

7,000 arrested in police operations since January

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More than 7,000 people have been netted in security swoops across the country since January this year.

Data that *Daily Monitor* has compiled from the records shared by security agencies since January 1, show the majority of the 7,000 suspects were arrested from Kampala Metropolitan Area during a police operation codenamed Fukuza Mafisadi.

The Kiswahili phrase, rendered as Chase Away Criminals, is a recent police operation that aimed to dismantle the criminal networks running the recent spate of violent crimes in urban areas.

Police spokesperson Kituuma Rusoke yesterday said they arrested 3,320 people in the disruptive operations last month.

"By Friday, we had produced in court more than 2,506 suspects. These operations will continue to make sure our neighbourhoods are safe and also to try to see how to curb the issue of drug consumption," Mr Rusoke said.

A wave of crime hit both urban and rural Uganda from mid-last year, and was one of the issues that were discussed during the High Command meeting chaired by President Museveni last week.

"We conducted more than 47 disruptive operations nationwide (last week), netting 1,185 suspects, or even more because the figures could have been updated yesterday," Mr Rusoke said.



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Suspects.

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Mr Kituuma Rusoke, Police spokesman.

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The number of suspects arrested in Kampala Metropolitan East in the areas of Kinawataka, Kireka, Kyaliwajjala, and neighbouring suburbs. These areas have for long been associated with petty crimes and drug abuse.

Mr Rusoke said dealing with crime needs more than law enforcement and called on the public and other government agencies to cooperate.

"We are calling on your cooperation and require your intelligence input about these emerging crime hotspots so that we can do a better job," he said.

Cause

In January, criminals armed with pangas, sometimes guns, and often riding motorcycles during their raids, sparked panic in the country. This prompted the police to carry out massive operations in urban areas, especially in Kampala City and surrounding urban centres, arresting thousands.

The police said in Kampala Metropolitan East, more than 16 operations were conducted, resulting in the arrest of more than 334 suspects in the areas of Kinawataka, Kireka, Kyaliwajjala, and neighbouring suburbs that have for long been associated with petty crimes and drug abuse.

In Kampala Metropolitan North, security teams carried out operations in the central business district under Old Kampala, Kyebando and surrounding areas, before extending the crackdown to Bulenga in Wakiso District and nearby trading centres.

In Kampala Metropolitan South, police mounted operations in Kabalagala, Nsambya and parts of the central business district under St Tropez Police Station. The operations stretched to Nkumba, Katabi and other communities in Entebbe.

Mr Rusoke said their security teams had mapped out specific high-risk areas before carrying out coordinated swoops.

Beyond the capital, similar operations were conducted in up-country regions, including Aswa East, particularly in Palabek, Lamwo District, and neighbouring areas, as police moved to ensure the crackdown is felt beyond Kampala.

"As you are aware, we still take the concerns of the communities out there seriously. Whoever

er has issues with security in our neighbourhoods, the operations are still ongoing, and essentially we are putting our weight behind them," he said.

A police source said although many people

were arrested in the operations, the security agencies didn't have evidence against many suspects.

"These were disruptive operations. In one way or the other, a swoop will arrest people

with crime and keep them away from the public. The challenge is to get evidence against them. That is why most of them are charged with being in possession of suspected stolen property and being a public nuisance," the source said.

Without tangible evidence and delay in investigations, most of the suspects are released at the police stations.

The Uganda Prisons Service statistics shows that 9,783 prisoners were newly admitted from court on a range of cases in January this year.

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