

Govt spends Shs35b on feeding inmates- report

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MBALE. The government spends Shs35 billion annually on feeding crime suspects who are on remand in prisons, the report released by Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), indicates.

The report titled 'Delayed Justice, Justice Denied' was launched at the weekend in Mbale District.

"The cost of feeding an inmate is Shs1.35 million a year. With the current 26,000 inmates on remand, it means more than Shs35b is spent on feeding them annually," reads the report.

The research was conducted between January and August this year.

A total of 193 inmates from various prisons were interviewed and it was found out

that many had spent close to 11 months without trial.

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MR FREDRIC SEKINDI,

FHRI DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND
ADVOCACY

Mr Fredric Sekindi, the director of research and advocacy at FHRI, decried the incident and said tax payers' money is being misused due to judicial delays in trying suspects.

"This lengthy excessive detention is not justifiable and it's unconstitutional. It deprives suspects their human right and constitutional guarantee for the right to fair hearing," he said.

Mr Sekindi explained that the judicial systems have a number of gaps causing delays in trial of suspects.

"The police officers lack investigative skills and they have turned a blind eye to constitutional obligations when effecting arrests,' he said.

Ms Mary Ikit, the deputy registrar at High Court in Mbale, however attributed the delayed trials to shortage of judges.

"It's prudent that at least each sub-county should have a magistrate and chief magistrate so as to reduce on alarming numbers of pretrial detentions," she said.

Ms Ikit added: "The biggest challenge is funding of the judiciary. The country has only 82 slots for high court judges which is insufficient for all detainees."