

## ***Uganda Police News***

### **Police Women**

**12 April 2009 <http://allafrica.com/>**

Women Police officers have complained that they are sexually harassed by their male bosses in order to be deployed or promoted. Some of the women officers said they had been denied promotions for rejecting sexual advances from their superiors, with some stuck at the same rank for over 27 years. The officers disclosed their plight during a meeting with the Inspector General of Police, Maj. Gen. Kale Kayihura, at the Kibuli Police Training School playground on Friday. The women officers were from the Kampala metropolitan area that covers Kampala, Wakiso and Mpigi districts. Some of the female officers sobbed as their colleagues narrated the ordeal they had gone through under their brutal male bosses. The complaints included poor personal and general conditions in the force. Many cited sexual harassment, victimisation over simple mistakes, poor housing and living conditions, failure by their supervisors to recognise their plight especially when pregnant, lack of uniforms, missing salaries and failure to be promoted. They said bosses refuse to deploy them for 'juicy' assignments after disagreements with them. Some said they had been deliberately undeployed for years for small mistakes, while others had discovered malicious reports in their confidential files. At least 45 women aired out their complaints as the Police chief, who braved the scorching sun, jotted down notes. He overruled the police spokesperson, Judith Nabakooba, who had suggested that some of the complaints were too personal and needed to be communicated in privacy. Detective Nora Asiimwe said many of her colleagues were sexually abused and contracted the HIV virus. "Due to sexual harassment, many of our colleagues get infected with HIV/Aids and can't be admitted for refresher courses. They end up getting frustrated, which has discouraged many other young women from joining the force," she said. She also reported that pregnant officers are maliciously assigned duties that require physically fit personnel. More tears flowed as Sgt. Shellie Namita Onega of the police band narrated that her bosses forced her to pay for a music instrument she accidentally broke while on duty and that since 2007, she has neither been deployed nor transferred. "I have been victimised for no good reason. I'm not deployed yet I'm a single mother with five orphans to look after. I have never been promoted for the 27 years I have served the force," she said. Another police woman, Lokisa Sande, also wondered why she had never been promoted yet she had served for over 35 years. Catherine Nampindi, who is attached to the Police Standards Unit, said although Kayihura had directed that she is promoted after serving for 12 years, her name was again deleted from the list of candidates. Kayihura had ordered her promotion following her petition last year. Nampindi joined the force in 1994 with a diploma. Baker Isabirye, in charge of the family protection unit at Wandegaya, said she had been victimised for filing a case against the former Mukono Police commander, James Aurien, over defiling her housegirl. Aurien is currently facing charges of murdering his wife. "I discovered several blackmail letters in my file," she said, adding that she had not been promoted for 15 years. She said many male Police officers above the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Police commit serious offences but are not prosecuted. ASP Womagye, attached to Mpigi police station, said her boss declared her a "deserter" on her return from a military training course at Kyankwanzi last year. "We are being sexually harassed, oppressed, marginalised and demoralised, especially by those 'God Fathers' at the headquarters and our immediate supervisors," Nalongo Leila

Dralo said. Some said they had been forced to share rooms in the barracks with men. The Police women said following up their missing salaries was a nightmare and wondered how the force would attract educated women when those serving were being subjected to inhuman treatment. Another police woman confessed it was her first time to speak to the Police chief, saying she had been scared by others that Kayihura would never listen to any complaint. "This is an Easter gift to allow us to express ourselves without the presence of our bosses who have oppressed us for a long time," another said. Kayihura said he would not tolerate such acts in the force and vowed to dismiss any officer who demands sexual favours from his juniors. "Anybody who demands sexual favours from any woman officer will be dismissed." He promised to investigate all the cases presented to him for appropriate action.