

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS ON
ALLEGED UNFAIR AND DISCRIMINATORY RECRUITMENT BY UGANDA
PEOPLES DEFENCE FORCES.**

**OFFICE OF THE CLERK TO PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS**

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KAMPALA -UGANDA

AUGUST, 2022

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Rt. Hon. Speaker and Members, At the 4th sitting of the 1st Meeting of the 2nd Session of the 11th Parliament of Uganda held on Wednesday 6th July, 2022, an urgent question was raised by Hon. Sarah Achieng Opendi District Woman Representative Tororo on alleged irregularities in the recruitment exercise by Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) characterized by un due infringement on the quota allotments of some districts in favor of recruits from other districts, in breach of Article 210(b) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda; The Rt.Hon. Speaker directed that the Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs briefs the House on the matter.

Subsequently, at the 8th sitting of the 1st Meeting of the 2nd Session of the 11th Parliament of Uganda held on Thursday 14th July 2022 a statement was presented by the Minister of State for Defence Hon. Oboth Oboth on the alleged un fair and discriminatory recruitment by Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF).

The Rt. Hon. Speaker referred the Matter to the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs for consideration and report back to Parliament.

The Committee considered the issue and hereby reports;

2.0 BACKGROUND

In 2004, the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs undertook a comprehensive programme to transform the UPDF into modern, professional and accountable force subordinate to civilian authority .Part of this is recruiting Ugandans who meet the standards prescribed in the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces Act,2005 Section 51 and 52.Details of who qualifies;

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The Committee held meeting with the following;

1. The Minister of State for Defence and Veteran Affairs and Officials from Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF).

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- II. Hon. Sarah Opendi , District Woman Representative , Tororo.
- III. Hon. Chemutai Everlyn , District Woman Representative Bukwo
- The Committee received a submission from Hon. Nakut Faith , District Woman Representative Napak

QUERIES RAISED BY PARLIAMENT

Tororo District.

Allegation raised by Hon. Sarah Achieng Opendi, Woman Representative Tororo was that people from elsewhere were recruited from Tororo and people from Tororo did not benefit from their quota.

It was also alleged that local leaders were not allowed to verify the list of recruits. RDCs and LCs were not given a copy of recruits for reference.

Nebbi District.

It was alleged that out of the 57 slots allocated, only 11 were from the District.

Lira district.

The allegation was that in Lira district, most applicants were dropped for reportedly being HIV positive.

Whereas the Committee interacted with, Hon. Sarah Achieng Opendi and Hon. Chemutai Everlyn and received a written submission from Hon. Nakut Faith .

UPDF RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE.

The ministry of Defence and Uganda Peoples Defence Forces carried out national recruitment exercise from 18th June to 4th July 2022. The recruitment coverage was for all Ugandan nationals and was based on quota system.

LC1 chairpersons provided documents to the applicants to prove that one has no criminal liability and the national ID proved one's nationality and presumes all biometrics and other details are with NIRA. At the recruitment centers, the RDCs /RCCs or GISOs signed on the dispatch forms before departure of candidates to training schools. However, not everybody who came met the criteria to be recruited as there were various tests undertaken to eliminate some people because of limited slots.

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The committee was informed that;

UPDF followed the process of recruitment and the criteria for being an eligible applicant were;

- a) Be a citizen of Uganda (proof of which is the National ID)
- b) Adult male/ female (18- 30 years)
- c) UCE or its equivalent certificate/ qualification and/ or any above
- d) Be healthy and willing to undergo medical and physical tests
- e) Have no criminal record (proof of good citizenship is/was LC1/DISO signature)

Quotas were distributed as follows

- a) 8400 shared national wide, based on district population size
- b) 1000 mechanics and drivers
- c) 600 Air force
- d) 100 doctors
- e) 100 brass band musicians
- f) 50 specialized sports

COMMITTEE FINDINGS

- i) The committee was informed that recruitment covered 146 districts and the recruitment plan covered 134 districts; and the 12 districts were accommodated within their former districts since their headquarters were not yet established. Quotas allocated to each district were based on the Uganda Bureau of Statistics population data of 2020.
- ii) Due to COVID 19 restrictions, the recruitments were done on the zonal levels for instance, UPDF recruited a total of 163 recruits from the districts of Nebbi, Zombo and Packwach in Nebbi. All those that attended were recommended by LC1s and DISOs. Nebbi district was a recruitment center hosting the other two districts. Despite their quota being 57 for Nebbi district alone, 163 recruits were recruited at the Zone. While recruitment is not based on tribe, most of the recruits that came from Nebbi were Alurs as per their Identity Cards.

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- iii) The Committee was informed that a total of 195 people were recruited from Tororo district and most of their documents were verified by LC1s of various villages of the applicants to ensure that they had no criminal record and not necessarily to prove their ethnicity, tribe or place of abode. (Attached are copies of the IDs and letters from LCs.) However, this was misunderstood to mean proof of nationality.

The committee recommends that LCs and the general public should be sensitized on the recruitment procedures and guidelines in accordance with the UPDF Act of 2005.

Advertisements should be clear, easy to understand and should be published in all local newspapers and local radios for wider coverage.

- iv) There were alarming numbers of forged academic documents and Uganda National Identification cards. Recruits who did not have identity cards but had already applied were not allowed to use their National Identification Numbers, because it was difficult to attach the faces to the NIN. Verification of all other documents required more time and finances which had its own limitations.

The recruitment period should be longer enough to allow time to verify all the required documents by relevant government institutions and agencies.

National Identification Numbers should be allowed as long as their genuineness can be verified.

The recruitment process should be well financed to undertake most of the required activities to avoid haphazard work.

- v) The recruitment was done for all Ugandans as long as they had National Identification cards and LC1 or DISO /GISO confirmed that they had required documents verified by LC1/DISO/GISO and are proved to have no criminal record.

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The Committee recommends that there should always be proper scrutiny/Vetting of documents by LC1/DISO/GISO

- vi) During the recruitment exercise, affirmative action was put into consideration. 30% of the recruits were women.
- vii) Recruits filled medical forms which provided parameters considered on medical grounds. Applicants with medical issues were not recruited country wide. The army has lost a number of its members on medical grounds and others frequently fall sick resulting into huge medical bills to the Ministry. Thus, there is need to have mentally and physically health personnel that can serve the purpose. Thorough medical examination is done to avoid compensation at retirement where retirees claim to have got health issues while at work. This has equally costed the Ministry huge sums of money in compensating them.
- viii) It was noted that the checkups take a lot of time due to limited number of personnel to undertake the exercise, coupled with huge numbers of recruits, this usually takes a lot of time and results into further complaints from recruits. The Ministry of Defence however raised the concerns that the money for training is limited and hence they find it difficult to hire other personnel that they can ably pay.

The Committee recommends that for the recruitment exercise to be managed effectively and efficiently, there is need for financial support to enable them hire expert personnel to beef up UPDF medical officers.

- ix) It was alleged that there was a lot of falsification medical results to eliminate the recruits. This allegation was widely brought to the attention of the Committee by Members of Parliament.

The Committee recommends that, hard copies of medical results should be issued to individuals undergoing medical tests as evidence of their health statuses to avoid result falsification, and copies be sent to the

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recruitment centres. This should be done in such a way that the results can be proved to confirm authenticity.

It was also noted that medical checkups were conducted in an open place without organized structures and conducive atmosphere. This exposes people to right to privacy.

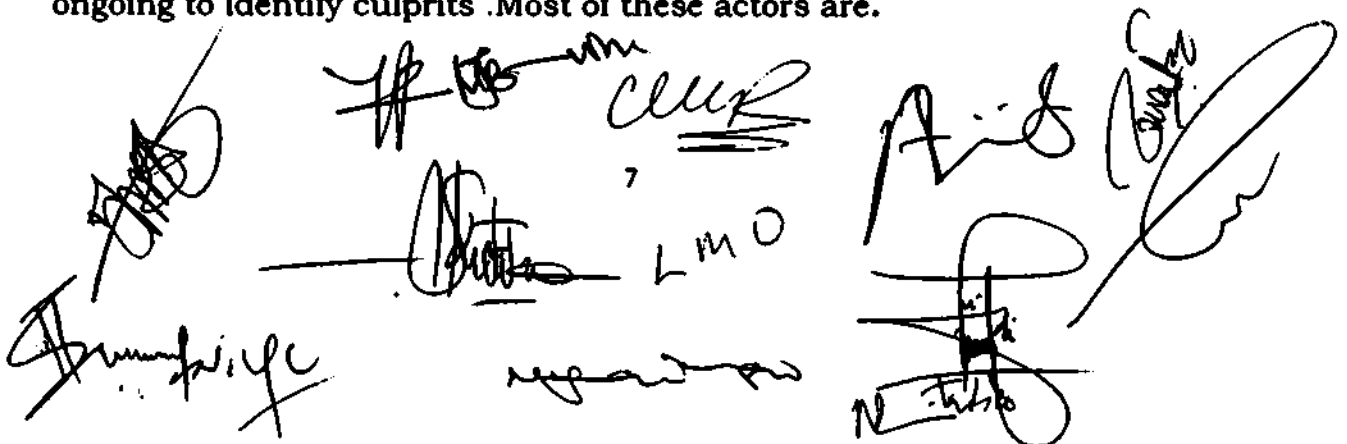
The Committee recommends that the medical checkups should be carried out in an organized place where the activity can be done systematically with reasonable medical infrastructure in place.

Alternatively, designated government hospitals and medical centers should be utilized for the checkups.

- x) Some recruits were disqualified for having scars, tattoos, cultural body marks and gaps in the teeth. This is because earlier experiences showed claims for compensation for having such marks purportedly acquired after joining the service. This has costed UPDF a lot of money for compensation but also they incur costs and time defending themselves when taken to courts.

While recruiting, UPDF should put into consideration some cultural norms that people are subjected to while they are still young which leave them with permanent marks on their bodies to avoid issues of discrimination. Such people can be taken through signing forms that indicate their status at entry into force.

- xi) There were several allegations of extortion and bribery during the recruitment exercise. However, the Committee was informed that the investigations are ongoing to identify culprits. Most of these actors are.

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However, it was also noted that there are indisciplined soldiers who purportedly turn themselves into recruitment officers where as not, and they extort money from the vulnerable recruits, parents and guardians.

The Committee was informed that some soldiers /officers who took part in the malpractice have been arrested and prosecution is due while others are at large and security is on track to get them arrested.

The Committee recommends that the public should be encouraged to report cases of bribery and extortion with evidence so that prosecution can be conclusive.

The Committee further recommends that recruitment officers should be given tags for clear identification during the recruitment process. Sensitization before and during recruitment periods should be intensified to avoid such scenarios.

GENERAL CHALLENGES DURING RECRUITMENT PROCESS.

The Committee was informed that UPDF faced the following challenges;

a) LC Recommendations.

It was difficult to prove the authenticity of the letters of recommendations since they cannot easily reach out to all LCs; they trusted the work of the GISOs and DISOs

b) Forgeries

There were many forgeries of documents by applicants, which takes a lot of time and procedure to verify. These include academic certificates, National Identity Cards, Driving permits and letters of recommendations. This delays the whole process and it is time consuming.

c) Influence -peddling.

There was a lot of influence peddling by politicians and soldiers of higher ranks and this affected the recruitment process. They usually mount a lot of pressure

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on the recruitment office and this destructs the officers undertaking the work. The big people in this country should give space to the recruitment process to follow the well-stipulated procedures and guidelines.

d) High turn up of recruits.

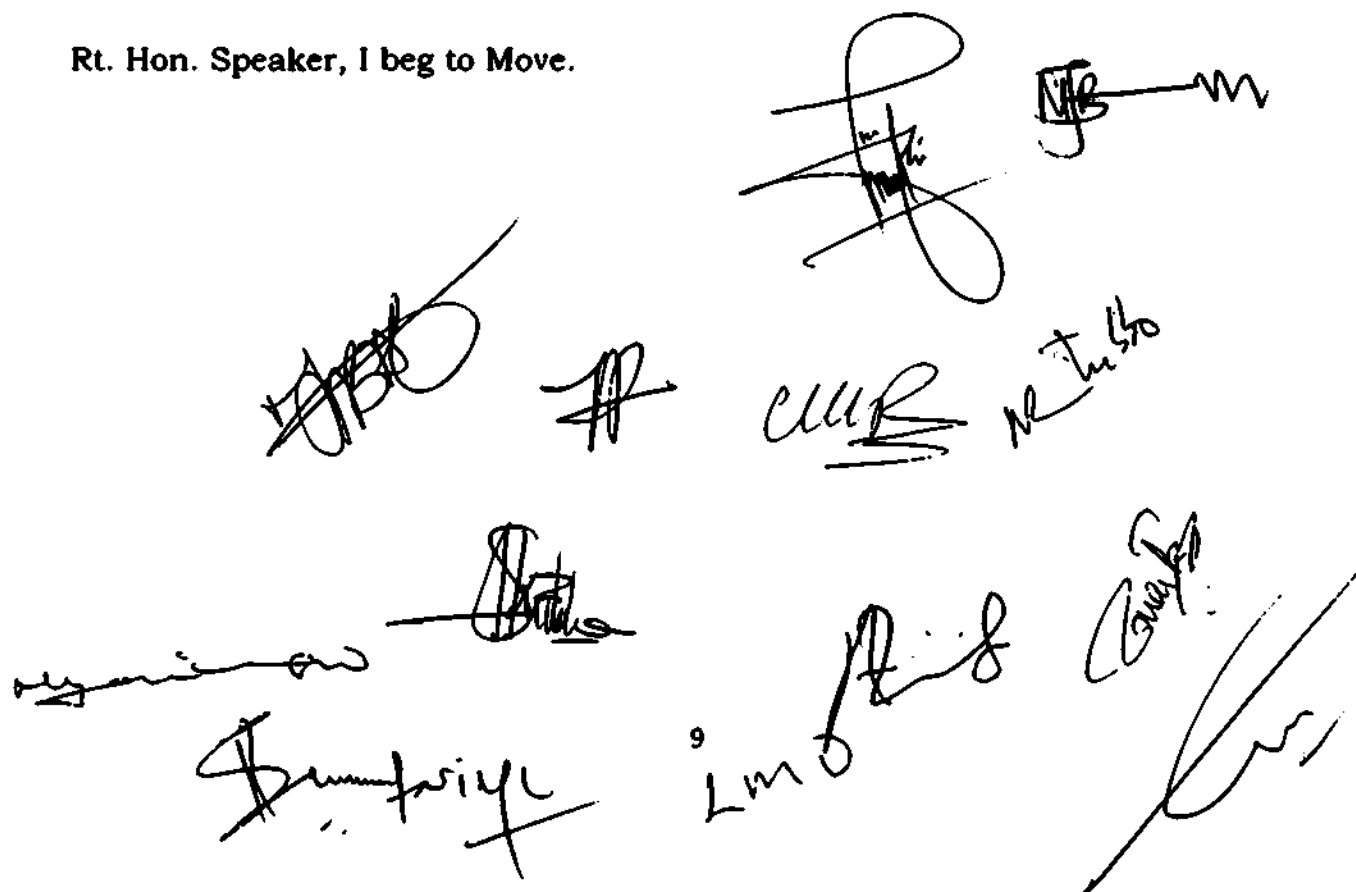
There was an overwhelming turn up of participants and the numbers exceeded the available slots and quotas. This led to many people being disqualified leading to many complaints and uncalled for allegations. For instance, positions that were for S.4 applicants did not stop University graduates from applying irrespective of clear guidelines. This is however attributed to unemployment wave in the country.

CONCLUSION

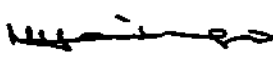

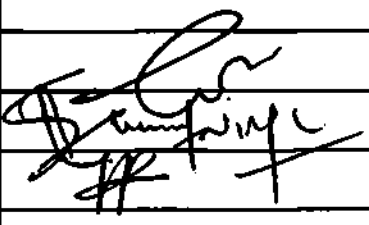
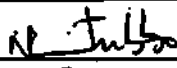
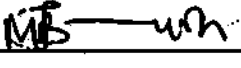



The exercise was conducted within the law and the high turn up of Ugandans was a clear indicator that the Youth want to serve their Country. Despite isolated incidences of extortion, bribery and political influences, the recruitment process was successfully done.

There is need to tighten up the loose ends in the recruitment exercise in future to avoid such complaints.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, I beg to Move.



**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS ON
ALLEGED UNFAIR AND DISCRIMINATORY RECRUITMENT BY UGANDA
PEOPLE'S DEFENCE FORCES.**

NO	NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY	SIGNATURE
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2	Hon. Milton Muwuma Vice Chairperson	Kigulu South County	NRM	
3	Hon. Wakooli Godfrey	Butiru County	NRM	
4	Hon. Ocheri Jimbricky	Labwor County	NRM	
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21	Hon. Okot Moses Junior Bitek	Kioga County	FDC	

22	Hon. Lt. Gen. Elwelu Peter	UPDF		
23	Hon. Odur Jonathan	Erute South	UPC	
24	Hon. Katabaazi Francis Katongole	Kalungu East County	NUP	
25	Hon. Kiwanuka Abdallah	Mukono North County	NUP	
26	Hon. Bakireke Namboze Betty	Mukono Municipality	NUP	
27	Hon. Museveni William	Buwekula South	INDEP.	
28	Hon. Kangwagye Stephen R.	Bukanga	INDEP.	<i>Handwritten signature</i>
29	Hon. Arinaitwe Rauben	Isingiro West	INDEP.	<i>Handwritten signature</i>
30	Hon. Lamwaka Margaret	Chua East	INDEP.	LMO