

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS ON
THE OVERSIGHT VISIT TO THE REGIONAL FORENSIC ANALYTICAL
GOVERNMENT LABORATORIES IN EASTERN AND WESTERN UGANDA**

**OFFICE OF THE CLERK TO PARLIAMENT,
PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS,
P.O BOX 7178,
KAMPALA**

SEPTEMBER, 2022

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Rt. Hon. Speaker and Members, the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs undertook a field visit to Eastern & Western Uganda, in the districts of Mbale and Mbarara to appraise the status of Regional Forensic Laboratories under the Directorate of Government Analytical Laboratory. The visit was conducted in accordance with **Article 90** of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and **Rule 189** of the **Rules of Procedure** of the Parliament, which empowers the Committee to monitor the performance of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA) under its jurisdiction.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Directorate of Government Analytical Laboratory (DGAL) is under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It provides a full range of general scientific analytical, forensic and advisory services that facilitate effective legal proceedings to dispense justice, safeguard public and environmental health and safety as well as promotion of trade.

DGAL provides services to a wide range of clientele including Government Departments responsible for the Administration of Justice and other agencies of Government; mainly the Police, Courts of Law (Judiciary), Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP), the Private Sector and members of the Public especially the traders and local manufacturers.

Historically, it was referred to as Government Chemist and it has been in existence since 1927. It has had varied administrative changes in status and placement within the government structures and bureaucracy. It became a Directorate in 2009, under the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

DGAL is a fully fledged directorate with three departments; namely, Criminalistics and Laboratory Services, Quality Chemical Verification and Regional Laboratories. Each department has got a diversity of laboratories, namely, forensic biology for DNA analysis, toxicology, arson/fire crimes and tool marks, questioned documents and cyber forensics, foods and drugs.

The Committee on Defense and Internal Affairs undertook to assess the general state of the Laboratories including but not limited to their human resource, the challenges faced by staff and management of the laboratories and any recommendations as to how a more efficient and effective institution can be achieved.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The Committee visited Mbale Regional Forensic Laboratory and interacted with staff and the Director, Directorate of Government Analytical Laboratory.

The Committee also made reference to the following documents;

- i. The National Budget for FY 2020/2021
- ii. The Semi- Annual Budget Performance Report for the Financial Year 2020/21

4.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee was guided by the following terms of reference;

- i. To ascertain the most common cases as well as the conditions under which the forensic laboratories operate, their functionality and infrastructure.
- ii. To assess the cost-benefit analysis of equipping the existing laboratories with the necessary sophisticated equipment, reagents and chemicals as a means of saving Government money on transportation of samples abroad.
- iii. To assess the staffing level of DGAL.
- iv. To ascertain challenges faced by Government Analytical Laboratories in Uganda.

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5.0 COMMITTEE FINDINGS

5.1 Status of the DGAL Forensic Laboratories


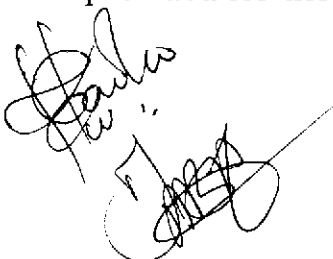
DGAL has acquired the land title for the Headquarters at Wandegeya and the Designs for the DNA Databank infrastructure Building have been approved by KCCA. However, there were no releases on development budget for Quarter one for FY 2022/2023, and this has greatly affected the commencement of works on the building.

DGAL has four (4) regional forensic laboratories situated in; Mbale for the Elgon and entire Eastern region, Mbarara for Western region, Gulu for Northern Region and Moroto for the North Eastern and Karamoja sub- regions. All these have their land titles except Mbarara where efforts to get the land title is underway.


DGAL developed an Operationalization Plan for Regional Forensic Laboratories as a systematic guide to operationalize the laboratories and offer more accessible forensic, analytical and advisory services to stakeholders at regional level.

Recruitment of forensic scientists to staff the Regional Forensic Laboratory has been embarked on with 10 Government Analysts recruited at the end of the FY 2021/2022. Clearance for recruitment for FY 2022/2023 has been sought from Ministry of Public Service through the Ministry of Internal Affairs. However it should be noted that DGAL approved staff structure are 124 positions and as of July 2022, only 65 positions are filled (52.4% filled) leaving 59 positions vacant (47.6% vacant).


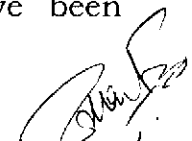
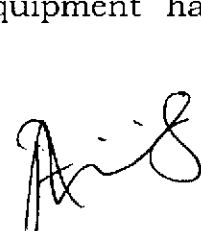
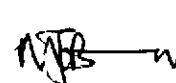
Day care facilities have been set up in Mbale Regional Laboratory to cater for breast feeding and expectant mothers who are part of the staff and clientele. The renovations and furnishing of basic scientific equipment have been provided for the Regional Forensic Laboratories.



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Parliament appropriated an additional UGX 8Bn to DGAL for the FY 2022/2023 for the Regional Forensic Laboratories to acquire modern scientific equipment to aid forensic analysis in the regions. An additional UGX 6.4Bn is needed to fully equip and operationalize all the regional laboratories.

The Committee further noted that despite the completion of the regional forensic laboratory in Mbarara, the said laboratory has not been operationalized due to lack of funding, lack of professional staff to manage the laboratory hence limiting service delivery in the region exhibits have to be transported to Kampala Headquarters.

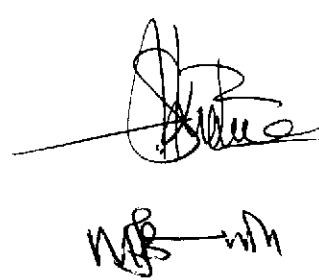
The Committee recommends quick deployment of the professional staffs to manage the Mbarara regional laboratory.

5.2 National DNA Data Bank

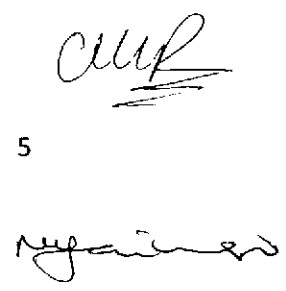
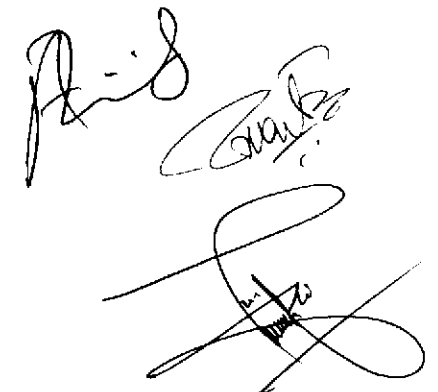
The Committee noted that the most common cases DGAL receives are those that require DNA analysis for crimes related to toxicology/poison, murder/homicides and sexual assaults (rape and defilement).

The DNA Bank will be essential in solving cases of missing persons, paternity, and civil cases of administration of estates referred by the Administrator General and Security Agencies.

Building and Establishment of a Forensic DNA Data base to support Intelligence and Crime Investigations will lead to strengthening National Security and criminal identification. The DNA bank will eliminate massive arrests of suspects before evidence is obtained and this will reduce the costs of feeding the suspects in prisons.


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The next generation of National Identification Cards will have a feature of the DNA profiles of all Ugandan Nationals and it is imperative that the National DNA Databank is in place to aid the National Identification exercise.

The establishment of a National DNA Database is critical to provide a fast call scientific based mechanism for identification of offenders by linking them to crime.

Funds availed for the construction of the DNA Database Building is not enough for the construction of the building.

The Committee recommends that construction of the DATA Bank should be fast tracked as this is going to be very vital aiding the National Identification exercise, Since NIRA will soon roll out massive ID renewal the DNA feature can be incorporated in the IDs. This will help in combating crime.

Agreed

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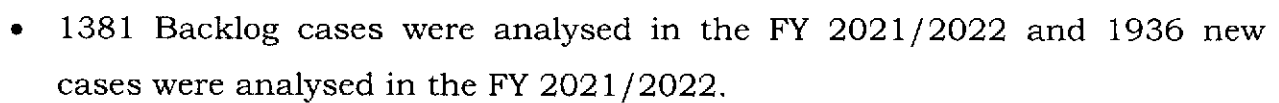
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Table 1



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FY 2021/2022 CASE PERFORMANCE

DIVISIONS	RECEIVED CASES	REPORTED CASES			
		NEWLY RECEIVED		Old	Grand Total
		General/Civil	New Forensic		
Toxicology	978	17	668	551	1,236
Forensic Biology	770	175	118	647	940
Fire Arms	102	0	93	11	104
Questioned Documents	171	0	78	40	118
Food and Drugs	349	66	205	43	314
Chemical and Microbiology	406	343	1	57	401
Pesticide Residue	129	55	19	32	106
Water and Environment	98	98	0	0	98
Subtotal	3003	754	1182	1,381	3,317
Grand total		1936		41.6% Backlog cases of the 37.5% target.	
Percentage performance	64.5% Reported cases of the received cases				

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The Committee was informed that DGAL developed a case backlog reduction strategy July 2018- June 2023 themed '**Clearance of forensic case backlog to enhance DGAL's Efficiency and Effectiveness**' that was approved by Ministry of Internal Affairs Senior Management. The case backlog strategy which commenced in FY 2018/19 targeted 100% clearance as at June 2021. The Case backlog has since been reduced from 5782 cases in FY 2017/2018 to 2003 cases as at FY 2021/2022.

The target of 100% cumulative case backlog clearance was not achieved due to;

- i. Covid-19 lockdown
- ii. Increase number of cases and exhibits submitted to DGAL by Police indicating an increase in crime rate
- iii. Insufficient budget for adequate required laboratory consumables
- iv. Inadequate number of staff.
- v. Delayed servicing of equipment from engineers from abroad

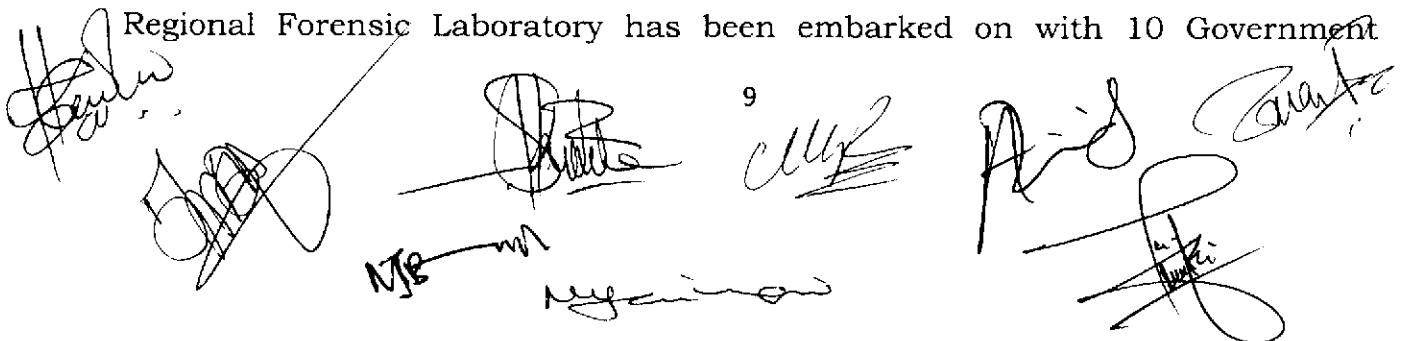
5.4 Staffing Level and Human Resource

The Committee noted that DGAL is understaffed. The approved staff structure for DGAL is 124 positions and as of July 2022, only 65 positions are filled (52.4% filled) leaving 59 positions vacant (47.6% vacant).

The wage provision for the directorate in FY 2022/23 was provided at UGX 2.644Bn against the requirement of UGX 8.385Bn leaving a shortfall of UGX 5.741Bn thus operating at 30% of the required budget to sufficiently staff the directorate.

The Committee was informed that Recruitment of forensic scientists to staff the Regional Forensic Laboratory has been embarked on with 10 Government

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Analysts recruited at the end of the FY 2021/2022. The Committee was also informed that submissions to Public Service Commission were already done and are pending interviews.

The Committee was further informed that clearance for recruitment for FY 2022/2023 has been sought from Ministry of Public Service through the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Delayed recruitment is a direct consequence of understaffing and this has resulted into a heavy case backlog DGAL is currently facing.

The Committee recommends that DGAL should fast track the recruitment process to make it fully operational.

The Committee was informed that recruitment of forensic scientist staff to the Regional Forensic Laboratory has been embarked on with 10 Government Analysts recruited at the end of the FY 2021/2022.

The Committee was informed that there are already submissions to Public Service Commission that are pending interviews.

5.5 The Cost-benefit analysis of equipping the existing laboratories

The Committee noted that the Government Analytical Laboratory is important especially when compared to the private laboratories because it is a multi-disciplinary national forensic referral institution that provides an advisory role to government agencies.

The Committee further noted that DGAL provides not-for-profit testing services to various Government Institutions, Departments and Agencies.

The budgetary provisions for the reagents to clear case backlog required at least UGX 12.8Bn but only UGX 7.2Bn had been initially provided and this affects the dispensing of justices to the population in time.

The DGAL annually raises UGX300M in fees from application by private individuals for the different they carry out on request.

The Committee recommends that DGAL should be provided with adequate budget. This would at the same time enable Government to realize more Non-Tax Revenue (NTR) from numerous DNA cases, and the individuals and organizations who usually want tests made from DGAL. Such payments are made directly to Uganda Revenue Authority and to the consolidated fund.

5.6 Age Analysis Equipment;

The Committee established that there is increased demand for age analysis /determination to DGAL from the population; this is coupled with increased incoming cases from NIRA for age analysis. DGAL requires the machine to address this requirement and the expected revenue is UGX120M per annum against the investment of UGX 2Bn only.

The Committee recommends that Government should provide U.Shs. 2 Billion to DGAL to fast track the process of procuring this equipment.

5.7 CHALLENGES FACED BY ANALYTICAL LABORATORIES IN UGANDA

5.7.1 Underfunding

The Committee noted that one of the biggest challenges the Directorate faces is underfunding. This has affected the performance of the directorate. Due to underfunding, most of the laboratories lack the necessary equipment, chemicals and reagents used in the numerous tests. It's important to note that most of the reagents are consumables and thus need constant replenishment.

The Committee recommends that Government allocates more funds to DGAL since underfunding has been a recurring challenge to the Directorate.

The Committee further recommends that efforts should be made to functionalize and operationalize regional laboratories to serve the wider population.

5.7.2 Delayed recruitment to fill the approved staff structure;

The Committee noted that this has contributed to inadequate number of staff to deploy in Regional Laboratories. The regional laboratories are grossly understaffed and this affects the laboratory analysis and exhibits collection at the regional laboratories. Currently only 65 positions are filled in the structure with 59 positions remaining vacant. Staffing is key in the promise of 100% clearance of backlog and without the 59 vacant positions filled, this target will be difficult to achieve.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs has contacted Public Service Commission to undertake the recruitment and promotions of staff at DGAL.

The Committee recommends that the Ministry should fast-track the recruitment exercise so as to fill the vacant posts.

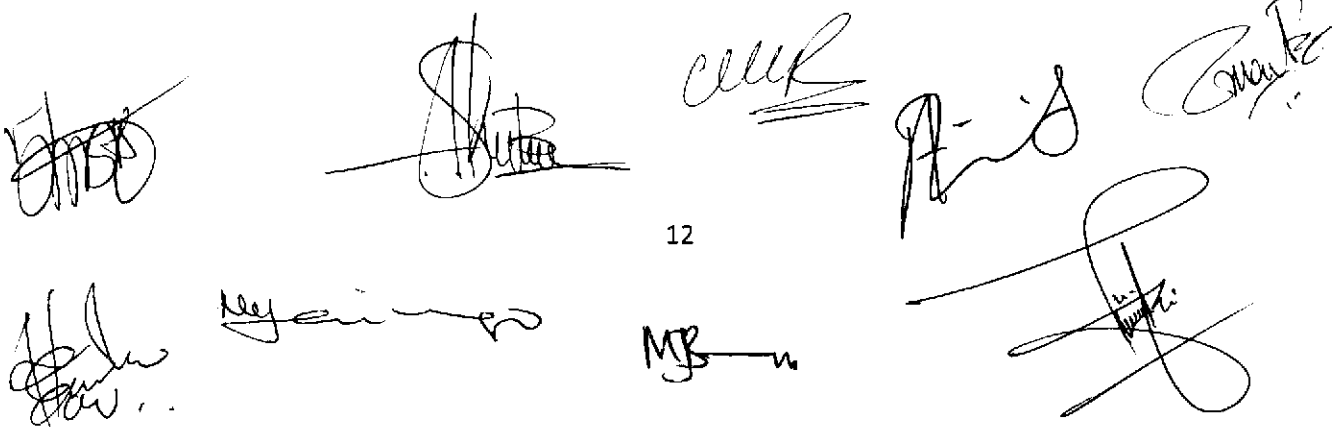
5.7.3 Training and capacity building of the technical Staff:

The budget for training is inadequate and the ban on scientist to travel for specialized trainings has affected the skills and knowledge transfer.

The Committee noted that there is need to constantly upgrade the skills of DGAL staff through routine training because of technological advances and criminals change their tactics all the time. This necessitates the need to adapt to different modern sophisticated methods to match the increasing sophistication in crime.

It is recommended that more staff undergo short courses and post-graduate courses with the help of government subsidies in order to improve the quality of DGAL staff performance and efficiency.

More funding for reagents should be provided in the next financial year in order to deal with the backlog cases.



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5.7.4 Equipping of Regional Forensic Laboratories:

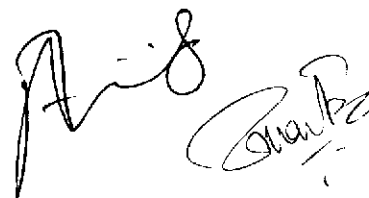

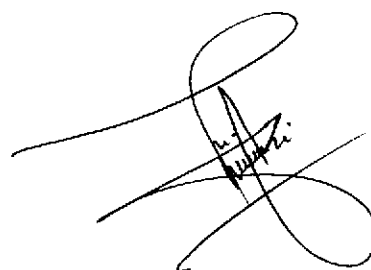
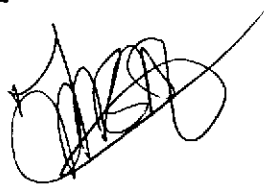
Parliament appropriated an additional UGX 8Bn to DGAL for the FY 2022/2023 for the Regional Forensic Laboratories to acquire modern scientific equipment to aid forensic analysis in the regions. An additional UGX 6.4Bn is needed to fully equip and operationalize all the regional laboratories. This is important in enhancing access to Justice in Courts of Law as exhibits sometimes take long to be transported to headquarters in Kampala.

6.0 CONCLUSION

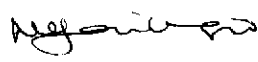
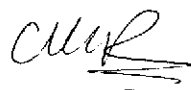
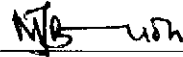
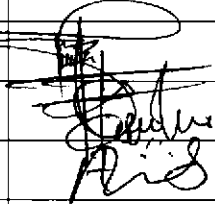
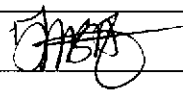
The Committee noted that although DGAL is an indispensable directorate in an evidence-based system of justice dispensation, it has faced numerous challenges key of which is underfunding and under staffing. Most of their scientists are usually poached out to greener pastures because of poor pay.


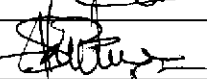
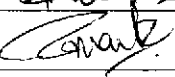
The Committee commends the management and staff of DGAL for the work they carry out with limited resources and recommend a substantial increment in their budget.

Rt. Hon. Speaker, I beg to Move.



**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS ON
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GOVERNMENT LABORATORIES IN EASTERN AND WESTERN UGANDA**

NO	NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY	SIGNATURE
1	Hon. Nyakikongoro Rosemary Chairperson	DWR Sheema	NRM	
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3	Hon. Wakooli Godfrey	Butiru County	NRM	
4	Hon. Ocheri Jimbricky	Labwor County	NRM	
5	Hon. Niyonsaba Alex	Bufumbira South	NRM	
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13	Hon. Kintu Alex Brandon	Kagoma North County	NRM	
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15	Hon. Lubega Bashir	Mubende Municipality	NRM	
16	Hon. Lokii Peter Abrahams	Jie County	NRM	
17	Hon. Mwesigwa Robert Rukaari	Mbarara City North	NRM	
18	Hon. Ikojo John Bosco	Bukedea County	NRM	
19	Hon. Ssekikuubo Theodore	Lwemiyaga County	NRM	
20	Hon. Namanya Naboth	Rubabo County	FDC	
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 Nambooze Betty	Mukono Municipality	NUP	
27	Hon. Museveni William	Buwekula South	INDEP.	
28	Hon. Kangwagye Stephen R.	Bukanga	INDEP.	
29	Hon. Arinaitwe Rauben	Isingiro West	INDEP.	
30	Hon. Lamwaka Margaret	Chua East	INDEP.	