CDF'S LEADERSHIP HAS CEMENTED UPDF'S COLLABORATION WITH OTHER SECURITY INSTITUTIONS

GEN. MUHOOZI BOOSTS UNITY, WORK ETHIC

By Nelson Kiva

To enhance discipline, teamwork and professionalism within the military, the Chief of the Defence Forces (CDF) Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, has since introduced the first ever CDF Inter-Forces Drill Competition. The Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) held the inaugural competition at the Kololo Independence Grounds on May 13, 2025. The historic competition attracted the participation of 16 units from across the services to compete in co-ordinated drills, showcasing the highest standards of precision and teamwork.

During the competition, which had the Internal Security Organisation (ISO) as the overall winner, Gen. Muhoozi announced a new dawn at the UPDF, where they would strive for excellence in all fields without exception. He applauded the high level of performance exhibited by all participants, which made the competition "excellent and enjoyable".

The drills, the military chief disclosed, demonstrated the core values and capabilities of the UPDF, ranging from teamwork, precision and discipline.

"Military parades represent the co-ordination essential in the military across different services, formations, and units," Gen. Muhoozi said.

He expressed gratitude to the Commander-in-Chief, President Yoweri Museveni, for his visionary leadership, attributing UPDF's success and resilience to his guidance.

During the competition, the best creative drill and cultural integration award was won by the Special Forces Command, best pro stick team was Air Force, best cane stick team was 3rd Infantry Division, best sword drill team was Internal Security Organisation, among other awards.

"The competition will not only have reinvigorated troop discipline, self-control and pride; pride in the uniform, pride in your service as soldiers of UPDF, and pride in your country, Uganda, it will also instil habits of precision, attention to detail, time management, teamwork and camaraderie. I encourage commanders and the leaders of all units in UPDF to keep rotating the participants of these drill competitions so that all may benefit from this new culture," Gen. Muhoozi said.

The competition was graced by military delegations from several countries such as Russia, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Kenya, South Sudan, among others.

The Deputy Chief of Defence Forces and chairperson of the Drill Competition Steering Committee, Lt. Gen. Sam Okiding, commended the Commander-in-Chief for his durable mentorship.

"He has always taught us to add value wherever we are, and that is why we are here today," Okiding said.

He applauded Gen. Muhoozi for leading with humility, openness and teamwork, and reaffirmed the UPDF's readiness and capability to defend the nation, guided by strong values and the Holy Spirit.

President Museveni has since applauded Gen. Muhoozi for his effective leadership in streamlining the UPDF military parade.

President Museveni, while presiding over the 62nd Independence Day celebrations, applauded the CDF for introducing reforms in the military parade not limited to marching routines.



The Chief of Defence Forces, Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba (centre), inspecting a guard of honour mounted by the UPDF as he arrived in Gulu to assess ongoing operations in the area on June 14, last year



Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba (foreground), addressing soldiers during a recent event. Efforts have been made to improve their welfare

IMPROVED REMUNERATION

The salaries for officers and other ranks have steadily improved over the past two years.

These adjustments reflect ongoing efforts to enhance the welfare and financial stability of soldiers and their families, while boosting morale and retention within the force.

In 2024, Parliament approved a significant salary enhancement for officers of the UPDF, allocating approximately sh962.2b to improve their remuneration.

The defence ministry had argued that the salary enhancement was part of the broader efforts to lessen pay disparities within the military service and align the recompence of lower-ranking officers more closely with broader public service salary standards.

The defence committee of Parliament stressed the need to prioritise salary enhancements for lower cadres in the military and tasked the finance ministry with considering additional funding to the defence wage bill.

LOGISTICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

According to the defence ministry, operational mobility through the acquisition of additional troop carriers, cargo trucks, and administrative vehicles, have been strengthened.

"Investment in maintenance infrastructure across divisions is ensuring that equipment and vehicles are properly serviced and remain operational for longer periods. Enhanced fuel management systems have improved transparency and accountability in resource use, significantly reducing misuse and strengthening oversight."

STRONG CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

Under Gen. Muhoozi's leadership, the UPDF has continued to strengthen its relationship with civilians through community engagement initiatives.

"In the recently concluded 2026 general election, strong civic engagement between the defence forces and the *wananchi* through national security mobilisation structures helped secure the biggest electoral victory (72%) for the President since 1996," the defence ministry noted.

"Gen. Muhoozi, through his Patriotic League of Uganda [PLU] initiative, is actively engaging young people in patriotism, civic awareness and national development. The PLU was launched on February 7, 2024, to promote good citizenship, national pride and unity among Ugandans. The other key objectives include combating corruption and promoting Pan-Africanism, among others," the ministry added.

The other pro-community programmes Gen. Muhoozi is spearheading include the MK Fund, which was inaugurated recently in Fort Portal.

According to Gen. Muhoozi, the MK Fund will complement existing government programmes such as the Parish Development Model and focus on segments of society that remain vulnerable, such as urban youth.

The fund will provide seed grants to youth with innovative business ideas in commercial agriculture, local manufacturing and information communication technology . The fund will provide sh1m to each beneficiary and the grants will not require repayment.

"The only payback will be the success of the recipient," Gen. Muhoozi said.

INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

Gen. Muhoozi, in his capacity as the CDF, has been lauded for ensuring enhanced collaboration between the UPDF and other national security institutions. They argue that close co-ordination of the UPDF, Uganda Police Force, Uganda Prisons Service, Uganda Communications Commission, immigration authorities, Uganda Wildlife Authority and intelligence agencies, has strengthened joint responses to security challenges.

"The integrated approach to security has improved intelligence sharing, operational co-ordination, and the ability of government institutions to respond quickly to emerging threats," an official at the defence ministry said.