

The Policing System in Uganda

The Establishment of the Uganda Police Force

The Uganda Police Force (UPF) was established under section 2 of the Uganda Police Act Cap 303 (Police Act).

The Mandate of the UPF

The mandate of Uganda Police Force as provided in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, and the Police Act, is protection of life and property, prevention and detection of crime, keeping law and order, and maintenance of overall Security and Public Safety in Uganda.

Did you know?

Uganda's formalised police history began with the establishment of the Uganda Armed Constabulary in 1899 by the British colonialists

Composition of Formal Police System in Uganda

The Uganda Police Force is made up of:

- i. The regular Uganda Police Force
- ii. The Uganda Police Reserve consisting of police officers of good character—
 - a) Who have reached retirement age;
 - b) Whose contract with the force has expired; or
 - c) Who, on having terminated their service with the force, have offered to serve on the reserve.
- iii. Special constables as appointed according to section 64 of the Police Act.
- iv. Any other person appointed as a member of the force under the Police Act.

The Legislation Governing the UPF

There are several laws governing the police including the Constitution, the Police Act, and the Uganda Police Standing Orders, among other guiding laws.

The Functions of the UPF

Article 212 of the Constitution states that the functions of the UPF include:

- Protection of life and property
- Preservation of law and order
- Prevention and detection of crime

- Cooperation with the civilian authority and other established security organs

Section 4 of the Police Act states further functions such as:

- Maintenance of security within Uganda
- Enforcement of the laws of the country
- Ensure public safety and order
- Performance of the services of a military force, subject to the empowerment of the police authority as stipulated in section 9 of the Police Act.

Who is in charge of the UPF?

The UPF is lead by the Inspector General of Police (IGP), who is deputised by the Deputy Inspector General of Police (D/IGP).

The IGP has the authority to make standing orders in respect of the force regarding –

- (a) the constitution, organisation, structure, ranks, responsibilities and command in the force;
- (b) the enlistment, training, promotions, transfers and discharge of police officers;
- (c) arms, accoutrements, dress, ceremonies and operations;
- (d) health, housing, equipment, welfare and recreation facilities;
- (e) the force accounts and office practice;
- (f) specialised units, their responsibilities and command;
- (g) any other matters which may promote efficiency and discipline on the part of a police officer in the discharge of his or her duties.

Furthermore, the inspector general may, in consultation with the police authority, make standing orders relating to pay, leave and conditions of service of members of the force and any other matters he or she deems fit.

How many police uniforms are there in Uganda?

There are various police uniforms representing different divisions of the UPF

- Khaki uniform–general police uniform
- Khaki uniform with white sleeves, belt and gaiters –Traffic Police
- Blue camouflage uniform–Field Operations Unit
- Navy Blue uniform–Marine Unit
- Black Uniform–Counter Terrorism Unit
- Brown Camouflage–Anti–Stock Theft Unit



Source: 101 THINGS YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE POLICE But Were Afraid To Ask

Compiled by Human Rights Network Uganda and the National Coalition on Police Accountability and Security Sector Reform

https://humanrightsinitiative.org/programs/aj/police/intl/docs/ea/101_THINGS_YOU_WANTED_TO_KNOW.pdf

Policing in Practice: A short story of Uganda's recent Past and Present.

Despite the more formalised police structure, urban areas in Uganda experience 'multi-choice policing'.¹ Under multi-choice policing, citizens look to different state and non-state policing agencies, for protection. These may include The Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Mines 'police', commercial security companies, the military (refer to Operation Wembley/Violent Crime Crack Unit under Internal Security Organisation) and community-based policing e.g. crime preventers, taxi drivers' associations and even mob justice.

At the lowest level, local councils also play a key role in security. All adults in Uganda automatically become members of their LC1 and directly elect a nine-person committee to administer local affairs. Amongst other things, LC1s have responsibility for the mobilisation of the local community in law and order matters; the gathering of criminal data; the establishment of byelaws that reflect local needs, as well as LC Courts.²

¹ Baker, B. (2006) 'Beyond the state police in urban Uganda and Sierra Leone' *Afrika Spectrum*, 41(1), 55-76 available at https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/10469/ssoar-afrspectrum-2006-1-baker-beyond_the_state_police_in.pdf?sequence=1

² See 1, above.

References

Baker, B. (2006) 'Beyond the state police in urban Uganda and Sierra Leone' *Afrika Spectrum*, 41(1), 55-76 available at https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/10469/ssoar-afrspectrum-2006-1-baker-beyond_the_state_police_in.pdf?sequence=1

Baker, B (2007) 'Conflict and African Police Culture: The Cases of Uganda, Rwanda, Sierra Leone' book chapter, M. O'Neil and M. Marks, (eds.) *Police Occupational Culture: New Debates and Directions*, 2007, Oxford: Elsevier Science available at <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.498.1907&rep=rep1&type=pdf>