

## **HUMAN CAPITAL TRANSFORMATION: UPS SETS NEW STANDARD WITH MERIT-BASED PROMOTION OF 4,996 OFFICERS**



Human resource development has become one of the key pillars of transformation within the Uganda Prisons Service (UPS) under the leadership of Commissioner General of Prisons, Can. Dr. Johnson Byabashaija. Over the years, the Service has invested heavily in staff welfare, professional training, career growth and institutional reforms aimed at building a modern and professional and people-centered correctional service.

One of the most significant milestones in this transformation was recorded on April 28, 2026, when the Commissioner General promoted a total of 4,996 junior officers following the approval of the 36th Prisons Council.

The promotions, which benefited officers from the rank of Principal Officer I down to Warder and Wardress, represent the largest promotion exercise in the history of the Uganda Prisons Service. With the Service currently having about 14,000 staff members, the promoted officers account for approximately 34 percent of the entire workforce.

According to the Prisons Act, 2006, the Prisons Council is mandated under Section 14 to appoint and promote prison officers up to the rank of Principal Officer I, while in section 10, the Prisons Authority is responsible for the appointment and promotion of senior officers from the rank of Assistant Superintendent of Prisons and above.



The promotion exercise was conducted across all the 270 prison units and 19 administrative regions of Uganda. Regional Prisons Commanders led the pipping and chevroning ceremonies, moving from one station to another in the presence of each Officer in Charge to ensure every promoted officer formally received their new insignia.

A total of 139 officers were promoted to the rank of Principal Officer I and received two stars on their shoulders. Another 196 officers were promoted to the Rank Principal Officer II and received one star.

Among the non-commissioned officers, 201 officers were promoted to Chief Warder/Wardress Grade I and received the distinguished round Coat of Arms insignia. A further 204 officers were elevated to Chief Warder/Wardress Grade II and received the silver embroidered Egyptian Star. Another 432 officers were promoted to Chief Warder/Wardress Grade III and received the five-edged star.

The largest category of promotions included 1,512 officers who advanced to the rank of Sergeant Warder/Wardress and received the iconic three V-shaped white stripes and sash. Additionally, 633 officers were promoted to Corporal Warder/Wardress with two stripes, while 1,679 officers became Lance Corporal Warders and Wardresses with one stripe.

The Commissioner General congratulated the officers on their achievement, describing the promotions as recognition of their hard work, discipline, commitment, and dedication to duty.

He encouraged them to maintain high standards of professionalism, integrity and accountability while executing their responsibilities.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the exercise was the transparent and merit-based promotion system used by the Uganda Prisons Service. Promotions are determined by performance, discipline, hard work and available vacancies within the approved prison structure.

#### Merit and Transparency

One of the most notable aspects of the promotion exercise was the emphasis on merit and performance.

Unlike perceptions that promotions in public institutions are sometimes influenced by favoritism, the Uganda Prisons Service follows a rigorous and transparent process designed to identify deserving officers.

The process begins at the prison station level, where a Station Promotion Board scrutinizes officers' records and recommends suitable candidates. These recommendations are then forwarded to a Regional Promotion Board chaired by the Regional Prisons Commander, with all Officers-in-Charge serving as members.

The shortlisted names are later submitted to the General Promotion Board at Prisons Headquarters, chaired by an Assistant Commissioner General of Prisons and supported by appointed heads of departments. The final recommendations are then presented to the Prisons Council, chaired by the Commissioner General of Prisons, for approval as required by law.

The structured process ensures accountability, fairness and equal opportunity for officers across the country.

## GALLERY





