

LETTER OF THE DAY

Consider hiring global expertise to fight cyber-enabled corruption

Of all the excitement surrounding investigations into corruption in Uganda, one uncomfortable truth stands out: we repeatedly fail to deliver credible, effective probes—especially in complex, cross-border cyber-related fraud cases.

Local institutions often lack the specialised skills, technological edge, and—crucially—unquestionable integrity needed to follow the money when it flows through digital channels, offshore accounts, and sophisticated laundering schemes.

If we are truly serious about ending this cycle, it is time to hire proven global agencies rather than persisting with performative domestic efforts that too often end in vanished exhibits and public disillusionment.

Recent cases underscore the problem. High-profile raids and arrests generate headlines and temporary outrage, but tangible recoveries and convictions that deter future graft remain elusive.

Cash, documents, and digital evidence have a troubling habit of disappearing.

This is not mere incompetence; it reflects systemic weaknesses in forensic accounting, cyber forensics, asset tracing, and the political insulation required for impartial investigations.

Why local capacity falls short: Modern corruption, particularly in procurement, aid diversion, and public funds management, increasingly relies on cyber tools: encrypted communications, cryptocurrency transfers, shell companies in multiple jurisdictions, and manipulated digital records.

Uganda's investigators, while dedicated, operate with limited resources, outdated technology, and pressures that can compromise outcomes.



Cross-border fraud demands expertise in international financial regulations, data analytics, and forensic IT that few domestic agencies possess at scale.

International firms bring proven track records. Some have conducted high-stakes investigations into fraud and corruption across Africa and globally, including asset tracing and complex financial crime probes.

These organisations employ former prosecutors, forensic accountants, and cyber specialists who operate with independence that local bodies often struggle to maintain amid political sensitivities.

Critics will cry “sovereignty” or claim external firms serve foreign interests. This objection rings hollow when domestic efforts repeatedly fail to recover stolen public resources or hold powerful actors accountable.

Hiring reputable global experts on defined terms—with clear deliverables, oversight by a bipartisan or independent panel, and full transparency—actually strengthens sovereignty by

demonstrating results to citizens and donors alike.

Uganda has invited external forensic support in past scandals (eg, donor-driven audits in the Office of the Prime Minister case); expanding this approach to cyber fraud makes pragmatic sense.

Beyond posturing: Relying solely on internal mechanisms risks perpetuating a familiar pattern: dramatic announcements, selective prosecutions of smaller players, and big fish swimming free or resurfacing in new positions.

The public has seen too many “exhibits” evaporate. Without credible, tamper-proof investigations, anti-corruption rhetoric becomes theatre—costly in lost aid, eroded trust, and forgone development.

A hybrid model offers the best path forward. Engage global firms for technical leadership on complex cases while building long-term local capacity through mandatory knowledge transfer, joint teams, and technology upgrades.

Tie funding and senior appointments in anti-graft bodies to performance metrics focused on recoveries and convictions, not just arrests.

Strengthen whistleblower protections and digital evidence protocols to reduce leakage.

Uganda's people deserve more than recycled promises. Corruption drains resources meant for health, education, infrastructure, and security.

In an era of digital finance and porous borders, amateurism is no longer an option. Serious intent requires serious tools and talent—wherever they reside.

Hiring these firms for flagship investigations is not capitulation; it is strategic maturity. It signals to corrupt actors that the game has changed and to citizens that accountability is finally arriving.

Less of that, and we must admit it, is mere posturing.

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