




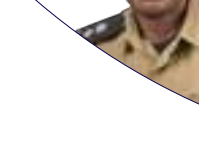





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# Editor's Note

Hello readers,

Our 18th edition of the Police Habari Magazine is here for us all to read and appreciate. It comes with a bang in which we welcome the new IGP and Deputy IGP, who are both career police officers.

**H**.E. Gen. (Rtd) Y.K. Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda recently promoted and appointed a new Inspector General of Police and the Deputy Inspector General of Police in the names of Abasi Byakagaba and James Ocaya respectively. The ceremony that ushered both men of valour to their new postings was glamorous. It was presided over by the Hon. Minister of Internal Affairs, Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Kahinda Otafire and the State Minister of Internal Affairs, Gen. David Muhoozi, here at Police Headquarters Naguru on Tuesday May 29, 2024.

Many other senior officers were appointed and posted to new stations. One of them is SCP Bamunoba Ubaldo, who is the new Chief Political Commissar of the Uganda Police Force. He was formerly head of the Police Marine

Unit. He is also the chairman of the Police Habari Magazine.

It is no secret that the month of June is a special Month for Uganda. Every year on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, Uganda and the globe commemorate the Uganda Martyrs. In 1885-1887, during the reign of Kabaka (King) Mwangi II of Buganda (now part of Uganda), a wave of Christian missionary activity reached the region. Many Ugandans converted to Christianity, much to the chagrin of Kabaka Mwangi II, who perceived Christianity as a threat to his authority.

Kabaka Mwangi II ordered the execution of several Christian converts, including both Catholic and Anglican converts, who refused to renounce their faith. The most brutal event occurred on June 3, 1886, when 23 Anglican and 22 Catholic converts were martyred in Namugongo. They were burned

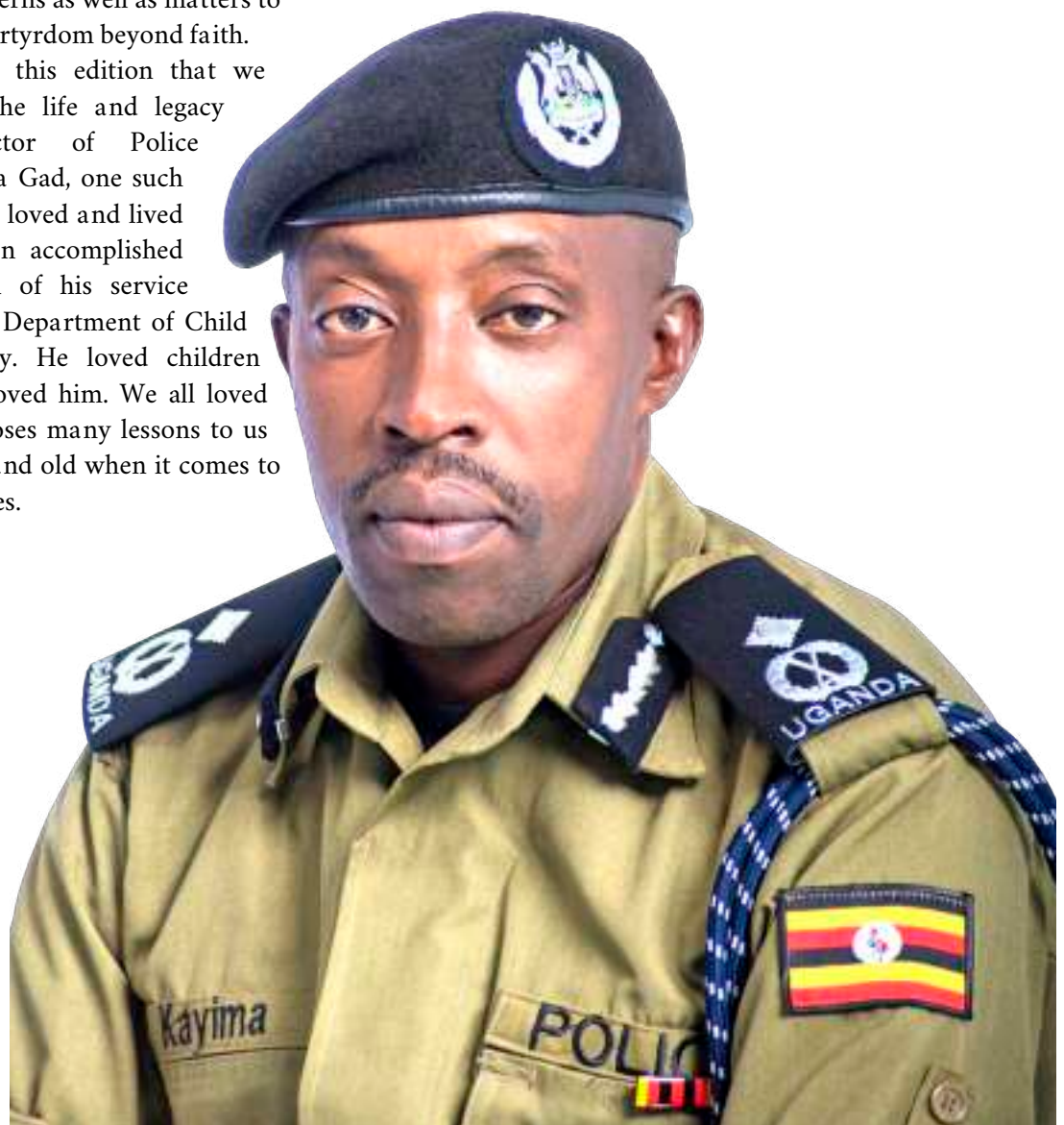
alive at the orders of Kabaka Mwanga II.

Given that background, each year hundreds of thousands of pilgrims embark on a pilgrimage to Namugongo to honour the memory of the martyrs. The pilgrimage typically takes place in the days leading up to June 3, the anniversary of the martyrdom. Pilgrims come from all corners of Uganda, in the region and across the world. We have given this event enough coverage detailing the security and safety concerns as well as matters to do with martyrdom beyond faith.

It is in this edition that we celebrate the life and legacy of Inspector of Police Mfutundida Gad, one such officer that loved and lived a life of an accomplished cop. Much of his service was in the Department of Child and Family. He loved children and they loved him. We all loved Gad. He poses many lessons to us all, young and old when it comes to family issues.

Enjoy the contents and continue to share feedback in that regard. We stand for excellence when it comes to performance. And our Police Habari Magazine is the number one magazine in the country that contains both security and contemporary issues all in one piece.

*ACP Emilian Kayima, psc (U)*  
**Managing Editor**



# Captivating Moments of Police Chiefs: May 28, 2024

## Oath-Taking Ceremony in Review

AIGP Abasi Byakagaba retired from the Uganda Police on May 7, 2024 only to be recalled to the force by His Excellence Gen. (Rtd.) Y.K. Museveni, the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces. He was promoted and appointed to the prestigious rank of IGP barely a week past his retirement. IGP Abasi Byakagaba replaces J.M. Okoth Ochola (Esq), who retired on March 1, 2024. Both Abasi and OMO, as he was fondly called, were squad mates, having joined the Uganda Police Force 36 years ago, in 1988. What a memorable journey!

By Emilian Kayima





**H**is appointment signifies many things, including confidence in the man himself and in the Uganda Police Force to steer clear of the Uganda Police Force's Agenda of protecting and serving humanity.

IGP Abasi Byakagaba is a soft-spoken season officer who respects everyone yet is a tough cop who has handled the toughest assignments with a sense of duty and dedication, yielding immense results. I recall his physical presence back in 2010 when the Al-Shabaab bombed us at Kyadondo Rugby Club and the Ethiopian Village Restaurant, killing 76 innocent people that were watching the final game of the World Cup soccer in South Africa. He never shows signs of discomfort, fatigue, or anger on or off duty. He controls his environment so well that when you meet him, you see a man who is simple and relaxed.

For a couple of years since 2001, the top leadership of the Uganda Police Force was a blended version of both the UPF and UPDF. It started with Gen. Katumba Wamala in 2001, deputised by DIGP. Julius Odwee. Then came Gen Kale Kayihura in 2005–2018 with Mr. Julius Odwee and J.M. Okoth Ochola as his deputies. When J.M. Okoth Ochola was appointed IGP, he was deputised by Gen. Sabiiti Muzeeyi, the late Maj. Gen. Paul Lokech, and finally, Gen. Geoffrey Tumusiime Katsigazi. This cross pollination as Gen. David Muhoozi calls it, has brought to the Uganda Police Force many insights. There are lessons to learn. They are ideas to embrace. We salute them all.

Is it not amazing that only this year, 2024 since 2001 we are seeing a paradigm shift from the norm to having both the Inspector General of Police (IGP) and the Deputy Inspector General of Police

(DIGP) being career police officers? It speaks volumes and can be interpreted differently by different analysts. The newly appointed IGP surely embraces this immense opportunity to rally the force behind a cause, and to deliver as expected or even beyond expectations.

The Deputy Inspector General of Police is James Ocaya. He was enlisted in the UPF back in 1994 as a cadet officer and has been handling a sensitive docket of Research, Planning and Development. He, too, is a soft-spoken person who pays attention to the deeper details of his work. He is a team player that is highly respected by the rank and file.

On May 28, 2024 the two senior cops took over their respective offices. It was a high level function presided over by Maj. Gen (Rd.) Kahinda Otafire, the Minister of Internal Affairs together with his colleague Minister, Gen. David

Muhoozi, who is the State Minister of Internal Affairs. It was a colourful function.

In his usual tone, Gen. Otafiire reminded both men in uniform to put their energies and expertise into serving Uganda. He asked them to treat rank and file as equals, for each of the directors present were potential IGPs. Equally, he advised against harassing the opposition politicians, warning that there is nothing wrong with one belonging to the opposition, for it is constitutional, legal, and legitimate. However, no member of the opposition has a right to disrupt public peace or to riot instead of having a peaceful demonstration regulated by law. “Enforce the law to the letter,” said the Hon. Minister of Internal Affairs, Gen. Kahinda Otafire.

The State Minister of Internal Affairs, the Hon. Gen. David Muhoozi, spoke so passionately about the call to duty by both IGP Abasi Byakagaba and DIGP James

Ocaya and all the other directors that were appointed. He told them all that leadership is all about clear identification of problems and appropriate handling of those problems. “In the Uganda Police, there are many unsung and un-thanked heroes.” He said that indeed, there is no reason we should expect the public to come and thank us. “The public expects nothing less but meticulous service”. He further explained that the IGP and his team have a huge task ahead of them in terms of expectations from our leaders, members of the public, the force, peers, and family. This he said, places heavy responsibilities to leaders. They ought to measure up to the tasks ahead of them.

He asked them to firmly deal with the persistent issues that continue to paint an ugly picture of the force, which include corruption, unprofessional conduct, the welfare of the police and the tendency to get involved in land grabbing. ‘Ensure force discipline through rewards

and sanctions to build a clear force culture and ethos that define us.”

On his part, IGP Abasi Byakagaba said that he was happy and very confident that his entire team of able men and women was going to deliver. He vowed to strengthen the training of the rank and file. He emphasized the need to coach and mentor all officers, address mindset change, and rally everyone to work to ensure safety and security in order to support the socio-economic transformation of this country.

A lot has been achieved, a lot is yet to be achieved. We wish the IGP God’s grace and clear stewardship in delivering on his assigned role of leading the Uganda Police force to deliver that most desired service; protecting life and property, preventing and detecting crime, ensuring law and order and, cooperating with other security agencies, leaders and the population generally. Aluta continua....





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# Policing: Why We Must Excel

My promotion and appointment to head the Directorate of Chieftaincy of Political Commissariat (CPC) in the Uganda Police Force by H.E. President Gen. (Rtd.) Y.K. Museveni is something I least expected at this time of the year in my 20 years of service in the force. I would like to state firmly, that this is indeed a great opportunity to focus the UPF in the a desired direction of professionalism and selfless service among the rank and file. We shall achieve these desired goals through carrying out foundational and career course training, coaching and mentoring of officers, and, a clear system of rewards and sanctions among others.

**By SCP Bamunoba Ubaldo**



**T**he Uganda Police Force has great brains among them. We have laws that guide our operations. We have leaders who trust and support us. We access resources and other needs to galvanise and harness our services. Therefore, we have no choice but to deliver on our sworn constitutional mandate as enshrined in Article 212 of the Constitution.

The five critical departments under my docket shall be supported to perform their duties with a sense of duty and dedication. These include the Department of Child and Family Protection, Information and Publications, Community Affairs, Political Education and Formal Education. These are critical departments that create and supply the oxygen and glue that keep the force together, focused on building a professional



and people-centered police force for a safe and secure society, as our vision states. We can ably do this when we partner with the public to spur the much desired socio-economic transformation in Uganda.

We have a duty to identify existing problems and, solve them, address persistent complaints in the areas of corruption and unprofessional conduct among the rank and file and eradicate them to nurture public trust. This shall be achieved through change of attitude, treating citizens respectfully, responding to incidents timely, and being responsive at all times. That is a role we will jointly play and achieve.

I will put my efforts into building a force that communicates effectively. Through our barazas, we teach, coach, and mentor, but we also learn a lot from the interactions. Ideological orientation is critical in all aspects of policing. We must all

know where this country has come from, where we stand, and where we want to go. That direction must be consciously understood and supported by all.

The rank and file must, for a fact, understand the concepts

of patriotism, nationalism, and socio-economic transformation so that we are all able to rally behind just causes in building our great country to greatness.

**The writer is the Director CPC and Chairman Police Habari Magazine.**



# 6 Years into Retirement:

## ACP (RTD.) Ovuru Presents Great Lessons to the Rank and File

By PC Wilfred Kamusiime



**M**y recollection of ACP (Rtd.) Ovuru Binenga Godence dates back to 2015 when I had just joined the Uganda Police Force as an intern from the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU). His walking style, akin to that of former AC Milan FC player Gianluigi Gattuso, struck me. His well-polished shoes and sharply ironed uniform grew my admiration for serving in the Force. Unfortunately, I did not see him for long. He retired in 2018, leaving a mark on me and many others in and outside the police ranks.

So, on April 29, 2024, at exactly 7.30 PM., I jump on a boda boda to Nile Star Coaches offices along Bombo Road to embark on a long journey to Nebbi district to meet my long-time mentor and role model. Nebbi is 374 kilometers in the north-western part of Uganda.

“You are welcome to my home,” he said to me as he ushered me to his country home.

It is green all over. It is amazing. The well-managed lawn, the prominence of the fruit trees, and the guinea fowl running around his home are a marvel—a sight

to be reckoned with. These two leave a mark on me. After a few pleasantries, we embarked on the conversation that brought me to meet the retired officer.

### Education

ACP (Rtd.) Ovuru was born in 1958 in a Padwot village in Nebbi district. He joined Akanyo Primary School and Kitante Hill School in Kampala, where he studied East African Certificate of Education in 1977, after which he joined the Uganda Police Force in 1979. By the time Ovuru joined the force, Uganda was at war, which finally deposed Iddi Amin Dad. The war cut short his secondary education, and as a result, when opportunity showed up, he joined the police as a recruit, Probationary Police Constable (PPC).

“We were 500 in number. We were all taken for military training in Kabamba. The pass-out ceremony was presided over by the then president, Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa, after which I came back to Police College Naguru, where we were again trained in police laws in 1981,” recalls ACP (Rtd) Ovuru.

### Inspiration

Ovuru’s inspiration to join the Uganda Police Force had roots in his admiration of the Police Band.

“I was inspired by the police band that played for guests at the grand opening ceremony of Pakwach Bridge. *(The bridge was officially opened by three presidents; Dr. Milton Obote of Uganda, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania have been supervised by the father of IGP Emeritus J.M. Okoth-Ochola (Esq.), Eng. Lawrence Okoth-Editor).* In addition, I admired police powers and how they used their powers to handle criminals. Their smartness also struck a chord deep in me,” says the officer.

Once he was confirmed from the probationary rank of PPC to PC, he worked for 12 years as a

courts as a court prosecutor while he was at the rank of Corporal.

After the Sergeant course, Ovuru was sent to pursue the Advanced Junior Command course at PTS Kibuli, where he earned the rank of Assistant Inspector of Police (AIP). From there, he worked at Police Headquarters for five years in the records department. In 1994, he went for a traffic induction course in PTS Kibuli, after which he was transferred to CPS Kampala. From CPS, he was transferred to Old Kampala as OC Traffic. He also served in Rukungiri district as OC Traffic. However, he was reverted to general duties and appointed to Katwe Division following his

Mubende, he was promoted to the rank of Superintendent of Police and sent back to Rukungiri as DPC. He also served in the same capacity in Ssembabule. After Ssembabule, he was nominated for a command training course at PTS Kabalye. After that course, he was transferred to Amuria as a DPC and was promoted to the rank of SSP. After his promotion, he was brought to Wamala Region as the first Regional Police Commander in 2014, where he worked for almost two years, got transferred to Police Headquarters at Naguru, and was assigned the role of barracks administration. In 2015, he was promoted to the rank of



police constable (PC). After that, he was sent for a corporal course at PTS Kibuli. The course equipped him with leadership skills. After that, he went on a sergeant course. By then, a Sergeant would go for prosecution in court because one would have learned and would work hard to ensure that criminals were convicted. ACP (Rtd.) Ovuru worked in Lugazi and Kayunga

promotion to the rank of Inspector. ACP (Rtd.) Ovuru was in Katwe for almost 12 years. He was then transferred to Kawempe, where he worked for two years. He was promoted to the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP). Following this appointment, ACP (Rtd.) Ovuru was sent to Mubende as OC Station and later assumed the prestigious office of District Police Commander (DPC). From

ACP and happily retired in 2018, having clocked the mandatory age of retirement.

It is on this note that he proudly states with a smile on his face: “I retired in 2018 after serving for 40 years with a clean service record. I was never charged or accused of any criminal or disciplinary offense during my 40 years of service to the Uganda Police,” says ACP Ovuru.

### A message to the rank and file:

“You must train. You must read law books to be abreast with the laws that you enforce every day. Someone must be promoted after taking a course because it’s during training that one reads and fully understands the law and the wisdom in those books. It also improves on discipline in the force. For example, how will you learn about traffic duties if you don’t take a course? I therefore highly

### Smartness & Discipline

“When we were in the police college, there were certain trainings that took place that went beyond police duties. For example, we were trained that a police officer must be smart 24 hours a day, even in bed. The barracks administration used to check our bedding during inspection routines. Turnout was emphasised, as was general smartness at all times. We were trained on how to polish shoes. Mark you, we polish our shoes, not

maintained? So when I am free on Saturday after doing my other work, I sit and polish, shine all pairs of my shoes, and leave them readily available for use when I will need them. I also iron my clothes accordingly. Don’t you see they are ironed? This becomes a culture that defines you beyond your policing duties,” says the retired officer.

### Regulating drinking

There were regulations on drinking, not necessarily prohibiting it but



recommend that police libraries be opened in all police schools and regions to enable officers to read and acquaint themselves with the wealth of knowledge in books, learning about various laws and operations of the police,” says ACP Ovuru.

using shoe polish, but using shoe polish and water to do it best. So when you have a free weekend, you embark on cleaning your environment and polishing your shoes neatly.

Then he looked me in the eye and said, “Aren’t you seeing my compound slashed and well

putting measures in place to protect the image of the police and the officers. Drinking in slam areas for police officers was prohibited.

“It is indiscipline; you will be charged. You are protected against mixing with criminal elements there, getting drunk and compromising standards,

divulging unnecessary information to members of the public that should never access it and many other aspects of policing.”

### Retired but not tired

ACP (Rtd.) Ovuru says that he is happily and honourably retired but is not tired.

“I have the knowledge gained over time. I retired as a senior officer, and I should never let down the name of the Uganda Police Force that I cherish. Many people, including retired police officers, come here to get help when working on their retirement packages. I help them compile correspondences using my old experience as a records officer. When they come here, we sit, and compile, and take them to Naguru and get their package. I receive about 10 police officers every month seeking help from me, something I do at no cost. I feel proud to be an extension of the institution even in retirement.”

ACP Ovuru argues that being a police officer implies that you are more enlightened than other ordinary citizens because police training and work expose you to superior knowledge than your counterpart who never got the opportunity to be police officers. Being a police officer equally helps you understand issues of crime better, and you easily acquire leadership skills and can therefore be a resourceful person in your community beyond police circles.

The retired officer encourages serving officers to retire happily and honourably when the time comes. But this requires planning and connecting with one’s family while still active. He states that officers have to take leave, learn to delegate duties, work and plan where they will retire from, and

keep active and productive in retirement.

“We must build capacity for sustainable living beyond our days of work. Self-reliance is very important. Government pays you pension until you die. This keeps you going. And then you can inspire citizens into loving and respecting the profession of the police because of how we carry ourselves especially in retirement. We must never embarrass ourselves, in life and death as police officers. Unfortunately, some do not plan their retirement, and on the day of retirement, some die and have nowhere to bury them!” He argues that something to this effect must be done individually and collectively.

### Lesson

ACP (Rtd.) Ovuru argues that training and becoming a police officer should translate into pride because they are mainly exposed to superior knowledge toward life, crime, the acquisition of leadership skills, and resilience to withstand all circumstances.”

### Challenges

“The resource basket for the country, and the budget of the police all constrain police officers from doing their work meticulously well. Transport is still a big challenge despite the remarkable improvements in the growth of the police fleet and budget. There is a long way to go. Some detectives cannot follow up on a case with the last person deep in our villages here. They are constrained!”

There is also the challenge of many young, unemployed youth who are idle and reckless, and are ready candidates for criminal activities. These are the policing challenges that persist. He further argues that officers with serious medical challenges need to be prepared, eventually relieved of their duties, and replaced with strong and ready-to-serve officers.

Officer Ovuru appreciates the fact that policing today is steadily going scientific but equally argues that it is still a challenge as offices are computerised, like the police post in his area. Training of personnel should also be done very



fast because the globe is going ICT. The transition from the manual system to the computerized system is not yet smooth. But he acknowledges that it is a great move that might make record-keeping systems easier and more efficient.

### Work and family balance

He states that this is very important. It speaks a lot about a police officer's life and how he performs. The stability of the family is the pivot around which meaningful living stems.

"I have six children; by then we used to produce many, but now you produce less because of the economy, as you see. They are all educated; some are working; only one is not working, but the rest are working. So catering for them with the little money one earns, which includes paying their school fees, feeding them, taking care of their medical needs, etc., requires discipline, sacrifice, and balance. So, a family where father and mother are strongly focused on raising their children even with meagre resources shall thrive where the rich and powerful fail. He shares his wise counsel; "Do not take a girl for a wife from the streets... as this will make life harder for you. Love and build trust with your family. I encourage police officers to love their spouses and work toward developing themselves together."

### A message to the young generation

ACP Ovuru urges young people to love their work.

"They should love their country. You should not focus on working for personal selfish interests but

for the peace and stability of your country. My observation is that most people especially the young people are not working toward the motto of the nation. They are thinking of themselves: thinking of when they will buy a car, build a posh house, and have a lavish wedding.

My advice to them is that they should love their work, love each other, and perform official duties with a sense of duty and dedication. Money should not come first in your program of duty. Service should. When handling members of the public, all officers should be interested in solving community problems so that they create peace and stability where they themselves will thrive and prosper.

Our failure to be problem solvers puts us at loggerheads with the public we serve. I have seen it in the villages here where some police officers take money from people, who in turn develop a hatred for them and do not even bother to report cases that take place in their localities.

I have not stopped speaking to police officers about these things, since I retired. I feel that I am part and parcel of the police fraternity till death. I also empower members of the public to continue reporting cases to the police and encourage them to report such rogue officers to the commanders, like the DPC or the RPC.

I have continuously encouraged the police in my area to be warm and receptive to avoid the gap that exists between us and the public we serve.

### Life in retirement

Truly, Ovuru enjoys his retirement and speaks with authority and pride when discussing the subjects of policing and retirement. He

confided in me that he was enjoying every moment of his retirement. He is a strong advocate of an opportunity for retired officers to have direct interaction with serving officers to bridge a gap that exists and provide an avenue for meaningful interaction, so that they are able to carry out coaching and mentoring. In this case, the retired officers would easily help their colleagues plan and prepare for a meaningful life in retirement, as he is doing.

"If such an opportunity was there, we would go and give lectures to the officers due for retirement in preparation for a smooth transition and a meaningful life in retirement. Look, I am here in Nebbi working. My retirement plan was to plant fruit trees, and earn money from. And here there are many mangoes, as you can see. I fetch money from them. There are also guinea fowls that bring in money. I also do, honey. I have many beehives, harvest honey, package it, and sell it with a lot of comfort. A 20 litre can fetches me UGX. 600,000. And mark you, only two beehives can mix 20 liters. See, if you have 20 or 30 beehives, which are easy to get, you will make clean money happily. Here, I have over 50 beehives. It gives me a lot of comfort.

Officer Ovuru argues that there is more money in the village than in towns, given his live example of having different streams of income as explained above.

Many retired officers need to be paid on time. The ones in charge of pensions ought to support these retired officers to lessen their problems. Surely, DPCs and RPCs must find a way to help them. Unfortunately, some are mentally derailed and need emotional, financial, and psychological support.



**Mrs. Agnes Kabwisho Mbabazi**  
Board Chairperson



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# Faith and Health:

## Why Pilgrims Should Take Care

The journey to Namugongo, Uganda, for pilgrims can be physically and emotionally demanding, especially for those who walk long distances from various parts of the country and beyond.

By SP. Dr. Okwadi J.M.Tukei, PhD



Despite the hardships, many pilgrims find strength and solidarity in the shared experience, deepening their connection to their religious beliefs and fellow pilgrims.

The annual pilgrimage to Namugongo is not only a religious observance but also a cultural and national event, uniting Ugandans of different backgrounds in a shared expression of faith, history, and heritage. It serves as a powerful reminder of the enduring legacy of the Ugandan martyrs and their inspirational example of courage, faith, and sacrifice. This obviously has several benefits for both the country and its citizens. Those are:

### Cultural Preservation

The pilgrimage to Namugongo serves as a vital means of preserving Uganda's cultural and religious heritage. It honours the memory of the Ugandan martyrs and commemorates a significant chapter in the country's history. By participating in the pilgrimage,

Ugandans reaffirm their connection to their cultural and religious roots, passing down traditions and values to future generations.

### Spiritual Renewal

It is a deeply spiritual experience that provides an opportunity for reflection, prayer, and renewal of faith. The journey deepens spiritual connection, allows pilgrims to seek forgiveness, and strengthens their commitment to their religious beliefs.

### Promotion of Unity and Tolerance

The pilgrimage to Namugongo brings together Ugandans from diverse backgrounds, regions, and religious denominations in a spirit of unity and tolerance. Regardless of their differences, pilgrims share a common purpose in honouring the martyrs and celebrating their faith. It promotes mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation

Physically, the journey can lead to exhaustion, blisters, muscle pains, and other physical discomforts.

Emotionally, pilgrims may experience a mix of excitement, spiritual nourishment and fulfillment, and challenges as they navigate the long journey, often reflecting on their faith and personal beliefs.



among many people in and outside the country.

### Boost to Tourism and Economy

The event attracts thousands of visitors, both domestic and international, to Uganda. This influx of pilgrims stimulates the local economy, benefiting businesses such as hotels, restaurants, transportation services, and souvenir shops in the vicinity of Namugongo. Additionally, the pilgrimage contributes to the promotion of religious tourism in Uganda, displaying the country's cultural and historical heritage to visitors from around the world.

### Education and Awareness

The pilgrimage to Namugongo provides an educational opportunity for Ugandans to learn about their history, culture, and religious traditions. Through religious ceremonies, processions, and storytelling, pilgrims gain a deeper understanding of the sacrifices made by the martyrs and the significance of their martyrdom. The pilgrimage also raises awareness about religious freedom, tolerance, and human rights, encouraging dialogue and discussion on these important issues within Ugandan society.

Worth nothing about the pilgrimage lies in the physical and emotional spheres of our lives, as outlined here below:

### Physical Strain and Injury

Walking long distances can put significant strain on the body, leading to injuries such as blisters, shin splints, muscle strains, and joint pain. Overuse injuries, especially without proper rest and

recovery, are common among long-distance walkers.

### Fatigue and Exhaustion

Walking for extended periods can lead to fatigue and exhaustion, particularly if adequate rest and nutrition are not maintained. Pushing the body beyond its limits can result in burnout and diminished performance.

### Time and Commitment:

Long-distance walking requires a considerable time commitment, often spanning days, weeks, or even months for extensive journeys. This can be challenging for individuals with busy schedules or other commitments.

### Logistical Challenges

Planning and organizing long-distance walks involve logistical challenges such as route planning, accommodation, food, and transportation. Navigating unfamiliar terrain, weather conditions, and unforeseen circumstances can add complexity to the journey.

### Isolation and Loneliness

Walking long distances, especially solo or in remote areas, can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness. Lack of social interaction and support networks may influence mental well-being, requiring resilience and coping strategies.

### Weather and Environmental Factors

Long-distance walkers are exposed to various weather conditions and environmental factors, including extreme temperatures, rain, wind, and terrain challenges. These factors can pose risks to safety,

health, and overall comfort during the journey.

Despite these disadvantages, many individuals find the rewards of long-distance walking far outweigh the challenges, making it a fulfilling and transformative experience.

Overall, the annual pilgrimage to Namugongo is a cherished tradition that enriches the lives of Ugandans, fosters national pride, and promotes spiritual, cultural, and economic development in the country.

In conclusion, long-distance walking for pilgrimage, such as the journey to Namugongo in Uganda, offers a multitude of benefits for both individuals and communities. Physically, it promotes health and wellness, enhancing cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength, and endurance. Mentally, it provides an opportunity for reflection, spiritual renewal, and personal growth, fostering resilience, determination, and self-discovery. Culturally and socially, pilgrimage walks promote unity, tolerance, and community cohesion, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds in a shared expression of faith and heritage. Additionally, pilgrimage walks contribute to the preservation of cultural and religious traditions, stimulate local economies through tourism, and raise awareness about important social issues. Overall, the benefits of long-distance walking for pilgrimage extend beyond the physical journey, enriching the lives of pilgrims and leaving a lasting impact on both individuals and societies.

**The writer is the Head of Research, Innovation, & Policy at the Directorate of Police Health Services.**

# Road Safety Tips for Pilgrims

Martyrs' day celebrations at Namugongo every June 3, attract mammoth crowds from all walks of life. While many are nationals from within, a sizeable number of pilgrims have a regional, continental, and global character. Those from within and in the region predominantly walk long distances as an expression of deep faith.

By SP Justine Opus



**M**any pilgrims move as organised teams of faithful Christians on a mission. Oftentimes, they have resting points along the way. They pray, sing, and boost each other's morale as they trek the long routes. There are great memories of such group activities. Equally, there are dangers. We rise to shed light on the tips each of us can take to keep safe and secure as we walk to Namugongo. All that shall walk should prioritise safety.

### Plan your route in advance

Before setting off on your journey, take time to understand the route you will be taking and familiarise yourself with any potential hazards or obstacles along the way. It is important to know your surroundings at all times. Pay attention to traffic flow, bearing

in mind that there are many road users who behave differently. It is also important to stay alert in order to avoid distractions such as using your phone or listening to music that can lead you into trouble.

### Use a footway or footpath if available

If such is not available, it is advisable that we walk while facing oncoming traffic. Members of the group must stay together and maintain a considerable and consistent pace. This will help to ensure that everyone in the group stays safe and that no one gets left behind. It is also important to communicate with your colleagues on matters of safety in view of possible hazards you possibly encounter. Walking against traffic also makes you more visible to drivers, reducing the risk of accidents.



### Increase visibility by wearing brighter clothing or reflective jackets

Motorists often ram into pedestrians and injure or kill them because they are hard to spot, especially on our rural roads. When night falls, use reflective strips, LED lights, and flashlights to make sure you are extra visible to all motorists. It is critical to wear bright and reflective clothing, especially when walking in low light conditions or at night. This will help to ensure that you are easily seen by all motorists and other road users thereby reducing the risk of accidents or collisions.

### When crossing roads, use your eyes cautiously

At this point, it is imperative that you look both ways; that is, look left, and then right, and then left again and ensure that you use designated crosswalks when crossing the road. Crossing at designated crosswalks ensures that you are crossing at a safer and more visible location,

reducing the risk of being hit by a moving vehicle. Make eye contact with drivers before stepping onto the road. Some motorists are absent minded or are distracted by many things around them. Beware!

### Avoid fainting

It is important to stay hydrated. Take enough water. Take breaks to regain energy and momentum as you walk long distances. Carry plenty of water or fluids to stay hydrated. Drink the water to avoid fatigue and dehydration. It is also important to listen to your body speak to you.

### Be mindful of your surroundings

It is important to be mindful of your surroundings and to trust your instincts at all times. If you feel unsafe or uncomfortable in a certain area, it is important to trust your gut and find an alternative route. Heard of the saying, "Better safe than sorry?"

### Be Courteous and considerate

It is also important to be courteous and respectful to all road users. The rule of thumb here is; follow traffic laws, yielding to vehicles when necessary, and be mindful of the smaller souls on the road, which include pedestrians and cyclists who suffer most from our recklessness. By being responsible and considerate on the road, you help in create a safer environment for everyone.

Finally, as we gear up to celebrate Martyrs' Day on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, it is important to the importance of safety, and the direct role each of us should play to guarantee the same to all road users.

Aluta Continua....

**The writer is the Deputy Traffic and Road Safety Commander at Kampala Metropolitan Police.**

# Uganda Police Force Ready to Secure Martyrs' Day Celebrations

Between January 31, 1885 and January 27, 1887, the Uganda Police Force would have commenced a serious investigation of homicide and mass killings where 45 young men lost their lives—22 Catholics and 23 Anglicans at the hands of Kabaka Mwanga and his hangmen, better known as “*abambowa*”. That did not happen. The Uganda Police Force was not in existence!

## SSP Donald Muhwezi



It took the Catholic Church 44 years to canonise the Uganda martyrs. Every year, thousands of Ugandans embark on a pilgrimage to Namugongo to honour the memory of the martyrs. The pilgrimage typically takes place in the days leading up to June 3, the anniversary of the martyrdom. They come from all corners of Uganda, as well as from neighbouring countries, to participate in the solemn and sacred event.

For this year, 2024, Martyrs day celebrations are just around the corner. And security is alert and ready to deliver the day very safely.

Early planning and preparation meetings were held. Ground appreciation and needs assessment done and dry drills in form of simulation exercises were carried out in time. Inter-Agency cooperation is the way to go. All

territorial commanders are ready to deliver the day peacefully and successfully.

The security sector bends backwards to serve all faithful Christians and friends of the church without discrimination. We expect total cooperation from all citizens and visitors. It should be total adherence to the guidelines issued. Expect some traffic diversions, sweeping of some places just in case of any threats and crowd control measures effected to guarantee success at the function of the Uganda Martyrs.

The lake at the Catholic shrine will also be secured by Uganda Police Marines. CFPU should establish tents for missing children and interestingly, for missing adults as well. Sometimes the long walk can make adults get disoriented, and due to the number of people, one may get detached from those



they came with especially from the rural side. The police should also be ready on how to handle those who abuse alcohol and become a menace to other pilgrims. The country has not yet completely cleared itself of COVID 19 even though majority were immunized, whereas masks are not mandatory now, public should be encouraged to wear them for their own protection from even other airily spread diseases.

High level security is a guarantee. Our security presence is visibly present and every district security officer led by the police take lead to safeguard the pilgrims and hand them over to the next territorial command, working hand in hand with the church, stewards, and members of the public.

The Uganda police Force Department of Traffic and Road Safety will be active all through

ever. Additionally, the Directorate of Fire and Rescue Services will be strategically positioned to respond to any emergency situations. The other teams including the counter terrorism, intelligence, and investigation officers, shall always be keeping watch both covertly and overtly.

On various media platforms, our police spokespersons and Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) shall be available to provide necessary information and guidance for all citizens and visitors pilgrims or non-pilgrims. "Safety First" is our strategy.

Therefore, we expect the public to fully cooperate with security officers around them, listen to and adhere to the guidelines given by wardens, report any suspicious items or character to the security personnel around them, and, take note to preserve and protect their

valuables like travel documents, national IDs, credit cards, and cash, to mention but three.

The briefing to the rank and file is clear: support all that deserve our support and create a healthy environment in which this year's pilgrimage will stand out as the best ever. Be smart in body and mind. Hospitality is a virtue we ought to nurture. Be professional, firm and fair at all times while on duty. The readiness to work long hours is a given among security personnel.

This event is yet another opportunity for the Uganda Police force to exhibit our proficiency in serving Motherland and, which will us renew our social contract and commitment.

**The writer is the Community Liaison Officer for Kampala Metropolitan Police**

# Good Bye Comrade IP Mfitundinda Gad Hashaka

Inspector of Police, Mfitundinda Gad Hashaka was a dedicated and compassionate police officer who touched many lives. He passed away on April 22nd 2024, in St. Francis Hospital Nsambya. Born in 1971, Gad began his journey with the Uganda Police Force in 1990 after completing his senior four years of education.

By SP Ogweng Francis

He initially served at Mobile Police Patrol Unit (MPPU), which that has since metamorphosed into Field Force Unit (FFU). Thereafter, he was posted to the Child and Family Protection Department. Here, he passionately championed the rights of women and children, his dedication transcending mere duty. His commitment to his duty extended far beyond mere obligation; he was a beacon of hope, having rescued numerous abandoned children and reunited countless broken families.

Gad's impact reverberated throughout the community as he diligently worked to build the capacity of fellow police officers, local council leaders, and community members throughout the country. His training sessions imparted vital knowledge and instilled a sense of duty and empathy in those he trained and mentored. Beyond his professional endeavours, Gad was a pillar of



strength and a source of wisdom to many. As a child and family counsellor, coach and mentor, he guided countless young officers and community members, embodying the values of integrity and compassion.

A staunch advocate for gender equality, Gad proudly championed the “*HeForShe*” movement and actively participated in “*Walk a Mile in Her Shoe*” campaigns, striving to raise awareness about issues affecting women and girls.

Gad’s deep faith and scholarly knowledge of the Bible enriched his life and inspired those around him. His unwavering passion for his work, coupled with his infectious humour, brought joy and camaraderie not only to the Child and Family Protection Department but to the entire force.

The loss of Inspector Mfitundinda Gad is deeply felt within the police department and the wider community. His invaluable contributions to the force and his unwavering dedication to serving others leave an indelible mark on all those that knew him.

In the latter years of his distinguished service, Gad was attached to the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), where he continued his noble work as a youth mobiliser and an unwavering advocate for the rights of children and women. Throughout his tenure, he remained steadfast in his commitment to upholding integrity and justice, earning a reputation as an incorruptible officer.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family, his dear wife Mama Asumpta Nalwoga Mfitundinda, and his children Ayebare Reagan, Uwera



Racheal, Hashaka Isaac and Irankunda Praise. As his name Mfitundida suggests that he has a protector, we pray that the Almighty God, his protector grant him eternal life and continue to protect and comfort the family in his physical absence. Inspector Mfitundinda Gad’s legacy of compassion, service, and unwavering commitment to justice will forever be cherished and remembered. He was laid to rest in his home district of Kanungu, Nyanga Sub County on 25 April, 2024. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

#### At the Funeral, his Children Eulogised their Dad

The four children stood to eulogise their dad. They were proud of him. From what they said, it was obvious that what Comrade Gad did for the world in his dedicated duty to serve humanity, he also did it to his family, something we feel proud of. The four children are; Reagan, Racheal, Isaac and Praise. We run their eulogy verbatim:

“We want to begin by thanking you all for coming to honor the life of our dad that he has lived. Those who have come from far and near,

family and friends we appreciate your presence and joining us as we put him to rest.

Our dad was a very good person; honest, kind, loving, and very joyful. He raised us into the people we are right now, and we are grateful for how we have turned out and till God decided to call him home.

Our dad was a real fighter. Those who have seen us through this journey witnessed him fight for his life for the longest time.

We want to thank our mom who has not left his side since day one even through the worst moments. She was our pillar as a family when our dad was at his lowest. She held the family together.

We also want to take this opportunity to thank our church which has not backed down at any opportunity and has always strengthened us. Dad was a very joyful person and brought happiness to our family.

Dad taught us to fear God. He was always happy and witty. We will always love you. Dad may your soul rest in peace, and, may the heavens receive you with open arms. We will always uphold your legacy and keep your memories alive.”

# Nurturing Peace in Karamoja Sub Region

From 2010 up to 2019, there was relative peace in the Karamoja sub region thanks to the previous forceful disarmament exercise that ended in 2010. That led to the recovery of over 42,000 guns.

By SCP Elias Kassirabo

However, in the first half of the year 2020 some wrong elements among the Karacunas organised themselves, acquired guns from the neighbouring Kenya and South Sudan and started to terrorise the region. Reports of livestock raids and thefts started surfacing between the Bokora and Matheniko, then the Jie and Dodoth. Areas of South Karamoja, Nakapiripirit, Amudat, and Nabilatuk remained peaceful until the end of 2020.

At the dawn of 2021, it was chaotic again. The entire sub region was filled with fear as cattle rustling took center stage. Almost all communities got involved in the vice, raiding and stealing livestock from each other and occasioning harm or even death at some point in time.

There were notable mass raids in Lotome and Lopeei (Kailikong) because of their proximity to the border areas. These raids were masterminded by Acucu, a known ruthless warrior of the time. Acucu

started making alliances with other warriors from Jie, Dodoth, Bokora, and Pian to conduct mass raids, killings, house breakings, and other havoc that led to a sporadic outburst of criminality in Karamoja. Insecurity was at its highest point.

There was public outcry. Leaders in the region were deeply concerned. They resolved to implore the Government of Uganda to re-launch another set of disarmament exercises to contain the situation and ensure that there is sanity in the Karamoja sub region. As a result, an operation code named *Usalama Kwa Wote* was launched on July 17, 2021. Notable among the reasons that made this operation successful and Karamoja peaceful are the following:

## Inter-Agency Cooperation and Building Synergies

Joint security forces have been conducting cordon and search operations aimed at recovering illegally acquired firearms since we

set foot on ground. They trucked and recovered raided livestock. To date, over 42,000 raided livestock have recovered since the operation started on July 17th, 2021

## Presidential amnesty

Karamojong warriors who voluntarily surrender their illegal firearms to security forces are not prosecuted. This approach has yielded good results since May 2023, when the president first met Karacunas at State House Entebbe to encourage them to return guns. To date, 196 guns have been recovered using this approach.

## Regulating lives stock markets, routes and establishments of verification centres

These are mainly meant to fight commercial raids, which have taken a high toll. We closed all illegal markets and allowed only 24 registered markets to be operational with security deployments to ensure that any



cow or goat or sheep brought to the market had letters written by village LC1 chairman, sellers have national IDs etc.

Security forces ensure that cattle traders have the required documents while moving with livestock right from the markets up to the final destination.

We established three (3) livestock verification centres at some designated points to confirm all livestock loaded on the trucks have documents, one by one. Our verification centres are in Nadunget, Chepsikunya, and Kapedo south.

To date 45736 cows and 40291 goats and sheep have passed through our verification centres since their establishment, and 2,576 livestock have been recovered through our established checkpoints and snap checks.

### Security Mobilisation together with Political leaders

A number of security mobilisation together with political leaders have been ongoing both north and south Karamoja, including face to face meetings to encourage Karacunas to bring illegal firearms. This was intended to create among awareness to the warriors about presidential amnesty.

### Incentives to Karacunas and other vulnerable groups

The Karimojong warriors who returned guns to the Government voluntarily were issued Disarmament certificates and registered by District Security Committees to receive iron sheets from OPM.

### Contribution of PDM

Many warriors in the villages received money from the government (PDM). Many of the active warriors embarked on farming and businesses scaling down raids.

### Presidential executive Order No.3 of 2023

This order barred Turkana warriors from northern Kenya from entering to Uganda while armed.

The infiltration of the Turkana Community into Karamoja in search of pasture and water facilitated the proliferation of small arms and light weapons since most of them entered while armed with guns in disguise of protecting their live stock but later ended up committing criminalities.

This armed groups were flashed out of Uganda by joint security forces and denied entry into the country. Their absence in Uganda has enabled relative peace.

### Joint operations on environmental degradation

This was also clearly spelt out in the presidential executive order No.3 of 2023. No burning of charcoal for commercial use.

Some cattle rustlers disguised themselves as charcoal burners during the day and carried out raids at night.

Joint security forces, together with the NFA, conducted a number of operations to impound sacks of charcoal all over Karamoja and impounded others at the established checkpoints.

To date, 6,420 bags have been impounded, and 4,179 were disposed of through a court order.

### Operations against illicit waragi.

It is both a health and security threat. Whereas it was an open commodity in the past, it is now a black market commodity. Operation has made waragi a less demanded item since it is unaffordable. People have resorted to their local brew, which is affordable and not health threatening.

Waragi was used by cattle rustlers false confidence in them during the execution of raids.

To date 7,263 jerricans have been impounded, and 6,000 have been disposed of through court order.

### Ideological orientation of some leaders through leadership training at Kawaweta and kyankwanzi

This particular training enhanced leadership skills.

Chairmen LVs, LC3, and councillors in Karamoja were all taken for ideological training at Oliver Tambo Leadership Institute in Kawaweta. Most of them came as change agents and promised to talk to their communities about the dangers of raids.

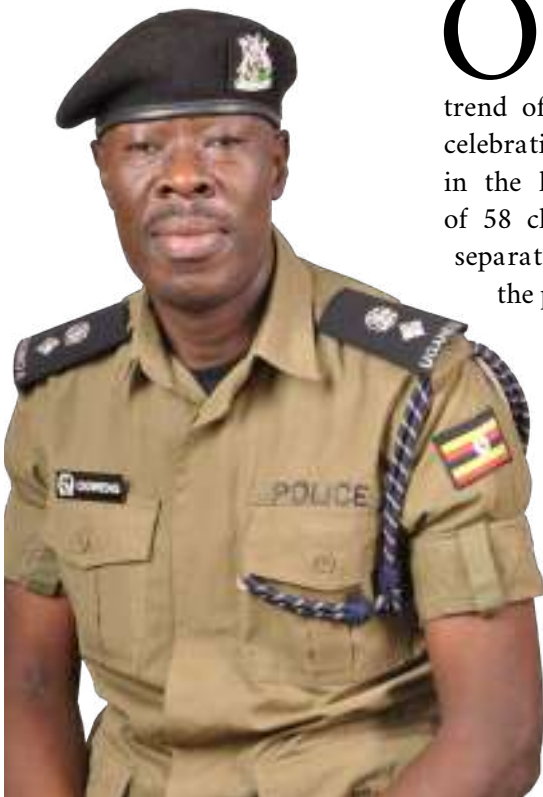
### Timely response to criminality and improved success of investigations

Through the use of canines, CCTV cameras, and force multipliers (APCs, surveillance Helicopters, etc.), identifying and arresting criminal collaborators has all led to current stability in Karamoja.

# Protect Children at Uganda Martyrs Day Celebrations

Every year on the 3rd of June, thousands of pilgrims flock to the Namugongo Catholic and Anglican Shrines in Uganda to commemorate the lives of the Uganda Martyrs. These are a group of 22 Catholic and 23 Anglican converts to Christianity that were executed for their faith in the late 19th century. It is a time of spiritual reflection and communal worship. However, amidst the faithful congregants, the reality of lost children during this annual event persists.

By SP Ogweng Francis



Over the past years, the Uganda Police Force has recorded a distressing trend of lost children during these celebrations. Statistics reveal that in the last five years, an average of 58 children annually have been separated from their families during the pilgrimage.

In the year past-2023, 58 children got lost, 52 got lost in 2022, and 64 got lost in 2019 according to police records. The Uganda Martyrs Celebration did not take place in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 lockdown. This phenomenon of lost children casts a dark shadow over what should be a time of unity and reverence, highlighting the need for proactive measures to ensure the safety of all participants, especially children.

The reasons behind the high incidence of lost children during this event are complex. The magnitude of the gathering, with crowds swelling into thousands, creates an environment where it is easy for children to become separated from their guardians. Additionally, the enthusiastic atmosphere of worship and celebration can be overwhelming for young minds, leading them to wander off in curiosity or confusion. Furthermore, the logistical challenges of managing such a large-scale event exacerbate the risk of children getting lost.

Additionally, there is also inadequate signage, overcrowded spaces, and limited access to emergency services, which often hinders efforts to reunite lost children with their families promptly. The repercussions of a child's going missing are profound. Families experience anguish,



children themselves suffer distress, and the risk of exploitation or harm is high. This highlights the urgent need for comprehensive action.

In response to this pressing concern, various stakeholders, spearheaded by the Uganda Police Force through its Child and Family Protection Department, have initiated programs to alleviate the risk of child loss during the pilgrimage.

Among these efforts are the establishment of temporary shelters and the deployment of Child and family protection officers alongside trained volunteers. These personnel patrol the pilgrimage sites and assist in quickly identifying lost children so that they are swiftly reunited with their families. Volunteers undergo thorough briefings and are equipped to raise awareness and coordinate search efforts efficiently. Their contribution has been instrumental in managing these incidents of lost children.

However, while these measures have yielded tangible results in keeping the prevalence of lost children under control, there remains a critical need for sustained investment in child protection infrastructure. This includes the expansion of surveillance systems, the establishment of dedicated lost

and found centers, and the provision of comprehensive training for event staff and volunteers in child safeguarding protocols.

Here are some essential tips for parents to safeguard and protect their children during this event:

- ◆ Before entering the pilgrimage site, parents should designate a specific meeting point for family members to gather if separated, opting for a visible location like a landmark or prominent statue for easy identification. The hindrance to this could be first-time pilgrims who get overwhelmed too! But these too can train their brains to overcome it if given thought.
- ◆ Equip your child with an identification tag containing their name and contact information. This simple precaution can speed up reuniting lost children with their families. To avoid losing the tag, you can print the child's name and your name and cell phone on their clothes, which they can easily identify and show to the police on duty, who will in turn help in reuniting the child and the parents.
- ◆ Encourage children to always stay close to their parents, holding hands or using a leash for younger children to prevent

wandering in crowded areas. Also, remind older children to stay within sight and seek help from uniformed personnel if lost.

- ◆ Teach children their full name, parent's names, and contact numbers in case they need to seek assistance. Emphasize the importance of staying with their family and not accepting gifts or invitations from strangers. Parents can do this training way before June and can set conditions like; only those who can grasp these details are eligible for pilgrimage.
- ◆ Continuously remind children of safety rules, including staying together, avoiding strangers, and seeking help from trusted adults if needed, while encouraging open communication and reassuring them that it is okay to ask for help if they feel lost or unsafe.
- ◆ Take moments throughout the pilgrimage to pause, reflect, and reconnect with your family. Use this time to reinforce the significance of the Uganda Martyrs Celebration and the importance of unity, faith, and love within the family.

By implementing these proactive measures and instilling a sense of vigilance and preparedness, parents and guardians can help ensure a safe and memorable experience for their children during the annual Uganda Martyrs Celebration. Together, let us honour the legacy of the Uganda Martyrs while safeguarding the future of our nation – our children.

**The writer is a Child Protection enthusiast and was working with the Child and Family Protection Department until recently when he was transferred to Director of ICT**

# MARTYRS' DAY: A Bitter Sweet Event

On the 3rd of June 2024, like it has been many years ago, Namugongo Martyrs' Shrine echoes with the sounds of tens of thousands of Christian faithful and musicians from different Dioceses. The Feast of Uganda Martyrs was decreed by an Act of Canonization by the Universal Catholic Church in 1964.

By PC Ojula Michael



It was here that some of the Christian converts were burned alive under the orders of Kabaka Mwangi II, the then King of Buganda. This carnage took place from 31 January 1885 to 27 January 1887. The Uganda Martyrs were a group of 22 Catholics and 23 Anglican converts.

Namugongo Martyrs' Shrine: a vast, lavish green place—a bastion of Christian faith. Sepulchral imagery lingers in the minds of whoever visits. People who professed Christianity were burned here. *Namugongo*: outside the shrine. Smoke blended with a tasty aroma of chicken, beef, and pork gladly mingle with oxygen, makeshift pubs and the business of all merchandise take place here. The incessant call for customers “*lukumi lukumi*” that used to be done by a hired boy who would sing the same lyrics for a week, is now replaced by a recorded “*VJ Jjingo*” audio, singing the same lyrics “*lukumi lukumi*” nonstop until power gets depleted from the Chinese made radio robot.

A cross the road opposite the Shrine's main entrance, lies a makeshift market made out of papyrus and old rusty iron sheets – a market all the same. This place every year experiences

pressure from a thick assemblage of humanity that visits the shrine.

The one kilometer stretch of a now new tarmac road along the *Namugongo* Martyrs Shrine is stamped by thousands of pilgrims from Kampala, upcountry, and many around the globe, making it the world's biggest Christian event.

The easily predictable exuberant scenes outside *Namugongo* Martyrs' shrine, quickly displace the gory history of this place.

But present always: thieves a—permanently unwelcome bunch of guests announce their presence as soon as one discovers a missing phone. Theft and other crimes are always a present dangers that can be averted if pilgrims do not let down their guard.

Toward the tail end of every month of May, lies a clarion reminder to all police officers in all operational units, like Counter Terrorism, Field Force Unit, Police Band and many others, that

sleepless nights are imminent, while securing pilgrims, the center of the activities and the nation in general.

A couple of years ago, I was privileged to March with the pilgrims from the *Busega* roundabout up to *Namugongo*. Bro! We walked while playing music with pilgrims for over twenty five kilometers. The Band broke its own record when that route march became the longest in the history of the Band, ever since it came to existence. It's not an easy task walking while blowing a trumpet, carrying and blowing a sousaphone

police. But again, personal safety from pick pockets and reckless "boda boda" riders was an individual responsibility.

A much bigger kudo is well deserving of the Uganda Police Force and sister forces for securing such a momentous occasion that draws people in their thousands from all over the globe. We have been tried, fricasseed, and fried. The 2010 World Cup disaster did it. We lost 76 people at the criminal hands of terrorists!

Listening to a BBC Outlook program a few weeks ago, a survivor who stepped out from

together, building synergies to keep everyone safe and secure.

Awareness of security threats by the pilgrims while trekking hundreds of kilometers to Kampala and even at the main event is the first nail in the coffin that will contain the body of terrorist activities, and other petty crimes as well. Vigilance is a vital aspect of security. There is a famous saying that goes "God helps those that help themselves."

Security is as paramount as prayer is. That is why pilgrims and security officers have a joint duty



(the shiny long bass instruments usually played by Bandsmen at the back of the parade formation during national parade ceremonies, like the recently held Labor Day at Fort Portal).

I am a percussionist in the marching band. The pain exerted by the tenor drum on my left thigh was debilitating and sharp. This was it. That pain was epic. And so was it for everyone in the band.

That Israeli-like trek was made possible with the help of traffic

the madding crowd of football fans at Kyadondo Rugby grounds during the 2010 World Cup final, was by rare serendipity, saved by a friend's phone call before "boom." You know what I mean. This drove me to think of pilgrims' safety and security. As has been the *wainainchi's* way of thinking – that the police is there so we are safe, so is true. However, the police can only work better to secure the lives and property of pilgrims if this is done

to stretch their imagination and devise mechanisms for keeping everyone safe and secure. Vigilance is crucial. Our eyes are our greatest weapons against crime. The adage goes; "If you see it, say it."

**The writer is a Police Constable deployed in the Uganda Police Band. He is highly talented and skilled in writing both prose and poetry.**

# A Letter from Kilimanjaro: Why Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Should be a Saint

The United Republic of Tanzania is a "big boy" in the East African Community, and can bulldoze many if it chooses but instead, it impresses and leaves a mark. The name, power, and legacy of Tanzania's first president, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, are felt from far and wide. We in Uganda have our memories too. My stay here is enticing me to greet my people back home; thus, *Shikamo mkubwa, salam kutoka, Moshi hapa, Mkoa wa Kilimanjaro.*

By SP Allan Nshimye Rugayampunzi



I am hesitant to continue because I know that most of our Ugandan readers have a thing for Swahili. They have previously been mistreated by Swahili speaking people especially by Amin's Army, and then the notorious Wakombozi back in 1979.

Uganda has had its fair share of wars and conflict. Many in uniform speak Swahili, and have been known

for their brutality. However, when FRONASA came fighting, it was a different game. They transformed into the National Resistance Army (NRA) and captured power in 1986. The NRA has since transformed into the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) a people's army, and continues to put citizens at the forefront of their service. They have a people's character and have demystified the gun and the uniform through patriotic training and exemplary discipline.

But this is a story for Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, a man whose physical stature was deceptive compared to his political genius and pro people gigantism as pronounced in the much re-known *Ujamaa* policy.

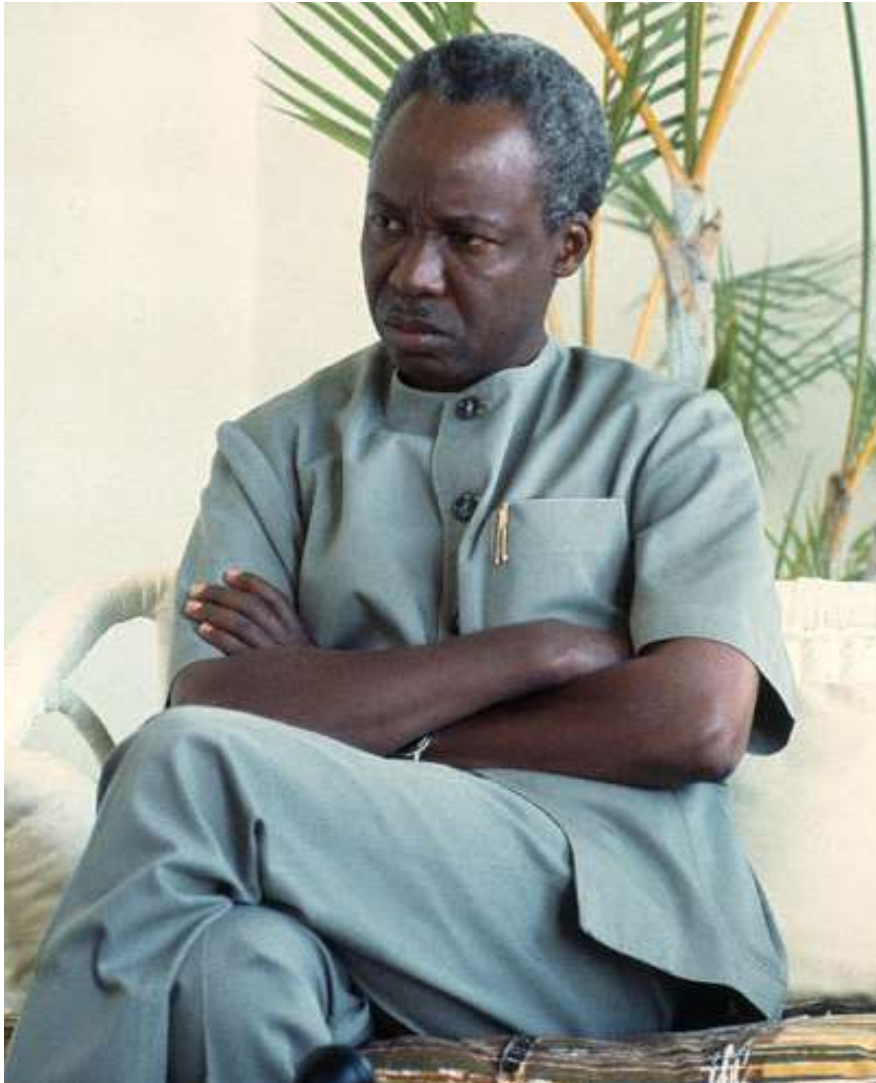
Born, 13<sup>th</sup> April 1922 in Butiama, Mara Region, Tanganyika (as the mainland was known then). Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, a son

of a Zanaki Chief came from a bright background as, a teacher with charisma (having graduated from Makerere University) and soon became a wee-known African nationalist who led his country to independence and supported many other countries to independence from the different colonial masters.

Under his rule, Tanganyika united with Zanzibar to become Tanzania, and the united country got rid of tribal sentiments as Kiswahili became the language of unity. Some historical sources allege that he adopted the name Nyerere, which means caterpillar in his Zanaki native language. Kambarage means the female spirit of rain. In secondary school, he was thought to be too kind to be a head prefect and was thus vetoed on account of his rather good character.

Nyerere's relationship with Uganda began with his university education at Makerere University, and later on, his friendship developed between him and Dr. Apollo Milton Obote. When Iddi Amin overthrew Obote, Nyerere supported his friend and fellow leader and brought him back as

political father, mentor, and coach. President Museveni holds him so highly, as does Mama Nyerere. Mama Nyerere is accorded immense respect in the Uganda on account of what they did for Uganda. On many occasions, President Museveni has said openly that Mwalimu deserves to be a



leader in 1980. Unfortunately, Dr. Obote was seen to have failed to unite the country using an equivalent of Tanzania's *Ujamaa* policy.

Their relationship was severed and Mwalimu shifted to supporting a youthful strategic leader, Yoweri Museveni, who waged a 5 year people's protracted war that brought him to power in 1986. He never disappointed his

saint, for his actions were beyond the ordinary acts of man.

Thomas Molony, a biographer, said that those who studied with Nyerere in Edinburgh described him as decent, unassuming, likeable, and a man of integrity. He didn't like titles, was principled with a strong sense of fairness and a man whose emotions were clearly visible and genuine.

In other circles, Mwalimu has been described as shrewd incorruptible politician. When I interacted with post graduate students at Moshi Cooperative University and asked them why they think Nyerere should be a saint: 20 of them said that indeed he should be a saint on account of his leadership credentials, while 8 said that he was incorruptible, and another 8 said that he supported and built Tanzania into a united country. Only four said that he was a good Christian. Some others said that he was a harsh leader who cracked on cooperatives that he suspected were undermining his authority.

In January 2005, the Diocese of Musoma opened up the cause for the canonisation of Julius Nyerere, whom they described as a devout catholic and a man of recognised integrity. On 13<sup>th</sup> May 2005 Pope Benedict XVI declared Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere a Servant of God, and the ball has been rolling since then.

In Uganda, specifically on June 3<sup>rd</sup> every year, the whole country and corresponding Christians in other countries celebrate the Uganda Martyrs Day. The widow of Mwalimu Nyerere prestigiously known as Mama Nyerere, often comes for the Uganda Martyrs Pilgrimage, accompanied by a large number of enthusiasts for the cause. It took 44 years for the Uganda Martyrs to be declared saints.

A similar time frame may be required to do the same to Mwalimu, my hero. Mwalimu Julius Nyerere deserves it, for he gave his all and stood taller than his name and voice. He is my political saint.

**The writer is currently pursuing further studies at Moshi Cooperative University in Tanzania.**

# The Myth and Tales of the Uganda Martyrs

Several tales, stories, and myths surrounding the reason why the Uganda martyrs were sentenced to death by burning them in fire have been making the rounds since that mayhem in the 19th century. About 55 Anglicans and Roman Catholic martyrs were executed during the persecution of Christians under the reign of Kabaka Mwanga.

By Staff Writer

The outstanding story or myth for me was that Kabaka Mwanga II had run out of bullets, and the only alternative was to burn them. The story begins far back in 1875, when the British-American explorer Henry Morton Stanley arrived in the court of Kabaka Mutesa I in Munyonyo, situated on the outskirts of Kampala Capital City. It is said that the Kabaka warmly welcomed him as a new ally of his Buganda kingdom in Central Uganda, thereby providing an opportunity to face off Egyptian and Sudanese threats.

This relationship led to the introduction of guns to the kingdom. It is further argued that when he got to the throne, Kabaka Mwanga was extremely trigger-happy and went on a hunting spree. He used all the bullets to kill wild animals. When the martyrs were arraigned before him as disobedient subjects, he wanted to shoot them, but since he had no bullets, it birthed the idea of burning them alive. It's alleged that it was their names that fanned the flames of the matter.

The Kabaka had heard that they were spying for his enemies under the guise on Christianity. It's said that his Chief Executioner, Nsubuga Mukajanga, arguably the most hated person whenever Catholics gather to celebrate the Uganda martyrs day, had information that some of the Baganda were being used as spies. So when they brought the suspects, the Kabaka asked to know their names. The first responded, "*Buuzaabalyawo*" loosely translated, 'ask those around you.' This was arrogance never heard of in the history of Buganda. It amounted to a heinous crime.

It is said that when they asked the next in line to mention his name, he introduced himself as "*Bazzekukketta*," which means "They have come to spy." He wanted to shoot them on spot, but since he had no bullets, the other option was to stone them. However his henchman Mukajanga, suggested burning them, something they hadn't done before. The last straw that broke the Carmel's back was when the Kabaka learned that they had also refused to denounce their faith, which he had asked them to

do. Like I said, this was one of the myth and stories, among others.

Martyrs' Day in Uganda commemorates the bold decision of some early converts to Christianity to give up their lives for the sake of the gospel. The day, marked on 3 June every year since the 1920s, is therefore a pivotal celebration in the life and history of Christianity in Uganda.

Some of the martyrs went through excruciating pain that surpasses human understanding. They were treated with great cruelty. The likes of Charles Lwanga, who displayed unshakable faith and exceptional Christian bravery during the Christian persecution. He was burnt in a slow fire from foot to head at Namugongo Busaale. He was burnt at the Catholic Basilica, exactly where the altar now stands. He was at the age of 25 years old when he died in a slow painful fire while praying for the conversion of the executioners and the king.

50 year old Mathias Kalembe Wante Mulumba died the most brutal and lingering death at Old Kampala from 27th to 30th May 1886. His limbs were cut off first, strip of flesh cut from his



back. and stayed in the same state without complaining for three days but rather praying for his people and the executioners.

Joseph Balikudembe Mukasa was very courageous. It is said that on one occasion a cobra of about five feet entered King Muteesa's house and after failing to find a stick, Mukasa rushed and strangled the serpent with his bare hands. The king from that time gave liberty to Christianity and named him BALIKUDEMBE, which means, "Christians are at peace to practice their faith." But that didn't stop him from being killed, and his body burnt on Sunday, November 15, 1885, at Nakivubo. He was the first Ugandan Catholic martyr at the prime age of 20.

Dennis Ssebuggwawo served as a page in King Mwangwa's palace. He is remembered for having been a talented and devoted musician with a melodious voice. It is alleged that he fought hard against the shameful sexual plays he was induced to do by King Mwangwa. This brought him into conflict and confrontation with the King, hence leading to his

martyrdom. Ssebuggwawo was the first victim of King Mwangwa's rage on the evening of May 25th 1886. He was severely scourged by the King himself at the age of 16. These, among others laid down their lives to model Christ-like grace.

Globally, they are held in high regard as the true epitome of courage because they exhibited faith over fear. The Catholic Church beatified the martyrs of its faith in 1920 and canonised them as saints in 1964. Most of the Catholic churches in Uganda are named after these saints. The staunch Catholics have gone ahead and named schools and businesses after the martyrs. Every year, hundreds of faithful Christians throng Namugongo Catholic Shrine to commemorate the killing of the martyrs. The pilgrims trek from different parts of the world with a belief that they are associating with the pain the martyrs experienced, and as such, they will receive blessings from them.

However, not everyone who goes to Namugongo has good intentions. Just as they say, the devil will always

pick interest where God's people are residing. We have thieves, pedophiles, rapists, terrorists, and witches that also show up with their own interests. Everyone has to be vigilant, especially when it comes to safety. Folks need to carry at least a torch to see where they are going. Most criminals perform best in dark places. The organisers need to make sure that the pilgrims have access to security numbers they can call in case of anything that threatens their safety or compromises their security.

We have witnessed pilgrims that take the excitement to another level and drink themselves silly. This renders them vulnerable to crimes like theft, violence, and rape, among others. The authorities should devise means of regulating alcohol consumption. Criminals will always mingle with well intentioned, targeting their valuables and possibly their children, or their lives.

Such criminals need to reflect on what the martyrs stood for and the values they espoused so that we can forge a way forward as a country of men that gave up their lives in faith.



# Martyrdom Beyond Prayer



As Uganda and the rest of the world commemorate Martyrs Day on 3rd June, one cannot help, but reflect on the essence of Martyrdom. The world today more than any other time in history, advocates more for being self-focused than self-sacrifice. Martyrdom on the other hand is the readiness to suffer and sacrifice one's life for a cause (Belanger et al., 2014).

By Dr Annette Kirabira (PhD)

With more and more people seeking happiness, there is more talk of self-love rather than real love that is expressed through serving others. Self-sacrifice is the birth place of real love, but this is not a popular concept in a world that is more “me-centered.” Martyrdom is a controversial concept as people seek to examine its purpose (Middleton, 2014). It has also been adopted by those who kill others suicide missions while others become martyrs unintentionally and embrace,



desire, and seek martyrdom (Mitchell, 2012).

The idea of one dying for a cause is quite perplexing, yet time immemorial, people have died for religious and political causes (Belanger, 2013). Social scientists have attempted to understand the self-sacrifice that underpins martyrdom and have come up with some individual variables that may predict martyrdom; attempting to understand why and under what circumstances individuals are willing to die for a cause (Belanger, 2013). A study conducted by Belanger (2013) found it difficult to get individuals involved in terrorism and also found it difficult to assess one's readiness to self-sacrifice, but despite these limitations it was discovered that martyrdom does not mean that martyrs do not value life, but rather that they choose to defend their deepest convictions at whatever cost; even death.

Some lessons to draw from Belanger's (2013) work are: Martyrdom is related to goal commitment, being drawn to acting on behalf of others, being helpful, and sacrificing wealth and other possessions, including important relationships. People who are likely to die as martyrs are more likely to endure pain, but they are also more likely to inflict pain and harm on others in the name of a cause. As we seek to learn from martyrdom the art of goal-commitment, self-sacrifice, and a willingness to die for a cause, caution should be taken, according to Vincelette (2020), that an individual who commits acts of violence against innocent people cannot be considered a martyr.

In a world that is increasingly tending towards living for self rather than self-sacrifice, the words of Martin Luther King Jr. thus; "*If You've Got Nothing Worth Dying For,*

*You've Got Nothing Worth Living For*" may restore some equilibrium.

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# Celebrating the Uganda Martyrs Day in Peace and Unity



Uganda comes alive every year on June 3rd, to commemorate Uganda Martyrs Day. The day is a cornerstone of Ugandan Christian tradition. Both Catholic and Anglican faithful mark and celebrate this historical day.

By Bwebare Nicholas

The Uganda Martyrs' Day is a significant day for Ugandans, combining religious commemoration, national pride, and historical remembrance. It is marked as a national public holiday to commemorate the execution of 45 Ugandan converts to Christianity who were killed between 1885 and 1887 on the orders of Mwanga II, the Kabaka of Buganda. They are revered as martyrs by both the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

Martyrs Day is not just a celebration; it's a time for reflection, with memorial services and sermons that focus on the importance of the martyrs' message of courage, resilience, and unwavering faith. The Uganda



Martyrs Shrine at Namugongo is the site where many of the martyrs were killed. It is a major pilgrimage destination for Christians from all over Africa and the world. Yes! Thousands of pilgrims, both from within Uganda, the region, and

far beyond our borders embark on this spiritual journey, many walking for days to reach the shrine in remembrance of the sacrifices made by the martyrs.

A novena, or nine-day period of prayer, traditionally precedes



Uganda Martyrs' Day. This is intended for a peaceful celebration. The Uganda Martyrs Day celebration is for renewed emphasis on finding peace and unity within the nation. Religious leaders from various faiths showcase Uganda's religious diversity, and promote interfaith understanding and acknowledgment of our past conflicts, promoting national healing through forgiveness and reconciliation messages.

#### How important is the Uganda Martyrs' Day in Uganda?

- ◆ **Public holiday:** It's a national public holiday, signifying its importance to the country. People have a day off work to participate in celebrations or commemorations.
- ◆ **Religious significance:** It honours the Uganda Martyrs, a group of early Ugandan Christians who were killed for their faith. They are seen as symbols of courage and resilience.

- ◆ **Major pilgrimage:** The day attracts pilgrims from all over Uganda and even the world, making it a big religious event. There are even pilgrimages leading up to the main celebration.
- ◆ **Historical importance:** It commemorates a significant period in Ugandan history, marking the arrival of Christianity and the challenges faced by early converts.

#### Keeping the Uganda Martyrs Day celebration peaceful

With large crowds expected, ensuring security and smooth organisation is crucial. The Ugandan government, in collaboration with religious institutions and the security agencies come together for better planning, guiding and managing the crowds. As it the practice, security is heightened at the site, along the roads and the surroundings near the site. This is usually composed of the military

and the police stationed in strategic places within and outside the shrines. The media is often involved to keep updating the people on the various instructions issued from time to time from security agencies and the organisers.

The processions or pilgrimages are guided to follow designated routes and avoid causing congestion. The medical fraternity and the Red Cross staff keep alert to assist the pilgrims that develop health complications or otherwise need medical attention. The people are often cautioned to be peaceful during and after the celebrations. Ugandan are called upon to show respectful conduct and being mindful of the solemnity of the occasion. While there may be festivities, remember the day is meant for the commemoration of the sacrifice of the martyrs. Dressing modestly, especially if attending the celebration is emphasised. With the community policing spirit promoted by the Uganda police, a high level of vigilance is encouraged. Many volunteer groups come onboard to assist with crowd management or other logistical aspects of the event, and any suspicious activities are reported to the security agencies as a deterrent measure to keep peace and security during and after the celebrations. By emphasising peace, unity, and reflection, Uganda can ensure that this important day continues to be a source of strength and inspiration, promoting mutual co-existence for generations to come.

**The writer is an Associate Editor with Fountain Publishers, Kampala.**

# A Love Letter to the Pilgrims of 2024



Dear pilgrims,

Namugongo remains the biggest Christian event in East and Central Africa. It attracts over 3 million people every 3rd June. These pilgrims are from Uganda and many other countries in the region and on the continent, making it a hot spot for criminals that include terrorists, child kidnapers, and all manner of offenders that include sexual offenders and pick pockets. That is my desire to pen this love letter that readers should find useful in protecting them as they pay homage to our martyrs.

By Daphine Musiime

**W**e are warned to take precautions. According to King James Bible in Job 1:6, it is stated thus; “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, satan came also among them.” If you do not expect bad people in and around Namugongo, even when the Holy book has warned you, prepare for the worst. There are many things we can individually or collectively do to keep safer and secure as we celebrate Martyrs Day this year.

## Moving with identification documents

As a faithful servant of God in a congregation of over 3 million people around you, do you ever

envisage what can happen to you in case you do not have authentic identification documents with you, and not necessarily original copies? God forbid but you could faint and fail to speak, yet you need instant help and support from those around you where you could be a stranger. So, have what good Samaritans can start with to reach out to your loved ones and possibly family members. Important phone numbers, emergency phone numbers and names and telephone contacts for your next of kin.

## Safety of the people and property left at home

Before starting the journey, ensure all doors and windows in your home are locked when you leave

(that is if everyone in the family is going to be absent), Set house alarms if you have them, do not tell others of your pilgrimage (but this world of selfies and blind joy!) other than friends and family. It is advisable to give a set of spare keys to loved ones so they can check on the safety and security of your property and family while you are away. They should be your eyes and ears while you are away.

## Report any unusual behaviour to the authorities

If you have been robbed and want to make a complaint or get advice, swiftly talk to the police. Either you know the important police contacts just in case or, you inform any police officer on uniform near you



if you are already at Namugingo. It is also vital to follow all security guidelines given. They are given for our good.

### Stakeholders' role in securing pilgrims

Stakeholder Power refers to their ability to influence the pilgrimage processes. In this case, church leaders should endeavour to give security and healthy tips during the sermons since most congregations listen to them. That too applies to the security sector in their community policing initiatives. And then the media. Let's jointly address safety for all this season.

### Walk in groups

Avoid walking alone in the dark. Walk in groups of people known to you to avoid joining criminals that could pretend to be pilgrims as well. Wear bright clothes, have some light like torches with you, and reflective jackets just in case. Most

importantly, while walking on the road, walk while facing oncoming traffic, and avoid being on your phone for you could get distracted and be hit by moving cars.

### Road Safety is paramount

The annual pilgrimage has previously seen road traffic congestion. Secondly, we have witnessed pilgrims killed by bad drivers. Take precaution to keep safer on the road. My recommendation is that both motorists and all road users take interest in keeping everyone on the road safer.

Fatigue and alcohol consumption, drug and substance use can all be sources of accidents and death on our roads. Motorists and pilgrims walking are all advised to take regular breaks so that they can rest to renew their energies.

### Stay healthy

It is not advisable to over burden your body. Avoid dehydration by taking a lot of fluids including water. Equally, it is important to maintain good body hygiene. Remember the adage; "a healthy soul lies in a healthy body."

In conclusion, you are likely to rediscover yourself along the way; make new friends and renew your faith. Therefore, be your brother's keeper. If you are faced with a tough situation around you, don't hesitate to ask someone but keep alert to avoid being misled. In general, most people will try and help you as much as they can. But mindful of the bad apples amidst us all. I hope that these safety tips will contribute to the wellbeing of many of us as we enjoy the forthcoming Eucharistic celebration on Martyrs Day come June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024.

**The writer is an intern working with the Department of Press and Public Relations at Police Headquarters at Naguru.**

# IGP Abasi Byakagaba: The Man on Fire



Gangs and goons in and around Kampala are not serious. How do you decide to carry out theft and terrorism operations when they have just appointed an FBI trained officer as Inspector General of Police?

By Keneth Kimuli aka Pablo

For starters, lately gangs have been attacking innocent civilians in and around the city of Kampala using martial arts skills before robbing from them. They had posed as the greatest threat to the national and economic security of the country.

Within 96 hours of public outcry, the police swung into action and arrested several suspects who were found with ammunition, stolen goods, and police like uniforms. It just cannot be a mere coincidence that this commando approach to curbing violence comes at a time when Afande Abasi Byakagaba has been appointed IGP.

His track record highlights the fact that he has done several courses on counter terrorism and has played a leading role in combating violent crimes involving gangs, crimes against children, fugitives, rebels, kidnappings, and violent bank robberies, among others. These goons couldn't see beyond their noses that they were jumping from the frying pan into the fire. The IGP can't allow him to start his tenure on a bad note. That's like killing John Wick's dog.

As an old boy of Kabalega Secondary School, Afande Byakagaba will go by the creed of his forefathers, who resisted colonialism in Bunyoro to nip in

the bud any threat that jeopardizes the well-being of the wanainchi. He is a true 'murusura' who is rooted in justice and fairness. He has lived the motto of his former school, 'I learn to serve.'

Those who have worked with him will tell you that the IGP keeps his word and is widely recognised for his integrity and impartiality. His counter terrorism investigations are based on the need both to prevent incidents where possible and to effectively act after incidents do occur. I could tell from how the police reconstructed the scene of a crime where a young gang member, who pleaded guilty to participating in the heinous acts



of theft, demonstrated how they clobbered a civilian before stealing from him that investigations indeed focused on the unlawful acts of the group, and a force that is truly interested in the ideological orientation of its members.

public's safety and our national and economic security. Lately, we have been hit by cyber-attacks and intrusions that are slowly becoming a serious security threat.

By the way, all political eyes are focused on the upcoming general

strength is his mature sense of judgment, and ability to act quickly and effectively to problem situations. His unmatched good sense of judgment, common sense, and motivation to produce results even amidst adversity, compassion,



It is commendable to see a police force that is now leaning more towards the rehabilitation of these young people and one that is interested in making them responsible and productive citizens. Most importantly, the force is steadily building an intelligence base to help in the cardinal role of preventing such criminal acts that include terrorism.

With Afande Byakagaba at the helm of the Uganda Police Force, we hope to see the rate of terrorism and its threats drop significantly. He has mastered the art of combating terrorism. I envisage him fighting malicious cyber activity that threatens the

elections in 2026. Obviously, this possesses a national security situation that calls for better preparedness on the part of the security sector in the country and in the region. It's likely to be a test of his smartness at policing. He is a resilient and extremely smart officer.

I am convinced without doubt that, with his immense experience as a seasoned cop, IGP Abasi Byakagaba is the perfect choice to transition the Uganda Police Force into a respectable, professional, and objective institution. Some officers that I talked to who have worked with him, though prefer anonymity say that his greatest

and good initiatives are a force to be reckoned with. Hopefully he is the long awaited game changer - the fire fighter that never ceases to quell a fire until it is extinguished!

As the law-abiding citizens of Uganda and the security sector, your family and peers stand to support your initiatives in the fight against crime, and in the cardinal role of building a force that promotes safety and peace among its citizens.

Aluta continua Afande IGP Abasi Byakagaba, Uganda's top police chief.

**The writer is a Ugandan writer, published author and television personality who loves and practices clean comedy.**

# Sports: “A Potent Weapon in the Battle Against Crime and Beyond”



Sports have always played a pivotal role in human civilization, offering a plethora of benefits that transcend mere physical exertion.

By CPL Bakari Mugah Bashir

In the realm of law enforcement, particularly within the Uganda Police, the significance of sports cannot be overstated. Mandated by the 1995 Uganda Constitution as amended, the police are tasked with maintaining law and order, as well as collaborating with civilian authorities, as articulated in Article 212.

Community policing initiatives have introduced a range of sports programs, from football and athletics to volleyball and more. These initiatives play a vital role in crime prevention by engaging civilians and police officers alike. Participation in sports not only

promotes physical well-being but also steers individuals away from potential criminal activities. As the adage goes, “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop,” underscoring the importance of channeling energies into constructive pursuits such as sports, thereby fostering socio-economic development.

Moreover, the impact of sports extends beyond crime prevention, offering avenues for individuals to earn supplementary income and gain recognition on both local and international platforms. Esteemed athletes like Tonny Maweje, Denis Obua, and Juma Balinya epitomise how dedication to sports can

lead to personal success, enabling them to support themselves and their families while serving as inspirations for aspiring athletes in Uganda.

Additionally, Uganda boasts a cadre of talented individuals who have brought honour to the nation through their achievements in global athletic competitions. Icons like ASP Joshua Cheptegei and AIP Dorcus Inzikuru have showcased Uganda’s prowess in athletics, clinching gold medals and motivating youth nationwide to pursue their athletic dreams.

Beyond competition, sports offer invaluable health benefits,

as emphasised by health experts advocating for regular exercise to promote longevity and well-being. Engaging in sports strengthens the body, enhances endurance, alleviates stress, fosters teamwork, and nurtures camaraderie among participants, thus contributing to overall physical and mental wellness.

In essence, the fusion of sports and law enforcement serves not only as a crime prevention mechanism but also as a catalyst for personal growth, community development, and national pride, highlighting the transformative power of sports in society.

### Call to Action for Police Officers:

As police officers, we acknowledge the invaluable lessons and advantages that sports provide. Therefore, I implore each member of our ranks to actively participate in sports and physical activities, both individually and collectively. By integrating sports into our lives, we not only enhance our physical fitness but also bolster our teamwork, discipline, and resilience, all of which are essential for effective policing.

Let us establish sports programs within our jurisdictions, organizing regular competitions such as the IGPs Tournament and training

sessions to foster camaraderie and unity among officers. Through sports, we can fortify our connections with the communities we serve, promoting trust and cooperation.

Together, let us embrace the transformative potential of sports and leverage it to become better officers, leaders, and role models. By embodying the values of sportsmanship and excellence, we can uphold the highest standards of professionalism and serve as inspirations for future generations.

**The writer is a sports enthusiast currently at PTS Kabalye for further training.**



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