

BE INTEGRIOUS IN CONDUCT, EXCELLENT IN PERFORMANCE, DISCIPLINED IN SERVICE

By Farooq Kasule

Prosecutors in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) have been warned against abusing power, selective prosecution and delayed justice.

Lucy Nakyobe, the head of Public Service, also Secretary to Cabinet, said such behaviour affects public confidence in not only in the institution, but also in the state.

"Every time they accuse the Government of violating the rule of law, do not think it is President Yoweri Museveni; it is you who has been accused. So, act carefully," Nakyobe warned.

Nakyobe sounded the warning at the opening of the annual prosecutors' symposium at Hotel Africana in Kampala, yesterday.

"A prosecutor must not be an instrument of oppression, intimidation, extortion or illegal enrichment. You are not there to secure convictions at all costs, but to deliver justice in the fairest way possible. Don't you want to go to heaven or do you think heaven is here?" Nakyobe said.

She added that the role of the prosecutors is to pursue justice fairly, objectively and independently, drawing from the theme of the symposium: *Enhancing Professionalism for Responsive Prosecutorial Services*.

"Do not allow people to influence you. You went to school to study the law, and

PROSECUTORS CAUTIONED AGAINST ABUSING POWER

PHOTO BY MPALANYI SSENTONGO

Seated:
Nakyobe
(third-left),
Anguzu
(fourth-left),
Kilei (second-
right), Massey
(right)
with other
participants
during the
Annual
Prosecutors'
symposium at
Hotel Africana
in Kampala,
yesterday



to come and practice it in its entirety and with fairness," Nakyobe cautioned, adding that professional prosecutors must resist political interference, financial inducements, conflict of interest, abuse of office, manipulation of evidence and misuse of their authority.

STAFFING GAPS

Concerning staffing gaps at ODPP, she promised to escalate the matter to Cabinet for redress.

SHUN CORRUPTION

"The public must see you as officers who will protect the rule of law, defend the victims and hold the offenders accountable. Serve without fear or favour. However, your loyalty must first be to the constitution, law and the people of Uganda," Lucy Nakyobe, the head of Public Service, said.

Professionalism, she said, demands punctuality and diligence. She urged prosecutors to respect procedures, proper case management, confidentiality, respect for human rights, objectivity in decision making and accountability for all the actions they take.

With the evolving crime trends coupled with the digital revolution, Nakyobe urged the prosecutors to upgrade their

qualifications and also enrol for refresher courses to ably handle the mandate.

According to her, prosecutorial

excellence must extend beyond legal training into specialised areas, including cyber crime investigations, digital forensics,

financial intelligence, asset recovery and environmental crime.

LEADERS SPEAK OUT

Director of Public Prosecutions Lino Anguzu said the three-day symposium is both a training and a mirror into how they have been performing.

"Therefore, I urge you all to recognise that we are called to enter the public service. Do not treat your office simply as an employment. Prosecution is a constitutional call to public service," Anguzu said.

He also urged the prosecutors to be professional.

"Professionalism is your shield from scandal, protects you from impunity and the public. Instead of simply sanctioning charges, we must ask the questions: What is actually happening in the country and how do we address it? Therefore, treat every file more than pieces of paper," Anguzu cautioned.

International Justice Mission country director Wamaiha Kimani, Redeem International programme management director Paul Woniaye, Human Trafficking Institute country director Gabrielle Massey and Barbara Kilei, the country manager of International Development Law Organisation, equally underscored the importance of professionalism in conducting prosecutions during the symposium.

By Charles Etukuri

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