

International Women's Day

Police woman committed to fighting gender-based violence

Profile. Senior Superintendent of Police Maureen Atuhaire studied education at Makerere University and graduated in 2007, however, she opted to join Police instead of teaching.

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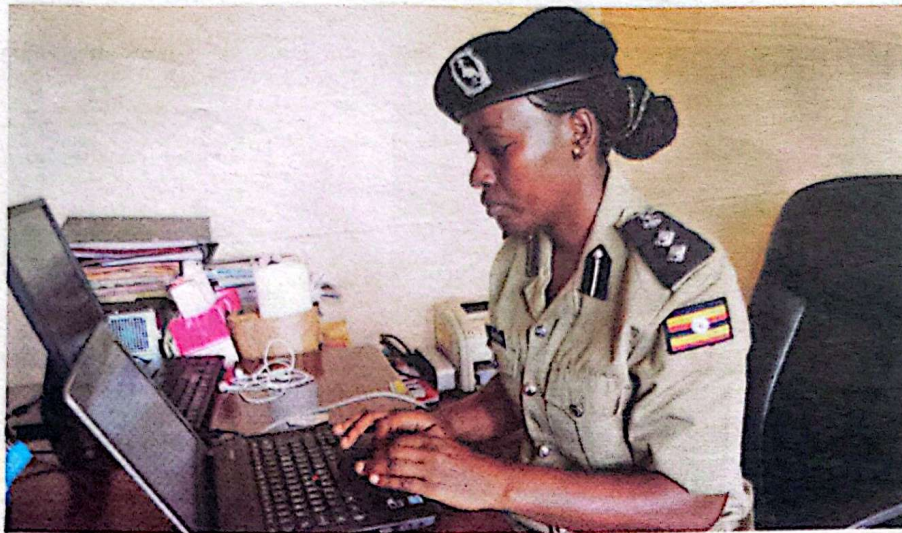
A number of working women are finding a big challenge of balancing work and family life.

One of such women is the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Maureen Atuhaire, who is the commissioner in charge of Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU) in the Uganda Police Force.

Ms Atuhaire who describes herself as family counsellor and rights advocate handles more than 3,000 cases related to Gender Based Violence (GBV) annually.

For the 10 years she has been in Police, Ms Atuhaire on some occasions spends nights awake, without her family and even misses attending her relatives and colleagues parties.

This, she attributes it to the increasing cases of GBV at her desk. Ms Atuhaire says cases of domestic violence are rampant during the beginning of every academic term and during harvest period where men tend to grab all harvest for



Senior Superintendent of Police Maureen Atuhaire in her office recently. PHOTO BY JOSHUA KATO

their own benefit.

"When the term is beginning, many men disappear from homes or find all excuses to avoid paying school fees for their children. Women press them hard to pay fees for their children and in the process fights emerge. A woman ends up being beaten, wounded or

chased away from home because of demanding school fees for the children. Sometimes the children also fall victims," Ms Atuhaire says.

She says family issues are completed and most of them rotate on the failure by men to fulfill responsibilities and expectations of their wives.

This is because women expect a lot when they are going into marriages. For instance, women hope to find a good house, good job, good care, and children or drive cars. But when such expectations are not met, some women are attempted to look for other options.

Others believe their husbands are spending the money on extramarital relationships and for that reason, they deny their husbands conjugal rights hence sparking off beatings and dismissal from homes.

Ms Atuhaire says domestic wrangles are everywhere and any person can be a victim. This, she cites basing on the fact that she handles GBV cases involving high profile people such as ministers, Members of Parliament, professors, businesspeople, military officers, including her fellow senior and junior police officers. "Issues related to family have no class. Whether you are a lawyer, a royal family member or an army general you will at one time find yourself involved in a family dispute either with your children, wife or close relatives. I receive

cases of where respected women and men have been beaten by spouses," she says.

She says she handles cases of police, army officers and MPs a lot of strictness because they are people who know the law and supposed to lead by example. Such people, she involves in their respective legal departments, sometimes their superiors need arises. This, she says, is tended to give a warning to people to be law implementers.

"If you are a police officer or MP, you must be the first person to know what the law says. For cases of police officers who do not take care of their children, I ask the legal department to intervene by deducting a portion of their salaries and it is given to their family," she adds.

Society she says, contribute 10 per cent of GBV because of selfishness for both men and women.

"A woman is known for cooking and looking after children. If a woman is found in the kitchen, he would be described as greedy. Men's selfishness as set up by society are huge families, guiding and providing care. Because of this, Ms Atuhaire says even women who are rich still be rubber stamped by Society. A woman who marries a man who is branded all sorts of name ridiculed in most cases.

Knowing rights

Ms Atuhaire, a graduate in law, is optimistic that GBV will one time be reduced once every person knows his or her rights. She believes women are the victims of GBV because they are ignorant of the law and their rights have been limited by society and cultural values.

Failed to solve her own

Ms Atuhaire is a parent of two children a boy and a girl. Ms Atuhaire is at the helm of dealing family matters, she separated from the father of her children 10 years ago.

"I am not married but I have a lot of knowledge on human rights handling family matters. I have solved my relationship issues. I have been able to reconcile with my ex-husband. I'm happy that what I failed to solve for my relationship, I do it for others," she says.

About Women's Day

International Women's Day is not a celebration but a reflection of what women have come, what they have achieved and what they should aim for. It is the time when women should appreciate their transformation from housewives to decision makers.

"Women's Day does not mean women should be disobedient to their husbands. It does not mean not to cook food for your family. It simply means reflecting on the strides women have taken over the years. Women have proved they can do what men do but it should have the respect it should have for the husband vice versa," she says.



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Ms Maureen Atuhaire, senior superintendent of Police

KIBULI MUSLIM HOSPITAL

CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

In commemoration of world women's day, Kibuli Muslim Hospital would like to congratulate all women upon reaching this special Day. We Salute your immense contribution in shaping our society. We hold up to our mission to inspire women's lives with the best Competent and Quality Care Services.

WE WISH ALL MOTHERS, SISTERS AND DAUGHTERS A HAPPY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Kibuli Muslim Hospital is offering Cervical and Breast cancer screening for all mothers. For more information, please contact: 0704093772, 0782378144, 0772889080, 077425485.

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