

# **Developing and Utilizing Power Resources: The Case of Kenya National Private Security Workers' Union**

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## **Abstract**

Kenya has a large and growing private security industry employing over 450,000 employees in at least 2,000 registered companies, the majority of which are local. The industry has a burgeoning informal economy and is increasingly characterized by subcontracting, outsourcing and market segmentation. A constant in the industry, at least until 2011, was ineffective organization and representation of industry employees. This was manifested in the multiple trade unions in the sector, leadership wrangles, coups in union leadership, and demarcation conflicts in membership organization and recruitment. The sector has, however, experienced a transformation since 2011. The change is largely attributed to development of associational and institutional power by the Kenya National Private Security Workers' Union to the advantage of the union and its members. The key achievements realized are massive growth in union membership from 327 members in 2011 to 45,000 members in 2016; stronger internal cohesion and solidarity; and promotion of unity within the union. The transformation has seen a double framing function by allowing the union to gain more sympathy and relevance from members of the public, while internally presenting it with articulation capabilities to bring together national officials, shop stewards and rank-and-file members. Institutional power was mainly exercised through stratification of the private security industry, signing of framework agreements, and establishment of institutions to promote social dialogue and regulation of the industry. These made the union to emerge as a strong, cohesive and vibrant union capable of turning challenges into opportunities.

Au Kenya, la syndicalisation améliore la sécurité des gardes de sécurité privée, by Ngugi Njoroge  
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Developing and Utilizing Power Resources: The Case of Kenya National Private Security Workers' Union by Jacob Omolo  
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