

# UNAFRI



United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI)

- Training and Programmes
- Research and Documentation
- Advisory Services to Governments
- Joint Activities and Strategies



**BILINGUAL NEWSLETTER- ENGLISH**

**UNAFRI LEADS THE CHARGE AGAINST GLOBAL CRIME  
AT THE CCPCJ'S LANDMARK 34TH SESSION.**

# NEWSLETTER

**APRIL TO JUNE 2025**

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# UNAFRI



## NEWSLETTER APRIL TO JUNE 2025

### UNITED NATIONS AFRICAN INSTITUTE FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS (UNAFRI)

*"Empowering African States for crime prevention and criminal justice to ensure sustainable development".*

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*"Renforcer la capacité des États africains dans la prévention du crime et la justice pénale pour assurer un développement durable".*

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*«Fortalecer la capacidad de los Estados africanos en materia de prevención del delito y justicia penal para el desarrollo sostenible»*

**UNAFRI SECRETARIAT, P.O BOX 10590, NAGURU-KAMPALA (UGANDA).**

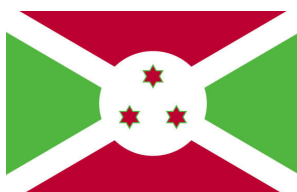
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## Member States



Burkina Faso



Burundi



Cameroon



Congo Brazzaville



DR Congo



Equatorial Guinea



Gambia



Ghana



Guinea



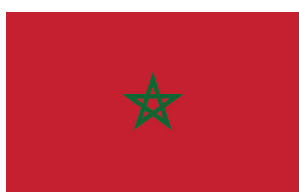
Kenya



Libya



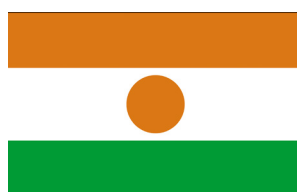
Malawi



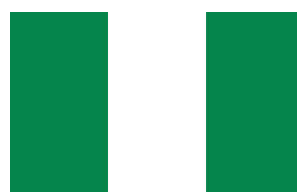
Morocco



Mozambique



Niger



Nigeria



Rwanda



Senegal



Seychelles



Sierra Leone



Somalia



Sudan



Tanzania



Togo



Tunisia



Uganda



Zambia



Zimbabwe

## MAKERERE LAW STUDENTS VISIT UNAFRI FOR FIELDWORK LEARNING ON CRIME PREVENTION, VICTIM RIGHTS, AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE



Final-year law students from Makerere University on 3rd April 2025 conducted a field visit to the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI). The visit aimed at gaining deep insights into the evolving dynamics of criminal justice in Africa. The educational fieldwork visit focused on the critical themes of crime prevention, the role of victims, restorative justice, and humane treatment of offenders, areas that are central to UNAFRI's continental mandate.

### Understanding UNAFRI's Mission

UNAFRI plays a pivotal role in shaping criminal justice policy and practices across Africa through research, training, and stakeholder collaboration. Students were introduced to UNAFRI's core functions, including:

- Conducting continent-wide research on crime trends;
- Developing humane and evidence-based criminal justice policies;

- Promoting restorative justice practices;
- Capacity building for justice sector professionals; and
- Facilitating inter-state dialogue on crime prevention.

The visit underscored UNAFRI's emphasis on multi-stakeholder collaboration involving governments, academia, and civil society to create informed, context-specific solutions to crime.

### The Evolving Role of Victims in the Criminal Justice System

A key topic discussed was the changing role of victims from being historically sidelined to now recognized as key stakeholders. The students explored significant policy shifts, such as the introduction of victim impact statements and technology-assisted court participation. These changes ensure victims' voices are heard and respected throughout the legal process.

Students were introduced to the understanding

of Victims' Rights and Empowerment Guidelines issued by Uganda's Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) in 2019, which emphasized physical protection, training for legal professionals, and comprehensive victim support. They also learnt about international legal instruments affirming victims' right to effective remedy, such as Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

### **Challenges in Victim Compensation Schemes**

While recognizing the progress made, students were challenged to critically assess the limitations of Uganda's victim compensation framework. Uganda lacks a national crime victim assistance scheme, and most restitution depends on court orders or recommendations from bodies like the Uganda Human Rights Commission. The fieldwork highlighted obstacles such as limited funding, bureaucratic hurdles, restrictive eligibility criteria, and lack of awareness all of which limit victims' access to meaningful compensation. A case study of the International Criminal Court (ICC) ordered compensation for victims of former LRA commander Dominic Ongwen was used to illustrate the logistical and ethical complexities of implementing large-scale victim compensation, even when international funding is available.

### **Restorative vs. Retributive Justice: Finding Balance**

Students were particularly engaged in a discussion to comparatively understand the restorative justice and retributive justice. Drawing on examples such as the Uganda v. Kanyamunyu case and the traditional Acholi Mato Oput ceremony, they discussed how restorative practices can foster societal healing by involving victims, offenders, and communities in reconciliation and reparation. While retributive justice offers deterrence and a sense of closure through punishment, students reflected on how

it often fails to address the root causes of crime or support long-term social reintegration.

### **Humane Treatment of Offenders: A Path to Safer Societies**

UNAFRI emphasized the importance of treating offenders with dignity, offering education, vocational training, mental health support, and rehabilitation programs as alternatives to harsh punitive measures. Students explored strategies to balance public safety with humane treatment, including evidence-based practices like cognitive-behavioural therapy and community reintegration programs.

### **Mental Health and the Impact of Solitary Confinement**

Another focal point of the discussions was the detrimental impact of solitary confinement and other punitive measures on inmate mental health. Prolonged isolation has been shown to cause severe psychological effects, contributing to higher recidivism and impaired reintegration. The discussions encouraged the students to advocate for humane correctional reforms that prioritize therapeutic interventions over punishment.

### **Conclusion: A Call to Future Legal Practitioners**

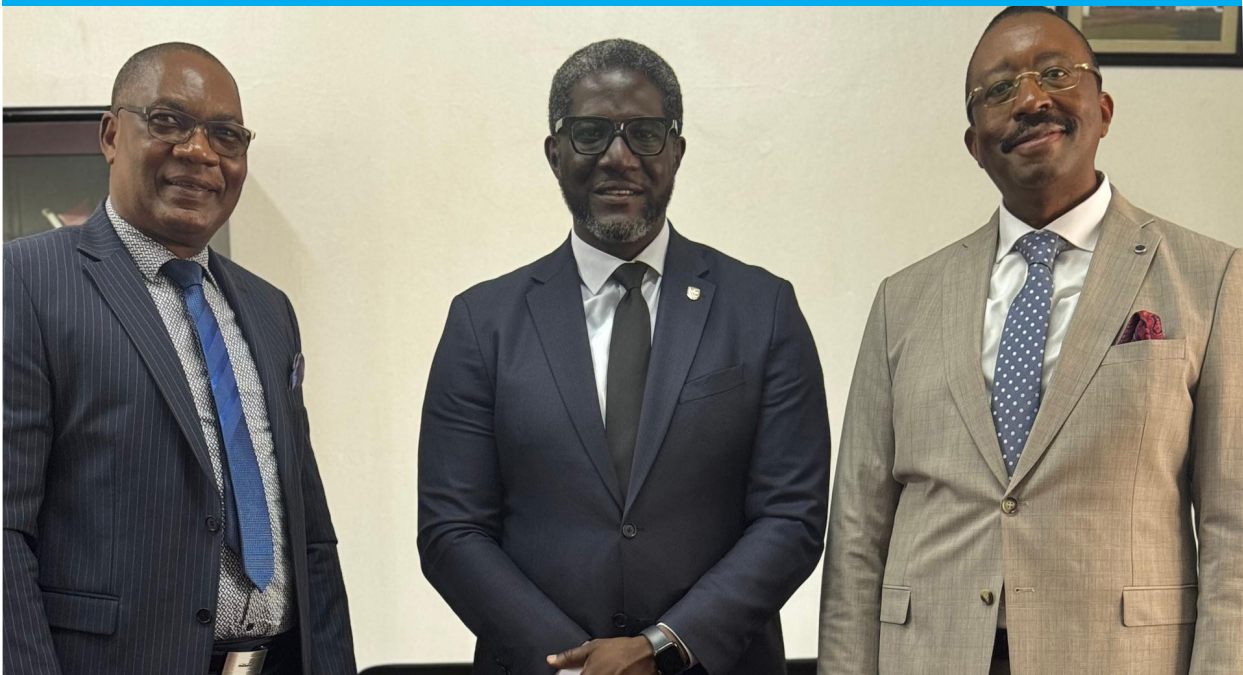
The Makerere University law students' fieldwork visit at UNAFRI enabled the visiting students to gain richer, research-backed understanding of Africa's justice landscape. It illuminated the



interconnectedness of crime prevention, victim empowerment, mental health, and justice reform in building safer, more inclusive societies. As future legal professionals, the students were challenged to champion reforms rooted in human rights, compassion, and empirical evidence.

Through their engagement with UNAFRI, these budding legal minds were better equipped to contribute to a justice system that not only punishes but also heals, reforms, and uplifts communities.

## STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR A SAFER FINANCIAL FUTURE



From left to right is Dr. Edouard Kitio the Director General of UNAFRI , Mr. Samuel Fredrick Mwogeza, Executive Director of Stanbic Bank and Andrew Munanura Karokora, Deputy Director-General of UNAFRI.

The United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) recently hosted a significant meeting with Mr. Samuel Fredrick Mwogeza, Executive Director of Stanbic Bank. During this courtesy visit to our headquarters in Naguru, we engaged in fruitful discussions on potential areas of collaboration.

The meeting focused on exploring ways to enhance cooperation in key areas, including banking, combating financial crimes, and addressing the growing threat of cybercrime. We recognized the importance



of collective efforts in promoting financial stability and security in the region.

UNAFRI values its partnerships with institutions like Stanbic Bank, which share our commitment to creating a safer and more secure environment. We believe that this potential partnership will enable us to leverage each other's expertise and resources, ultimately con-

tributing to the development of effective strategies for preventing and combatting financial crimes.

We look forward to working closely with Stanbic Bank and exploring opportunities for mutual benefit.

## UNAFRI PARTICIPATES IN THE LAUNCH OF UGANDA'S FINANCIAL SECTOR ANTI-FRAUD CONSORTIUM



On April 23, 2025, the Director General of UNAFRI, Dr. Édouard KITIO, represented the Institute at the Launch Ceremony of the Uganda Financial Sector Anti-Fraud Consortium at Mestil Hotel, in Kampala. The event was jointly organized by the Uganda Bankers Association, the National Payment Service Providers Association in collaboration with the Bank of Uganda, the Financial Intelligence Authority, and the Uganda Communications Commission.

This joint initiative to combat cyber fraud in the financial system became necessary at a time when

the sector has experienced significant disruptions due to multiple cybercrime incidents that nearly crippled the national economy. Initial efforts to coordinate the anti-cybercrime national strategies began with the first Anti-Fraud Forum in 2023, followed by other initiatives in 2024. These developments reflect the need for global strategies to tackle a global threat. Cybercrime knows no borders, and cybercriminals often use similar methods to target their victims. Cybercrime cases potentially occur through mobile money and banking networks. Stakeholders from these sectors have thus been included in

the consortium to enhance its effectiveness.

Indeed, the Uganda Police's Annual Crime Report reveals that in 2024, 474 cases of cybercrime were reported to the police, compared to 245 cases in 2023—a 93.5% increase. The report indicates that cybercrime led to a financial loss of UGX 72,125,613,915, of which only UGX 420 million was recovered. By the end of 2024, 64 cases had been prosecuted, 97 cases were not pursued, and 310 cases were stalled at the investigation stage due to difficulties in gathering evidence. Among the prosecuted cases, 21 resulted in convictions, 7 led to acquittals, and 39 are still pending in court.

These statistics clearly show that Uganda's financial sector is under severe threat from cybercriminals and requires immediate and effective measures. Among the planned measures include raising awareness among system stakeholders whereas the general public, and service users remains a priority. This is to be followed by the adoption of stringent legislation that punishes cybercriminals harshly including imposing temporary bans on their use of financial services. For instance, it is believed that in addition to prison sentences, if a cybercriminal is denied access to electronic banking cards or SIM cards, it would be difficult for them to commit further fraud through the banking system.

Economically, the rise of cybercrime in the financial system could discourage investors and significantly harm economic growth. Strong deterrent measures are therefore necessary. However, financial sector actors have pointed out that investigators and judicial officers are often not adequately trained to handle cybercrime cases, and even when convictions occur, the sentences are often too lenient, which can encourage repetition of offenses. Cooperation with the judicial system is therefore essential to ensure cybercriminals are punished appropriately in light of the severity of their crimes.



*Dr. Twinemanzi the newly appointed Chairman of the Financial Sector Anti-Fraud Consortium. He is also the Executive Director, National Payment Systems at Bank of Uganda.*

Financial fraud has been likened to economic warfare and requires a fitting response. The growing use of online banking increases fraud risks and compels financial system actors to anticipate, detect, prevent, and respond effectively to the persistent threat. A web portal has been created by financial sector actors to report all cybercrime cases and respond accordingly. The intersectoral cooperation underscores that fighting cybercrime is not the responsibility of one person or entity, but a collective battle requiring coordinated action. The fight involves not only financial system stakeholders but also investigators, prosecutors, the media, and consumers of financial services. The goal is to bring all forces together to curb this threat. In this light, information sharing and message consistency among financial system actors should be encouraged as legislative reforms are awaited, especially those increasing prison terms, fines, and bans on financial service usage.

Attention must also be paid to capacity building for various stakeholders involved in handling cybercrime cases especially financial system officials, investigators, prosecutors, and judges. This is where UNAFRI stands out as a key partner.

As a Crime Prevention and Offender Treatment Institute, its primary mission is to build the capacities of judicial system actors to combat crime effectively. It possesses unique expertise in this area. UNAFRI is the regional institute in Africa dedicated to crime prevention and criminal justice and it is part of the United Nations Programme Network Institutes. As a member of the PNI Newsletter editorial board, it can leverage the expertise of other network members to train financial system actors, investigators, prosecutors, and judges in handling cybercrime cases.

It should be noted that in 2023, UNAFRI success-

fully led an expert mission in Morocco to help the Kingdom establish the National Crime Observatory. In 2024, the Institute also contributed to the organization of an international symposium by the Kingdom of Morocco on “The Role of Scientific Research in Measuring Crime and Analysing Criminal Phenomena.” in Rabat. Additionally, since 2023, the Institute has organized about ten international online conferences for both Francophone and Anglophone audiences on various crime prevention and criminal justice topics. These and other actions reflect the vitality of UNAFRI and its prominent role in overall crime prevention and criminal justice control mechanisms in Africa.

## UNAFRI LEADS THE CHARGE AGAINST GLOBAL CRIME AT THE CCPCJ'S LANDMARK 34<sup>TH</sup> SESSION.



Vienna, Austria | 17<sup>th</sup> May - 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025

### Introduction

The United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) actively participated in the 34th session of

the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) held at the Vienna International Centre in Austria. This report highlights UNAFRI's engagements, including discussions in the plenary on

combating environmental crimes, smuggling of goods, and trafficking of cultural property. Furthermore, it elaborates on collaborative efforts to enhance crime prevention strategies, training capabilities, and international partnerships aimed at addressing the complexities of organised crime and justice reform.

### **The 34<sup>th</sup> Session of the CCPCJ**

The 34<sup>th</sup> session of the CCPCJ explored critical issues surrounding new, emerging, and evolving forms of crime that pose significant threats to global security and development. Among the topics discussed were environmental crimes, which include illegal logging, wildlife trafficking, and pollution-related offences that undermine ecosystems and contribute to climate change. The session also deliberated on the smuggling of commercial goods, a growing concern due to its impact on economic stability and the integrity of global trade systems. Additionally, participants addressed the trafficking and illegal appropriation of cultural property, shedding light on offences targeting heritage sites, artefacts, and monuments—crimes that not only deprive nations of their cultural identity but also fuel organised criminal networks. The discussions emphasised the need for robust international legal frameworks, enhanced law enforcement collaboration, and community engagement to effectively combat these multifaceted challenges.

The session featured presentations by member states outlining their progress in the following areas: (a) Ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and its Protocols; (b) Ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption; (c) Ratification and implementation of international instruments aimed at preventing and combating terrorism.

### **Key Meetings and Engagements**

#### **Director General's Collaborative Meetings**

On 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025, UNAFRI's Director-General attended the PNI coordination meeting at the Vienna



International Centre. The discussions centred on the strategic role of the Programme Network of Institutes in shaping the agenda for the 2026 UN Crime Congress, emphasizing themes of global crime prevention and justice reform. Participants explored ways to strengthen international cooperation, evaluated the effectiveness of implemented activities, addressed challenges related to budget constraints, and formulated innovative strategies for future advancements. The meeting served as a vital platform for fostering collaboration among institutes and aligning efforts to address pressing criminal justice issues on a global scale.

The Director-General of UNAFRI engaged in significant discussions with the Director of the Bangkok Rules at the Thailand Institute of Justice (TIJ) and representatives from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). These conversations centred on potential collaborations in crime prevention and criminal justice, paving the way for innovative joint initiatives.

### **Enhancing UNAFRI'S Training Capabilities**

UNAFRI received e-learning course materials from UNODC's Sven Pfeiffer, marking a significant step forward in strengthening UNAFRI's training and research capabilities. These materials are intended to address key areas of criminal justice, including the rehabilitation of offenders, crime prevention strategies, cybercrime and community-based interventions. The inclusion of these resources signifies an ongoing commitment to capacity

building and cross-institutional knowledge sharing. Furthermore, this collaboration reflects a broader vision of equipping justice systems across Africa with the tools and expertise necessary to address emerging challenges effectively.

### **Launch of the United Nations Model Strategies for Reducing Reoffending**

UNAFRI participated in the official launch of the UN Model Strategies for Reducing Reoffending during a side session organised by UNAFEI and hosted by the Government of Japan at the Vienna International Centre. These strategies aim to reduce reoffending and enhance public safety by actively involving community stakeholders. The session was attended by prominent figures, including Her Excellency Ghada Fathi Waly, Executive Director of UNODC, and Hon. Kanda Junichi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Justice of Japan.

A distinguished panel discussed various methodologies for reducing reoffending and promoting rehabilitation. The session was moderated by Phillip Meissner (UNODC's Inter-Regional Advisor on prison and penal reform), and the panel included contributions from: Director Yamauchi Yoshimitsu (UNAFEI), Shigeko Imai, an experienced probation officer from Japan, Salome Wairimu Muhia, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Interior and National Administration, Kenya, and Luliana-Elena Carbutaru from the Romanian Ministry of Justice. The discussions underscored the importance of international collaboration and knowledge-sharing in tackling global criminal justice challenges.

### **The Director General's Plenary Address**

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2025, the Director-General of UNAFRI delivered an impactful address during the plenary session of the CCPCJ. This address highlighted UNAFRI's pivotal accomplishments and its ambitious vision for the future, particularly in solidifying its reputation as a leading force in global crime prevention and justice reform. The Director-General acknowledged the essential financial and

technical support from both the United Nations and African member states, expressing deep gratitude for the partnerships that have enabled the Institute to enhance its reach and effectiveness across the continent.

The speech called for a renewed commitment to fostering collaboration among international, regional, and local stakeholders in addressing contemporary criminal justice challenges. By advocating sustainable community-centred approaches, the address underscored the significance of innovation and adaptability in creating equitable justice systems that tackle the root causes of crime and uphold human rights and the rule of law. This call to action reinforced UNAFRI's dedication to promoting solutions that align with the diverse needs of African societies while contributing to the wider global agenda for justice and security.

### **Conclusion**

UNAFRI's participation in the 34th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice exemplified its dedication to fostering meaningful collaborations, enhancing training and research capabilities, and contributing to global dialogues on justice reform. Through these efforts, the Institute reaffirmed its commitment to advancing its mission and strengthening its impact across Africa.

### **Deliverables**

UNAFRI emphasizes the need for sustained collaboration with international partners to foster innovative joint initiatives aimed at addressing contemporary criminal justice challenges. Recognizing the growing importance of technology in education, the Institute advocates for the expansion of e-learning materials to enhance training and research capabilities, thereby ensuring accessibility and effectiveness in capacity-building efforts. Additionally, UNAFRI underscores the significance of active participation in upcoming UN Crime Congress activities, aiming to amplify its global influence and continue contributing to meaningful dialogues on

criminal justice reform. UNAFRI seeks to fortify its role as a pivotal player in international crime prevention and justice reform initiatives through these measures.

## REDUCING RE-OFFENDING THROUGH REHABILITATION AND RE-INTEGRATION: INSIGHTS FROM EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA



### Introduction

Rehabilitation and the successful reintegration of offenders into society are crucial for reducing re-offending rates, a challenge faced across Eastern and Southern Africa. The third International Conference (C3), organised by UNAFRI on 27 May 2025, brought together experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to share regional experiences, explore innovative approaches, and develop actionable strategies to address these pressing concerns. The conference attracted over 250 participants from diverse fields, including correctional services, probation staff, psychologists, and community leaders.

**Conference Theme and Objectives** The theme of the conference, “Reducing Re-Offending

Through Rehabilitation and Re-Integration: Regional Experiences in Eastern and Southern Africa”, underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in tackling the root causes of criminal behaviour and supporting reintegration.

### The main objectives were:

- I. To analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of current rehabilitation and re-integration programmes within the region, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses.
- II. To share best practices, lessons learned, and success stories from different countries regarding the implementation of model strategies.
- III. To identify challenges and barriers that

hinder successful rehabilitation and reintegration, such as societal stigma, limited resources, and lack of institutional support.

- IV. To develop strategies for enhancing cooperation between regional and international stakeholders, promoting a cross-border approach to offender rehabilitation.

### **Key Presentations and Sub-Themes**

The conference was opened by the Director General of the Institute Dr. Edouard Kitio. It featured thought-provoking presentations and interactive panel discussions, moderated by Mr. Andrew Munanura Karokora, Deputy Director-General of UNAFRI. Among the sub-themes covered were:

#### **Effectiveness of Rehabilitation Programmes**

Mr. Hasiyo Adams, Principal Social Rehabilitation & Welfare Officer (PSWO) - Uganda, presented an in-depth review of current efforts aimed at rehabilitating offenders across Uganda. His presentation included an analysis of how community-based rehabilitation centres and vocational training initiatives have transformed lives, enabling ex-offenders to contribute positively to society.

#### **Community Involvement.**

Mr. Clement J. M. Okech, former Deputy Director of Kenya Probation and Aftercare Services, highlighted the pivotal role of communities and families in supporting the reintegration of ex-offenders in Kenya. He highlighted programmes such as restorative justice practices and community mentorship schemes as vital components in reducing stigma and fostering acceptance.

#### **Gender Specific Approaches.**

The Commissioner General of Tanzania Prison Services provided valuable insights into the

unique challenges faced by female offenders during their reintegration process in Tanzania. His discussion included case studies of initiatives focusing on skill-building programmes specifically designed for women, and the critical need for childcare services to aid in reintegration.

### **Model Strategies and Policy Development**

Professor Yuho Furukawa (UNAFEI) outlined the development of policies that support sustainable reintegration practices and model strategies to reduce recidivism. He highlighted the importance of evidence-based policymaking and shared examples from countries that have successfully implemented comprehensive rehabilitation frameworks.

#### **Innovative Practices and Technologies**

Ms. Elsa Marie Nourrice, Head of Prison Psychosocial Support and Rehabilitation, and Probation Services in Seychelles, explored innovative practices and technological tools employed to effectively rehabilitate and monitor ex-offenders. Her discussion addressed the use of advanced tracking systems, virtual counselling platforms, and digital skill-building programmes to enhance reintegration outcomes.

### **Conference Outcomes and Impact**

The conference proved to be a significant suc-



cess, facilitating the exchange of best practices and model strategies. Participants gained a deeper understanding of the current state of re-habilitation and reintegration efforts, enabling them to critically evaluate existing approaches to reducing reoffending.

Actionable strategies were developed to address key barriers to effective offender rehabilitation. These strategies included creating public awareness campaigns to combat stigma, expanding access to vocational training, and enhancing the role of community leaders in reintegration efforts. Additionally, the establishment of a collaborative network brought together professionals such as correctional officers, probation staff, and psychosocial support experts. This network aims to foster ongoing cooperation, innovation, and knowledge-sharing across borders.

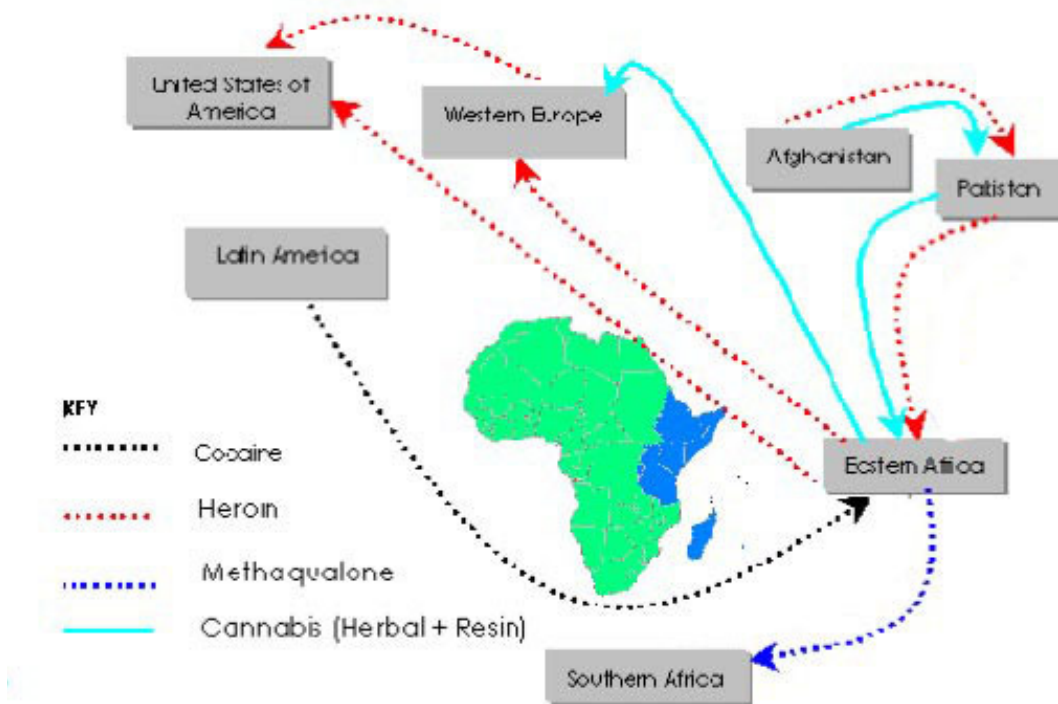
The conference also laid the groundwork for

future improvements by identifying innovative approaches, challenges, and concrete solutions that contribute to reducing re-offending and recidivism in the region. The commitment shown by attendees ensures that the strategies discussed will have a lasting impact on policies and practices.

## **Conclusion**

The International Conference undoubtedly strengthened regional commitment to rehabilitation and reintegration as essential elements in reducing re-offending rates. With the active participation of attendees, a wealth of shared insights, and the identification of practical solutions, this event has opened new avenues for regional cooperation and innovative practices. These developments pave the way for a brighter future in offender rehabilitation and societal reintegration, ensuring long-term success in reducing crime and its associated social costs.

## DRUG TRAFFICKING IN THE EAST AFRICAN REGION



By SIMALI Baldric Elijah – Intern at UNAFRI

Figure (1) Major Drug Transit Routes in the East Region from [www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)

### Introduction

The East African region has been used as a transit corridor for transportation, as well as an important destination of illicit narcotics, drugs, and psychotropic substances worldwide. It is on that foundation that the East African Community sought to implement the Protocol on Combatting Drug Trafficking in the East African Region; however, this Protocol has not yet come into force. This article therefore examines Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Seychelles in relation to drug trafficking.

### Uganda

Uganda is recognised as both a transit and destination country for drug smugglers, especially for heroin and cocaine. Heroin mainly enters the country via drug mules or building materials, trafficked from countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India through Kenya or Tanzania. Entebbe international Airport has become

a key hub in the transit of illicit drugs from African sources to European and other international markets. The Uganda Police Force Annual Crime Report (2024) indicates that 5 cases of assorted narcotic drugs were reported in 2024, a decrease from 20 cases in 2023, representing a 75% reduction. Additionally, 21,962.84 grams of narcotic drugs were seized in 2024, down from 51,875.07 grams in 2023. The Global Organised Crime Index Report (2023) highlights that cocaine and heroin trafficking in Uganda is driven by weak security systems, high border porosity, and widespread corruption.

The Uganda Police Force Annual Crime Report (2024) indicates that 2,240 cases of Narcotics/Drugs were reported in 2024, up from 2,113 in 2023, representing a 6% rise in this crime category. It also highlights that out of the total reported, 1,496 cases were taken to court, 264 cases were not proceeded with, and 480

cases remained under investigation. A total of 5,739 suspects were arrested and charged before courts, including 5,509 male adults, 99 female adults, 116 male juveniles, and 15 female juveniles. Recent events further demonstrate that the Uganda Police Force has significantly engaged in intelligence-led operations, leading to numerous arrests.

To combat the vice, Uganda's Parliament recently passed the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Bill, 2023, which was assented to by the President and is now an Act, repealing the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act of 2016. The Bill aims to implement measures that criminalise drug-related offences under domestic law in line with Article 3 of the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988, which requires States Parties to establish criminal offences related to narcotics, drugs, and psychotropic substances within their national legislation. It also seeks to establish a National Co-ordination Committee for Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Control to oversee the management of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances abuse and trafficking. Consequently, it adopts a criminal law approach rather than a public health or human rights-based approach to drug use.

Additionally, in 2024, the World Customs Organisation (WCO), in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), trained staff from the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), and Uganda Police Force (UPF) on effective ways of combatting illicit trade. This encompassed training on narcotic drug types and sources, container types, maritime commercial documents, drug and explosive precursors, seal manipulation, handling dangerous cargo, and container concealments which help them in their day-to-day operations at work.

## Kenya

Kenya has also seen the pervasive issue of drug abuse and trafficking, so much so that the Kenyan Govern-

ment has come up with stringent legislation, enforcement actions, and community awareness programmes, all with the aim of curbing the issues of illicit drugs. Similar to Uganda, Kenya is also used as a transit country for heroin trafficked from Afghanistan and the Arabian Gulf to Europe, the Americas, and other parts of Africa. The Global Organised Crime Index Report (2023) portrays a large domestic heroin and cocaine abuse problem, particularly along the coast. While the volume of cocaine is smaller than that of heroin or cannabis, the country remains a trans-shipment point for the global cocaine trade, with international transit shipments often being controlled by Nigerian syndicates and through embedded Italian mafia networks. The report attributes Kenya's cocaine trafficking market to limited maritime enforcement capabilities that hamper drug inception.

The most significant legislation in Kenya's fight against drug abuse is the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Act of 1994, which was amended in 2022. This law criminalises the possession, trafficking, and use of a wide range of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The amendments were made to impose harsher penalties for offences under the Act and to establish procedures for the seizure of drugs. Kenya is a signatory to the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which reinforces Kenya's legislative framework and facilitates cooperation with other countries in combating drug trafficking. Based on this, the National Police Service (NPS) Report (2023) highlights that cannabis sativa, heroin, cocaine, morphine, cozepam tabs, MDMA, diazepam, and Rohypnol are the most abused narcotics, drugs and psychotropic substances in Kenya. It also notes that in 2023, a total of 7,891 persons were arrested and brought before court for drug-related offences; 6,307 were found in possession, 1,278 involved in trafficking, and 216 were cultivating.

Additional to the NPS, is the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), which has the mandate of ensuring the

enforcement of drug-related laws in Kenya. The NACADA works in tandem with the Anti-Narcotics Unit of the NPS, as well as the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) to identify, arrest, and prosecute individuals involved in drug-related offences. In one of its quarterly reports (NACADA, 2025), it is noted that a study which was carried out on undergraduate students from both public and private universities in Kenya showed that substances like shisha, e-cigarettes, cigarettes, and cannabis are regularly used by students. It further notes that Kenya, at the 2025 Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), took a stand for inclusive and gender-sensitive drug policies by reaffirming its commitment to ensuring no gender is left behind in the fight against substance abuse. NACADA also reports that 53% of Kenyans have abused drugs.

Recent efforts in Kenya have led the Eastern and Southern Africa Commission on Drugs (ESACD) hold its Fourth High-level Consultation Meeting, where a report was launched to address the increasing issue of illegal drug trade and consumption across East and Southern Africa with new, more effective strategies. The meeting emphasised the connection between the drug problem and other serious crimes such as human trafficking, terrorism financing, corruption, and proliferation of illegal weapons.

### **Tanzania**

Tanzania has also emerged as both a transit and a destination country for the drug, with estimates from the Global Organised Crime Index Report (2023) suggesting that almost half of the heroin destined for East Africa ends up in Tanzania. Traffickers are said to transport the heroin in various ways including: wooden dhows, bulk carrier ships, and container shipments, whereafter the heroin is moved through the country to reach Central, West, and Southern Africa. The country's weak interdiction capacity, porous borders, and corruption are prevalent as some of the contributing factors to the continuance of the crime hence allowing Tanzania to become a prominent cannabis hub for domestic consumption as well as regional and international exploitation. The Parliament then passed the Drug Control and Enforcement Act in 2019, in order to

make robust legislative rules for efficient and effective control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; to provide for the establishment of the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority for the prevention and control of drug trafficking; and to repeal the Drugs and Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Drugs Act of 1995.

The government implemented a Surge Operations Deterrent Strategy (SODS) with the primary purpose of curbing drug supply, demand and harm, and in order to restrain drug trafficking in the country, unprecedented illicit substance policy reforms were implemented, including punishment, forced treatment, and drug users' criminalisation methods. In a bid to combat drug trafficking, the Sixth Phase Government, through the Drug Control and Enforcement Authority (DCEA), has made significant progress in tackling the drug problem in Tanzania, and these achievements are attributed to the large-scale seizures of drugs and the control of drug trafficking and abuse in the country. In 2024, the DCEA seized a total of 2,327,983.66 kgs of drugs which were intercepted before they could enter the country and cause significant harm. Among the drugs seized were 3,444 kgs of heroin. Still in 2024, the DCEA worked with international agencies to intercept a large shipment of 848 kgs of methamphetamine from Pakistan – the drugs were hidden in a container labelled as containing textiles – and they also seized 1,200 kgs of fentanyl at the port of Dar es Salaam.

Notably, early in 2025, the DCEA made significant strides in the fight against illicit drug trade with the successful seizure of 790.528 kgs of narcotics across Arusha, Mwanza, Mbeya, Mtwara, and Dar es Salaam, in an operation spanning from January to February. It also led to the destruction of numerous cannabis farms and the arrest of 114 suspects involved in the illicit trade. The foregoing results confirm that drug trafficking is closely linked with other crimes such as illegal arms trade and wildlife poaching.

In an effort to expand treatment services for drug addicts and users in the country, the government, in collaboration with stakeholders and development partners increased the number of Medication-Assist-

ed Treatment (MAT) clinics in the Pwani and Tanga regions, bringing the total number of MAT clinics in the country to 18. Additionally, 6 sober houses were established, bringing the total number of houses to 62, providing rehabilitation services to 17,230 addicts. The government, through the DCEA, intends to strengthen the control of drug abuse by increasing the number of interventions to reduce the supply of and demand for drugs; increasing the number of health facilities offering treatment for drug addicts; increasing the number of rehabilitation centres; and strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies to combat drug trafficking.

### **Seychelles**

The rise of new trafficking routes through East Africa in the late 2000s, combined with the porous borders and relatively high purchasing power among Seychellois, flooded the paradisiacal islands with heroin. It should be noted that the heroin trade in Seychelles continues unabated with estimates from the Global Organised Crime Index Report (2023) showing that the country has the highest per capita rate of heroin use in the world due to the drug's abundance and affordability, with around 10% of the Seychellois population being dependent on heroin. Regarding the cocaine market, it is reported that Brazil is the primary source for the drug entering the Seychelles, with most seizures occurring at the airport involving mules of various nationalities.

The increasing trade flows of cocaine in the region, with Kenya and Tanzania acting as transit hubs, have impacted the Seychelles. Traffickers from Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan use the Seychelles as a trans-shipment point for thousands of kilograms of heroin bound for African nations each year. Heroin trafficking has taken a toll on Seychelles, where an estimated 10% of the nation's nearly 100,000 residents are addicted to the drug – the highest rate of heroin addiction in the world, and it has almost doubled since 2018.

Over the years, Seychelles has implemented a variety of anti-drug measures, to include the Misuse of Drugs Act 2016, which provides effective measures against the abuse and diversion of controlled drugs

and precursors among others, as well as substance prevention and rehabilitation programmes.

The Agency for Prevention of Drug Abuse and Rehabilitation (APDAR), a specialist drug agency created in 2017 to tackle the problem, plays the role of reducing the damage and harm caused by heroin addiction on society and families. Its mission is to set the standards for quality of care for men and women suffering from addictive diseases by implementing and coordinating evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies through a dynamic and responsive multi-sectoral approach.

In late 2023, authorities intercepted two Iranian men on a dhow in Seychelles' territorial waters who were transporting 622.6 kgs of heroin and 388.6 kgs of methamphetamine. Additionally, at the end of 2023, Seychelles reported that the country had destroyed 1.2 million metric tons of illegal drugs, including an undisclosed amount of heroin that had been captured over the previous 18 months.

### **Conclusion**

The challenge of drug trafficking in the East African region continues to strain communities and drive the rise of other drug-related crimes. Addressing this issue demands robust policy reforms and cohesive international cooperation. The East African Community must unite in a concerted effort to combat this pervasive problem, fostering regional collaboration and engaging global partnerships. As demonstrated by the measures taken by the analysed countries, a unified approach is critical to curbing the devastating impact of drug trafficking.

## UNAFRI'S 4<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE – 2025



**Theme: National Anti-Corruption Institutions and Their Role in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) By 2030**

On 10 June 2025, the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) held an on-line international conference via Zoom platform.

### 1. Objectives:

The conference had the following objectives:

- Present the current state of the fight against corruption in the listed sub-regions;
- Assess the effectiveness of national anti-corruption institutions and explore potential improvements to existing mechanisms;
- Evaluate how states are implementing international, regional, and national anti-corruption instruments;
- Analyze the practical challenges in prosecuting corruption-related offenses and provide useful recommendations;

- Evaluate the implementation of legal provisions on asset recovery and propose areas for improvement;
- Make comprehensive recommendations to improve anti-corruption mechanisms at the national, regional, and international levels;
- Encourage academics and researchers to undertake studies on issues related to the fight against corruption.

### 2. Introductory Remarks and Moderation:

**Dr. KITIO Édouard**, Doctor of Law, Senior Magistrate, Director General of UNAFRI.

### 3. Conference Sub-Themes:

**Panel 1: Administrative Institutions and Their Economic Effectiveness**

**Section 1 – Overview and the Situation in Central Africa**

**By Mr. Emmanuel OLLITA ONDONGO:** Governance and anti-corruption expert; former President of the African Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities; President of the High Authority for the Fight Against Corruption in Congo-Brazzaville; President of the Congolese Association for the Fight Against Fraud and Corruption (ACLCFC); recipient of multiple honorary awards.

#### **Cameroon's Experience:**

**By Gilbert Christian ONANA NKUDU,** Head of the Studies and Cooperation Division, CONAC.

#### **Section 2 – The Situation in West Africa**

- By Dr. Jean Baptiste ELIAS, Doctor of Economics – University of Clermont Ferrand II (France); UN (UNODC) expert in governance and anti-corruption; former President of the Benin Anti-Corruption Observatory; former President of the ECOWAS Network of National Anti-Corruption Institutions; founding member of the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (IAACA); former Chair of the Executive Committee of the African Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities; former Chair of the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption.

#### **Section 3 – The Situation in the Arab Maghreb**

- By Ms. NADIA ANNOUZ, Doctor of Public Law from Moulay Ismail University, Meknes (Morocco); graduate of the International Advanced Program of the École Nationale d'Administration (ENA), Strasbourg (France); governance and anti-corruption expert; former Inspector General of the High Commission for Planning in Rabat (Morocco); Vice-President and Council Member of the National Authority for Integrity, Prevention and Fight Against Cor-

ruption; Member of the AU Advisory Board on Corruption.

#### **Panel 2: Judicial Institutions and Their Societal Impact**

##### **Section 1 – Judicial Processing of Corruption Cases and Practical Challenges**

- By Mr. NGATCHA Isaïe, Senior Magistrate (Top Grade), President of the Public Enterprises Section, Audit Bench of the Supreme Court of Cameroon.

##### **Section 2 – Implementation of Judicial Decisions and the Challenge of Asset Recovery**

- By Dr. SOCKENG Roger, Doctor of Law, Senior Magistrate (Top Grade), Advisor to the Supreme Court of Cameroon, expert legal trainer.

#### **Summary of the C4-UNAFRI-2025 International Conference**

UNAFRI hosted its fourth online international conference via Zoom on 10th July 2025, bringing together Prosecutors, judges, judicial & police officers, lawyers, heads of anti-corruption institutions, human rights and anti-corruption NGOs, trainee magistrates, teachers, academics, and other researchers to address matters in relation to National Anti-Corruption Institutions and their Role in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) By 2030.

Discussions highlighted the strong link between corruption and delays in achieving the SDGs, particularly regarding poverty, access to health, education, justice, and a healthy environment. Corruption was denounced as a major obstacle to development, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations.

Participants from various judicial, administrative, academic, and NGO backgrounds reviewed



existing national mechanisms, noting both progress and limitations. The importance of political will and an independent judiciary was strongly emphasized to ensure effective anti-corruption measures.

Key achievements of the conference included recommendations to strengthen national insti-

tutions and raise awareness about the importance of transparency in achieving the SDGs.

Participants were encouraged to pursue further research on corruption-related issues and to foster more collaboration at regional and international levels.

## UNAFRI AND LIBYAN AMBASSADOR DISCUSS STRENGTHENING COOPERATION AND PRISON REFORM INITIATIVES



Meeting Highlights – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025, Embassy of Libya in Uganda

A high-level meeting between the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) and the Libyan Ambassador to Uganda, H.E. Ibraheem Ahmed Sultan, was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 at the Embassy of Libya in Uganda. The meeting was attended by the Ambassador, UNAFRI Director General Dr. Kitio Edouard, Deputy Director General Mr. Munanura Andrew Karokora, and Hajara the interpreter.

### Warm Reception and Mutual Gratitude

The meeting opened with a cordial welcome from Ambassador Sultan, who expressed his openness to hear UNAFRI's concerns and proposals. Dr. Kitio extended appreciation for Libya's continued support as a member state, particularly through financial contributions, and provided an update on outstanding arrears and UNAFRI's activities across both English-speaking and French-speaking African nations.

### Financial Cooperation and Commitments

Dr. Kitio presented the status of Libya's financial

obligations to UNAFRI, stressing the importance of resolving arrears for the organization's operational efficiency. Ambassador Sultan reassured the delegation that all relevant communications had been relayed to the Libyan government, which remains committed to clearing its dues.

### Deepening Collaboration: Focus on Prison Reform

The meeting also explored areas for enhanced cooperation, with the Ambassador highlighting the urgent need for prison reform in Libya. Key challenges identified included prolonged detention and judicial delays. To address these, the Ambassador proposed:

- Formation of a UNAFRI-led committee to assess the Libyan prison system.
- Direct technical support from UNAFRI to recommend reforms solutions for the identified challenges.
- On-ground workshops and activities in Libya to support reform efforts.

Libya pledged to provide both logistical and financial support for these initiatives.



### **Proposed Official Visit and High-Level Engagements**

Looking ahead, the Ambassador recommended organizing a formal visit by UNAFRI to Libya. He committed to facilitating engagements with key government entities including the Head of Government, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Internal Affairs, the UN Envoy to Libya, and the Speaker of Parliament.

### **Next Steps and Roadmap**

UNAFRI will develop a detailed proposal for the planned assessment mission to Libya. This will include a clear roadmap for engaging the relevant Lib-

yan offices and implementing collaborative prison reform strategies, alongside expert exchange and capacity-building efforts.

In his closing remarks, Ambassador Sultan reaffirmed Libya's dedication to strengthening its partnership with UNAFRI. He expressed optimism about the potential impact of the discussed initiatives and pledged ongoing support from the Libyan government. The meeting concluded on a positive and constructive note, with both parties agreeing to maintain regular communication and work together toward shared goals.



## HAS FRAUD BECOME AN IRREDEEMABLE EVIL?



*By Dr. Édouard KITIO, Senior Magistrate, Director General of UNAFRI*

At the 34th Session of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), held in Vienna, Austria, from May 19 to 23, 2025, one of the topics that drew the most attention was the phenomenon of fraud. The representative of the United Kingdom emphasized the magnitude of fraud in the UK, noting that it accounts for 43% of all crimes. According to the speaker, fraud is closely linked to transnational organized crime, including human trafficking, and poses a critical threat to national security and the global economy.

The scale of the problem calls for joint efforts, as no country can claim to fight fraud alone. Fraud is particularly prevalent in the banking sector. In response, the United Kingdom has implemented a system that identifies new accounts and notifies the account holder of any suspicious transactions, asking for confirmation before transferring funds to a new account. This approach helps control

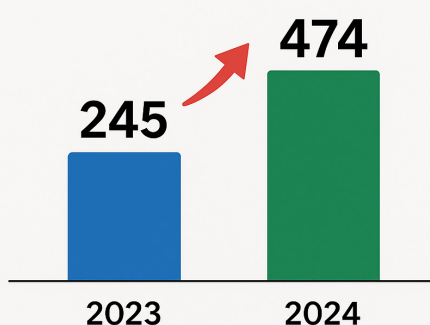
transfers to newly created accounts and allows potential victims to block the operation. For such a system to be effective, cooperation with the private sector especially banks is essential.

In Uganda, the financial sector is heavily affected by fraud. According to the Uganda Police's annual crime report, 474 cybercrime cases were reported in 2024, compared to 245 in 2023 an increase of 93.5%. The report indicated that cybercrime led to financial losses amounting to UGX 72,125,613,915, of which only UGX 420 million was recovered.

Many other countries also suffer from this phenomenon, which has been worsened by the widespread use of new information and communication technologies in everyday life, especially in business. Fraudsters often operate across borders, using similar methods to carry out their crimes.

Another important area of fraud relates to re-

## Cybercrime cases increased by 93,5%



## Financial losses:

 **UGX 72,125,613,915**  
Of which only  
**UGX 420 million**  
was recovered

cruitment. This issue was highlighted during the regional preparatory meeting for the 15th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, organized by the Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (ILANUD) in partnership with Caribbean countries. Discussions focused on cybercrime and online fraud. Recruitment fraud occurs when scammers exploit job seekers' eagerness by advertising fake job opportunities, prompting applicants to share personal information, send money, and falsely believe they have secured employment. Sadly, this type of scam is now a common part of modern job hunting, as fraudsters become increasingly sophisticated. Recently, Cameroonian authorities uncovered several fake employment networks, which particularly targeted young women in Yaoundé, who were then subjected to various forms of abuse, including sexual exploitation.

Domestically, fraud within Cameroon's public administration is also a major concern. The Cameroonian police actively detect fake employment schemes. The Ministry of Finance recently suspended family allowances for over 4,000 retired police and military officers due to suspected fraud, especially involving lifetime benefits for children of military and police personnel. This action signals a strong intent to combat fraudulent practices in public service, including within the security forces.

Some fraudsters impersonate senior officials to lure victims. A high-profile identity theft network was recently dismantled in Cameroon. Seven suspects including a prison guard, four inmates from Kondengui Central Prison, and two mobile operator identification agents were arrested and charged on Friday, March 28, 2025. They faced accusations of impersonation, co-authorship of forgery in public documents, and fraud. The network was exposed after the identity of the Director of Health at the General Delegation for National Security was misused to scam police recruitment applicants. The military command ordered an investigation to identify both the perpetrators and victims. The suspects also used the names and fake profiles of top officials such as Samuel Mvondo Ayolo (Director of the Civil Cabinet at the Presidency), Oswald Baboke (Deputy Director of the Civil Cabinet), and Jean Ernest Massena Ngalle Bibehe (Minister of Transport).

[Source: [https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroon-Usurpation-d-identite-de-faux-hauts-fonctionnaires-arretes\\_a139821.html](https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroon-Usurpation-d-identite-de-faux-hauts-fonctionnaires-arretes_a139821.html)]

To avoid falling victim to recruitment fraud, extreme vigilance is necessary. Generally, legitimate companies and recruitment agencies do not ask for payment during the hiring process. Any job posting requiring payment should raise a red

flag. Often, the quality of language used in these postings is poor an indicator that the sender may not be well-educated. One should also be wary of requests for sensitive personal information during the early stages of recruitment. Personal data (such as social security numbers, birth dates, or bank details) should only be provided after a contract is signed, or at the earliest, on the employee's first day of work. It's also important to verify job offers from unfamiliar companies and even with well-known companies, job seekers should confirm that the offer aligns with the organization's official recruitment procedures. A genuine recruiter will typically have an email domain that reflects the organization's name or industry.

Fraud can also originate from job applicants themselves, especially when they submit falsified qualifications in pursuit of a position. It is not uncommon for candidates to exaggerate their

credentials or present forged diplomas. If such deception goes unnoticed during the recruitment process, employers must be diligent in verifying the authenticity of all diplomas and certificates listed on an applicant's résumé to ensure integrity within their organisations.

In Uganda, President Yoweri Museveni has ordered the immediate dismissal of 152 civil servants who were fraudulently recruited using fake diplomas or certificates. The decision was made following numerous shortcomings observed in the performance of these officials at their workplaces (New Vision, Monday, July 14, 2025, p.6).

In Cameroon, the Ministry of Defence has reported a rise in the number of fake diplomas detected during recruitment processes. According to the Minister of Defence, 929 individuals were excluded in 2022 due to fake diplomas, and in 2024, 1,312 counterfeit diplomas were found during the recruitment of gendarmes and soldiers. These included both Cameroonian and foreign (neighbouring country) documents, broken down as follows: one fake GCE Advanced Level, 12 fake Probatoire, 64 GCE Ordinary Level, 491 fake Cameroonian BEPC, 661 BEPC from a neighbouring country, and 43 fake CAP certificates.

According to the official statement, the Ministry of Defence intercepted these documents through "appropriate verification of diplomas for candidates shortlisted for thorough medical exams," which are crucial steps before final admission results are announced. This marks an improvement from 2022, when fake diplomas were detected only after final admission and the start of military training. The exclusion of these candidates sparked public debate, with some accusing the state of having trained criminals only to unleash them into society.

## Rise in Fake Diplomas Detected in Cameroon

The Ministry of Defence reported an increase in the number of fake diplomas detected during recruitment processes.



These included both Cameroonian and foreign (neighbouring country) documents, broken down as follows:

- ✓ 1 Fake GCE Advanced Level
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- ✓ 64 Fake GCE Ordinary Level
- ✓ 491 Fake Cameroonian BEPC
- ✓ 661 BEPC from a neighbouring country
- ✓ 43 Fake CAP

[Source: Arnaud Nicolas MAWEL, "Cameroon: the army detects over 1,300 fake diplomas in a recruitment process (on the rise)," in: ([https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Usurpation-d-identite-de-faux-hauts-fonctionnaires-arretes\\_a139821.html](https://www.alwihdainfo.com/Cameroun-Usurpation-d-identite-de-faux-hauts-fonctionnaires-arretes_a139821.html))]

## FORCED LABOUR AS A RESULT OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS: AN OVERVIEW FROM THE UNODC GLOBAL REPORT ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS 2024



By **SIMALI Baldrick Elijah**- Intern at UNAFRI

### Introduction

Since 2019, the detection of trafficking for forced labour has recorded greater increases than trafficking for sexual exploitation and for other purposes. The detection of trafficking for forced labour increased by 47% globally when compared to the period prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Globally, in 2022, 42% of the victims detected were trafficked for forced labour. Men are more frequently reported to be trafficked for forced labour, while only about one-third of these victims are females, both women and girls. About 20% of the total victims of trafficking for forced labour are boys. This article analyses trafficking vis à vis migration as well as the role of conflict, the mining sector, climate change, and agriculture in the trafficking of persons for forced labour in Africa.

### Background (Global Perspective)

Victims trafficked for forced labour now account for the biggest share of all victims around the world, overtaking those who are trafficked for sexual

exploitation. Yet, criminal convictions remain primarily focused on the latter. There is a rise in trafficking for forced criminality as organized crime models evolve and use trafficking victims to conduct online scams and other crimes in a spiral of victimization. However, female victims are also trafficked in large numbers for forced labour particularly for domestic work, and for different types of exploitation, including forced marriages and forced criminality.

In parallel, the number of children among the detected victims is growing rapidly and alarmingly, increasing by a third (1/3) over the space of three years. In particular, the number of girls detected has surged, rising by 38%. Globally, some 45% of boys detected are trafficked for forced labour and another 47% are exploited for other purposes, including forced criminality and forced begging. Children are typically trafficked for forced labour across short distances, remaining within their country or region, with traffickers exploiting the economic need of some

families by targeting their children for forced labour. In 2022, detections of children trafficked for forced labour were particularly prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa. In several cases reported to UNODC, in Sub-Saharan Africa, victims of child labour were typically trafficked domestically or from nearby countries for exploitation in various activities, from domestic work to agriculture and mining. In West and East Africa, both boys and girls are more typically trafficked for forced labour, including domestic work.

### **Trafficking vis à vis Migration**

UNODC has mapped a large number of African victims trafficked across continents and for many different forms of exploitation. Between 2019 – 2023, some 15,000 victims from Africa were officially detected outside the African continent, particularly in Europe and the Middle East, but also in East Asia and North America. The practice of selling migrants who third parties have captured for forced labour has been widely reported in North Africa. The same patterns are documented in the Sahel, usually perpetrated by armed groups operating in these territories. Female migrants are reported to be sexually exploited by being “rented” to specific “clients” for periods, exploited as domestic workers or forced to work in the hospitality industry. Male migrants are reported to be trafficked into the construction sector.

Trafficking in persons is also documented on the route from the Horn of Africa to Southern Africa, where different actors exploit refugees and migrants. In the context of trafficking occurring along migration

routes, the same actors involved in the smuggling industry may opportunistically collaborate with, or operate as, trafficking networks aiming at exploiting migrants. Research on the routes to North Africa or the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has shown how, in some cases, smuggler traffickers seem to be part of a broader system that starts with the initial contact with migrants in their community of origin and concludes with exploitation in transit or at the destination. Research on trafficking in the context of migration conducted in 2016 found extremely high levels of victimisation among returnees, as one in every two people interviewed had been trafficked during their journey or at destination.

### **The Role of Conflicts**

The African continent is the region of the world most affected by armed conflicts. The degree of violence has considerably escalated since 2019 – 2020, directly and fatally affecting civilian populations. Militias and armed groups engage in the trafficking of civilians for a variety of reasons in Africa. In 2023, between 80 and 90 armed groups were counted to recruit children and use them in conflict-related operations in Africa. These groups recruit children to use them as fighters, support personnel, or force them to work for generating income. The methods used to engage children may vary and can range from abductions to the use of threats, force, coercion, deception, or exploitation of vulnerabilities.

In Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), field research has found that living in villages

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Ravenstone Consult, Captive commodities: Commodification, exploitation and missingness of Ethiopian irregular migrants on the Eastern Route to Yemen and Saudi Arabia, (March 2023).

Lemma Derseh Gezie, Alemayehu Worku Yalew and Yizaw Kebede Gete, “Human trafficking among Ethiopian returnees: its magnitude and risk factors”, BMC Public Health, 2019, vol. 19, no. 104, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-6395-z>

Children and armed conflict – Report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/384), 3 June 2024.

UNODC, Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018, Booklet 2: Trafficking in persons on the context of armed conflict (United

that had suffered armed attacks was associated with higher odds of slavery-related abuse than living in villages that were not attacked before displacement. In 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that the displaced population resulting from the conflict in Sudan alone could reach over 10 million by 2024.

Children may be recruited for exploitation as combatants or in support roles, such as collecting resources, acting as porters and messengers, or cooking and cleaning. Others may be trafficked for sexual exploitation or forced marriage. The DRC is heavily affected by this phenomenon, and between 2021 – 2022, about 2,000 children were recruited by force. In 2023, in Africa, violence against children in armed conflict reached an extreme level with a 21% increase in grave violations compared to the previous year.

### **The Role of the Mining Sector**

Africa is home to the largest number of artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) miners in the world, with an estimated 10 million in all regions of the continent, many of whom are children. It is estimated that between 20% and 40% of all workers in ASM are children aged 5 – 14. Traffickers in ASM appear to target mainly children for work in mines as their age makes them particularly easy to exploit. In 2018, Interpol rescued 100 children who were subjected to forced labour in gold mines in Sudan and were trafficked from a variety of countries from the Sahel to the DRC, South Sudan and Eritrea. In the DRC,

research has documented armed groups forcing local communities into compulsory community labour, including extracting and transporting wood and charcoal, as well as maintaining roads. In the Eastern Provinces of the country, militias traffic children to exploit in the gold mining sector.

Traffickers active in ASM use debt, finance and lending systems as strategies to exploit and traffic the victims. The groups leverage the geographic remoteness of mines as an advantage to traffic and exploit victims. According to a study conducted on the financial system surrounding gold mines in West Africa, nearly all miners on the sites work to repay debt incurred for transportation, to purchase the necessary tools for work, or for other reasons. According to some estimates in 2015, between 60,000 and 100,000 children worked in ASM under exploitative conditions in Burkina Faso alone accounting for about 6 – 10% of the total estimated population working in ASM in the country.

### **The Role of Climate Change and Agriculture**

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Sub-Saharan Africa records the highest incidence of rural poverty. The continent of Africa has been one of the areas hardest hit by climate change both in general and specifically, with the resulting uptick in climate-related natural disasters over the past decade. Climate-adverse conditions have an immediate impact in terms of increasing labour-intensive activity to compensate for the loss

Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.IV.2).

IOM, ILO and Walk Free, “No Escape: Assessing the relationship between slavery-related abuse and internal displacement in Nigeria, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo”, (IOM Publications Platform, 2022); Situation in South Sudan – Report of the Secretary-General (S/2023/135), 22 February 2023.

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UNHCR, Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2023 (United Nations publication, 2024).

Children and Armed Conflict – Report of the Secretary-General (A/76/871-S/2022/493), 23 June 2022.

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Givan Hilson, James McQuilken and Rachel Perks, “State of the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Sector”, (Washington D.C., World Bank, 2019).

Irene Schipper, Esther de Haan and Mark van Dorp, “Gold from children’s hands: Use of child-mined gold by the electronics sector”, Stichting Onderzoek Multinationale Ondernemingen (SOMO), (Amsterdam, November 2015).

INTERPOL, “Human trafficking: 100 victims rescued in Sudan”, 10 September 2018.

UNSC, Final Report of the UN Group of Experts on Mali, in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 2541 (2020) pursuant to Security Council resolution 2374 (2017) and extended by Security Council resolution 2541 (2020), 6 August 2020; Roy Maconachie and Gavin Hilson, “Mapping informal and financial flows in the artisanal mining sector: The cases of Sierra Leone and Liberia”,

of land productivity. It has been documented how immediately after natural disasters, boys in Malawi are trafficked within the country and to Zambia for forced labour on commercial farms. Similarly, a study in Ghana found that in extreme scenarios resulting from climate-related loss of livelihood, children in some rural communities have been trafficked into marriage or forced labour as coping strategies. Research in Zimbabwe has shown that during droughts, families often marry off their young daughters as a means of generating cash.

Further, in the fallout caused by natural disasters, displaced persons face acute, immediate risks of trafficking in persons. One study conducted by UN Women in rural parts of Southern Africa found that because of food insecurity, girls in particular may be pressured by their families to turn to prostitution as a means of accessing cash or food; this risk is highlighted in a post-disaster context. The study reports a rapid increase in the number of women and girls trafficked to cities and across borders for the purpose of sexual exploitation in the aftermath of natural disasters. In a 2016 study conducted in Kenya, a large percentage of the climate-displaced population interviewed stated that they were willing to accept risky work offers, with 37% of respondents reporting that they had witnessed or experienced human trafficking. In 2020, authorities in Burkina Faso reported that weather-induced disasters have increased the displacement of populations towards larger cities, where they are at risk of falling prey to traffickers. In other studies, it has been found that climate-displaced people had

to accept hosting arrangements that exposed them to conditions of forced labour or sexual exploitation.

Just over half of the employed people in Sub-Saharan Africa are active in agriculture. While it is an important source of economic revenue, forced labour and trafficking have been reported in the agricultural sector, particularly in cocoa production as well as the cultivation of cotton and rice. Similar to ASM, studies conducted in West Africa focusing on child trafficking into cocoa plantations have documented victims being moved across borders by intermediaries, recruiters and exploiters operating in business-like types of engagement, each with a different role along the trafficking chain.

## Conclusion

The progress of Africa in combatting trafficking in persons is tangible and measurable, as African countries have reported significant improvements from the criminal justice response perspective. The number of convictions recorded on the continent has quadrupled compared to 2017, particularly following the pandemic period. African countries are therefore tasked with adopting and reinforcing counter-trafficking measures to prevent child trafficking, protect and assist child victims, expand the counter-trafficking institutional framework and understanding, and improve the identification and protection of victims.

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