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swung from a loss of Shs36.6b in 2023

Uganda increasingly vulnerable to cyber-attacks amid skills gap

Cyber security. |

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Uganda is becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyber-attacks due to a critical shortage of skilled cybersecurity professionals, experts have warned.

This comes at a time when cybercrime in the country is rising at an alarming rate.

According to the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID), reported cyber attack cases nearly doubled from 245 in 2023 to 474 in 2024, a 93.5% increase.

Even more concerning, the financial losses from cybercrime surged dramatically, rising by 4,700 percent to an estimated Shs72.1b in 2024.

Multiple reports indicate that only a small fraction of the stolen funds has been recovered, highlighting the growing sophistication of cybercriminals and the country's limited capacity to respond effectively.

Other fraud cases were also reported to be on the increase, with the most damaging offenses being "obtaining by false pretenses," while cases involving forgery and uttering of documents alone accounted for losses amounting to Shs74.2 billion.

A 2025 cyber and fraud landscape assessment further revealed a 242% increase in online scam notifications, largely attributed to increased reliance on digital banking, mobile money platforms, and weak enforcement of cybersecurity policies.

The report also notes a worrying trend in which criminals are increasingly leveraging AI to carry out phishing attacks, impersonation scams, and social media account takeovers.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony of students completing a cybersecurity course at Milima Academy, Ms Elizabeth Ntege, chairperson of the ICT Association of Uganda and the NFT Consult chief executive officer, said that whereas the shortage of cybersecurity professionals remains a global challenge, it is highly acute in Uganda.

"Cybersecurity is not just an IT issue, it is a matter of national security. There is a lot of money at stake, and trust becomes a critical factor," she said, warning that hackers are becoming more sophisticated, capable of accessing personal and institutional data from anywhere in the world, there by urging professionals to remain vigilant and uphold ethical standards.

Mr Emanuel Chagara, CEO of Milima Academy, stressed that building human resource capacity is the country's most viable solution to combating cybercrime.

"We currently do not have enough professionals to effectively fight cybercrime. Worse still, some of the few we have are involved in these crimes. The government must invest in developing human capital in this field," he said.

As Uganda continues its rapid digital transformation, experts agree that strengthening cybersecurity capacity is no longer optional but essential to safeguarding the country's economic and national security.

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