Britain donates firearms storage to Uganda Police

TORORO

By Faustine Odeke

The British support team in East Africa has donated firearms storage facilities to Uganda Police to curb the abuse, proliferation and damage of arms.

The equipment, worth $20,000 (about sh72m) was handed over to Tororo Police. It included 12 gun boxes and 40 gun shelves.

Handing over the equipment on Friday, Phil Figgins, the legal advisor for the British Peace Support Team in East Africa, said the facilities are part of the package that the British government has extended to guarantee the safety of ammunition in the region.

He said it is the desire of the British government to ensure there is limited access to firearms by unauthorised people and less damage to the available ammunition.

Figgins disclosed that besides providing storage facilities they will also support the construction of armouries in different parts of the East Africa region and train security personnel in firearms storage management.

"We are doing all this to limit the circulation of firearms into illegal hands through loss or diversion, because this threatens the security of any state and puts the lives of security personnel in danger since the same ammunition leaking out may be turned against them," Figgins noted.

He said often weapons that have leaked from official national stocks have been a major source for rebel groups, militia and criminals.

Figgins said they will continue training officers in physical stock security and management in order to increase skills in the management of firearms and enhance professionalism.



Nakhaima (left) shakes hands with Figgins after receiving the equipment. Photo by Faustine Odeke

Receiving the equipment on behalf of the Government, Anthony Nakhaima, an official from Uganda National focal point on small arms and light weapons in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, commended the British government for the continuous support it has rendered to strengthen security systems in Uganda.

He said safe security and storage is crucial for the security of firearms, which has posed a big challenge in all their security agencies and civilians that possess and use firearms.

Nakhaima said the facilities will play a big role in providing safety for the firearms and protect them from being exposed to situations that may reduce their efficiency and durability.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Besides providing storage facilities, Britain will also support the construction of armouries in different parts of the East Africa and also train security personnel.

"We appreciate the British government for the support it has extended and we assure you that this will minimise abuse, loss and damage of our firearms.

We bring to your attention that as a country, we have always planned to have such facilities at every police station but we are limited by resources. We shall always welcome your co-operation," Nakhaima said.

The handover was also witnessed by Bukedi Regional Police commander Julius Gobolo and the officer in charge of Tororo Police, Suzan Ikuku, among others.

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