

ROLE OF COMMUNITY POLICING AND CRIME PREVENTION IN RELOKA

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The basis for community policing in Uganda is both Legal and doctrinal. The Constitution enjoins us under article **212(d)** to cooperate with the public, other security organs and the population generally in the performance of our functions. It is also the duty of the citizen under article **17(f)** of the Constitution to cooperate with lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order.

The concept of community policing is now considered as **second generation** policing. The new paradigm in police work requires the integration of traditional police duties and functions into life and activities of communities.

The purpose of community policing is to encourage **Public Private Partnership** in the fight against crime. Community policing emphasizes building partnerships between police and community members. It has two core ideas-**Community partnerships and Problem solving**. The Public / communities in order to fully support the Police need to take center stage by being more active through a very strong partnership. This in its intrinsic value represents a fundamental shift in the basic role of the Police to develop new partnerships with key elements of the community. Crime prevention initiatives and civic security must be decentralized to the basic manageable units of society in our case, through Local Councils and other organized communities.

The major consideration therefore, is that the basis of community policing is the joint effort between the citizen and the police in addressing the local crime problems.

2.0 BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY POLICING AND CRIME PREVENTION

- a) We should note that crime especially economic and political/media offences that have not been handled properly hurt the image of not only the police but the country. It destabilizes the security and tranquility of the country and erodes the democratic structures that have been built through pain and sacrifice from our patriots. Economic development and investments cannot take place in a much more pragmatic way if crime especially economic crimes are not controlled. We must realize that those countries that have developed much faster have among things controlled crime drastically, especially by the use of the population. Such countries include Japan and the Asian tigers who adopted a community policing approach as a catalyst for crime prevention and hence investment. Singapore, Malaysia and Japan are some of the countries with a prominent community policing model that involves the business community in the fight against crime and hence triggering investments.

South Africa has embarked on a community policing model known as Business Against Crime (BAC) in order to fight against crime and hence striving to improve its international image in order to promote development. One of the reasons why hosting the world cup was eluding South Africa was due to high levels of crime.

- b) Involving the police and communities, in crime prevention allows the police to benefit from community intelligence which is a prerequisite for crime intelligence. In turn, crime intelligence helps a lot in crime prevention. It directs operations such as patrols hence improving reaction time to incidents of crime.
- c) On the other hand also, crime prevention especially community policing-led crime prevention helps in gaining from economies of scale. In the long run, the police, use few resources, such as transport, funds, salary, allowances and personnel involved in fighting crime. Community policing creates “civilian police” officers or crime preventers, who do not need to be paid or facilitated to report, inform or prevent crime. As long as the population is sensitized, educated and constructively engaged, they will fill the gaps left by lack of resources needed by police to do their job. In addition to above reasons, crime prevention through community involvement assists the police to benefit directly from public resources e.g. donations by the communities to assist the police in performance of their work e.g. through provision of police posts, police booths, motor vehicles or payment of rent. All this is possible if the public appreciate our work through joint involvement.
- d) Crime prevention through community policing also, assists the police in criminal investigations. A community that is apprehensive of the police can not avail itself in critical situations where evidence is required. Many would be witnesses have not come up during investigations and court trials due to poor police image and lack of public involvement. We now need to be more vigilant in public sensitization programmes targeting at educating the public on crime investigation. This makes our investigations

easier and hence procuring convictions that in turn have a positive effect on prevention of crime.

- e) Crime prevention through community policing helps in promotion of human rights and freedoms e.g. reduction of murders means respect of the right to life. Prevention of thefts is a positive act towards promotion of the right to own property. This in turn promotes democracy, Constitutionalism and human rights.
 - f) **Building Private-Public Partnerships.** This is where Police officers, community members and Government agency representative's etc work together to change those conditions that allow crime and disorder problems to take hold in a particular neighborhood.
 - g) **Information gathering and dissemination.** Community policing will play a critical role by providing the Police with information about specific crimes in their communities.
 - h) **Joint operations.** This will be achieved through forming joint patrols between the police and the communities to deter crime in their localities.
 - i) **Civic Education and mass sensitization.** During Community policing programme, the team will educate and sensitize communities to be security conscious and report any criminal activity.
 - j) **Conducting meetings.** The team will conduct focused meetings where ever it will be necessary, in order to address issues concerning crime.
 - k) **Registration of residents and visitors.** The team should encourage LCs to keep an up to date list of all people in the areas and what they do for a living. This will help to monitor illegal activities and crime in general.
 - l) **Carry out a performance auditing of the police.** The communities policed must be able to take stock and evaluate the **efficiency, effectiveness and corrupt** tendencies in their police through Community policing.
 - m) **Supporting vulnerable groups in society.** Domestic violence, gender based violence and child protection need to be given particular attention by the Police while on community policing.
- Re-activation of subcounty security committees. It has been noted that Sub-county security committees through out the country are not effective and fully operational especially in Northern Uganda. This has had a negative effect on the delivery of police services, especially improvement of law and order and development in general. The UPF is embarking on a country wide programme of reactivating the committees with the relevant stakeholders starting with Northern region. This is aimed at strengthening the programme for resettlement of IDPs from camps back to their villages and re-establishment of law and order in Karamoja.

- Under the Local Government Act, the political head of the subcounty is the chairperson local council III. Likewise the National Security Council Act also establishes in every subcounty a committee known as the subcounty security committee. The subcounty security committee is composed of;
- The chair person of the subcounty local council, who is the chairperson,
- The internal security officer at the subcounty (GISO), who is the secretary,
- The subcounty chief,
- The secretary responsible for security in the subcounty local council committee,
- The area police commander,
- All secretaries for defence of the parish council committees in the subcounty, and
- The chairperson of the subcounty women's council.

n) Functions of the subcounty security committees

- to inform and advise the district security committee(DSC) on matters relating security in the subcounty,
- to coordinate and advise on matters relating to intelligence and security in the subcounty,
- to forward to the district security committee the security needs of the subcounty,
- to carry out any other function as the district security committee or the council may assign to the committee.
- **Benefits of sub-county security committees**
 - Ease of monitoring government programmes
 - The population feels safe and secure
 - Promotes constitutionalism, respect and observance of human rights
 - Improves investments and quality of life
 - Improves people's trust in their government
 - Provides permanent solutions to problems
 - Promotes cooperation and coordination among the various government departments.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The main focus to policing now is community policing, and this strategy begins at the neighbourhood level. Local Government administration in Uganda is delivered under the Local Council system. Section 26 of the Local Government Act lists the functions of the lower local government councils which include assisting in the maintenance of law, order and security. They also receive and solve problems and disputes forwarded to them from the lower councils.

Therefore, implementation of community policing can be achieved under the LC system.

Security concerns of the subcounties just like crime requires a proactive approach. This would require laying down strategies that will effectively deal with any aspect of insecurity or crime before they occur. For example section 39 of the Local Government Act allows local government councils to make byelaws as long as they are not inconsistent with the Constitution of Uganda or any law enacted by parliament or an ordinance of the district. This could be done to curb certain local crimes or acts of insecurity within the subcounty.

Security is the cornerstone to settled communities and consequently development. It is imperative that local leaders prioritize issues of security in order to gain the confidence of the people they lead.

It should also be noted that mechanisms to deal with local problems need to be developed because more often than not, local security or even crime problems, would call for local solutions. It is in this respect that any functioning subcounty security committee would go a long way in meeting the communities' expectations but above all demonstrate the importance of team work.

Where subcounty security committees do not function there is a tendency of solving problems mechanically and to even refer minor problems for solutions from above. In this era of democracy, democratic centralism need to be seen to be practiced.

Community policing emphasizes building relationships between police and community members. Crime prevention is at the heart of Community policing. The UPF seeks to promote a community based policing approach that is centered and focused on the fulfillment of community needs and aspirations. Communities that are empowered and clear about their problems are more willing to support the Police in devising strategies, and to commit their resources to achieve solutions to the problems identified. This community policing strategy therefore, provides the ammunition to achieving the above goals, objectives and aspirations. We are sure we have set a steady and prudent course for successfully accomplishing our goal of providing the highest quality of Police services and excellence to the citizens of Uganda.