

Over 136 cars stolen in Kampala

By Henry Sekanjako

At least 136 cars were stolen in Kampala city and surrounding areas in the past three months, according to the latest Police report.

This means at least one car is stolen in the city per day or an average of 40 cars are stolen every month.

Out of the 136 cars stolen, the Police have been able to recover only 36 cars.

The report by the Police indicated that the 136 vehicles went missing between August and November this year.

Addressing journalists yesterday at the Central Police Station in Kampala, the Police spokesperson, Emilian Kayima told journalists that many Ugandans have continued to lose motor vehicles to criminals who sell them locally or beyond borders to the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan or Tanzania.

According to the Police, the most prone areas for car thefts include Kampala central business area, Wakiso, Mukono, Entebbe and Kawempe within Kampala Metropolitan Police (KMP).

According to previous Police reports, the most high risk areas include Najjera, Kiwatule, Kisaasi, Bahai, Lukuli-Nanganda, Namasuba Upper Hill, Kibuye-Ggaba and Kigoowa.

"In Kampala Metropolitan Police area, 30 cases have been taken to court (in past three months), which is 22.05%. Successful prosecution is sometimes hampered by victims who easily lose interest immediately they recover their vehicles. This encourages criminals in their trade," Kayima said.

He explained that most of the stolen cars are picked from parking lots, bars and off the streets.

The Police publicist revealed that criminals were targeting Kampala Metropolitan Police area, because it is the most populated.

He noted that besides Kampala and surrounding areas, car thieves also mostly target Arua, Masaka, and Mutukula, which are near borders. This makes it easy for the thieves to drive the vehicles to the DR Congo or Tanzania.

Kayima further said the car thieves are mainly youth aged between 20



Kayima (right) showing some of the unclaimed vehicles parked at CPS. Photo by Ronnie Kijjambu

According to Kayima, the cars mostly targeted by thieves include Premios and Prado TX. He said the Japanese cars are generally preferred by the thieves.

MOST STOLEN CARS

and 30.

"When they steal these vehicles, they dismantle some into parts, modify others through tampering with the chassis numbers and then sell them locally or drive and sell them beyond borders to DR Congo, South Sudan or Tanzania," he said.

Last week, the Internal Security Organisation (ISO), arrested and paraded a 29-year-old man who

confessed to being part of the gang that is involved in stealing vehicles in the country and taking them to DR Congo.

Identified as Godfrey Mubiru Kayongo, the suspect told ISO that he had been in the illegal trade for the last 12 years, until he was arrested last week.

How vehicles are stolen

According to Kayima, criminals engaged in car theft trail their victims to the parking lots, homes, and along the streets. Then the thieves drive the cars away stealthily.

He added that some thieves break into houses and drive the vehicles away. "Some thieves hire the cars from owners under the self-drive arrangement and later report theft of the same vehicles," he noted.

After stealing the car, the thieves forge chassis numbers, replacing the original chassis number with the forged ones and replacing the registration number plates on the stolen vehicle.

"If the car owners are not keen, they might fail to recover their cars

due to the forgeries," Kayima said.

What motorists need to do

Kayima said when a motor vehicle is stolen, the owners should report to Police immediately, with authentic documents such as the national ID and log book, to enable the Police start on the recovery process.

He also advised car owners to invest in car tracking devices that help in fighting the rampant car thefts.

At CPS, Police are still stuck with a number of unclaimed cars, which are part of the 36 vehicles that have so far been recovered.

Kayima identified the cars as Premio new model, UAX 805A, UBB 605H, UAV 186Y, a Nissan and an Ipsum registration number UAN 044G.

According to past Police reports, between 2011 and 2016, a total of 474 vehicles were stolen from Uganda and taken to DR Congo.

But few car thieves take cars to Rwanda because it does not have porous border crossing points like those of DR Congo, Tanzania, Kenya and South Sudan.