61,508 in 2022. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdown measures in 2020 also influenced crime dynamics, suppressing certain offences while increasing others, making this period particularly important for analysis (Daily Monitor, 2025a).

The Uganda Police Force classifies crime into multiple categories, including homicides, economic crimes, sex-related offences, child-related offences, breakings, thefts, robberies, assaults, and other general offences (Uganda Police Force, 2024). Each category presents unique challenges for law enforcement and requires targeted interventions. Importantly, the distinction between reported crimes and prosecuted cases provides insight into the efficiency of the criminal justice system.

Recent evidence suggests that theft remains the most prevalent offence, accounting for approximately 28 percent of all reported crimes (Uganda Observer, 2025). Assault and sex-

related offences also remain consistently high, indicating persistent underlying socio-economic and behavioural factors (Ssebunya, 2024).

Concerns have also been raised about the effectiveness of Uganda's criminal justice system. A significant proportion of reported crimes do not result in prosecution, contributing to declining public trust and, in some cases, the emergence of mob justice (Uganda Radio Network, 2026). For example, 127 people were killed by mob action in Luwero District between 2019 and 2024, with residents citing failure to prosecute suspects as a key driver. This highlights the importance of analysing both crime trends and prosecution outcomes.

Furthermore, time series analysis has proven useful in identifying hidden patterns in crime data. For instance, studies using SARIMA models have revealed seasonal variations in crime rates across different periods of the year (Ssebunya, 2024). Such approaches enable forecasting, which is essential for proactive policing and strategic planning.

As Uganda continues to face socio-economic challenges and political transitions, understanding future crime trends becomes increasingly important. Forecasting crime patterns can support early warning systems and improve preparedness, particularly during sensitive periods such as elections (Early Warning Project, 2024). This study therefore seeks to provide empirical evidence on crime trends, prosecution efficiency, and future projections in Uganda.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the availability of annual crime reports from the Uganda Police Force, there is limited systematic analysis of this data to support evidence-based policymaking. While descriptive statistics are regularly published, in-depth analysis of trends, prosecution efficiency, and future projections remains inadequate. This study addresses this gap through a comprehensive secondary analysis of crime data from 2020 to 2023.

First, the volume of reported crimes has been increasing, placing pressure on the criminal justice system. Reported crimes rose from 195,931 in 2020 to 231,653 in 2022, representing an increase of approximately 18 percent (Uganda Police Force, 2023). Theft alone increased by 47 percent over the same period. This growth strains police investigations, prosecution processes, and court systems, leading to delays and case backlogs.

Second, there exists a significant gap between reported crimes and prosecution outcomes. For instance, in 2024, only 26,328 convictions were secured out of 81,750 cases taken to court—less than a 40 percent success rate (Daily Monitor, 2025b). Additionally, many cases remain under investigation or pending in court. This inefficiency undermines public confidence and may discourage crime reporting.

The consequences of this gap are severe. In some areas, communities resort to mob justice due to perceived failures of formal justice systems. Evidence shows that lack of trust in police effectiveness is strongly associated with such behaviour (Olusegun & Isbell, 2020).

Third, there is limited use of forecasting techniques in crime analysis. Although annual reports provide retrospective data, they rarely include forward-looking insights. Without forecasting, law enforcement agencies remain reactive rather than proactive in addressing crime.

Finally, emerging crime patterns—such as increases in economic crimes, robbery, and land-related offences—require continuous monitoring and strategic intervention (Uganda Observer, 2025). However, without systematic analysis, these patterns may not be effectively addressed.

This study therefore seeks to bridge these gaps by analysing crime trends, evaluating prosecution efficiency, and forecasting future crime patterns in Uganda.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyse crime trends, assess prosecution efficiency, and forecast future crime volumes in Uganda using police data from 2020 to 2023.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study will be guided by the following objectives:

1. To analyse the trends in reported crimes across all categories in Uganda from 2020 to 2023.
2. To determine the prosecution rate for each crime category and assess changes over the four-year period.
3. To forecast reported crime volumes for 2024 and 2025 for the three highest-volume crime categories (thefts, other crimes, and assaults).

1.5 Research Question

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the trends in reported crime volumes across different categories in Uganda between 2020 and 2023?
2. What are the prosecution rates for each crime category, and how have these rates changed between 2020 and 2023?
3. What are the projected reported crime volumes for thefts, other crimes, and assaults in Uganda for 2024 and 2025?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to contribute to both knowledge and practice in several ways.

First, it provides empirical evidence on crime trends in Uganda through a systematic longitudinal analysis, addressing gaps in existing literature.

Second, it quantifies prosecution rates across crime categories, offering benchmarks for evaluating criminal justice system performance.

Third, the forecasting component provides projections that can inform resource allocation and strategic planning by the Uganda Police Force, the Directorate of Public Prosecutions, and the judiciary.

Fourth, the study demonstrates the application of time series analysis and forecasting techniques in a developing country context, contributing to methodological advancement.

Finally, the findings may inform policy discussions on criminal justice reform, particularly in areas such as case management, policing strategies, and crime prevention.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on reported crime and prosecution data from the Uganda Police Force for the period 2020 to 2023. The analysis covers all major crime categories, including homicides, economic crimes, sex-related offences, child-related offences, breakings, thefts, robberies, assaults, and other general offences.

The study is limited to national-level data due to the aggregated nature of available statistics. The forecasting component focuses on the three highest-volume crime categories: thefts, other crimes in general, and assaults.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations.

First, it relies on secondary data, which may be subject to reporting bias, underreporting, and inconsistencies in data collection.

Second, the use of aggregated national data limits the ability to analyse regional variations in crime patterns.

Third, the data does not include detailed information on victims, offenders, or reasons for non-prosecution.

Fourth, the forecasting analysis is based on only four years of data, which may affect the accuracy of projections.

Finally, the study does not include qualitative insights from stakeholders such as police officers or victims, which could enrich interpretation of the findings.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature on crime trends, criminal justice system efficiency, and crime forecasting. The review is structured into four main sections. The first section presents the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The second examines empirical studies on crime trends, with emphasis on Sub-Saharan Africa and Uganda. The third section reviews literature on prosecution efficiency and case attrition, while the fourth explores crime forecasting approaches and their applications in policing. The chapter concludes by identifying gaps in the existing literature that this study seeks to address.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in three theoretical perspectives: Routine Activity Theory, Institutional Anomie Theory, and the Theory of Criminal Justice System Efficiency. These theories provide complementary explanations for crime patterns, institutional performance, and criminal justice system outcomes.

2.1.1 Routine Activity Theory

Routine Activity Theory, developed by Cohen and Felson (1979), posits that crime occurs when three elements converge: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. The theory emphasises situational conditions rather than offender characteristics.

In the Ugandan context, this theory helps explain variations in crime between 2020 and 2023. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered routine activities through lockdowns, business closures, and restricted movement (Halford et al., 2020; Nivette et al., 2021). These changes reduced opportunities for some crimes while increasing others. For instance, burglary declined when households were occupied, while theft increased due to economic hardship and emerging opportunities.

The theory also explains the concentration of crime in urban areas such as Kampala, where high population density and the availability of valuable targets increase crime risk. Similar

findings have been observed in African contexts, where urbanisation is associated with increased property crime (Ellis, 1999).

2.1.2 Institutional Anomie Theory

Institutional Anomie Theory, proposed by Messner and Rosenfeld (1994), explains crime as a result of imbalance between economic and social institutions. The theory argues that when economic goals dominate society and other institutions are weakened, crime rates tend to increase.

This perspective is particularly relevant in developing countries like Uganda, where economic pressures are significant. High levels of theft can be linked to a strong desire for economic success combined with limited legitimate opportunities. The increase in theft during the COVID-19 period reflects this imbalance, as economic disruptions intensified pressure on individuals (Uganda Police Force, 2023; Uganda Police Force, 2024).

The theory also highlights the role of weak criminal justice institutions. When law enforcement systems are perceived as ineffective, their ability to regulate behaviour diminishes, potentially leading to increased crime and alternative forms of justice such as mob action (Uganda Radio Network, 2026).

2.1.3 Theory of Criminal Justice System Efficiency

The Theory of Criminal Justice System Efficiency views the justice system as a sequence of interconnected stages, including reporting, investigation, prosecution, and adjudication. Inefficiencies at any stage affect overall system performance (Packer, 1968; Feeley, 1979).

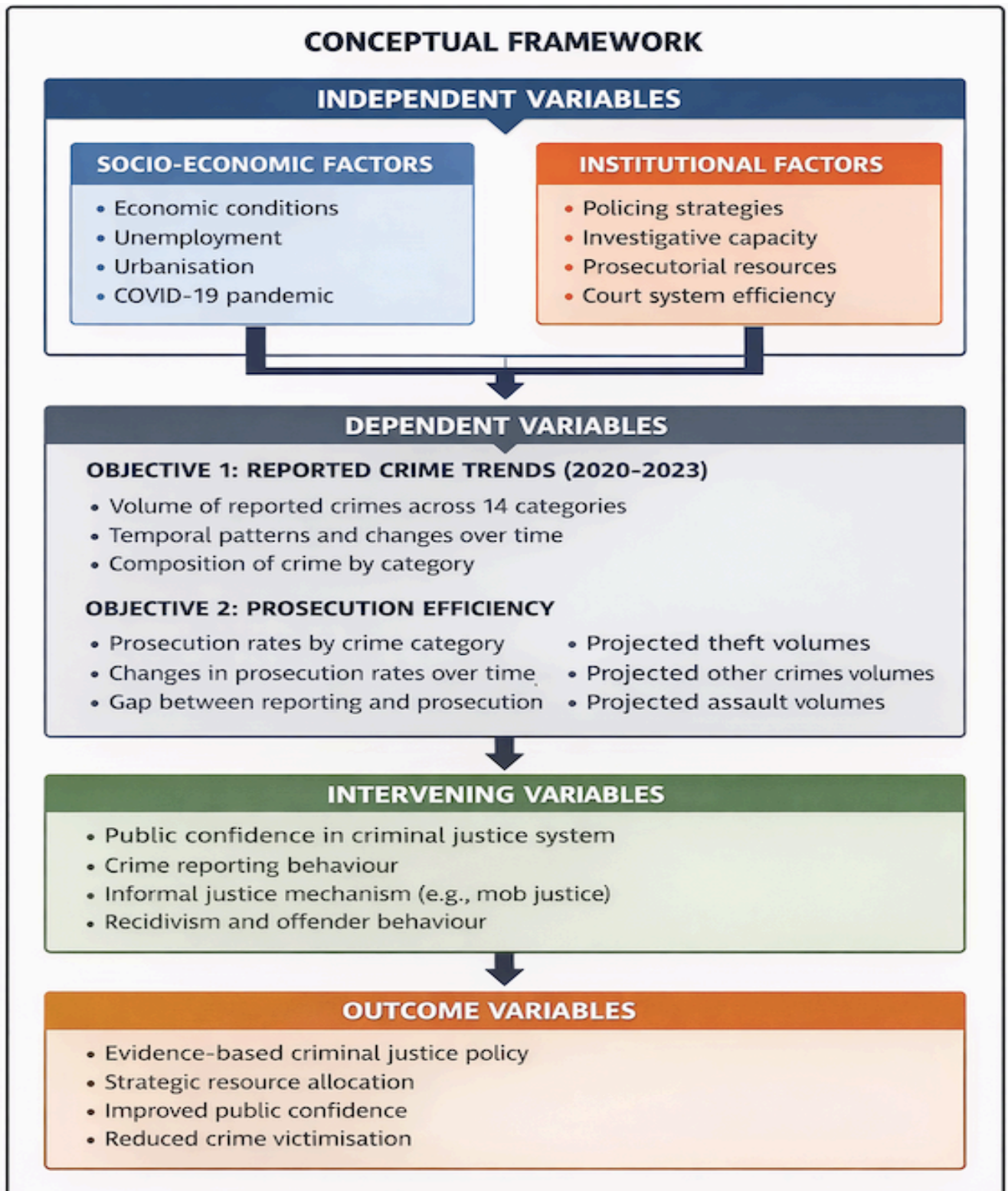
In Uganda, high case attrition reflects inefficiencies within the system. Data indicates that a large proportion of reported cases do not proceed to prosecution, and even fewer result in conviction (Daily Monitor, 2025b). These inefficiencies may arise from limited investigative capacity, insufficient evidence, and resource constraints (Forst, 2000).

The theory also emphasises the consequences of inefficiency. When the system fails to process cases effectively, public confidence declines, potentially leading to reduced crime reporting and increased reliance on informal justice mechanisms.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a visual and narrative representation of the key variables in a study and the relationships between them (Miles & Huberman, 1994). It provides a structure for understanding how study variables interact and guides the analysis of findings. This study's framework explains the relationship between reported crime trends, prosecution efficiency, and crime forecasting in Uganda.

Figure 2. 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



The framework consists of three main components aligned to the study objectives.

Reported Crime Trends represent the independent component and include the volume and distribution of crimes across the 14 categories recorded by the Uganda Police Force. These trends are influenced by socio-economic conditions such as unemployment and economic status, as well as institutional factors like policing strategies and crime reporting behaviour. This component identifies changes in crime levels over time and across categories.

Prosecution Efficiency refers to how reported cases progress through the criminal justice system. It is measured using prosecution and conviction rates. It is influenced by factors such as investigative capacity, availability of evidence, and prosecutorial resources. This component assesses how effectively reported crimes are processed.

Forecasting involves predicting future crime volumes based on historical data. Using past trends, the study projects crime levels for key categories such as theft, assault, and other crimes for 2024–2025 using linear trend analysis.

2.2.1 Relationships Between Variables

The framework assumes that reported crime trends directly influence prosecution efficiency, as high crime volumes may strain justice system resources and affect case handling. In turn, historical crime data forms the basis for forecasting future crime patterns. Additionally, prosecution efficiency can influence public confidence in the justice system, which may affect crime reporting behaviour and indirectly shape future crime trends.

2.3 Empirical Review: Crime Trends

2.3.1 Crime Trends in Sub-Saharan Africa

Crime trends in Sub-Saharan Africa are influenced by urbanisation, inequality, and institutional capacity (Ellis, 1999). Studies have shown that property crime is strongly linked to economic conditions such as unemployment and poverty.

Cross-national studies also indicate variation in crime rates across the region. For example, homicide rates differ significantly depending on inequality levels and institutional strength (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020).

In East Africa, research has identified seasonal patterns in crime. A study by Ssebunya (2024) found that crime rates in Uganda vary across different periods of the year, highlighting the importance of time-based analysis.

2.3.2 Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Crime

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered crime patterns globally. Studies show that lockdown measures reduced street crimes while increasing domestic violence and cybercrime (Halford et al., 2020; Nivette et al., 2021).

These changes are consistent with Routine Activity Theory, which links crime to opportunity structures (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Reduced mobility limited opportunities for certain crimes, while increased household interaction contributed to others.

In Uganda, crime trends followed a similar pattern. Reported crimes declined in 2020 but increased in subsequent years as restrictions eased and economic pressures intensified (Uganda Police Force, 2023; Uganda Police Force, 2024). The pandemic also disrupted criminal justice processes, contributing to delays and case backlogs (Daily Monitor, 2025b).

2.3.3 Crime Patterns in Uganda

Empirical evidence indicates that theft is the most prevalent crime in Uganda, accounting for a significant proportion of reported cases (Uganda Police Force, 2024; Uganda Observer, 2025). The concentration of theft in urban areas reflects the availability of valuable targets and limited guardianship.

Assault is another major category and has remained consistently high over time (Ssebunya, 2024). This suggests that social factors such as interpersonal conflict and domestic violence play a significant role.

Homicide, although less frequent, remains a serious concern and is often linked to land disputes and mob justice (Uganda Radio Network, 2026). Emerging crimes, including economic and land-related offences, have also increased in recent years (Uganda Police Force, 2024).

2.4 Empirical Review: Prosecution Efficiency

2.4.1 Measuring Criminal Justice System Performance

Criminal justice system performance is commonly measured using indicators such as prosecution rates, conviction rates, and case processing time (Forst, 2000). High attrition rates between reporting and conviction are a common feature of justice systems worldwide.

In developing countries, resource constraints and high caseloads often reduce efficiency, leading to delays and case backlogs.

2.4.2 Factors Influencing Case Attrition

Several factors influence whether reported crimes proceed to prosecution. Victim cooperation is critical, as cases are less likely to proceed when victims withdraw or fail to testify (Felson & Lantz, 2016).

Evidentiary challenges also play a significant role. Cases lacking sufficient evidence are unlikely to proceed to court (Forst, 2000). In addition, institutional capacity and resource limitations hinder effective case processing.

In Uganda, significant gaps exist between reported cases and those taken to court, indicating high attrition rates (Daily Monitor, 2025b).

2.4.3 Prosecution Rates and Public Confidence

Prosecution rates are closely linked to public confidence in the justice system. Research shows that perceptions of fairness and effectiveness influence willingness to report crimes and cooperate with authorities.

In Uganda, low levels of trust in the police have been associated with perceptions of corruption and inefficiency. This has contributed to the persistence of mob justice in some communities (Uganda Radio Network, 2026).

Low prosecution rates may also weaken deterrence, encouraging further criminal activity (Becker, 1968).

2.5 Empirical Review: Crime Forecasting

2.5.1 Approaches to Crime Forecasting

Crime forecasting involves predicting future crime patterns using historical data. Time series models such as ARIMA and SARIMA are commonly used to analyse trends and seasonal variations (Gorr & Harries, 2003).

A study by Ssebunya (2024) applied SARIMA modelling to crime data in Uganda and found significant seasonal patterns, demonstrating the usefulness of forecasting techniques.

2.5.2 Applications in Policing

Forecasting is increasingly used to support proactive policing strategies. Predictive policing involves using data to identify high-risk areas and allocate resources effectively (Perry et al., 2013).

Studies in developed countries show that forecasting can contribute to crime reduction when properly implemented. However, challenges such as data quality and potential bias remain.

2.5.3 Forecasting in Developing Countries

In developing countries, crime forecasting is constrained by limited data and resource challenges (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020). Studies suggest that simpler methods, such as trend analysis, may be more appropriate in such contexts.

In Uganda, forecasting applications remain limited, with most analyses focusing on retrospective trends rather than future projections (Ssebunya, 2024).

2.6 Summary of Literature and Research Gap

The literature reviewed highlights that crime trends are influenced by socio-economic conditions, routine activities, and institutional factors. Theft and assault remain dominant crime categories in Uganda, while the COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered crime patterns (Halford et al., 2020; Nivette et al., 2021).

Research on prosecution efficiency indicates high levels of case attrition, driven by factors such as limited resources, evidentiary challenges, and victim cooperation (Forst, 2000). Low

prosecution rates have been linked to reduced public confidence and increased reliance on informal justice mechanisms (Becker, 1968; Uganda Radio Network, 2026).

Crime forecasting has demonstrated potential for improving policing strategies, but its application in developing countries remains limited due to data constraints (Gorr & Harries, 2003; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020).

Despite these insights, several gaps remain. There is limited systematic analysis of recent crime trends in Uganda, insufficient quantification of prosecution rates across crime categories, and a lack of forecasting studies using recent data.

This study addresses these gaps by analysing crime trends, evaluating prosecution efficiency, and forecasting future crime volumes using Uganda Police Force data from 2020 to 2023.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used in the study. It outlines the research design, data sources, data collection procedures, and analytical techniques used to examine crime trends, prosecution efficiency, and crime forecasting in Uganda. It also highlights data limitations and ethical considerations to ensure transparency and replicability.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative, longitudinal, and retrospective research design.

It is quantitative because it relies on numerical crime data to analyse trends, compute prosecution rates, and generate forecasts. It is longitudinal since it covers a four-year period (2020–2023), allowing the study of changes over time. It is retrospective because it uses existing secondary data from official reports.

The design is also both descriptive and predictive. It describes crime trends and prosecution patterns over time and uses historical data to forecast crime volumes for 2024–2025. The study does not aim to establish causality but to identify patterns and make statistical projections.

3.2 Data Sources

The study uses secondary data obtained from annual crime reports published by the Uganda Police Force for the years, 2020,2021,2022 and 2023. These reports are official government publications containing national crime statistics and case outcomes. The Uganda Police Force is mandated to collect and publish crime data under the Police Act, making these reports the most reliable source of crime statistics in Uganda.

3.2.1 Data Extracted

From each report, data were extracted for 14 crime categories, including:

Homicides, economic crimes, sex-related offences, child-related offences, breakings, thefts, robberies, assaults, terrorism, political and media offences, corruption, narcotics and drugs, other laws, and general crimes. For each category, the variables collected were, reported cases and prosecuted cases.

3.2.2 Data Limitations

The study acknowledges limitations associated with secondary crime data:

- Underreporting: Not all crimes are reported to police, leading to incomplete data.
- Recording variations: Differences in reporting practices may affect consistency.
- Aggregation: Data is national-level, limiting regional or district-level analysis.
- Classification issues: Crime categories may differ from academic or international standards.

Despite these limitations, the data remains suitable for identifying national crime trends and conducting statistical analysis.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection involved a systematic review of the four annual crime reports.

First, the relevant reports for 2020–2023 were obtained from official sources. Second, tables containing reported and prosecuted cases by crime category were identified and extracted manually into Microsoft Excel. Third, data entry was verified by cross-checking with the original reports to ensure accuracy. Finally, the data were organised into a structured dataset containing year, crime category, reported cases, and prosecuted cases for analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel and statistical techniques aligned with the study objectives. The analysis was carried out in three main stages: descriptive analysis, prosecution efficiency analysis, and forecasting.

3.4.1 Descriptive Analysis of Crime Trends

To address the first objective, descriptive statistical methods were used to analyse trends in reported crime across all categories from 2020 to 2023.

First, total reported crimes for each category were computed annually. This allowed comparison of crime levels across the four-year period. Percentage change was also calculated to measure the rate of increase or decrease over time.

Percentage change was computed as;

$$\text{The percentage change} = \frac{\text{Value}_t - \text{Value}_{t-1}}{\text{Value}_{t-1}} * 100$$

Line graphs and bar charts were used to visually present trends and identify patterns across crime categories. This analysis helped to determine whether crime levels were increasing, decreasing, or fluctuating over time.

3.4.2 Analysis of Prosecution Efficiency

To address the second objective, prosecution efficiency was measured using prosecution rates for each crime category.

The prosecution rate was calculated as:

$$\text{Prosecution} = \frac{\text{Number of Prosecuted Cases}}{\text{Number of Reported Cases}} * 100$$

This measure indicates the proportion of reported crimes that proceed to court.

Prosecution rates were computed for each category and each year (2020–2023). The results were then compared across years to identify trends and changes in efficiency.

Descriptive statistics and graphical analysis were used to Compare prosecution rates across crime categories, Identify categories with high or low prosecution rates

3.4.3 Forecasting of Crime Trends

To forecast reported crime volumes for 2024 and 2025 for the three highest-volume crime categories (thefts, other crimes in general, and assaults).

The analysis will be conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics. Given the time series nature of the data, the analysis will follow a structured approach involving data preparation, stationarity assessment, model selection, forecasting, and validation.

3.4.4 Data Structure

The dataset for Objective Three consists of 4 annual observations (2020–2023) for each of the three crime categories. The values are reported in thousands (000s).

Table 3. 1: Reported Crime Volumes by Category (2020–2023) – Values in Thousands

Year	Thefts	Other Crimes	Assaults
2020	41,950	62,908	30,712
2021	43,583	60,717	29,317
2022	61,508	63,369	32,041
2023	65,901	60,581	29,881

3.4.5 Visual Exploration

Before formal modelling, line graphs will be generated for each crime category to Identify visible trends, Detect unusual fluctuations or outliers and Provide preliminary evidence for stationarity assessment.

3.4.6 Stationarity Assessment

Time series forecasting requires an understanding of whether a series is stationary (constant mean and variance over time) or non-stationary (exhibiting trends). For series with only 4 annual observations ($n = 4$), formal unit root tests such as the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test are statistically invalid due to insufficient degrees of freedom and zero statistical power. Therefore, stationarity will be assessed using Visual inspection of line plots and first differences

Line plots for each crime category will be examined to determine whether the series:

- Fluctuates around a constant mean (stationary)
- Exhibits a clear upward or downward trend (non-stationary)
- Shows increasing or decreasing variance over time

First Difference Analysis

Year-to-year changes will be calculated as:

$$\Delta Y_t = Y_t - Y_{t-1}$$

Where:

- Y_t = reported crime volume in year t
- Y_{t-1} = reported crime volume in the previous year

A stationary series should show first differences that fluctuate around zero with constant variance.

Table 3. 2: Expected Findings

Crime Category	Visual Pattern	Stationarity Status
Thefts	Increasing trend (non-stationary)	Non-stationary
Other crimes	Fluctuates around ~61,893	Stationary
Assaults	Fluctuates around ~30,487	Stationary

3.5 Forecasting Methods

3.5.1 Method 1: Linear Trend Extrapolation (For Thefts)

For Thefts, which exhibits a clear increasing trend, linear trend extrapolation will be used. The model is: $Y^t = a + bt + e_t$

Where:

- Y^t = forecasted crime volume at time t
- t = time index (1 = 2020, 2 = 2021, 3 = 2022, 4 = 2023)
- a = intercept (estimated baseline)
- b = slope (average annual increase)

3.5.2 Method 2: Simple Exponential Smoothing (For Other Crimes and Assaults)

For stationary series (Other Crimes and Assaults), Simple Exponential Smoothing (SES) will be applied. The model is:

$$\widehat{Y}_{t+1} = \alpha Y_t + (1 - \alpha) \widehat{Y}_t$$

Where:

$\widehat{Y}_{t+1}$ = forecast for next period, α = smoothing parameter, Y_t = actual value at time t and $\widehat{Y}_t$ = forecast at time t .

3.7 Model Evaluation Criteria

Due to the short time series ($n = 4$), traditional train-test split validation is not possible. The following fit statistics will be used to evaluate model performance on the historical period (2020–2023):

3.7.1 Root Mean Square Error (RMSE)

$$RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \sum_{t=1}^n (Y_t - \tilde{Y}_t)^2}$$

3.7.2 Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE)

$$MAPE = \frac{100}{n} \sum_{t=1}^n \left| \frac{Y_t - \hat{Y}_t}{Y_t} \right|$$

Table 3. 3: Interpretation

MAPE Range	Interpretation
< 10%	Excellent fit
10% – 20%	Good fit
20% – 50%	Reasonable fit
> 50%	Poor fit

3.7.3 R-squared (for Linear Trend Model of Thefts)

For the linear regression model applied to Thefts, the R-squared value will be reported, indicating the proportion of variance explained by the time trend.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis structured according to the three research objectives. First, trends in reported crimes across all categories in Uganda from 2020 to 2023 are examined. Second, prosecution rates for each crime category are calculated and analysed. Third, forecasts for the three highest-volume crime categories (thefts, other crimes in general, and assaults) for 2024 and 2025 are presented using linear trend analysis (SPSS equivalent).

4.1 Objective 1: Trends in Reported Crimes (2020–2023)

4.1.1 Overall Crime Trends

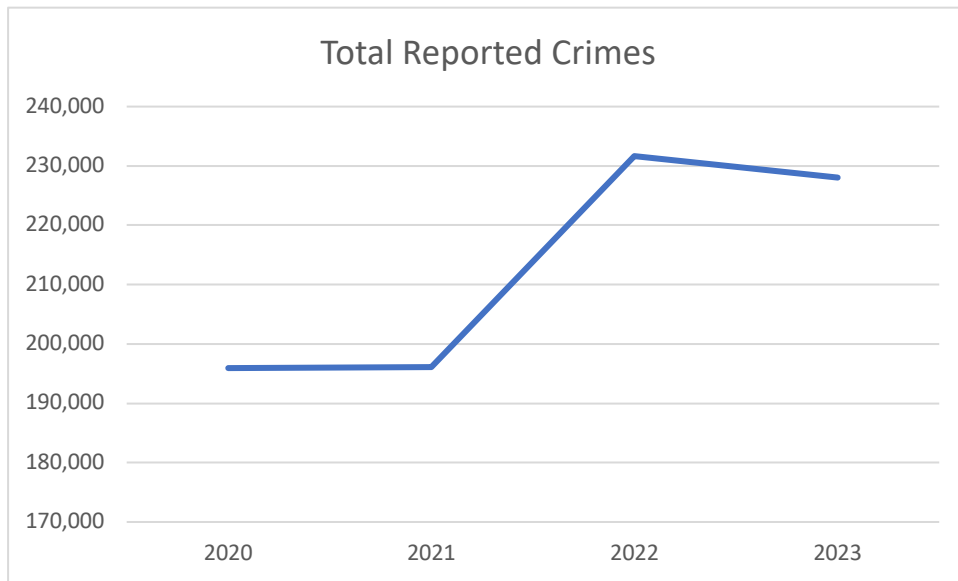
Table 4.1 presents the total reported crimes in Uganda from 2020 to 2023.

Total Reported crimes in Uganda (2020-2023)

Table 4. 1:: Total Reported Crimes in Ugan 1

Year	Total Reported Crimes
2020	195,931
2021	196,081
2022	231,653
2023	228,074

Figure 4. 1: the overall crime trends (2020-2023)



Total reported crimes increased from 195,931 in 2020 to 231,653 in 2022 — a rise of 18.2%

A slight decline of 1.5% occurred between 2022 and 2023 (from 231,653 to 228,074)

Overall, reported crimes increased by 16.4% from 2020 to 2023

This trend indicates that crime levels increased significantly after the COVID-19 period, likely due to economic recovery challenges and increased social interaction.

4.1.2 Crime Trends by Category.

Table 4. 2:changes in Reported Crimes by Category, Uganda (2020–2023)

crime category	2020	2021	2022	2023	DIFFERENCE S	%CHANG E
Political/Media Offences	1,033	797	140	125	-908	-87.9
Sex related offences	16,144	16,373	14,693	14,846	-1,298	-8.0
Homicides	4,460	3,912	4,043	4,248	-212	-4.8
Other crimes in general*	62,908	60,717	63,369	60,581	-2,327	-3.7
Assaults	30,712	29,317	32,041	29,881	-831	-2.7
Corruption	32	57	37	32	0	0.0
Child related offences	9,225	8,681	13,489	10,741	1,516	16.4
Narcotics/Drugs	1,714	1,668	2,797	2,113	399	23.3
Economic Crimes	10,057	10,966	13,170	12,892	2,835	28.2
Breakings	10,113	10,148	13,826	14,543	4,430	43.8
Robberies	5,302	5,275	6,854	7,772	2,470	46.6
Thefts	41,950	43,583	61,508	65,901	23,951	57.1
Other Laws	2,279	4,566	5,671	4,373	2,094	91.9
Terrorism	2	21	15	26	24	1200.0
Total	195,931	196,081	231,653	228,074	32,143	16.4

Between 2020 and 2023, total prosecutions increased by 16.4% (from 195,931 to 228,074). This growth was driven primarily by sharp rises in Thefts (+57.1%), Robberies (+46.6%), and

Breakings (+43.8%). In contrast, Political/Media Offences (-87.9%) and Sex related offences (-8.0%) declined substantially. Terrorism showed the largest percentage increase (+1,200%), though from a very low baseline.

Figure 4. 2: Top 3 Crime Categories (2020–2023)

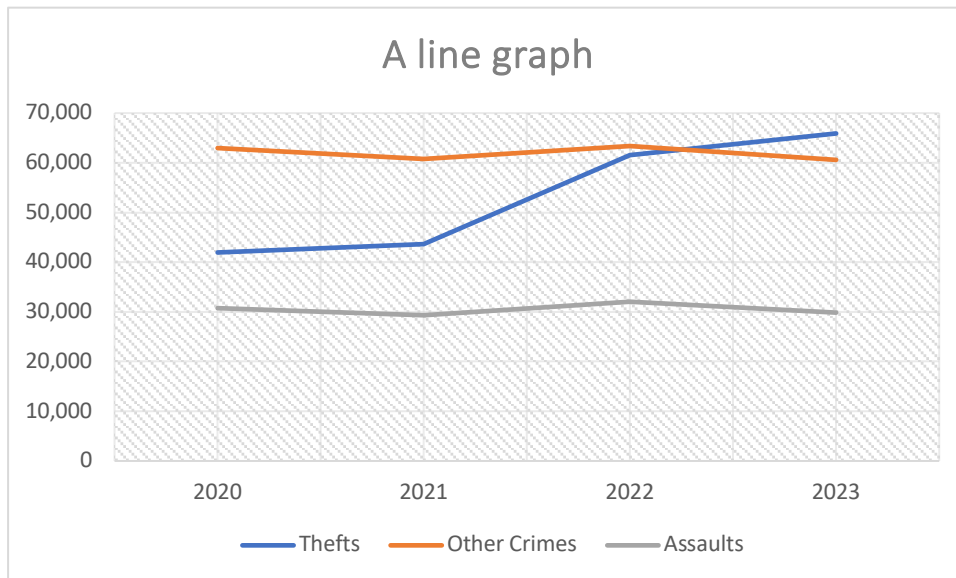
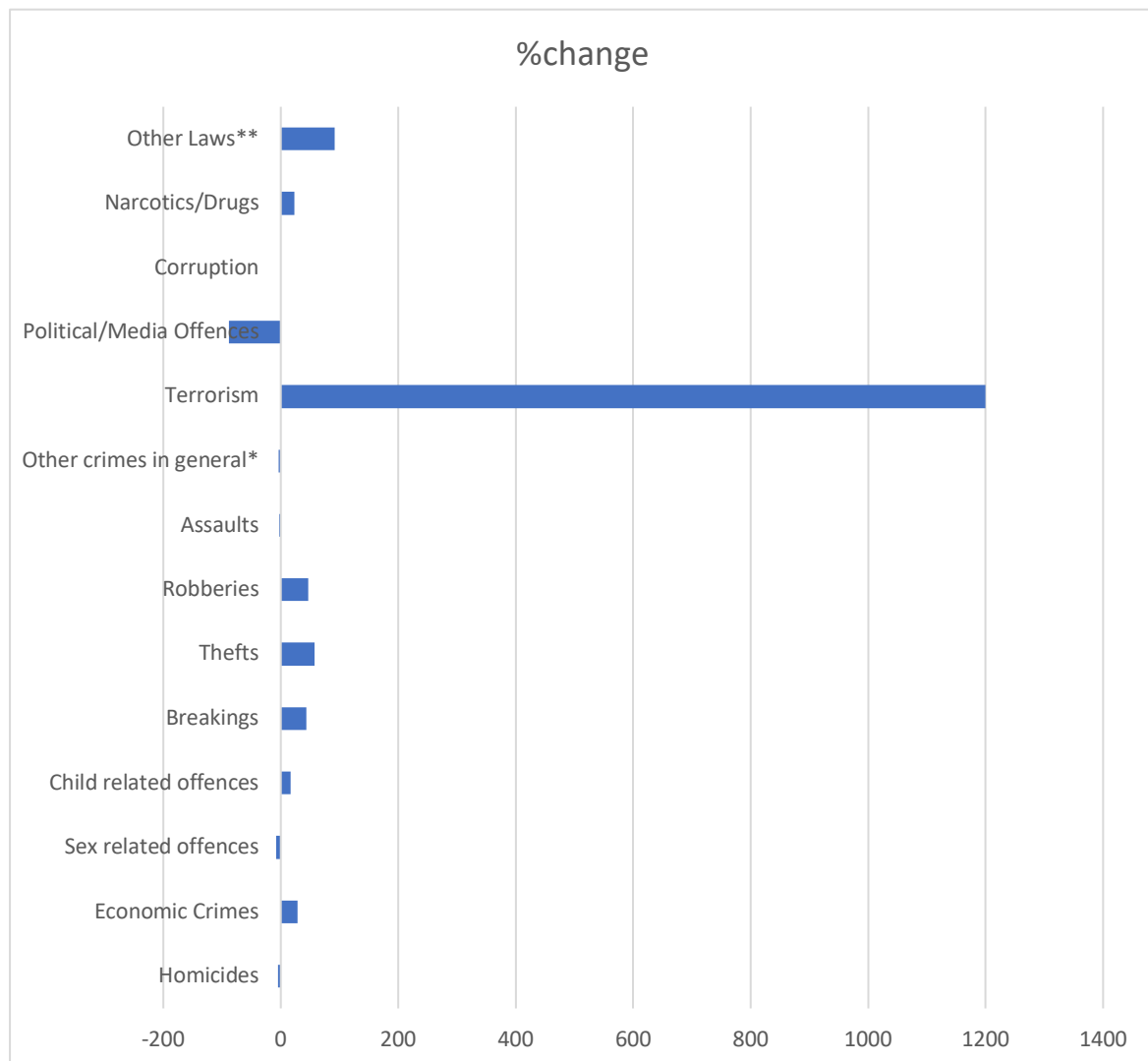


Figure 4.3 illustrates that thefts have shown the most dramatic upward trajectory, surpassing other crimes in 2022 and continuing to rise in 2023. Other crimes in general have remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 60,000 and 63,000 cases. Assaults have shown no clear trend, remaining between 29,000 and 32,000 cases annually.

Figure 4. 3: Percentage Change by Crime Category (2020–2023)



Key Finding: Property crimes (thefts, breakings, robberies) showed the largest increases among high-volume categories, while violent and sex-related offences declined slightly. Terrorism showed the largest percentage increase but from a very low base.

4.2 Objective 2: Prosecution Rates by Crime Category (2020–2023)

4.2.1 Prosecution Rate Calculation

The prosecution rate was calculated as:

$$\text{Prosecution} = \frac{\text{Number of Prosecuted Cases}}{\text{Number of Reported Cases}} * 100.$$

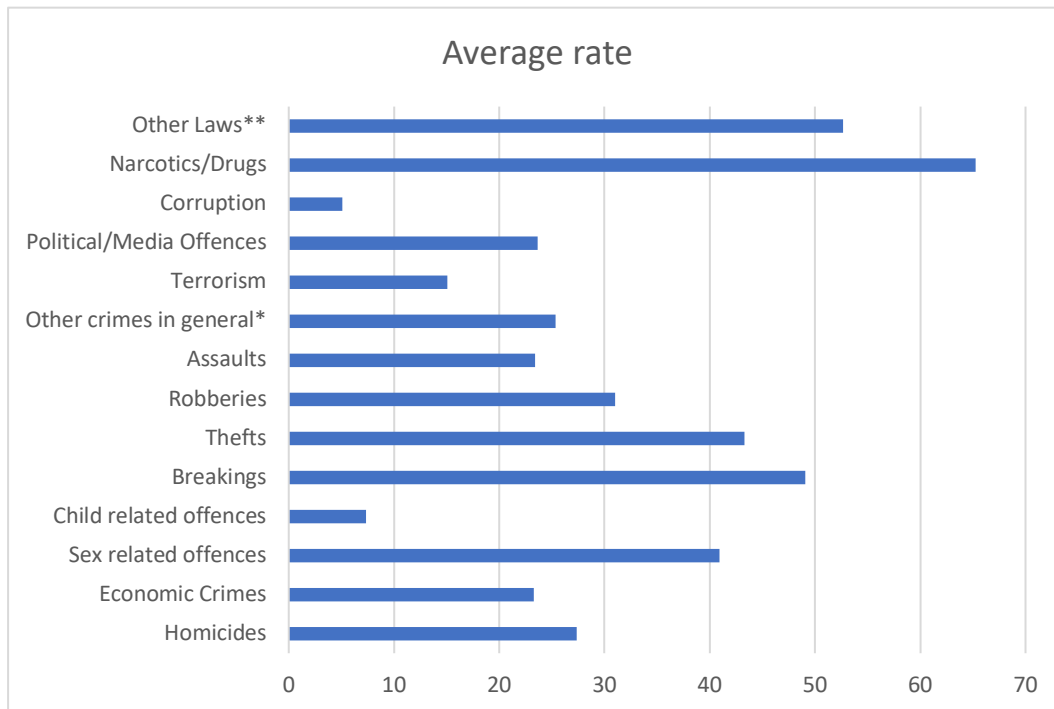
This measure indicates the proportion of reported crimes that proceed to court.

4.2.2 Complete Prosecution Rates by Category and Year (2020–2023)

Table 4. 3: Prosecution Rates by Crime Category, Uganda (2020–2023)

	reported	prosecut	rate	reported	prosecut	rate	reported	prosec	rate	reported	prosecut	rate	Average
Homicides	4,460	1,269	28	3,912	1,318	34	4,043	763	19	4,248	1,204	28	27
Economic Crimes	10,057	2,043	20	10,966	2,768	25	13,170	2,648	20	12,892	3,544	27	23
Sex related offences	16,144	6,557	41	16,373	7,012	43	14,693	5,461	37	14,846	6,395	43	41
Child related offences	9,225	629	7	8,681	721	8	13,489	642	5	10,741	1,008	9	7
Breakings	10,113	4,680	46	10,148	5,116	50	13,826	6,327	46	14,543	7,846	54	49
Thefts	41,950	16,421	39	43,583	19,017	44	61,508	25,290	41	65,901	32,559	49	43
Robberies	5,302	1,607	30	5,275	1,696	32	6,854	1,831	27	7,772	2,704	35	31
Assaults	30,712	6540	21	29,317	7,522	26	32,041	6,533	20	29,881	7,861	26	23
Other crimes in general*	62,908	14,359	23	60,717	16,297	27	63,369	14,207	22	60,581	17,824	29	25
Terrorism	2	0	0	21	2	10	15	3	20	26	8	31	15
Political/Media Offences	1,033	233	23	797	151	19	140	24	17	125	45	36	24
Corruption	32	2	6	57	3	5	37	1	3	32	2	6	5
Narcotics/Drugs	1,714	1,119	65	1,668	1,101	66	2,797	1,816	65	2,113	1,371	65	65
Other Laws**	2,279	1,192	52	4,566	2,284	50	5,671	2,859	50	4,373	2,536	58	53
Overall			29			33			30			37	32.2

Figure 4. 4: Percentage Prosecution Rates by Category



4.3.2 Prosecution Rates by Crime Category

High Prosecution Rate Categories

Narcotics and drug-related offences recorded the highest and most consistent prosecution rate, averaging 65% across all years. Similarly, offences under other laws recorded a relatively high average rate of 53%, while breakings had an average of 49%.

These high rates suggest that such cases are either easier to prosecute due to stronger evidence or are prioritised within the criminal justice system.

Moderate Prosecution Rate Categories

Theft, the most prevalent crime, recorded a relatively moderate prosecution rate averaging 43%, increasing from 39% in 2020 to 49% in 2023.

Sex-related offences also showed consistently high prosecution rates, averaging 41%, indicating relatively strong case follow-through.

Robberies recorded an average prosecution rate of **31%**, while homicides averaged **27%**, both showing moderate but fluctuating performance.

These categories demonstrate **partial efficiency**, though inconsistencies suggest challenges in investigation or case handling.

Low Prosecution Rate Categories

Several categories recorded relatively low prosecution rates. Economic crimes averaged **23%**, while assaults also averaged **23%**, despite having high reported case volumes.

Other crimes in general recorded an average of **25%**, indicating that a large proportion of cases do not proceed to court.

Child-related offences recorded a particularly low average rate of **7%**, suggesting significant challenges in prosecuting such cases.

Very Low and Irregular Categories

Corruption recorded a very low average prosecution rate of **5%**, while terrorism, although showing improvement from **0% in 2020 to 31% in 2023**, had an overall average of **15%** due to low case numbers.

Political and media offences recorded an average of **24%**, with noticeable fluctuations over time.

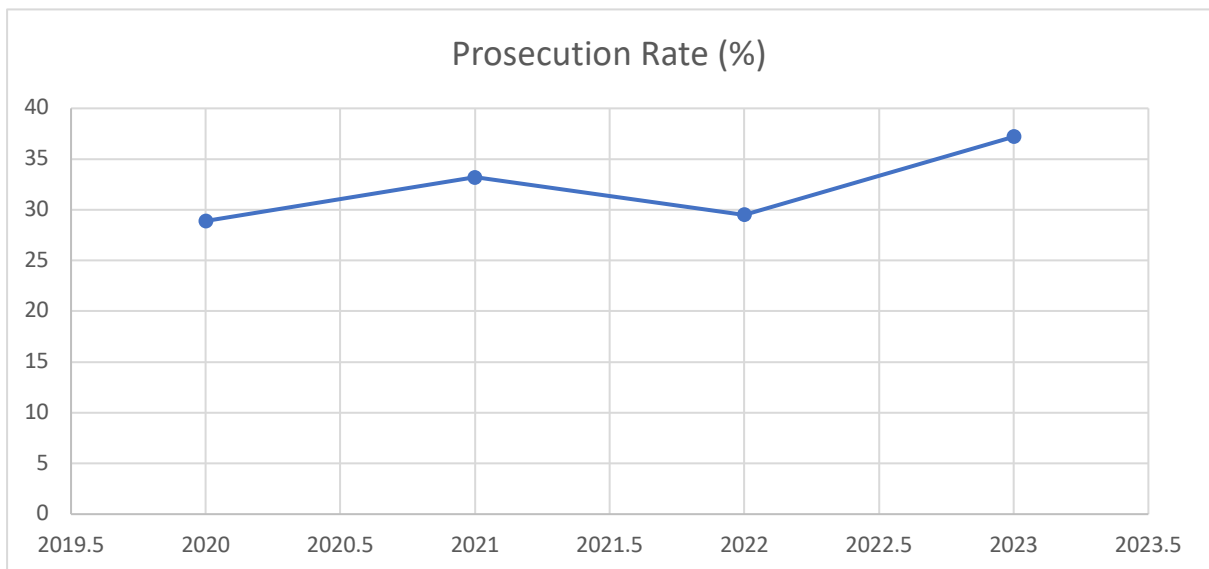
4.3.1 Overall Prosecution Trends

Table 4. 4: Overall Prosecution Rates by Year (2020–2023)

Year	Prosecution Rate (%)
2020	28.9
2022	29.5
2021	33.2
2023	37.2

4.3.2. Overall Prosecution Rate (2020–2023)

Figure 4. 5: Overall Prosecution Rate (2020–2023)



The overall prosecution rate increased from 28.9% in 2020 to 33.2% in 2021, declined slightly to 29.5% in 2022, and then rose significantly to 37.2% in 2023, giving an average rate of 32.2% over the study period.

This trend indicates a general improvement in prosecution efficiency, particularly in 2023, although some fluctuations were observed.

4.3 OBJECTIVE THREE: FORECASTING REPORTED CRIME VOLUMES FOR 2024 AND 2025

4.3.1 Introduction

This section presents the results for Objective Three of the study, As established in Chapter Three, the analysis employed linear trend extrapolation for Thefts (which exhibited a non-stationary increasing trend) and Simple Exponential Smoothing (SES) for Other Crimes and Assaults (which exhibited stationary behavior). All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics

4.3.2 Descriptive Overview of Historical Data (2020–2023)

Before presenting the forecasts, it is useful to review the historical patterns of the three crime categories under investigation.

Table 4. 5: Historical Reported Crime Volumes by Category (2020–2023)

Year	Thefts	Other Crimes	Assaults
2020	41,950	62,908	30,712
2021	43,583	60,717	29,317
2022	61,508	63,369	32,041
2023	65,901	60,581	29,881

Table 4. 6: Historical Trends of Thefts, Other Crimes, and Assaults

Crime Category	2020–2023 Pattern	Key Observation
Thefts	Strong upward trend	Increased by 23,951 thousand (57.1%) from 2020 to 2023
Other Crimes	Fluctuating, no clear trend	Peak in 2022 (63,369), lowest in 2023 (60,581)
Assaults	Fluctuating, no clear trend	Peak in 2022 (32,041), lowest in 2021 (29,317)

The sharp increase in Thefts between 2021 and 2022 (from 43,583 to 61,508, a 41.2% jump) is particularly notable and may reflect changes in reporting practices, economic pressures, or policing strategies during that period.

4.3.3 Stationarity Assessment Results

As detailed in Chapter Three, formal stationarity tests (e.g., Augmented Dickey-Fuller) could not be conducted due to the limited number of observations ($n = 4$). Instead, stationarity was assessed visually using line plots and year-to-year change analysis.

Table 4. 7: Year-to-Year Changes in Crime Volumes (2020–2023)

Period	Thefts Change (000s)	Other Crimes Change (000s)	Assaults Change (000s)
2020→2021	1,633	-2,191	-1,395
2021→2022	17,925	2,652	2,724
2022→2023	4,393	-2,788	-2,160

Table 4. 8: Interpretation

Crime category	Assessment	Conclusion	Method Selected
Thefts	Consistently positive changes; clear upward trend in line plot	Non-stationary (trending)	Linear trend extrapolation
Other crimes	Changes alternate between positive and negative; fluctuates around mean of ~61,893	Stationary	Simple Exponential Smoothing
Assaults	Changes alternate between positive and negative; fluctuates around mean of ~30,487	Stationary	Simple Exponential Smoothing

4.3.4 Forecasting Results for Thefts (Linear Trend Extrapolation)

4.3.4.1 Model Estimation

A linear regression model was estimated with Year (coded as time index $t = 1, 2, 3, 4$ for 2020–2023) as the independent variable and Thefts as the dependent variable.

Table 4. 9: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.947 ^a	0.897	0.845	4815.493
a. Predictors: (Constant), t				
b. Dependent Variable: Thefts				

Model Summary

The model shows a very strong fit, with an R Square of .897, indicating that approximately 89.7% of the variance in Thefts is explained by the predictor t. This suggests that the independent variable is a highly effective predictor within the context of this specific dataset.

Table 4. 10: Anova

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	403004464.2	1	403004464	17.379	.053 ^b
Residual	46377948.8	2	23188974.4		
Total	449382413	3			
a. Dependent Variable: Thefts					
b. Predictors: (Constant), t					

The ANOVA results indicate the model is marginally significant with a p-value of .053 ($F = 17.379$), which sits slightly above the standard .05 alpha level. While it suggests a strong linear trend, it does not strictly meet the criteria for statistical significance at the 95% confidence level.

Table 4. 11: coefficients

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standard ized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	30791	5898		5.221	0.04	5415.03	56167
	t	8977.8	2154	0.947	4.169	0.05	-288.2	18244

a. Dependent Variable: Thefts

The regression equation is $\text{Thefts} = 30791 + 8977.8(t)$, showing that for every unit increase in t, Thefts are predicted to rise by 8,977.8.

Manual calculation for forecast

Formula: $\text{Forecast} = a + (b \times t)$

Where t = 5 for 2024, t = 6 for 2025, a =30791 and b =8977

Table 4. 12:forecast

Year	t value	Forecast (000s)
2024	5	75,680
2025	6	84,658

Table 4. 13: Forecasted Thefts Volumes for 2024 and 2025 (in thousands)

Year	Point Forecast (000s)	95% Confidence Interval Lower	95% Confidence Interval Upper
2024	75,680	66,242	85,118
2025	84,658	75,220	94,096

The linear trend model showed that reported thefts increased over time between 2020 and 2023. The model explained about 89.7% of the variation in theft cases ($R^2 = 0.897$), indicating a strong fit despite the small sample size. The results further showed that thefts increased by an average of about 8.98 million cases per year.

Using the model, reported thefts are forecasted to rise to approximately 75.68 million cases in 2024 and 84.66 million cases in 2025, representing a continued upward trend. The forecasts also suggest increases of about 14.8% by 2024 and 28.5% by 2025 compared to 2023 levels.

Although the model was only marginally significant ($p = 0.053$), the findings still provide useful evidence of a rising trend in theft-related crimes. The wider confidence intervals for 2025 indicate greater uncertainty in longer-term forecasts, which is common in time series analysis.

4.3.5 Forecasting Results for Other Crimes

Simple Exponential Smoothing (SES) was applied to Other Crimes. The model estimates a smoothing parameter α that determines the weight given to recent observations.

Table 4. 14: Simple Exponential Smoothing Model for Other Crimes

Exponential Smoothing Model Parameters

Model			Estimate	SE	t	Sig.
other crimes-Model_1	No Transformation	Alpha (Level)	0.203	0.247	0.82	0.47

Interpretation of Alpha ($\alpha = 0.203$):

The smoothing parameter $\alpha = 0.203$ indicates that approximately 20% weight is given to the most recent observation, while 80% weight is distributed across past observations. This low alpha value confirms that Other Crimes is a stable series with no strong trend, as the model relies more heavily on historical data than recent fluctuations. This aligns with the stationarity assessment conducted in Section 4.3.3, which concluded that Other Crimes fluctuates around a constant mean without a clear directional trend.

Table 4. 15: Model Fit Statistics for Other Crimes

Fit Statistic	Mean
Stationary R-squared	0.653
R-squared	-0.321
RMSE	1667.192
MAPE	2.276
MaxAPE	2.906
MAE	1413.015
MaxAE	1841.307
Normalized BIC	15.184

The model achieved a MAPE of 2.276% , which is considered excellent as it falls well below the 10% threshold (Makridakis et al., 2008). This indicates that the average percentage error between the fitted values and actual historical data is only about 2.28%, demonstrating that the Simple Exponential Smoothing model captures the pattern of Other Crimes very accurately.

The RMSE of 1,667.192 thousand (approximately 1.67 million crimes) represents the average absolute prediction error in the original units. The Stationary R-squared of 0.653 indicates that 65.3% of the variance in the series is explained by the model, which is acceptable for a short time series with only four observations.

4.3.5.2 Forecasted Values for Other Crimes (2024–2025)

Table 4. 16: Forecasted Other Crimes Volumes for 2024 and 2025.

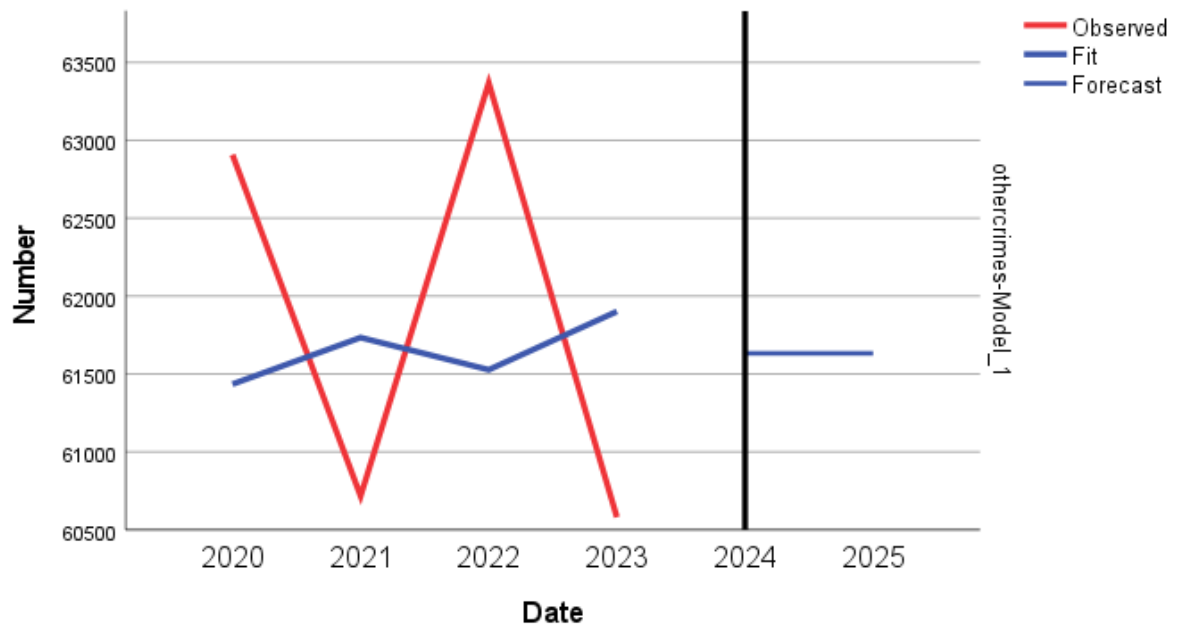
Model		Model	
other crim es- Mod el_1	Fore cast	61633	61633
	UC L	66939	67047
	LCL	56328	56219

The SES model for Other Crimes forecasts that reported volumes will remain relatively stable, with a point forecast of approximately 61,633 thousand (61.63 million crimes) for both 2024 and 2025. This represents a 1.74% increase from the 2023 actual value of 60,581 thousand.

The 95% confidence intervals indicate that the true crime volume in 2024 could reasonably range from 56,328 thousand to 66,939 thousand (approximately 56.3 million to 66.9 million crimes). For 2025, the confidence interval widens slightly to 56,219 thousand to 67,047 thousand.

The relatively narrow confidence intervals (approximately $\pm 8.6\%$ from the point forecast) suggest moderate certainty in the forecast, which is attributable to the stable historical pattern of Other Crimes. The forecast aligns with the findings from Objective One, which showed that Other Crimes fluctuated without a clear trend between 2020 and 2023, peaking in 2022 at 63,369 thousand and reaching a low of 60,581 thousand in 2023.

Figure 4. 6: Other Crimes – Historical Data, Fitted Values, and Forecasts with 95% CI (2020–2025)



The chart above displays the historical observed values (red line), fitted values (blue line), and forecasted values extending to 2025. The flat forecast line beyond 2023 reflects the absence of a detectable trend in the series,

Table 4. 17:Key Findings for Other Crimes

Finding	Explanation
Excellent model fit	MAPE of only 2.276% indicates very accurate forecasting
Stable series	Alpha = 0.203 confirms no trend; model relies on historical data
Flat forecasts	2024 and 2025 forecasts are identical (61,633 thousand)
Moderate certainty	Confidence intervals are relatively narrow ($\pm 8.6\%$)
Slight increase expected	1.74% increase from 2023 to 2024/2025

4.3.6 Forecasting Results for Assaults (Simple Exponential Smoothing)

Model Estimation

Simple Exponential Smoothing (SES) was applied to Assaults due to the stationary nature of the series (as established in Section 4.3.3). The SES model estimates a smoothing parameter α that determines the weight given to recent observations relative to historical values.

Table 4. 18: Simple Exponential Smoothing Model for Assaults – Parameter Estimates

Exponential Smoothing Model Parameters

Model			Estimate	SE	t	Sig.
Assaults-Model_1	No Transformation	Alpha (Level)	0.112	0.325	0.345	0.753

Interpretation of Alpha ($\alpha = 0.112$):

The smoothing parameter $\alpha = 0.112$ is notably low, indicating that approximately 11% weight is given to the most recent observation, while 89% weight is placed on past observations. This very low alpha value confirms that Assaults is a highly stable series with no detectable trend, as the model relies almost entirely on historical averages rather than recent fluctuations. This aligns with the stationarity assessment in Section 4.3.3, which showed Assaults fluctuating around a mean of approximately 30,487 thousand without any clear directional pattern.

Table 4. 19: Model Fit Statistics for Assaults

Fit Statistic	Mean
Stationary R-squared	0.655
R-squared	-0.219
RMSE	1306.763
MAPE	3.104
MaxAPE	6.12
MAE	960.476
MaxAE	1961.059
Normalized BIC	14.697

The model achieved a MAPE of 3.104% , which is considered excellent as it falls well below the 10% threshold (Makridakis et al., 2008). This indicates that the average percentage error between the fitted values and actual historical data is only about 3.10%, demonstrating that the Simple Exponential Smoothing model captures the pattern of Assaults very accurately. Notably, the RMSE for Assaults (1,306.763 thousand) is lower than that for Other Crimes (1,667.192 thousand), suggesting that the Assaults model has slightly better predictive accuracy. The Stationary R-squared of 0.655 indicates that 65.5% of the variance in the series is explained by the model.

Forecasted Values for Assaults (2024–2025)

Table 4. 20: Forecasted Assaults Volumes for 2024 and 2025

Forecast

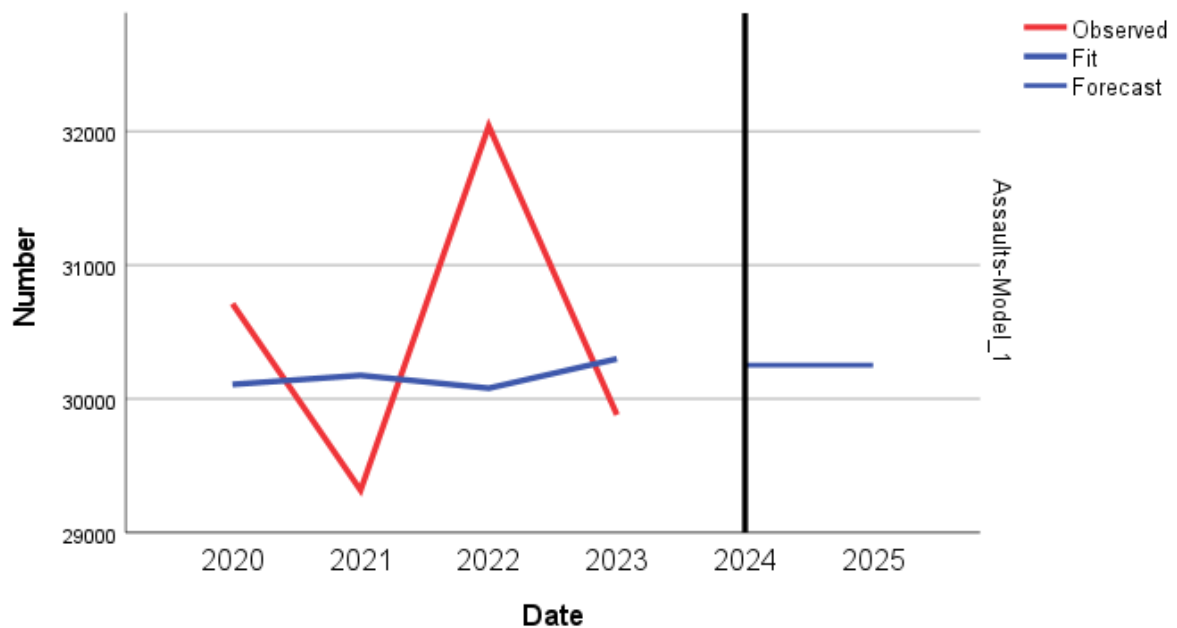
Model		2024	2025
Assaults- Model_1	Forecast	3025 3	30253
	UCL	3441 1	34437
	LCL	2609 4	26068

The SES model forecasts that reported Assault cases will remain relatively stable at approximately 30,253 thousand (30.25 million crimes) in both 2024 and 2025. This represents a slight increase of 1.24% from the 2023 value of 29,881 thousand.

The 95% confidence intervals suggest that the actual number of Assault cases could range from about 26.1 million to 34.4 million crimes in both forecast years. The slightly wider confidence intervals compared to Other Crimes indicate greater uncertainty in the Assaults forecast, which is consistent with the higher MAPE value and the greater historical fluctuations observed in Assault cases.

The forecast is also consistent with findings from Objective One, where Assaults fluctuated between 29,317 thousand and 32,041 thousand from 2020 to 2023 without showing a clear trend. Overall, the forecast suggests that Assault cases are likely to remain close to their historical average of approximately 30,487 thousand.

Figure 4. 7: Assaults – Historical Data, Fitted Values, and Forecasts with 95% CI (2020–2025)



The chart above displays the historical observed values (red line), fitted values (blue line), and forecasted values extending to 2025. The flat forecast line beyond 2023 reflects the absence of a detectable trend in the series.

Table 4. 21: Quick summary table for Assaults

Metric	Value
Model	Simple Exponential Smoothing
Alpha (α)	0.112
MAPE	3.104% (Excellent)
RMSE	1,306.763 thousand
Stationary R-squared	0.655
2024 Forecast	30,253 thousand (30.25 million)
2024 95% CI	26,094 – 34,411 thousand
2025 Forecast	30,253 thousand (30.25 million)
2025 95% CI	26,068 – 34,437 thousand
Projected Change (2023→2025)	1.24%

Table 4. 22: Key findings for Assaults

Findings	Explanation
Excellent model fit	MAPE of 3.104% indicates very accurate forecasting
Highly stable series	Alpha = 0.112 confirms no trend; only 11% weight on recent data
Flat forecasts	2024 and 2025 forecasts are identical (30,253 thousand)
Moderate certainty	Confidence intervals are $\pm 13.7\%$ from point forecast
Slight increase expected	1.24% increase from 2023 to 2024/2025

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results of forecasting reported crime volumes for 2024 and 2025 for the three highest-volume crime categories in Uganda: Thefts, Other Crimes, and Assaults. Using linear trend extrapolation for Thefts (non-stationary) and Simple Exponential Smoothing for Other Crimes and Assaults (stationary), the following key forecasts were obtained:

Table 4. 23: Final Forecast Summary for 2024 and 2025

Crime Category	2024 Forecast (000s)	2025 Forecast (000s)	Direction	Change (2023→2025)
Thefts	75,680	84,658	Increasing	28.50%
Other Crimes	61,633	61,633	Stable	1.74%
Assaults	30,253	30,253	Stable	1.24%

The results showed that Thefts are expected to continue increasing, with forecasts rising from 75,680 thousand in 2024 to 84,658 thousand in 2025, representing a 28.5% increase from 2023.

In contrast, Other Crimes and Assaults are forecasted to remain relatively stable at approximately 61,633 thousand and 30,253 thousand respectively for both years.

The SES models for Other Crimes and Assaults demonstrated excellent forecasting accuracy, while the linear trend model for Thefts explained a large proportion of the variation in theft cases. The findings suggest that theft requires urgent policy attention through stronger prevention and prosecution measures, whereas Other Crimes and Assaults may require continued monitoring and maintenance of current interventions.

However, the forecasts should be interpreted cautiously because they are based on a short time series of only four annual observations. They should therefore be viewed as preliminary projections intended to indicate possible future trends rather than precise predictions.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, discussion of findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study in relation to the research objectives, existing empirical literature, and the underlying theoretical frameworks. The chapter is organized systematically according to the three specific objectives of the study. Furthermore, it highlights the definitive conclusions drawn from the empirical evidence, actionable recommendations arising from the study, limitations encountered during the research process, and suggestions for future academic research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study investigated crime dynamics in Uganda between 2020 and 2023. Under Objective One, the findings revealed a 16.4% increase in overall reported crimes, surging from 195,931 cases to 228,074 cases, heavily driven by property-related thefts. Under Objective Two, the evaluation of prosecution efficiency established a relatively low overall prosecution rate, which averaged 32.2% over the investigation period, indicating significant case attrition. Under Objective Three, statistical forecasting models for 2024 and 2025 projected a continued upward trajectory for theft cases, while general crimes and assault cases are expected to maintain stable volumes.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

5.2.1 Trends in Reported Crimes in Uganda (2020–2023)

The empirical findings of the study revealed that reported crimes in Uganda generally experienced an upward trajectory during the period 2020 to 2023. Overall crime levels rose significantly from 195,931 cases in 2020 to 228,074 cases in 2023, representing a net increase of 16.4%. This expansion was largely driven by property-related crimes, particularly thefts, robberies, and breakings. Notably, theft cases recorded the highest increase among the major crime categories and emerged as the most prevalent offence over the study period.

These findings are highly consistent with previous studies which indicate that property crimes are more common in developing countries due to increasing socio-economic pressures, rapid urbanization, and changing opportunity structures. The findings also strongly support the Routine Activity Theory developed by Cohen and Felson (1979), which posits that crime occurs when motivated offenders encounter suitable targets in the absolute absence of capable guardianship. Increased urbanization, post-pandemic economic hardship, and greater social interaction following the total easing of COVID-19 restrictions created environmental conditions highly favourable for the growth of property crimes in Uganda.

The findings further demonstrated that specific categories, such as sex-related offences and homicides, experienced slight statistical declines during the study period. This pattern is consistent with earlier literature which found that different categories of crime respond heterogeneously to shifting social and macroeconomic conditions. Although terrorism recorded the highest percentage increase, the absolute number of cases remained small, suggesting that it did not substantially contribute to the overall aggregate crime burden in Uganda.

5.2.2 Prosecution Efficiency of Criminal Cases in Uganda

The study established that the overall prosecution rate within the judicial system averaged 32.2% during the period under investigation. This empirical reality implies that only about one-third of reported cases eventually proceeded to full prosecution, indicating the existence of substantial case attrition within the Ugandan criminal justice pipeline.

The results showed considerable variation across individual crime categories. Narcotics and drug-related offences recorded the highest prosecution rates, while corruption and child-related offences registered relatively low prosecution rates. These structural differences may be attributed to variations in the availability of prima facie evidence, the complexity of tracking white-collar investigations, levels of witness cooperation, and institutional capacity constraints.

These findings are in agreement with Forst (2000), who observed that criminal justice systems in developing economies often experience severe systemic inefficiencies arising from limited resources, poor funding, and heavy case loads. Similarly, Felson and Lantz (2016) argued that victim cooperation and stringent evidentiary requirements play a foundational role in determining whether cases proceed to court or are dropped. The relatively low prosecution rates observed in some categories at CoBAMS may therefore reflect structural challenges associated with police investigations and forensic evidence gathering.

The findings also support the theoretical arguments advanced by Becker (1968), who suggested that low levels of law enforcement and low probability of conviction weaken deterrence mechanisms and encourage criminal behaviour. Consequently, improving prosecution efficiency remains an important systemic requirement for strengthening public confidence in the justice system and enhancing long-term crime prevention efforts.

5.2.3 Forecasted Crime Volumes for 2024 and 2025

The forecasting results indicated divergent future patterns for the three highest-volume crime categories in Uganda. Theft cases were projected to continue increasing during 2024 and 2025, while other crimes in general and assault cases were expected to remain relatively stable.

The continued projected increase in theft cases suggests that property crimes are likely to remain a major operational challenge for law enforcement agencies in Uganda. This finding reflects persistent socio-economic difficulties, youth unemployment, and increasing structural opportunities for property-related offences in urban centers. These results are highly consistent with modeling studies by Gorr and Harries (2003), which demonstrated that historical crime patterns provide highly useful baseline information for predicting future criminal behavior.

The stable forecasts obtained for assaults and other general crimes indicate that these specific categories do not exhibit strong, linear long-term trends. The relatively low forecasting errors obtained from the models suggest that the predictions are reasonably reliable, despite the limited number of observations available for the time-series analysis. Overall, the findings demonstrate the high utility of statistical forecasting in supporting proactive policing, strategic resource allocation, and long-term planning within the Ugandan criminal justice system.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the empirical findings and subsequent discussions, the study draws the following conclusions:

1. Crime levels in Uganda increased systematically between 2020 and 2023, with theft emerging as the most dominant, pervasive, and fastest-growing major crime category due to post-lockdown macroeconomic strain.

2. Although prosecution efficiency showed minor fluctuations over the study period, the overall prosecution rate remained low at 32.2%, indicating critical case attrition and a need for judicial investigations reform.
3. Future crime patterns are highly likely to differ across categories. Whereas theft cases are projected to continue an upward linear trajectory, other crimes and assault cases will remain relatively stable, proving that crime prevention policies must prioritize property-related offences.

5.4 Recommendations

In view of the findings obtained, the study proposes the following recommendations:

1. The Uganda Police Force should strengthen measures aimed at preventing property-related crimes, particularly thefts, robberies, and breakings, through increased community policing, intelligence-led gathering, and improved electronic surveillance systems.
2. The Government of Uganda should allocate additional budgetary resources to investigative agencies and the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to actively reduce case backlogs, improve forensic capabilities, and enhance overall prosecution efficiency.
3. Security and justice agencies should actively integrate statistical crime forecasting techniques into their annual policing strategies to allow for proactive resource deployment rather than reactive law enforcement.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The study relied exclusively on secondary data obtained from the Uganda Police Force annual crime reports; consequently, it was limited to officially reported crimes and could not account for the dark figure of unreported criminal incidents. In addition, the use of national aggregate data limited the possibility of analysing deep regional or spatial variations in crime patterns. Finally, the forecasting component was constrained by a short time series consisting of only four annual observations, which restricted the application of more advanced, multi-variable forecasting techniques.

5.6 Areas for Further Research

Future academic studies should consider analysing crime trends at the regional or district level in order to identify geographical and cross-border differences in crime patterns. Further research should also investigate the specific socio-economic factors, such as inflation and youth underemployment, associated with increasing property crimes in Uganda. Lastly, future studies may employ longer time-series datasets and advanced econometric forecasting models to improve prediction accuracy regarding conviction rates and case attrition.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Raw Data

Table A.1: Reported and Prosecuted Cases by Crime Category, Uganda (2020–2023)

Number of Crimes by Category ('000s) 2020 - 2023

Crime Categories	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Reported	Prosecuted	Reported	Prosecuted	Reported	Prosecuted	Reported	Prosecuted
Homicides	4,460	1,269	3,912	1,318	4,043	763	4,248	1,204
Economic Crimes	10,057	2,043	10,966	2,768	13,170	2,648	12,892	3,544
Sex related offences	16,144	6,557	16,373	7,012	14,693	5,461	14,846	6,395
Child related offences	9,225	629	8,681	721	13,489	642	10,741	1,008
Breakings	10,113	4,680	10,148	5,116	13,826	6,327	14,543	7,846
Thefts	41,950	16,421	43,583	19,017	61,508	25,290	65,901	32,559
Robberies	5,302	1,607	5,275	1,696	6,854	1,831	7,772	2,704
Assaults	30,712	6540	29,317	7,522	32,041	6,533	29,881	7,861
Other crimes in general*	62,908	14,359	60,717	16,297	63,369	14,207	60,581	17,824
Terrorism	2	0	21	2	15	3	26	8

Political/ Media Offences	1,033	233	797	151	140	24	125	45
Corruption	32	2	57	3	37	1	32	2
Narcotics/ Drugs	1,714	1,119	1,668	1,101	2,797	1,816	2,113	1,371
Other Laws**	2,279	1,192	4,566	2,284	5,671	2,859	4,373	2,536
Total	195,931	56,651	196,081	65,008	231,653	68,405	228,074	84,907

***Source:** Uganda Police Force*

* Includes human trafficking, abduction, kidnap, arson, malicious damage to property, criminal trespass and attempted murder.

**includes Immigration, NEMA, UWA, LG, Firearms, Fish and Crocodile Acts etc.