



GUIDELINES FOR POLICE OFFICERS FOR HANDLING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES:

Introduction

Do you know that?

- Domestic violence can be physical, economic, emotional or sexual
- Domestic violence is a crime and prohibited by the Domestic Violence Act 2010
- The Domestic Violence Act seeks to protect everyone in a domestic setting
- All officers of the Uganda Police Force have a role to protect everyone from domestic violence

All police officers are mandated to enforce the Domestic Violence Act as defined below:

Child and Family Protection Department (Police Headquarters)

- Establish protocols and practices grounded in an understanding of domestic violence that promote victim safety and confidentiality, respect for victim autonomy and offender accountability.
- Supervise work of the CFPU. key things to supervise include;
 - Whether all cases reported to the stations are handled and properly documented.
 - All police officers should handle clients with respect
 - Make appropriate referrals
 - Ensure officers use the Domestic Violence Police handbook to handle domestic violence cases
- Ensure that all officers use the Domestic Violence Act 2010 and Domestic Violence Regulations to handle domestic violence cases and avail copies of the Act to all stations.
- Ensure internal coordination of relevant department for effective management of domestic violence offences
- Ensure that officers in CFPU are knowledgeable and skilled to handle domestic violence cases and determine the need for additional training on handling domestic violence
- Give clear guidelines for handling cases of domestic violence committed by law enforcers.



Unit commanders (RPC, DPC, OC Stations, OC outposts)

Your mandate as a commander requires that all units run smoothly to meet the constitutional mandate of the Uganda Police Force;

- Ensure that officers are trained and make reference to useful materials e.g. Domestic Violence Act 2010, Penal Code Act and Police handbook while handling domestic violence cases.
- Ensure that OC CIIDs and CFPU orient newly posted officers on professional conduct in regard to domestic violence e.g. taking all cases seriously, observing confidentiality, victim safety and avoiding victim blame.
- Learn about the Domestic Violence Act 2010, Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2009 and the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act 2010 and ensure that officers enforce these laws.
- Inform the UPF Political Commissariat about the resource need in the CFPU office e.g. physical space and trained personnel. Make sure that the office is easily accessible to all people seeking services.
- Encourage CFPOs to report back to you about progress of their work. Take their concerns seriously and strive to address them.

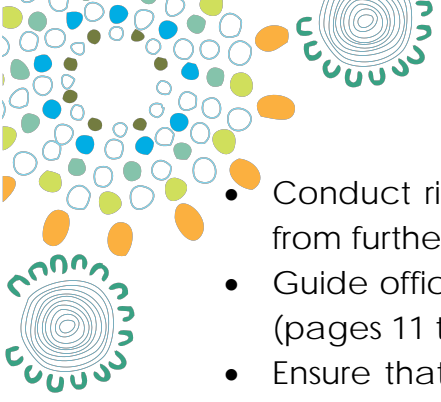
Child and Family Protection Unit/officers

Your mandate is to create an environment in which children and women's rights are recognized, respected and protected.

Law enforcement

- Use the Domestic Violence Act, Penal Code Act and related laws to handle domestic violence cases. Network with other departments within the Police force e.g. CIID and with partners outside the police force e.g. NGOs, Probation Officers, LCs etc.
- Clearly explain to the perpetrator the offence committed, the consequences and next steps e.g. giving bond to the perpetrator, taking them to court etc.
- Ensure victim safety; do not give the victim summons to deliver to the suspect.

Skills

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- Conduct risk assessment with the victim and support clients to stay safe from further violence. Refer to pages 18 and 20 of the Police Handbook.
 - Guide officers on how to effectively interview cases of domestic violence (pages 11 to 17 of the police handbook).
 - Ensure that officers stick to their role of law enforcement: officers should avoid making decisions and choices for the victims of domestic violence.
 - Make appropriate referrals to available services
 - Observe confidentiality; by handling cases in private and avoid gossiping about the cases with other clients and officers.


Ethical issues

- Avoid victim blame: the victim is not to blame since the suspect is responsible for his/her actions.
- Conduct the victim interview in a private setting, away from the suspect and, if possible, other family members.
- Document all cases and ensure that all records are safely kept.

CID officers

Your mandate is to gather evidence in a manner that ensures that victim's right to life free of violence is upheld

- Respond to domestic violence reports in a timely manner and take precaution to ensure victim safety.
- Assess the crime scene for physical evidence (e.g. fingerprints, body fluids, footprints, and/or disrupted objects).
- Ensure all evidence has been collected, properly stored and processed.
- Revisit the crime scene and make diagrams of necessary evidence.
- Issue a PF3 in case there is physical or sexual assault and refer to the nearest government health unit for medical examination.
- Interview the victim in a private setting away from the suspect.
- Record the victim and suspect's statements obtaining rough preliminary information.
- Record any previous incidents of domestic violence known to the officer or reported by the victim or other witnesses.
- Complete a written report, whether or not an arrest is made. If an arrest was not made, explain why.
- Charge the suspect with all crimes arising from the incident as defined in the Domestic Violence Act and arrange for the suspect to appear in court.
- Testify as required throughout court hearings.

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- Decide to arrest solely on state law, and not on other factors (e.g. speculation the victim will not go forward, the arrest may not lead to conviction etc)
 - If offender is not arrested, explain to the victim the reasons for not arresting the suspect. Let the offender know that violence is not acceptable.
 - Explain to both the suspect and the victim the reasons for police bond and remind the suspect that repeating the offence will lead to cancelling of their bond.
 - Stay in contact with the victim and update him/her about progress of the case.

Front Desk Officers

All police officers are mandated by the constitution to enforce laws and your role is critical.

Law enforcement

- Use the Domestic Violence Act to determine domestic violence offences and them to appropriate office
- Take all reports of domestic violence seriously by clearly documenting them and issuing case reference numbers and explain the importance of the reference no.
- Listen to the clients to get preliminary information and refer to the appropriate office.
- Stick to the role of law enforcement and avoid making decisions for people seeking services.
- Display information about domestic violence at the reception area about police's role on handling domestic violence.
- Ensure confidentiality for all cases handled.
- Do not turn away any domestic violence complaint even when you think that it is a minor report