

## **THE COMMUNIQUE OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION ON POLICING IN UGANDA, 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024 AT HOTEL AFRICANA**

### **Preamble:**

We, the stakeholders gathered at the National Convention on Police Accountability and Security Sector Reform in Uganda, hosted by Justice Access Point on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024, have deliberated on the pressing issues highlighted in the Annual Status Report on Policing in Uganda for the year 2023. The discussions were centered on the need for comprehensive police reform and enhanced accountability mechanisms within the security sector.

### **Acknowledgment of Challenges:**

Recognizing the challenges outlined in the Annual Status Report, including instances of police brutality, corruption, lack of transparency, and inadequate mechanisms for citizen engagement and police accountability, we emphasize the urgency of addressing these issues to ensure a professional and accountable police force that upholds human rights and serves the public interest.

### **Call to Action:**

Drawing from the report's findings and the discussions at the conference, we present the following key recommendations:

1. **Enhanced Training and Capacity Building:** It is imperative to invest in ongoing training programs for law enforcement personnel to enhance their capabilities in conflict resolution, human rights protection, community policing, and ethical behavior.
2. **Establishment of Independent Oversight Mechanisms:** We endorse the idea of establishing an independent police oversight body with adequate authority to investigate complaints against law enforcement agencies, hold wrongdoers accountable, and propose necessary reforms to prevent future misconduct.
3. **Promotion of Community Policing Initiatives:** We call for increased efforts to foster trust between police officers and communities through collaborative initiatives aimed at addressing local security issues.
4. **There is need to popularize existing accountability mechanisms** such as the Professional Standards Unit and the police disciplinary courts to deal with all the cases of impunity by the UPF and put in place a clear monitoring mechanism to track the efficacy of such mechanisms.
5. **In order to safeguard the integrity of the police as an institution against partisan politics** that may accrue from regime use of the police force, the IGP and the senior management should be protected from arbitrary dismissal. Further, the Executive should not involve themselves in decisions concerning the appointment, assignment, deployment, or promotion of individual members of police services other than the IGP and heads of police high command.
6. **There should be regular and timely feedback on complaints filed by members of the public before the internal accountability mechanisms of the UPF and ensure that data on the outcome of disciplinary cases and human rights complaints against officers is published regularly.**
7. **The UPF should implement and track its policy framework, including the Human Rights Policy, the Anti-corruption strategy, guidelines on using force and firearms, and the Uganda Police Force Gender Policy, Strategy and Action Plan to enhance efficiency and accountability.**
8. **The UPF should review and streamline its training curriculum to ensure the delivery of comprehensive training that conforms to both the domestic, regional and international human rights standards and best practices in policing.**
9. **The Parliament should amend the UPF act 1994 and the UPDF Act 2005 to ensure greater protection of human rights.**
10. **UPF should implement the Uganda Human Rights Commission recommendations on the improvement and observance of human rights by the UPF.**
11. **Government should enact an instrument to regulate joint operations between UPF and other security agencies to prevent the blurring of lines of accountability and impunity for human rights violations and abuse perpetrated in joint operations by armed officers.**
12. **The Government should revise the resource cap of the UPF to ensure adequate funding to enable the institution execute its mandate and police welfare.**
13. **The relevant UPF authorities should fully implement its policy framework, including the Human Rights Policy; the Anti-corruption strategy; the disciplinary Codes; Guidelines on using force and firearms; the Uganda Police Force Gender Policy; and Strategy and Action Plan.**
14. **UPF should review its recruitment and promotion practices to ensure they are consistent with standards of a modern police service. Special attention should be given to the place and position of women police officers into positions within the UPF.**
15. **The government should ratify and domesticate key regional and international instruments that directly impact on the work of the UPF such as the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT).**
16. **The Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) should undertake comprehensive awareness creation and capacity building of the stakeholders, including the general public and the UPF on human rights and accountable and democratic policing in Uganda. This should also include awareness creation of the existing accountability mechanisms within UPF.**
17. **CSO should monitor police compliance with regional and international human rights standards to ensure professionalism of the security sector.**

### **Conclusion:**

As stakeholders committed to promoting a just and transparent security sector in Uganda, we stand united in our resolve to advocate for meaningful reforms that will strengthen police accountability, enhance public trust, and safeguard the rights of all citizens.

**Endorsed by acclamation of those in attendance.**