

# Protect children from all forms of torture

EDITOR: On Monday, November 27, while watching the 10:00pm news bulletin of *Agataliiko Nfuufu* on Bukedde Television, it was broadcast that the Police in Kyazanga made a community patrol where idlers were arrested as well as school-going children who had missed school in the guise of hunting and picking *nseneene* (grasshoppers), which are a delicacy.

Many children were rounded up and their parents called by the Police. What left me shocked was the fact that the Police officers in Kyazanga ordered that these children receive five strokes of a cane each by their parents as a disciplinary measure.

Whereas I do not condone the habit of children missing school for such trivial reasons, I was not amused to see the Police officers asking parents to cane

children. It is inordinately inconceivable that it is the law enforcement officer encouraging parents to subject their children to inhumane treatment. Article 17 (1) (c) of the Constitution coves this.

Besides, Article 24 of the same Constitution is clear on torture. In any case, Section 89 (1) of the Children Act (Cap 59) avers that, "Where a child is arrested, the Police shall under justifiable circumstances caution and release the child."

I believe the Police officers should have exercised his wisdom and engaged both the parents and children and then provided counsel to the children. I call upon the public to promote the welfare of children by protecting them from all sorts of abuse and torture.

The fact that they are young, they

need a lot of guidance and counselling, nurturing and proper handling. This caning is tantamount to corporal or physical punishment, which is the use of physical force, intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort for discipline, correction, and control.

Physical pain can be caused by different means such as hitting the child with a hand or other objects, kicking, throwing the child, pinching or pulling the hair or ears, caning or whipping.

Psychologically, corporal punishment causes depression, lowers self-esteem, causes pessimism and prevails apprehension. Corporal punishment also causes personality disorders among children as it suppresses children's potential for growth and development.

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PICTURE BY RAMADHAN ABBEY