

Uganda Prisons Service Mandate

The Prisons Act, 2006 provides for the mandate and functions of a Uganda Prisons Service composed of Central and former Local Government Prisons and spells out the duties of the UPS as to protect, promote and fulfil the rights of those incarcerated. Section 3 spells out the key objective as "to contribute to the protection of all members of society by providing reasonable, safe, secure and humane custody and rehabilitation of offenders in accordance to universally accepted standards". The Prison Act represents a milestone in penal reform in Uganda. It offers a modernized legal framework for incarceration, entrenches, human rights in penal policy, caters for the prisoners' rights, consolidates and strengthens the management of UPS. It is the mandate of UPS to enforce the new Act.

The Prisons Act, 2006, section 116 mandates the UPS to take over management and administration of Local Administration Prisons.

The new law introduces a number of issues such as access to information, complaint handling, establishment of Prisons Council and Authority, internal and external oversight, the right to be heard for both inmates and staff whereas subject to disciplinary measures/action.

The Act was passed by Parliament at the end of FY 2005/06. The law became effective on 14th July, 2006 after completing the budgeting process for FY 2006/07.

Section 114 of the Prisons Act, 2006 states that:-

- The functions and administration of Local Administration Prisons shall be taken over by the Central Prisons Service.
- A person who immediately before coming into force of this act held or was acting in any office in local administration prisons, so far as consistent with this Act, shall be taken to have been appointed as from the coming into force of this act in the equivalent office under this Act.
- A person being held as a prisoner or detained in custody in a local administration prison at the time this Act came into force shall be taken to be held or detained by the Uganda Prison Service.
- The Assets and Liabilities of local administration prison shall be taken over by Uganda Prisons Service.

Functions

Section 5 of the Prisons Act provides the functions of UPS as follows:-

- To ensure that every person retained legally in a prison is kept in humane, safe custody, provided in court when requires until lawfully discharged or removed from prison.
- To facilitate the social rehabilitation and reformation of prisoners through specific training and educational programmes.
- To facilitate the re-integration of prisoners into their communities.
- To ensure performance by prisoners of work reasonably necessary for the effective management of prisons.
- To perform other such functions as the Minister after consultation with the Prisons Authority, may from time to time assign to the service.

Constitutional, Legislative and Policy Mandates

The Uganda government has ratified a number of treaties providing minimum standards for prisons condition and prisoners rights. The Uganda Prisons service derives its mandate from the following:

- Article 215 of the constitution of the Republic of Uganda
- Prisons Act, 2006
- United Nation Minimum Rules for treatment of offenders (1955).