CMI probes another 41 top cops

BY VISION REPORTERS

At least 41 more Police officers, including eight directors, have been lined up for interrogation by the Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI) on various offences, impeccable security sources have revealed.

This brings the number of officers accused of various offences to 48, in a probe that has caused panic and tension in the Uganda Police Force.

All the directors have spent not less than 20 years in the force. Some of them were mentioned in a number of investigations in cases related to corruption and abuse of office, while others had been recommended for dismissal from the force by the 2001 Justice Julia Sebutinde commission report. Other Police officers are also accused of involvement in drug trafficking and violent robbery.

Saturday Vision recently broke the story of CMI lining up senior Police officers for interrogation over several offences. According to sources, the Police officers are facing charges, including kidnap, murder, fraud and armed robbery, among others.

Some of the murders involve foreign nationals with big businesses in Uganda, who were kidnapped and some murdered before their money, in billions of shillings, was withdrawn from their accounts in various city banks in collusion with bank officials. CMI is also probing reports that some of the implicated officers illegally possessed military hardware, including unregistered guns and were feared by their colleagues in the force.

Other officers reportedly running ungazetted private holding cells where they detain victims.



Nickson Agasirwe (left) and other Police officers being led out of the army court martial recently

Museveni directive

This comes at a time when CMI has also taken over several high-profile cases that the Police were investigating, the latest being the probe into Wakiso women murders. However, the Police still insist they are in charge of the investigations into the killings.

Reliable sources revealed that the move to probe the Police officers followed a directive from President Yoweri Museveni to the Police chief, Gen. Kale Kayihura, to send the implicated officers to CMI for questioning.

Kayihura then asked his deputy, Okoth Ochola, to inform the officers to report to CMI.

Subsequently, CMI arrested Senior Commissioner of Police Joel Aguma (Police Professional Standards Unit commandant), Senior Superintendent of Police Nickson Agasirwe (former commander of the disbanded Special Operations Unit) and five other Police officers.

The others are Assistant Superintendent of Police James Magada, Detective Assistant Inspector of Police Benon Atwebembeire, Detective Sergeant Abel Tumukunde, Detective Corporal Amon Kwarisima and Special Police Constable Faisal Katende.

The seven Police officers, together with a Rwandan army officer, Rene Rutagungira and a Congolese national, Pacifique Bahati Mugenga aka Ilunga Monga, were charged before the Army General Court Martial in Makindye with kidnapping two Rwandan nationals and repatriating them back home without their consent.

Prosecution led by Maj. Raphael Mugisha alleged that the nine accused persons kidnaped Jackson Kalemera aka Ndinga and Lt. Joel Mutabazi in 2013 and delivered them to Rwanda without consent. Mutabazi was a former bodyguard of Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

The accused officers were not allowed to plead to the charges and were remanded. Aguma and Agasirwe were remanded to Makindye Military Barracks, while the rest were sent to Luzira Prisons.

Sources said the detained officers have temporarily been replaced by their deputies in the respective offices, pending the outcome of the trial.

Commenting on the recent arrest by CMI of various suspects, who include Rwandans, foreign affairs state minister Okello Oryem said: "These arrests are just a cleanup of the house to ensure that there is law and order and observance of the law."

Oryem's comments were in response to media reports that there were frosty diplomatic relations between Uganda and Rwanda, indicating that some Ugandans in Kigali had lost their jobs over the alleged diplomatic standoff. But Oryem said Uganda and Rwanda enjoy a cordial relationship.

Top leadership fight

Another top Police officer who spoke to *Saturday Vision* on condition of anonymity, argued that there was a 'fight' in the top leadership in the force.

"There is intrigue, blackmail and many dirty reports have been written about colleagues and sent to State House," he complained.

"Others (top Police officers) have been linked by other directorates to dirty deals fuelling bad blood," he added.

Explaining the fight, the source hinted at the recent clash over a woman known as Christine Mbabazi Muhoza, alleged to have been a mistress of the fallen Assistant Inspector General of Police Felix Kaweesi.

The woman is said to be in possession of vital information about the assassination of Kaweesi.

Muhoza is currently under the protection of the Special Forces Command (SFC) at a house in Lungujja, a city surburb. SFC took over the protection after a clash between Police and ISO operatives. The Police claimed they had received SOS calls from Muhooza.

Kaweesi was gunned down in April by assailants travelling on a motorcycle in Kulambiro, a city suburb.

While eulogising Kaweesi, President Yoweri Museveni asked Kayihura to clean up the Police force, saying it had been infiltrated by criminal elements.

Subsequently, Kayihura appointed Aguma as the PSU commandant, specifically to investigate officers linked to criminal elements.

So far, PSU has written to the Police's directorate of legal, recommending the sacking of at least 80 Police officers over misconduct.

A total of 105 officers, both junior and high ranking, are under probe. The cases range from extortion to robbery, concealing evidence and fraud. Most of the Police officers cited in the report are traffic Police officers and heads of Police stations.

However, it emerged last week that the CMI was carrying out parallel investigations in the Police.

It was reported that a number of top Police officers were under CMI investigation.

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