

UGANDA PRISONS SERVICE PASSES OUT 1,238 RECRUITS IN A COLOURFUL CEREMONY AT LUZIRA, EMPHASISING DISCIPLINE, PROFESSIONALISM AND INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH



Friday, 17th April 2026, what a memorable and colorful day it was at the Maroons Grounds, Luzira Prisons Complex, as the Uganda Prisons Service held a grand pass-out ceremony for 1,238 recruits.

The event was not only a celebration of achievement but also a powerful display of discipline, unity, and national pride. The day began with calm and cozy weather, as a light drizzle of rain fell while the parade was forming. The gentle rain created a refreshing atmosphere, and as the morning progressed, sunshine broke through the clouds, lighting up the grounds and symbolizing a bright future for the recruits.

From the early hours of the morning, the venue was filled with life. Parents, guardians, and invited guests arrived in large numbers, eager to witness their sons and daughters

achieve this important milestone. There was visible excitement, joy, and pride among families who had patiently waited through months of training.

As the sun rose higher, the recruits assembled and the parade formed. Dressed in smart uniforms and standing in perfect lines, they presented a clear picture of discipline, confidence, and readiness. Their transformation from civilians into trained prisons officers was evident to all.

The ceremony officially began with the arrival of VIPs. Dignitaries from across government, civil society organizations, and the security forces took their positions. The Commissioner General of Prisons, Can. Dr. Johnson Byabashaija, arrived, followed by representatives of the Inspector General of Police and the Chief of Defense Forces. Ministers and the Head of Civil Service were also present, underlining the national importance of the occasion.



The highlight of the arrivals was Her Excellency Jessica Rose Epel Alupo, the Vice President of the Republic of Uganda, who represented H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. She was received with full honors, marking the significance of the ceremony.

The national anthem brought everyone to attention, followed by the inspection of the parade. The Vice President, accompanied by the Commissioner General and the Parade

Commander, moved along the ranks. The recruits stood firm, displaying confidence and pride in their new profession.

Prayers by the clergy followed, asking for guidance and protection for the recruits as they begin their service. This moment added a sense of reflection and purpose to the ceremony.



The parade march-past was one of the most exciting highlights. The recruits marched in both slow and quick time with precision and coordination. Their sharp movements and discipline drew loud applause from the audience.

In the speech delivered on behalf of the President, Her Excellency the Vice President conveyed appreciation to the leadership of the Service and congratulated the recruits.

H.E. Jessica Rose Epel Alupo emphasized the importance of empowering women within the Service. She noted that when women are given equal access to education and job opportunities, just like men, they become a powerful force for positive change.

“Women receive the same education and job opportunities as men; they can improve any organization they join and transform the communities they live in.”

Her message highlighted the role of gender inclusion in strengthening institutions like the Uganda Prisons Service, encouraging more women to take up positions of responsibility and contribute meaningfully to national development.

A special moment followed as the best recruits were recognized.

The Vice President awarded gifts to outstanding performers in categories such as academics, drill, and overall best recruit. This recognition brought pride and joy to the award winners and their families.



Gen. (Rtd) Hon. Kahinda Otafiire, the Minister of Internal Affairs, also delivered a strong message to the newly passed-out officers. He reminded them of their constitutional authority over inmates, urging them to exercise it firmly but with compassion. He emphasized that while maintaining discipline is central to their role, it must always be balanced with rehabilitation.

He cautioned the officers against engaging in any form of criminal conduct, noting that their position demands the highest levels of integrity and professionalism. The Minister underscored that prison officers are not only custodians but also reformers, entrusted with the responsibility of guiding offenders towards positive change.

He further encouraged them to see every inmate as an individual capable of transformation, stressing that their daily actions and attitudes can influence whether an offender returns to society as a better and more responsible citizen. This reflected the government's commitment to strengthening the Uganda Prisons Service.



The Commissioner General of Prisons, Can. Dr. Johnson Byabashaija, congratulated the trainees for successfully completing the rigorous training programme. He commended them for their resilience, discipline, and determination throughout the training period, which had prepared them for the demanding responsibilities of prison service. He also expressed appreciation to the directing staff and trainers of the Prisons Academy and Training School for a job well done in shaping the recruits into professional officers.

During the ceremony, there was a remarkable exhibition of parade drills, which demonstrated the high level of competence, coordination, and discipline acquired by the trainees. The display reflected the intensity of their training and the transformation they had undergone from civilians into trained officers of the Uganda Prisons Service.

He emphasized that the values instilled during training would not end with the pass-out ceremony but would form part of their everyday life in the prison service. These values, he noted, are essential in guiding their conduct, decision-making, and interactions within and outside the service.

He urged them to consistently exhibit professionalism, nationalism, and, above all, discipline in the execution of their duties. He reminded them that their role requires integrity, respect for the rule of law, and commitment to service, even in challenging circumstances.

The Commissioner General further noted that the trainees are now fully prepared to serve and support the Government at all times when called upon. He encouraged them to remain loyal, focused, and dedicated as they embark on their careers in public service.

He also highlighted various development initiatives being undertaken by the Service, particularly in enhancing staff welfare, promoting infrastructural growth, and boosting production and productivity within prisons industries and farms. He reiterated that these initiatives are aimed at strengthening institutional capacity, improving living and working conditions, and contributing to national development and self-sustainability.



In her remarks, ACP Mary Centenary, the Acting Commandant of the Prisons Academy and Training School, highlighted the journey of the recruits. She explained that they had undergone intensive training in physical fitness, discipline, security, and rehabilitation. Mrs. Centenary congratulated them and encouraged them to remain committed and focused in their duties.

As the ceremony came to a close, the national anthem was played once again. The parade marched off in a final, impressive display of discipline and coordination, marking the official transition of the recruits into full service.

Guests and dignitaries departed in reverse order, bringing the ceremony to an end. Families celebrated with their loved ones, capturing photos and sharing memorable moments.

The pass-out of 1,238 recruits was a significant boost to the Uganda Prisons Service. It strengthened the institution's capacity and its continued commitment to professionalism and service delivery.

