



The Domestic Violence Law; Keeping every man, woman and child in Uganda safe at home!”

A call on Uganda Police Force to curb Gender Based Violence in Uganda through Law enforcement.

Background/Introduction

With the advent of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) of 2010, there has been a consistent increase in the number of reported cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV) in official statistics. According to the Uganda Police Force (UPF) annual crime reports, registered defilement cases have steadily increased from 8,635 in 2008 to 9,598 by 2013.¹ Also, annual domestic violence deaths reported have more than doubled from 137 in 2008 to 315 by 2013, making it the highest reported crime in the country.

The National Gender Based Violence (NGBV) policy earmarks specific responsibilities to the Uganda Police Force. In particular, the force, is responsible for: (i) providing security to GBV victims/survivors; (ii) timely apprehension of perpetrators/suspects; (iii) budget adequately for arresting perpetrators/suspects, investigations and detention; (iv) sensitization of communities on the implications of GBV crimes; (v) provide a toll free hotline for rapid response to GBV cases; (vi) strengthening law enforcement procedures to ensure timely access to justice; (vii) building capacity of staff for GBV programming and implementation and (vi) record and manage statistics of reported GBV cases.

The brief highlights the gaps in GBV implementation of the National Action Plan on GBV by the UPF in implementing its mandate within the DVA. The analysis is based on the Ministry of Internal Affairs 2014/15 Ministerial Policy Statements.

Gaps in UPF implementation of the National Action Plan on GBV

- 1) UPF allocates substantial resources to GBV response through community based policing. About UGX 10.4 Billion was allocated for community policing in 2014/15, but this budget line also includes a number of non-GBV interventions. Community policing tends to put emphasis on other crimes like terrorism and no time is dedicated to GBV prevention. In relation to the National Action Plan on GBV, the UPF appears to be heavily involved in community policing whereas their actual mandate envisaged in the NGBV policy relates more with law enforcement as well as capacity building for all police officers with regard to investigation of cases and apprehension of suspects.
- 2) It is also conceivable that the UPF prefers to engage in raising community awareness but ends up earmarking meagre funds to this particular aspect of GBV prevention. Ultimately, by focusing on community awareness, the UPF neglect institutional issues required for GBV response e.g. establishing the necessary infrastructure and equipment to enable the departments function while addressing GBV issues. For instance, the child and family protection department has only 645 police officers to cover 112 districts, making it the least staffed department of Police. This means that there is not enough manpower to respond to the huge number of cases reported. Indeed, at some police posts or stations, there is no CFPU or officer to handle GBV Cases. Furthermore, even though crimes of GBV

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are sensitive and come with so much shame and stigma, most police stations have non-private interview rooms for survivors/victims of GBV, the victims have to tell their story publically at the counter/ waiting area in full view and input of other persons.

- 3) Some of the key facilities addressing GBV in Uganda are un-known to even police officers. For instance, the UPF's Criminal Intelligence and Investigative Directorate (CIID) created a department to handle sexual and gender violence cases. This department provides Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) for survivors of rape and defilement at the police training school in Kibuli Kampala. Nonetheless, some police stations do not appear to know about its existence and as such do not refer victims of rape/defilement to the clinic.
- 4) Even at this established sexual offences clinics, internal protocols for handling sexual violence cases are non-existent. For instance, there is a perception that perpetrators of rape/defilement must first be arrested, tested for HIV, before victims are offered the requisite services. Such unfriendly procedures further fuel stigmatization towards SGBV survivors.
- 5) The collection and capture of GBV data remains inadequate. For example, the UPF indicate in its annual plan the number of SGBV cases the force will handle during a given financial year. However, when reporting outputs at the end of year, statistics actual SGBV cases handled are not reported. Failure to collect and publish GBV data highlights a lost opportunity to engage on GBV issues using evidence and may be a recipe for neglecting GBV issues.
- 6) Another example in this regard is within the police force, which mentions training of staff in specialized skills and lumps together SGBV training with fraud and money laundering. Adding GBV issues to other issues such as money laundering may be counterproductive. There is often a preference by the police officers to handle money laundering cases rather than GBV cases due to the complexity of GBV cases yet GBV cases affect a far large percentage of the Ugandan population.

Table 3: Analysis of GBV activities in the 2014/2015 budget proposals for Uganda Police Force

List of intervention: Source 2014/2015 budget estimates	Issues addressed in GBV policy	Budget Allocation 2014/15 (UGX millions)	Analysis	Proposed activities	Estimated Cost (UGX millions)
1. Register, investigate, counsel and refer GBV cases	Access to services for survivors				
2. Investigation of SGBV cases	Enforcement of GBV legislation		No specific budget whereas this is a mandate that cannot be undertaken by any other institution.	Conduct 10,000 SGBV investigations.	300
3. Procurement of vehicles to support SGBV	Enhancing access to essential services for survivors	360		Procure 3 vehicles to support SGBV case investigations	390

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List of intervention: Source 2014/2015 budget estimates	Issues addressed in GBV policy	Budget Allocation 2014/15 (UGX millions)	Analysis	Proposed activities	Estimated Cost (UGX millions)
4. Procurement of motor cycles for SGBV investigations	Enhancing access to essential services for survivors			Procure 10 motor cycles to support SGBV case investigations	80
5. Sensitization workshops for police officers	Mainstream GBV issues in legislations, programmes and plans.				
6. Conduct sensitization and training workshops in communities school and home visits	Build capacities of vulnerable groups to protect themselves against GBV.	788	This is an intervention that can be done by institutions other than police.	Undertake community policing; establish a 24 hour help line for DV victims; sensitize communities and offenders on the implications of GBV crimes.	8,320
7. Staff salaries for CFPU	Enhancing access to essential services for survivors	3,096	Assumes that all the current 645 CFPU are Police Constable paid basic salary of UGX 400,000	Double the number of CFPU officers to 1,290	6,192
8. Training of police officers in examination of SGBV cases	Strengthening coordination of public institutions for GBV response.	60		Train at least 100 CFPU officers in counselling and data management of SGBV.	60
9. Training of police officers in counselling and data management of SGBV cases	Building a cohesive system for GBV data	392		Record and manage statistics of reported GBV cases i.e. Print and distribute at least 100,000 PF3A forms. Forms to be distributed by 26 Regional Police Commanders.	548



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10. Procure Radio spot messages	Creating awareness and strengthening sensitization on attitudes towards GBV in the community				
11. Print and distribute PF3A forms	Enhancing access to essential services for survivors/ victims of GBV				
Total		4,696			15,890

Recommendations:

- 1) UPF should elevate the CFPD to a directorate to enable it access and attract a vote on the police budget for better access to both human and financial resources to enable it effectively support and respond to GBV. Internal reforms to support GBV response should be speeded. For example, the proposed upgrading of the Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU) to a directorate should be given urgent consideration. Such a change will have profound effects on GBV programming within the UPF as directorate have powers to participate in budget formulation. In addition, a directorate will help in setting standards regarding the handling of GBV issues e.g. stabling internal protocols
- 2) The UPF should focus on the statutory/expected role of law enforcement to curb GBV and not raising community awareness. In particular, the UPF should build and equip police stations to carry out GBV investigations to facilitate the prosecution of perpetrators/suspects. GBV funding should target enabling officers to perform roles of law enforcement. As such, there is need to strengthen the force to address the capacity challenge. For instance, Police needs to prioritize funds towards internal development e.g. review of curriculum to include GBV related laws/trainings, training of officers, offering office space, motor vehicles and fuel for GBV/SGBV investigations.
- 3) There is also a requirement to streamline procedures and protocols for handling GBV cases.
- 4) There is need to popularize the presence and refer SGBV survivors to the clinic at Kibuli. Designing leaflets describing the type of services of offered at the clinics and posting the material in the CFPU at police station could help in this regard. Apart from the Kibuli clinic, the other referral network points should be popularized to provide options for survivors. Finally, the police stations need to establish linkages with government health units so that they can refer victims for medical care in cases of rape and physical violence as well as filling in of the police form 3.

Endnotes

- 1 Uganda Police Force (2014) Annual Crime and Traffic/ Road Safety Report 2013 (Kampala: Uganda Police Force)

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