

BY VISION REPORTERS

The financial intelligence arm of the Uganda Police Force (UPF) has uncovered massive fraud involving several officers in the army and launched a probe to catch suspects.

After a month's surveillance, the Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA) uncovered suspicious bank transactions used in a scheme to pay pension to alleged 'ghost soldiers'.

The accounts are allegedly run by top Army officers at the defense ministry, Police authorities confirmed on Friday.

The new investigation casts a spotlight on the alleged fight between elite security agencies, which came to the fore with recent arrests of senior Police officers by the army over criminal activities.

BACKGROUND

It all started with a clash over a woman, Christine Mbabazi Muhooza, who is alleged to have been a mistress to fallen Assistant Inspector General of Police, Felix Kaweesi. The woman is said to be in possession of vital information

about the assassination of Kaweesi.

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

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

Last month, the army's elite unit, the Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI), picked up nine suspects, including Rwandan and Congolese nationals.

Subsequently, the suspects were charged before the Makindye-based Court Martial in Kampala for allegedly kidnapping a former bodyguard (Lt Joel Mutabazi in Uganda in 2013) of Rwandan president, Paul Kagame.

CMI operatives picked the suspects that included:



Karemeire denied knowledge of the fraud allegations

Commandant of Police Professional Standard Unit, Senior Commissioner of Police Joel Anguma; Senior Superintendent of Police Nixon Agasirwe; former commander of Police Special Operations Sgt Abel Tumukunde, Flying Squad commander Kampala Metropolitan; Assistant Superintendent of Police, Magada under Crime Intelligence and Faisal Katende under the Flying

Squad.

The other suspects were a Congolese national and Rene Rutangungira, a Rwandan.

Both the outgoing Police spokesperson, Asan Kasingye and the army publicist, Brig. Richard Karemeire, have said there is no fight between the two sister security agencies.

FRAUD IN THE ARMY

A top Police officer, who spoke to *Sunday Vision* exclusively, revealed that the FIA traced suspicious bank transactions from the defense ministry as a result of deposits, allegedly paying pension.

According to the Police officer, the erroneous bank accounts were opened and huge monies were paid.

"They open up accounts, deposit the money and withdraw and abandon the accounts," said the Police officer.

Police alleges that when the army officials learnt of the probe, they allegedly forged a letter of a top FIA official to unfreeze the account and

the money was subsequently withdrawn.

"FIA closely monitored and froze the accounts following the standard procedure," said the Police officer.

When contacted, the FIA chief, Sydney Asubo, confirmed the forgery to *Sunday Vision*. He added that he has since referred the matter to the Police.

Speaking during a telephone interview, Asubo, who is currently on official duty in Seychelles, said: "Someone forged my signature, but before the funds could be unfrozen, the bank got in touch with us to confirm the authenticity of the letter. We informed them that it was, indeed, a forgery. So the funds remain frozen."

He added: "The case of forgery of my signature is being investigated by the Police. In fact, we transferred the funds to FIA's Fines & Frozen Assets account at Bank of Uganda for safe keeping."

It is at that stage that the Police's Criminal Investigations

Directorate wrote to the Defense Secretary Permanent Secretary, Rosette Byengoma, seeking clarity.

Until yesterday, Police was still waiting for a reply, according to the Police officer.

Karemeire denied knowledge of the investigation.

"I am not aware of that," he said in a telephone interview with *Sunday Vision* yesterday.

Preliminary Police investigations indicate that even when the Police verified the account names with the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA), they did not match, preliminarily proving fraud.

"The names on the accounts do not match those at NIRA. Others do not even exist," said the Policeman.

IMPECCABLE SOURCES

Police wrote and visited two top banks in Kampala and upcountry and were furnished with details of the accounts. At the time (two months ago), about sh300m had been detected.