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**BILINGUAL NEWSLETTER- ENGLISH**

**REPORT ON THE 33<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
COMMISSION ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

**NEWSLETTER**

**APRIL - JUNE 2024**

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# UNAFRI



## NEWSLETTER APRIL - JUNE 2024

**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»*

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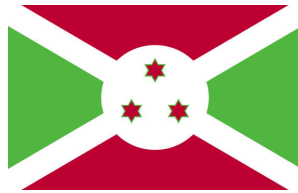
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## Member States



Burkina Faso



Burundi



Cameroon



Congo Brazzaville



DR Congo



Equatorial Guinea



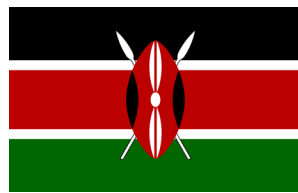
Gambia



Ghana



Guinea



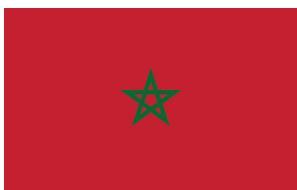
Kenya



Libya



Malawi



Morocco



Mozambique



Niger



Nigeria



Rwanda



Senegal



Seychelles



Sierra Leone



Somalia



Sudan



Tanzania



Togo



Tunisia



Uganda



Zambia



Zimbabwe



## REPORT ON THE 33<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

From May 13 to 17, 2024, the Director-General of UNAFRI, Dr. Édouard KITIO, attended the 33rd session of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna. He was accompanied by UNAFRI's legal consultant, Barrister Andrew Munanura. The Commission is the primary decision-making body of the United Nations in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice. It meets annually in May and plays a crucial role in preparing for the United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the 15th of which will be held in the United Arab Emirates in 2026.

The sessions of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) assess the state of implementation of international conventions related to crime prevention and criminal justice and consider prospects for capacity-building for states and other stakeholders.

The session provided an opportunity for all duly registered delegations to present the state of affairs

in their respective jurisdictions, particularly regarding transnational organized crime, terrorism, other illicit trafficking, corruption, and the recovery of stolen assets etc.

The 33rd session of the CCPCJ was dedicated to the crucial theme of promoting international cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address organized crime, corruption, terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and other forms of crime, including in the areas of extradition, mutual legal assistance and asset recovery. This theme underscored the global commitment to tackling these pressing issues.

All delegations acknowledged the importance of combating transnational organized crime, cybercrime, environmental crime, and other crimes that hinder development. The need to implement the Palermo Convention of December 15, 2000, and its protocols was emphasized to coordinate state mechanisms in

the fight against transnational organized crime.

Additionally, Brazil stressed the adoption of an international convention on cybercrime to combat the use of new information and communication technologies for criminal purposes.

Most delegations recognized the efforts of UNODC in fighting crime.

Western countries and the United States used this forum to condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine, calling on Russia to cease hostilities immediately and withdraw from Ukraine.

Arab countries condemned the aggression against Palestine by the State of Israel and called on the United Nations to recognize the State of Palestine.

African states supported the position of the G77 plus China on international geopolitics and the importance of combating transnational organized crime, terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, corruption, environmental crimes, and other crimes that hinder development.

International cooperation was highlighted as an important vector for recovering assets from corruption and fighting organized crime, money laundering, and its devastating effects on development.

Extradition and mutual legal assistance were also noted as important elements of international cooperation. France mentioned it has implemented several actions to facilitate investigations and promote international cooperation. It specified that there is even a European Directive on environmental crime.

Stakeholders unanimously recognized the need to combat human trafficking and the illicit exploitation of migrants, which are contrary to human dignity.

The United Arab Emirates noted that the CCPCJ meets annually, but crime continues to increase worldwide, necessitating global measures to combat organized crime and corruption since crime prevention is essential for development. The UAE

willingly accepted to host the next United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Crimes and wars create fertile grounds for human rights violations, particularly migrant trafficking and human trafficking. It is also necessary to combat violence against children, especially their use for criminal purposes.

Uganda emphasized the importance of implementing regional or international agreements in the absence of an extradition treaty. Speed is crucial in prosecution, as delays reduce the chances of achieving the desired outcome.

Intensifying international cooperation is essential to ensure the effectiveness of criminal justice systems. With international cooperation, efforts should be made to recover assets from illicit activities and ensure their return to the concerned states.

The electronic transmission of mutual legal assistance requests ensures the rapid processing of cases. Uganda observed that individuals involved in organized crime are often the same in major states-level crimes.

The representative of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) highlighted the crucial role of this organization in police cooperation and criminal justice. INTERPOL was created on September 7, 1923, to promote international police cooperation. It comprises 196 member states, allowing their police services to connect: police-to-police communication, compilation of files related to transnational organized crime, and transmission to justice. Information is taken at the right time and place, facilitating good decision-making and the rapid transmission of mutual legal assistance files.

Countries must work together to share communication channels to exchange sensitive data. The support of the CCPCJ is important to enable INTERPOL to leverage the effectiveness of criminal justice systems. The communications from CCPCJ member states were followed by debates, some of which are summarized below:

## DEBATES

### SAUDI ARABIA

For Saudi Arabia, transnational crime and other forms of crime constitute threats to national security. Saudi Arabia has designated a national authority to coordinate mutual legal assistance requests.

### RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Russian Federation noted that some states do not respond to mutual legal assistance requests for political reasons. It provided several examples of requests sent to European countries that remained unanswered. It emphasized that judicial cooperation should not be affected by political reasons.

### MOROCCO

Crime has become very complex. Morocco has revised its penal laws to address all forms of crime. Electronic communication techniques could facilitate international cooperation. Bilateral and regional agreements exist to prevent recidivism and social reintegration. The Ministry of Justice has a bill to create a national agency to recover crime proceeds. It is also necessary to consider texts on environmental crime.

### TANZANIA

Regarding International Cooperation, Tanzania noted the following points:

The collection of evidence must be rapid. The central prosecutor's office receives mutual legal assistance requests. Electronic and video evidence can be received. The USA and Uganda have helped Tanzania in some judicial matters.

Tanzania uses multilateral treaties to execute extradition and mutual legal assistance requests. The law also allows the seizure of crime proceeds.

States must mobilize and unite their forces to combat organized crime.

Language barriers sometimes hinder international cooperation.

State sovereignty must be respected in the search for evidence.

### UNITED KINGDOM

The United Kingdom has set up a secure online form for international mutual legal assistance requests. It is determined to build safer societies.

### THAILAND

Like Uganda and other countries, Thailand defended the principle of rapid processing of extradition requests. Thailand uses various methods to recover illicit assets. The only difficulty lies with crypto currencies.

### SUDAN

Sudan has become a theatre of transnational organized crime due to foreign powers' interference in internal politics. All states are committed to international cooperation in fighting organized crime.

The mere signing of bilateral or multilateral agreements is not enough. There must be a will to effectively combat organized crime; the speed of interconnection and digitization of procedures facilitate international cooperation.



## DELEGATES ATTENDING THE 33RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN VIENNA

The aggression by Israel against Palestine was widely condemned by Arab countries, which called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to defenceless Palestinian victims. It was noted that even UN personnel are victims of Israeli strikes in Gaza. The necessity to create a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, respecting the 1967 borders, was proposed as the best solution to the crisis. This solution is also supported by Turkey, which condemns the Israeli aggression in Gaza that threatens stability and international peace. South Africa also supports a two-state solution and calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

### **The 33rd session of the CCPCJ resulted in several key outcomes:**

1. Adoption of resolutions: Member states adopted resolutions addressing various aspects of crime prevention, including measures to combat organized crime, corruption and terrorism.
2. Strengthening international cooperation: discussions emphasized the importance of international cooperation in addressing transnational crime. Strategies for enhancing collaboration among countries were explored.
3. Technical assistance and capacity building: the session highlighted the need for technical assistance and capacity-building efforts to strengthen criminal justice systems worldwide.
4. Focus on extradition and mutual legal assistance: delegates discussed extradition procedures and mutual legal assistance mechanisms to facilitate cross-border cooperation in criminal cases.
5. Asset recovery and anti-corruption efforts: The CCPCJ emphasized the importance of recovering illicitly acquired assets and combating corruption at national and international levels.
6. Overall, the session aimed to promote effective crime prevention strategies and enhance global efforts to address criminal challenges.

## THE NEED FOR AN AFRICAN CONVENTION ON EXTRADITION AND MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN CRIMINAL MATTERS, “The promotion of an African cooperation arrangement against transnational criminality”

By **Munanura Andrew Karokora, Deputy Director General, UNAFRI**

The theme of this year’s 33rd session of the CCPCJ was promoting international cooperation and technical assistance to prevent and address organized crime, corruption, terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and other forms of crime, including in the areas of extradition, mutual legal assistance, and asset recovery. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice CCPCJ is the principal policy-making body guiding the United Nations in these critical areas.

Attempts to formulate the African Convention on Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters were first floated in 1971 by an African council of ministers, who considered the first draft convention circulated in 1974. This initiative failed as only ten member states responded by sending their comments and observations.

UNAFRI subsequently took up the initiative in 1996



**BY MUNANURA ANDREW KAROKORA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL, UNAFRI**

with the assistance of the United States Government and conducted a fresh survey to which most African member states responded. The survey revealed that the existing mechanisms, practices and legislation on extradition and MLA were inadequate and poorly developed. As a result of the survey, an improved draft convention was prepared after rigorous discussions, seminars and input from member state countries to fine-tune the final version.

Despite all the excellent progress that the experts made, the draft conventions were never submitted to the decision-making organs of the AU for adoption. However, I heard a few hurdles in harmonising the linguistic texts to ensure harmony in the texts, and financial issues frustrated the process.

This presentation is to re-ignite debate and interest in the African conventions on extradition and MLA in criminal matters as part of the international cooperation measures to combat criminality. UNAFRI aims to promote an African cooperation arrangement against transnational crime by pushing the African member state countries to adopt the African Convention on Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance in criminal matters to supplement other global efforts laid out in the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its additional protocols and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

To advance the above-stated aims, we intend to do the following:-

1. Conduct a survey to collect information on the African region’s existing extradition and mutual legal assistance arrangements. The survey intends to serve as a starting point in initiating measures towards modern and effective African extradition and MLA arrangements.



2. The earlier surveys that UNAFRI conducted in 1998 revealed that the existing mechanisms, practices and legislations were inadequate and poorly developed. A bulk of the arrangements were inherited from the colonial era. A discussion in Africa on extradition mechanisms and practices is, in reality, a study of European systems of extradition relations. There is a dearth of bilateral extradition and mutual legal assistance arrangements among African countries. In many cases, the existing arrangements are outdated and must be replaced by modern arrangements considering recent developments.
3. We intend to conduct a fresh survey to update our existing literature, hoping to avoid the past hurdles and push through the convention.

### **Objectives of our initiatives**

- To promote regional and international cooperation and coordination of law enforcement entities and officials dealing with extradition and establish a database that will be updated from time to time, UNAFRI continues its outreach throughout Africa;
- To upgrade the skills and performance of the vital extradition and mutual legal assistance personnel through the exchange of experience and exposure to the implementation of international principles and practices;
- To expose criminal justice practitioners and other interested parties to the existence of information on extradition and MLA in print and electronically and its availability to law enforcement officials and others in Africa and elsewhere;
- We intend to initiate closer collaborative activities and relations between African countries and criminal justice actors in those countries;
- Update extradition treaties and arrangements, laws and practices to match the current international developments in the field;
- Advocate for simplified extradition procedures

to facilitate the extradition of fugitives since extradition remains one of the most effective tools available to the international community in combating transnational crime.

### **Extradition arrangements and mechanisms: There are four primary extradition arrangements:-**

- Extradition through reciprocal arrangements
- Extradition through unilateral domestic legislation which follows extradition (Japan example)
- Extradition through multilateral treaties or schemes
- Extradition through bilateral treaties usually addresses specific bilateral problems.
- Outside these arrangements, states can agree to prosecute fugitive offenders; irregular procedures such as deportation, cross border arrests and abductions, which go contrary to human rights principles and don't follow due process; Interpol mechanisms, the use of red notice.
- UNAFRI is pursuing the African convention so that member states have a legal obligation to extradite whenever needed.

### **Challenges faced by African countries in extradition and MLA**

- In preparation for extradition requests, the authorities of the requesting state must have due regard to the extradition laws of the requested state. Many existing treaties contain provisions that create difficulties ranging from:-
- Extraditable offences: not all offences are extraditable; these include political and military offences and sometimes include fiscal and tax offences. In the principle of double criminality, the alleged offence should be a crime in the requesting and requested state

- The issue of Nationality, some countries don't extradite their nationals;
  - The divide between common law and civil law usually revolves around safeguards that guarantee a fair trial—acquisitorial and inquisitorial systems. Under common law, one should establish a prima facie case before extradition (which can be done by written evidence), and it is unnecessary to call witnesses. This requirement is absent in civil law jurisdictions.
  - Death penalty issues: countries that have abolished the death penalty would not usually extradite a person accused of a capital punishment crime to a non-abolitionist state unless there are guarantees that a death penalty would not be carried out.
  - Speciality rule: A person cannot be tried in the requesting state for offences other than those appearing in the request. (Common law jurisdictions do not allow additional charges, while civil law jurisdictions allow them). This gap is slowly narrowing.
  - Political Instability: A number of African countries are embroiled in one form of political instability or another. This instability is an obstacle to extradition.
  - Technological challenges
  - The bottom line is that the surrendered fugitive should face a fair trial. So we're urging countries to be flexible and extricate themselves from the civil and common law divide.
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**FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN UGANDA: SIGNIFICANT STEPS  
PRESIDENT YOWERI MUSEVENI IS PUTTING WORDS INTO ACTION AND IS  
LAUNCHING A FIERCE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION AND PUBLIC FUNDS  
EMBEZZLEMENT.**

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

After several months of raising awareness, the Ugandan Head of State is now merciless towards his compatriots who prioritize their selfish interests over the well-being of the population. Even if the fight against corruption was already in its political program, it took a significant step with the embezzlement of corrugated iron sheets intended for the very poor population of the Karamoja locality. Several ministers were arrested and taken to prison for their alleged involvement in the embezzlement of these sheets, which were intended to alleviate the suffering of the populations who have long remained underdeveloped due to armed attacks, cattle theft, and the effects of climate change.

Representatives from this locality were appointed by the President to the government to defend the interests of their populations and find development pathways of this locality with the support of the government and foreign partners. Unfortunately,

instead of defending their populations, they turned into oppressors, using their strategic positions to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor.

In his various messages to the Ugandan nation, the Head of State promised political sanctions against some of these perpetrators, pending court decisions on the facts with which they are accused. Putting words into action, he dismissed some ministers involved in the misappropriation of corrugated iron, while others were retained in office while waiting for the courts to rule on their fate. It is truly regrettable to note that those who already benefit from exorbitant advantages due to their government positions refuse to give poor citizens the minimum that the state offers to lift them out of poverty.

While the iron sheets embezzlement case was still fresh, budget fraud surfaced, prompting President Museveni to be intransigent against the parliamentarians who are members of the committees responsible for voting the budget of state institutions. Several members of parliament

are currently under thorough investigations for corruption cases in the Republic's budget vote. Information reported in the press reveals that several members of parliamentary committees demanded significant sums of money to add and pass the budgets of certain state institutions. Among other things, they are accused of using influence peddling on parliamentary committees to increase the budget of the Ugandan Human Rights Commission for 20% commission. Thus, instead of the substantial increase in the budget being motivated by the real increase in the expenditure of the Institution, it is rather motivated by the corruption of the members of the finance committee! The money that was supposed to be used to improve the functioning of public services and fight against poverty is then pocketed by crooks for selfish purposes. The national press, *New Vision*, in its edition of Thursday, June 20, 2024, indicates that 5 parliamentarians have already been arrested and are undergoing thorough interrogations before the Criminal Investigations Directorate (CID). According to the same sources (*New Vision*, June 17, 2024, p.3), 35 other parliamentarians are also facing new arrests.

How can people's representatives, supposed to embody honesty and honourability, go so low to tarnish the image of the state? Everyone knows that President Museveni is a convinced Pan-Africanist who has contributed to several peace missions in Africa, notably in the DRC, Somalia, Sudan, etc. He recently hosted the Non-Aligned Movement and G77+ China summit. He currently chairs these high international bodies, making the whole country and continent proud. Moreover, he is the pivot of sub-regional cooperation in the East African zone and is considered one of the best wise men on the continent. The Ugandan parliament should reflect the President's image, with parliamentarians who respect public affairs and care about the population's well-being. However, it is regrettable to note that old habits die hard. Despite the President's warnings, many parliament and public administration officials continue to believe they can embezzle public funds with impunity. To combat this drift, President

Museveni has asked the judiciary to take action. To avoid continuing to entrust unscrupulous individuals with parliamentary committee responsibilities, the Central Executive Committee (CEC) of the ruling party (National Resistance Movement (NRM)) has invited its Internal Security Organization (ISO) to thoroughly study all files of parliamentarians aspiring to positions of responsibility within parliamentary committees. The objective is to censor all individuals of dubious morality to prevent their actions from continuing to tarnish the parliament and the entire country's image (Cf. *New Vision*, June 18, 2024, p.7).

Nevertheless, those involved in various corruption cases continue to benefit from the presumption of innocence until proven guilty in a trial where they are entitled to all procedural guarantees. The right to a fair trial is a fundamental right recognized by most international human rights instruments. In respect of the presumption of innocence principle, we will not name the suspects under investigation in this Newsletter.

It was indeed time to launch this fight against corruption, which has become a real gangrene against economic development. All newspapers had made the fight against corruption their editorial line to raise awareness among the population about the harm it causes to society. No nation can develop if authorities prioritize their personal interests over collective interests. However, the frantic pursuit of illicit gain has invaded many public life sectors in Uganda. Recently, the public press *New Vision*, in its edition of Tuesday, June 18, 2024, page 4, reported the existence of more than 800 fake land titles resulting from public officials' corruption. While the Head of State encourages populations to intensify agriculture, many conflicts arise over land occupation. Courts are increasingly dealing with land disputes, and those who cannot afford to go to take legal action resort to mob justice to reclaim their lands. In recent years, several deaths have resulted from mob justice generated by land conflicts. Ugandan police crime statistics show that in 2023, there was a worrying increase in mob justice. Murders increased by 9%,

with 1039 cases reported in 2023 compared to 953 cases in 2022. Additionally, a total of 271 offenses were reported to the Land Protection Unit (LPU), a decrease from 561 cases in 2022, a 51.7% reduction in reported offenses in this category.

Corruption and public funds embezzlement fall into the category of economic crimes. In 2023, 12,924 economic crimes were recorded across the country, a slightly decreasing trend compared to 2022, which had 13,202 cases. This report could indicate that the fight against economic crimes is already bearing fruit. We must only strengthen the fight mechanism, hoping that public officials will become more aware of respecting public affairs and promoting economic development. In any case, in his State of the Nation address, President Museveni declared war on corruption: "I have declared war on corruption. Avoid becoming my target..." (New Vision, Friday, June 21, 2024, p.7). Wrongdoers better watch out!

It seems that corruption has become a global evil, and especially constitutes a curse for the African continent. However, the right to life and well-being are part of the fundamental rights of every citizen, and the State which makes enormous efforts to satisfy the basic needs of citizens must show itself without weakness in sanctioning prevaricators.

Unfortunately, no country is truly spared from this scourge. On December 9, 2023, 114 countries signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption in Mérida, Mexico. As of October 31, 2023, 140 countries or organizations had signed it, and 190 countries had ratified it. Despite this commitment from the international community, corruption continues to slow down the development of countries and accentuate poverty, pushing States to readjust their systems to combat the scourge.

In an article entitled "Organized financial crime "Corruption": an obstacle to the success of the new development model in Morocco", published in "Research Files in Economy and Management: File 10, No. 1: March 2022", BENNIS Laila and BOUNAR Amine describe the impact of corruption on the socio-

economic development of the Kingdom of Morocco. Several sectors are affected by the phenomenon, including parliament, the private sector, the police, the judicial system, health, public and administrative services. Thus, these are vital sectors which are considered the most affected by corruption. Therefore, Morocco has taken anti-corruption measures to prevent the use of their sectors of activity for the purposes of corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing.

In Cameroon, the fight against corruption and embezzlement of public funds has pushed the government to create several institutions to seek to stem the phenomenon, notably the National Anti-Corruption Commission, the National Financial Investigation Agency, and the special Criminal Court.

Benin, for its part, created, among other things, the Court for the Repression of Economic Offenses and Terrorism (CRIET). This jurisdiction is responsible for the repression of the crime of terrorism, offenses or crimes of an economic nature as provided for by the criminal legislation in force as well as drug trafficking and related offenses.

Similar measures have been taken in many other African states without real success. There must be a genuine political will to curb the phenomenon, by taking strong action against those implicated, particularly through strong institutions and a judiciary truly independent of the executive power. Instead of remaining at the level of slogans, the fight must take a decisive turn through concrete actions of prosecution and repression, the recovery of the proceeds of crime, the declaration of assets by public authorities upon taking office, and transparency in the management of public affairs. Heads of state should commit to this path in order to deserve their place as elected representatives of the people, guardians of public property. In this context, wrongdoers will have to be on their guard!

## SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS (SALW) PROLIFERATION: A LOOMING CRISIS IN AFRICA

By Sandra Karugu Consultant, UNAFRI

The proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) continues to pose a grave threat to peace, stability, and development across Africa. Despite concerted efforts by governments and regional organizations, the uncontrolled circulation of firearms persists, fuelling armed conflicts, organized crime, and terrorism across the region.

Statistics paint a grim picture of the SALW situation in Africa. According to the African Union Committee on SALWs, approximately 80% of illicit small arms and light weapons in Africa are unregistered and unmarked, with millions more flooding into the region each year (The Uganda Observer, 2024). This influx of weapons exacerbates existing tensions and facilitates the perpetration of violence, from inter-communal clashes to transnational terrorism.

The root causes of SALW proliferation are multifaceted and interconnected. Factors such as political instability, porous borders, weak governance, and socio-economic marginalization create fertile ground for the illicit arms trade to thrive. Furthermore, ongoing conflicts and post-conflict environments provide ample opportunities

for weapons to change hands, often finding their way into the hands of non-state actors and criminal syndicates.

In June 2024, during a meeting of Members of Parliament from across Africa (Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Comoros, Madagascar, and Uganda) that convened to discuss mechanisms for enhancing the prevention and reduction of small SALW addressed the pressing issue of illicit arms trade. Lawrence Biyika Songa, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Forum on SALWs and MP for Ora, highlighted the need to tackle underlying issues such as limited education and lack of opportunities, which drive youth towards firearms. He stressed, the importance to check the root causes like competition for natural resources by external entities that interfere in regional affairs for their interests. Dr. Raphael Chegeni, an MP from Tanzania and president of the Parliamentary Forum on SALW, highlighted recent research indicating that over 260,000 individuals, including men, women, and children, lost their lives due to violence involving small arms in 2021. (The Uganda Observer, 2024).

The consequences of SALW proliferation are profound and far-reaching. Armed violence not only results in loss of life and displacement but also undermines efforts for sustainable development and regional integration. Additionally, the presence of weapons perpetuates a cycle of insecurity, hindering investment, and stifling economic growth in affected communities.

Recognizing the urgent need to address SALW proliferation, countries in East Africa and the Horn of Africa have taken steps to enhance cooperation and coordination. Regional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the East African Community (EAC) have established mechanisms for information-sharing, capacity-building, and joint operations to combat the illicit arms trade. The regional seminar organized by the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms



SANDRA KARUGU, CONSULTANT, UNAFRI

and Light Weapons (SALW) seeks to contribute to the achievement of more peaceful and developed societies by parliamentary action against armed violence to increase human security.

Moreover, national governments have implemented various legislative and enforcement measures to strengthen firearms control and prevent diversion. These efforts include the enactment of robust firearm laws, border security enhancements, and disarmament and demobilization programs targeting ex-combatants and militias. According to Gen. David Muhoozi Chief of Defence Forces of the Uganda people's Defence Forces, Uganda, in particular, has implemented several laws and policies to prevent the illicit trade in firearms. These include voluntary disarmament, the destruction of illegal armouries, the destruction of over 2,000 redundant firearms, and the fingerprinting of state, civilian, and private company firearms to ease the tracing of criminal activity.

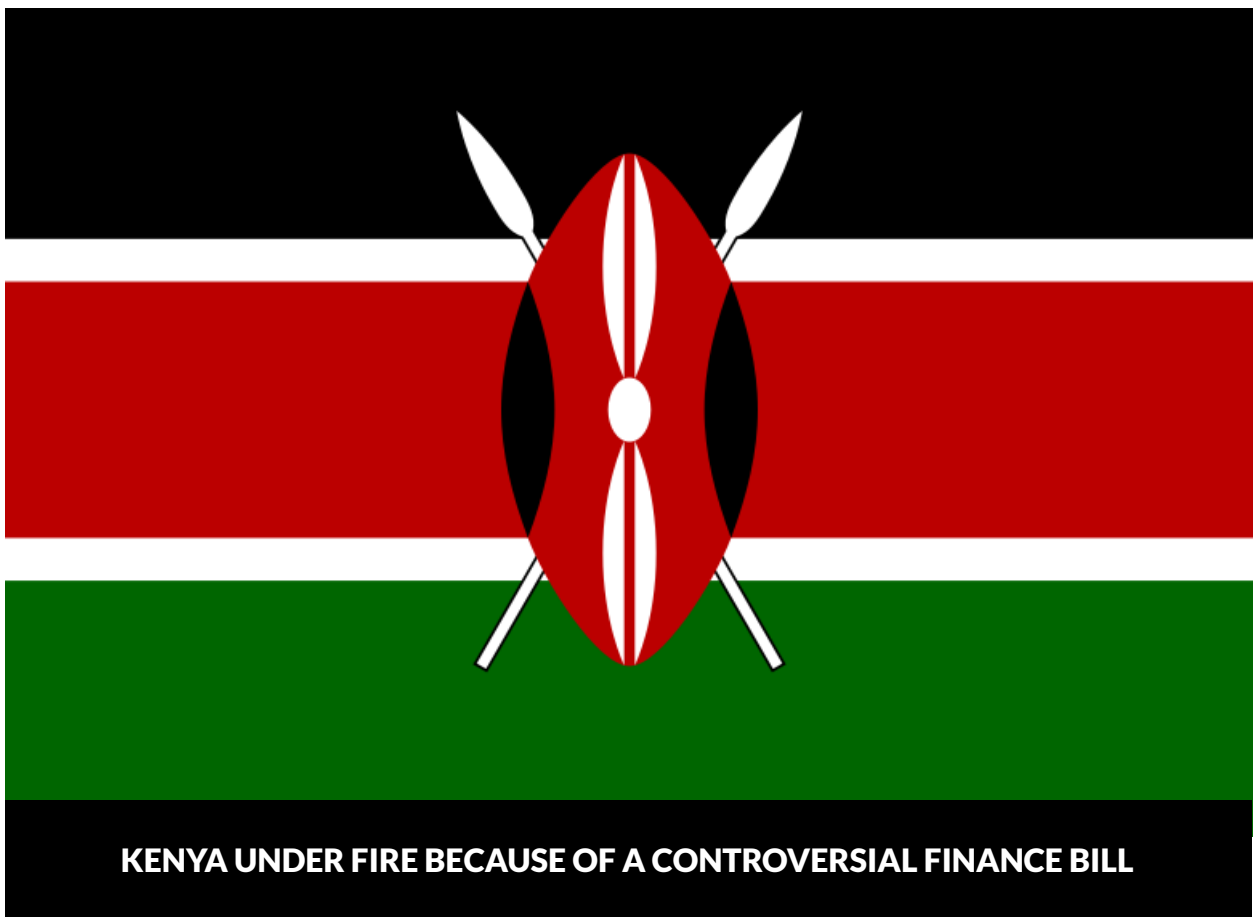
According to Kirabira Florence, the national focal person and head of the office coordinating small arms and light weapons in the country, the Firearms Act of 1970 no longer suits the current societal changes and innovations. With a new law Coming in place, (small Arms and Light Weapons Control) it is hoped that practices such as marking and destroying excesses and regulating imports, exports, and manufacturing will be embraced, similar to those seen elsewhere. (The Uganda Observer, 2024).

Moving forward, a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach is needed to tackle SALW

proliferation in East Africa and the Horn of Africa. This approach should encompass not only law enforcement and security measures but also socio-economic development, conflict prevention, and community engagement. By addressing the root causes of armed violence and strengthening regional cooperation, countries in the region can mitigate the impact of SALW proliferation and pave the way for lasting peace and prosperity.

It should be noted that the issue of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons was already a concern for the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. On June 21, 2023, UNAFRI held a virtual video conference meeting with officials from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) of the U.S. Department of State to discuss prospects for collaboration in combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which exacerbates insecurity on the African continent. This conference provided an opportunity to revisit the project of creating a regional center at UNAFRI to tackle this phenomenon. Discussions are ongoing with a view to signing a Memorandum of Understanding on the issue. It is important that African parliamentarians join forces with UNAFRI to undertake effective actions in data collection, harmonization of legislation, security policies, and training of personnel responsible for combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons as part of a holistic approach for the emergence of the continent.





On Tuesday, June 25th, 2024, thousands of Kenyan protesters flooded the streets of Nairobi and other regions across Kenya, urgently demanding reforms. The demonstrations, ignited by widespread discontent with the recently passed Financial Bill 2024, swiftly escalated into violent confrontations with the police. The violence was sparked off by young citizens protesting against the rise in the prices of basic necessities in the Finance Bill.

Initially peaceful, the protests saw demonstrators demanding government action on the high cost of living, the eradication of corruption, and electoral reforms. Led by opposition and civil society leaders, the protesters marched through Nairobi, chanting slogans and carrying placards. (As reported by CNN 24/June/2024).

As the day progressed, the situation deteriorated.

In Nairobi, protesters erected burning roadblocks, while in Kisumu and Mombasa, they faced off against the police. The police responded with tear gas and batons, leading to numerous injuries and the arrest of over 100 people. Reports of police brutality surfaced, with accusations of excessive force being used against the demonstrators.

The protests have exposed deep divisions within Kenyan society. While some citizens support the government's stance, others are adamant in their calls for reform. Economic challenges, including high unemployment rates, inflation, and rising food and fuel prices, have exacerbated public discontent. According to the World Bank, Kenya's economy has been struggling to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The unemployment rate remains high, particularly



among the youth, and the cost of living has soared due to inflation. Corruption remains a significant issue, with Kenya ranking 124th out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Despite the chaos and violence, the protests have highlighted the urgent need for change in Kenya. The government's willingness to engage in dialogue with the opposition and civil society groups is a positive step, but whether it will lead to meaningful reforms remains to be seen.

In response to sustained protests against the legislation, Kenyan President William Ruto withdrew the controversial Finance Bill. However, police opened fire on protesters who stormed the parliament building and set offices on fire, forcing parliamentarians to run for safety. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights said that 361 people had been hurt and 24 people had died since the protests started two weeks earlier.

The recent events in Kenya are a pivotal moment that underscores the need for constructive engagement between the government and its citizens. The protests, which were sparked by the

Financial Bill 2024, highlight broader concerns such as economic hardship, corruption, and electoral transparency.

The clashes during the protests emphasize the importance of addressing societal grievances through peaceful dialogue and reform. The Kenyan government faced difficulties in balancing economic policies with public sentiment, and the challenges in maintaining law and order during periods of civil unrest.

It is crucial for all parties, including government authorities, opposition leaders, and civil society organizations, to engage in open and inclusive dialogue aimed at resolving the underlying issues. By fostering a collaborative approach, Kenya can work towards a more stable and prosperous future, reducing the potential for crime and violence.

The recent protests serve as a reminder of the importance of addressing public concerns through transparent and inclusive governance. By working together, all stakeholders can contribute to a more harmonious society, ensuring that the voices of all citizens are heard and respected.



## CAMEROON IS STRENGTHENING ITS MECHANISM TO FIGHT AGAINST MONEY LAUNDERING, THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM AND THE PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION



**By Dr KITIO Édouard, Super Scale Magistrate, Director General of UNAFRI**

The world is going through numerous crises, some of which are caused by terrorist groups which undermine development efforts in Africa and accentuate poverty and misery. Cameroon, which is a country in central Africa, is not spared. Since Boko Haram terrorist groups sowed insecurity in the far north, the country has lost sleep due to repeated attacks and kidnappings for ransom caused by these violent and dangerous extremists.

While the country was not yet at the end of its troubles, protests resulting from separatist groups in the North-West and South-West have emerged since almost 2016, once again plunging the country into a merciless quest for security. These permanent struggles against armed terrorist or separatist groups now constitute a bottleneck for economic growth and the fight against poverty.

If Boko Haram is of foreign origin since its headquarters are in neighboring Nigeria, the separatist groups claim

the creation of the “welfare” state of Ambazonia. In long form, the Federal Republic of Ambazonia, also called Amba Land, is a non-internationally recognized secessionist state self-proclaimed on October 1, 2017, in the two English-speaking regions of North-West and South-West of Cameroon. The multiple abuses caused by these groups on the population and socio-economic structures push Cameroon to sometimes take retaliatory or conciliatory measures, which do not always have the expected effects.

Decree No. 2023/464 of October 30, 2023, establishing, organizing and operating the Committee for the Coordination of National Policies to Combat Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction constitutes a new step forward in the system to combat these scourges. This text includes ten (10) articles relating respectively to the general provisions (art. 1 and 2), the organization of the Committee (art. 3), the functioning of the Committee (art. 4, 5 and 6), diverse and final provisions (art. 7, 8, 9, 10).

Money being the sinews of war, it is important to control capital flows, especially since terrorists and secessionists benefit from external financing which feeds their networks and allows them to equip themselves with weapons, ammunition, and communications equipment and of command. For several years, Cameroon has been inviting friendly countries that shelter the intellectual authors and financiers of the secessionists to play fair by initiating legal proceedings against them, but their timid reaction fringes on their complicity. It is therefore a question of placing particular emphasis on securing the territory by strengthening internal measures. To do this, a committee has been created to coordinate national policies to combat these illicit actions.

Cameroon’s approach is in line with the directives

of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC). Cameroon thus applies Regulation No. 01/CEMAC/UMAC/CM of April 11, 2016 on the prevention and repression of money laundering, the financing of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in Central Africa, and Directive No. 01/16/CEMAC/UMAC/CM of December 12, 2016 relating to the model text establishing the creation, organization and operation of the Committee for the Coordination of National Policies to Combat Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Proliferation in Each Member State of GABAC, called the "Coordination Committee".

According to article 2 of the aforementioned decree, the Committee is placed under the authority of the Minister of Finance, and is responsible for developing and coordinating, at the national level, policies and activities aimed at combating money laundering, the financing of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It has a role of assistance and awareness raising among the authorities and populations, proposes all measures enabling Cameroon to apply the decisions taken by regional and international bodies, supports the National Agency for Financial Investigations in the coordination and monitoring self-assessment and mutual evaluation exercises of the fight system, formulates proposals for regulations adapted to the fight, promotes consultations between the various administrations concerned with the fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism and proliferation, etc.

Chaired by the Minister of Finance or his representative, the Committee includes, among others, representatives of: the Presidency of the Republic, the Prime Ministry, the Ministry of Finance, Justice, Territorial Administration, the Economy, the tourism, Housing and Urban Development, External Relations, Mines, the State Secretariat for Defense in charge of the National Gendarmerie, the General Delegation for National Security, the General Directorate of External Research. In addition, the Committee includes representatives of the Bank

of Central African States (BEAC), the professional association of credit institutions and microfinance establishments, insurance companies, as well as the National Order of lawyers, notaries, and accountants. The involvement of security services, the Presidency of the Republic, sectoral ministries, associations of credit institutions and other professional orders makes it possible to cover all sectors concerned by the fight against money laundering, the financing of terrorism and proliferation. Each sector should therefore demonstrate integrity in order to support the government's dynamic of strengthening the fight system.

The Chairman of the Committee may call on any person or structure, because of their skills, to take part in the work of the Committee, in an advisory capacity. A permanent secretariat assists the Committee in carrying out its missions. The Committee meets when convened by its President in ordinary session once every six months, and in extraordinary session whenever necessary (art. 4). The recommendations of the Committee are adopted by a simple majority of the members present. In the event of a tie, that of the President is casting (art.5).

The Permanent Secretariat is placed under the coordination of the Director of the National Financial Investigation Agency (ANIF). He can call on the evaluators of the Action Group against Money Laundering in Central Africa (GABAC).

The Committee produces half-yearly and annual reports which are addressed to the President of the Republic and transmitted to the ministers in charge of Finance, Justice, Defense, Foreign Affairs, the General Delegate for National Security, and the Action Group. Against money laundering in Central Africa (art.9).

It remains to be hoped that the Committee will work effectively to prevent illicit capital flows in order to reduce asymmetric threats to their bare minimum. No economic development can in fact reasonably be conceived in a context dominated by insecurity and terror.



## **POLITICAL TRANSITION IN BURKINA FASO, GABON, GUINEA, MALI, AND NIGER. COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL (PSC) OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) adopted, during its 1212th meeting held on May 20, 2024, an important communiqué on the updated briefing on the political transition in Burkina Faso, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, and Niger.

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council expressed deep concern over the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government and prolonged political transition processes, exacerbated by the rise of terrorism and insurgency, as well as the proliferation of small arms and light weapons on the African continent.

The Council expressed concern over the shrinking political and civic spaces in some countries undergoing political transition, particularly through the banning of political parties' activities, associations, and civil society organizations, as well as the repression of media activities.

Given the deterioration of the political situation in these countries, the Council invited transitional authorities to prioritize the supreme interests of their respective countries and populations, ensure strict implementation of their respective transition roadmaps within agreed timelines, operationalize Joint Transition Monitoring Committees in respective countries, and ensure inclusive and transparent transition processes.

Furthermore, the Peace and Security Council reiterated its position that members of transitional authorities should not participate in elections, in accordance with the provisions of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG). It noted with concern the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel region due to the activities of terrorist and insurgent groups, as well as the resulting dire humanitarian situation. It welcomed the efforts

made by transitional authorities and emphasized the need to find comprehensive solutions to the structural causes and factors of terrorism in the region.

In the same vein, the Peace and Security Council invited the African Union Commission, the international community, and member states capable of doing so to support the efforts of governments of countries in transition by providing humanitarian assistance. It emphasized that preventive measures in combating terrorism and violent extremism in the Sahel remain crucial and urged for synergy of international and regional efforts to effectively combat terrorism and violent extremism, based on the 1999 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and AU normative frameworks related thereto.

The Peace and Security Council also called on the international community to provide necessary support to countries undergoing political transition, while urging all multilateral stakeholders to adapt their engagement

strategies to reflect current realities and priorities, particularly regarding the provision of efficient and quality services.

Among other things, the Council requested the AU Commission to take necessary measures to swiftly deploy a preventive mediation mission to Niger, to engage in dialogue with transitional authorities and work towards establishing a realistic roadmap for transition, in accordance with national and regional provisions. It also requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to appoint a High-Level Facilitator, at the level of a sitting or former head of state or government, to engage in dialogue with transitional authorities in the concerned countries.

Finally, the Peace and Security Council individually reviewed the political and security situation in Burkina Faso, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, and Niger, while welcoming progress in some cases, expressing concern over political freedoms restrictions in other cases, and providing useful recommendations to restore constitutional order.



Burkina Faso's President Ibrahim Traoré



## DIRECTOR GENERAL OF UNAFRI VISITS EQUATORIAL GUINEA EMBASSY IN KAMPALA

The Director General of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI), Dr. KITIO Édouard on 26th June 2024 visited the Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in Kampala as part of a strategic initiative to engage with all member states. This visit was a recommendation by the UNAFRI Governing Board, and it underscores the Institute's commitment to fostering collaboration and gaining support for its crucial mission across Africa.

UNAFRI, overseen by 11-member states of the Governing Board representing different African regions, plays a pivotal role in advancing crime prevention and criminal justice systems continent-wide. During the Director General's meeting with H.E. Camilo Micha Nguema Misi, the Ambassador Extra Ordinary and Plenipotentiary of Republic of Equatorial Guinea accredited to Uganda, Dr. KITIO

Édouard highlighted UNAFRI's extensive mandates and its integral role in training public administration executives, particularly law enforcement officers, prison, magistrates and other stakeholders on effective strategies to combat crime.

Expressing gratitude for Equatorial Guinea's active engagement, particularly the Minister of Justice's participation in the online International Conference, Dr. KITIO Édouard emphasized the institute's dedication to promoting global cooperation and advising member states on implementing UN crime prevention policies. UNAFRI's collaborative efforts within the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Program Network have strengthened its capacity to address all sorts of crime challenges and enhance regional security.

The visit also served as an opportunity to give an update on the Institute's restructuring efforts and to reinforce partnerships with Equatorial Guinea and explore avenues for further cooperation in tackling transnational organized crime and advancing access to justice initiatives. By aligning its efforts with international frameworks and leveraging strategic alliances, UNAFRI continues to bolster its impact in shaping a safer, and a more just Africa.

On the other hand, the Director General received commendations from H.E. Camilo Micha Nguema Misi, the Ambassador of Equatorial Guinea to Uganda for his engagement and determination to transform the pan African Institute. He praised UNAFRI's dedicated efforts in combatting crime across the African continent. He emphasized the firm commitment of his Head of State, H.E. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, to initiatives promoting peace and security, citing the critical need for African states to unite against crime, including emerging crime trends

such as terrorism, cybercrime and human trafficking.

Recognizing the indispensable role of financial support in UNAFRI's mission success, Ambassador Camilo Micha Nguema Misi affirmed Equatorial Guinea's commitment to enhancing its partnership with the Institute in regards to its financial contribution. He pledged to foster deeper collaboration between his country and UNAFRI, aligning efforts to strengthen regional security frameworks and combat transnational organized crime effectively.

The ambassador further stressed the importance of collective action and international cooperation in addressing complex crime challenges facing Africa today. He finally pleaded for greater involvement of member countries in strengthening the financial health of the Institute in order to enable it to fully play its role on the continent.



## THE EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI IN KAMPALA HOSTS THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF UNAFRI



On June 27, 2024, Dr. KITIO Édouard, the Director General of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI), visited the Embassy of the Republic of Burundi in Kampala and was welcomed by H.E. Brigadier General Jules NDIHOKUBWAYO. This visit is part of the strategic initiative to engage with all member states, under the recommendations of the UNAFRI Governing Board, emphasizing the Institute's dedication to fostering collaboration and securing support for its vital mission across Africa.

The Director General informed the Ambassador that UNAFRI is overseen by an 11-member states Governing Board representing diverse regions of Africa and plays a crucial role in advancing crime prevention and criminal justice systems in the African continent citing that there are similar Institutes in other continents. During

his meeting with H.E. Brigadier General Jules NDIHOKUBWAYO Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Burundi accredited to Uganda, Dr. KITIO Édouard highlighted UNAFRI's broad mandates and its fundamental role in training law enforcement officers and stakeholders in effective crime prevention strategies.

The Director General informed the Ambassador of the General Assembly, which convenes biennially to assess the activities of each Institute that deals in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, along with an annual evaluation in Vienna to review the UN's recommendations and policies in the same area. Additionally, every five years, the United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice convenes.

Dr. KITIO Édouard emphasized that Africa presents a fertile ground and must assert its



interests by fulfilling its obligations, preventing other crime prevention institutions from establishing themselves on the continent. This goal hinges on securing support from member states to enable UNAFRI to conduct targeted training activities addressing specific threats and crime issues in each country.

During discussions, the Director General highlighted several Memoranda of Understanding between UNAFRI and the University of Birmingham, focusing on indigenous approaches to regulating digital assets and Artificial Intelligence in Africa. Additionally, UNAFRI collaborates with North Carolina Central University on addressing community violence and partners with Makerere University to tackle drug use in schools, among other initiatives. The plans are also underway for the establishment

of an African Center for Small Arms Control in partnership with the National Institute (NIJ) of Justice of State department of the United States of America.

The ambassador recognized UNAFRI's crucial role in addressing critical issues such as terrorism, cybercrime, corruption, money laundering, and human trafficking prevalent in Africa. He expressed his willingness to collaborate in combating these challenges and stressed the importance of creating mediation mechanisms for African states to resolve conflicts. Leveraging his military background, he affirmed his commitment to advocating for full government support for UNAFRI, aiming to strengthen bilateral relations and deepen cooperation between his country and the Institute.





## CELEBRATING A LEGACY: UNAFRI BIDS FAREWELL TO ITS LONG-SERVING STAFF

**By Grace Kobusinge, UNAFRI**

In the journey of any Institution, there are milestones that mark not just the passage of time, but the dedication and commitment of its members. On 31st May 2024, UNAFRI stood such a milestone as it bid farewell to a group of individuals who have been the very backbone of the Institute since its inception. With mixed emotions of gratitude, nostalgia, and pride, we were glad to honor the retirement of our long-serving staff members.

For many years, these individuals have poured their hearts and souls into their work, shaping the culture and character of our Institute. They have been the custodians of our values, the pillars of

our success, and the embodiment of our Mission and Vision. Their unwavering dedication and expertise have left a lasting mark on every aspect of the Institute.

These retiring staff members spanned various roles from Senior Management to Support Staff. Among them, Mr. John Sembuya Ssali dedicated nearly 32 years to the institute, serving as an Administrative and Finance Officer (AFO) as his substantive Position, Acting Director for 3 years, Acting Deputy Director General for close to 2 years. His extensive tenure equipped him with profound knowledge of the Institute's programs and operations. Ms. Sarah Musoke served as the Finance Administrative Assistant (FAA). Similarly, Mr. Patrick Mwaita progressed from

being a Program Assistant to retire as a Program Officer. Additionally, Madam Edith Marget K Kibuuka Musoke a Senior Bilingual Secretary, Madame Justine Kasiryee, a highly esteemed Senior Secretary, and Mr. Charles Mutyaba, the Registry Clerk, and support staff Mr. Bossa Zubair a Senior Driver and Mr. Zziwa Emmanuel an office Messenger also marked their retirements during this period, and they all served the Institute for decades.

As we reflect on their countless contributions, we cannot help but marvel at the depth of their experience and the wealth of knowledge they have amassed over the years. Their guidance and mentorship have been invaluable to their colleagues, imparting wisdom that transcends textbooks and manuals. Beyond their professional achievements, it is their kindness, generosity, and camaraderie that have commended them to us all.

It is with much emotions that we bid farewell to such esteemed colleagues, but we do so knowing that their legacy will endure long after they have left this Institute. Their autograph on our Institute is engraved in the bonds they have forged, the projects they have spearheaded, and the lives they have touched. While they may be retiring from their roles, they will always be remembered.

Indeed, it is a rare occasion for our Institute to bid farewell to such a significant number of long-serving staff at the same time. Yet, as we mark this milestone, we also embrace the opportunity to celebrate their achievements and express our deepest appreciation for their years of service. Their dedication and commitment have been the cornerstone of our success, and for that, we are eternally grateful.

The retirement of personnel necessitated the

efforts to re-engage the Institute in various activities, and the first steps of reform have already been felt with online International Conferences since the arrival of the Director General. During the Board Meeting held in Addis Ababa in October 2023, the Director General received approval to recruit professional staff for program implementation purposes.

Additionally, following the retirement of long-serving staff members, the Institute has initiated a comprehensive restructuring effort aimed at implementing various reforms. This strategic revamp is designed to modernize operations, enhance efficiency and by embracing these changes, the Institute aims to foster a more dynamic and innovative environment that supports the achievement of its mandates.

Before the retirement of these personnel, the Chairman of the Governing Board Hon. John Mulimba visited the Institute to personally verify their retirement entitlement calculations and harmonize the varying perspectives to prevent any disputes that could have emerged. He was accompanied by a team of auditors from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, and everything proceeded serenely.

As they embark on the new chapter of their lives, we extend our warmest wishes for a fulfilling retirement filled with health, joy, laughter, and well-deserved relaxation.

May the years ahead be a celebration of a legacy well-lived and a testament to the power of dedication, passion and commitment just as the ones they have spent in our midst.

**HAPPY RETIREMENT**



## UNAFRI 5TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Theme: "ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND LEGAL AID IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS IN FRENCH SPEAKING COUNTRIES IN AFRICA AND THE MAGHREB REGION."

The United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) organised its fifth International Conference by videoconference on the 23 of April 2024.

### 1. Objectives:

The conference had the following objectives:

- Present the efforts of African States in the implementation of international instruments relating to human rights, in particular free access to justice for all;
- Evaluate practical legal assistance systems for disadvantaged or weak groups, particularly poor, women and children;
- Evaluate victim and witness protection in criminal the justice systems;
- Evaluate the perception of bars regarding legal aid and concrete proposals for improving the systems in place;

- Encourage academics and other researchers to undertake studies and research on issues related to legal aid and the prospects for its improvement
- Propose concrete measures that the various State's organs must take for better administration of justice and fairness of trial.

### 2. Opening Remarks and Moderator

Prof ADAMOU Rabani, Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Tahoua (Niger)

### 3. Sub theme of the conference

#### Panel 1: Legal aid: inventory and implementation (legislative, administrative and practical aspects)

##### • Situation in Central Africa States

Prof YAWAGA Spener, Titular Professor of Universities, Dean of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, University of Maroua, (Cameroun)

- **Situation in West African States**  
Prof Moktar ADAMOU, Dean of the Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Parakou (Benin)
- **Situation in the Arab Maghreb States**  
Mr. JARDANI Mohamed Amine, Magistrate serving at the Directorate of Criminal Affairs and Crime Observatory (Morocco)

## **Panel 2: The bar and the legal aid: practical difficulties, issues and perspectives**

- **The organization of legal aid by African bars**  
Barrister NGUIMBI MBENZE Franck, Lawyer (Congo Brazzaville)
- **Financing of legal aid by African States**  
Ms. MANKENTSOP WAMBA Clairette Sylvie, Magistrate, Head of the Monitoring Unit at the Ministry of Justice, Yaoundé (Cameroon)

### **4. Summary**

UNAFRI recently organized its fifth international conference via Zoom, with a focus on the French-speaking countries in Africa. This meeting aimed to foster the exchange of ideas, the sharing of knowledge, and navigate the latest developments regarding the “access to justice for all and legal aid in the criminal justice systems in French-speaking Africa and the Maghreb region.” Through their professional interventions, the speakers demonstrated that both in the African French-speaking countries and the Maghreb region, legal aid is recognized in state legislation, in accordance with international community recommendations. However there are concerns regarding the weak organization and insufficient funding. Notably, lawyers are inadequate in the various states and are mostly concentrated in major cities, making it problematic to defend litigants in remote up country areas.

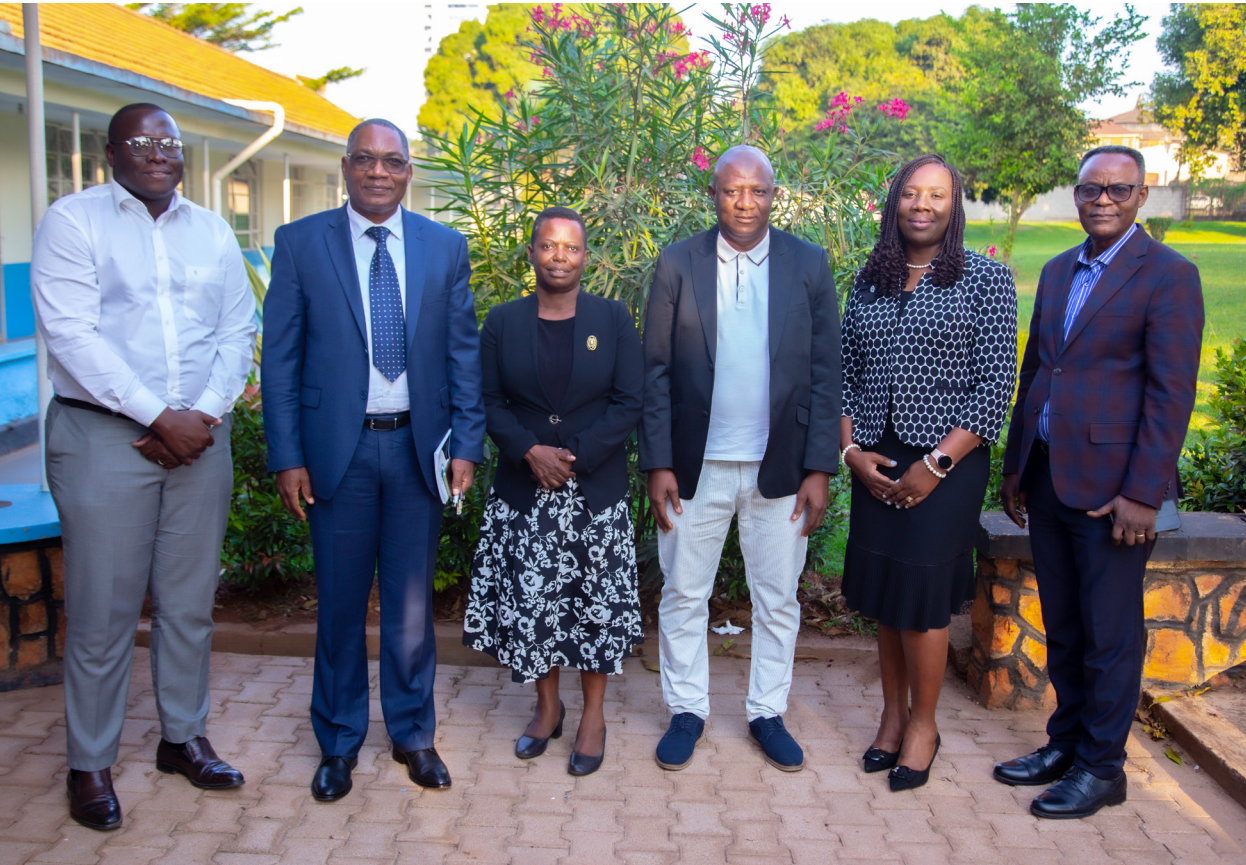
And even where lawyers are strongly represented, they show little interest in defending the weaker parties due to insufficient funding for their professional services. In some cases, states resort to legal representatives or simple jurists to address the shortage of lawyers, which does not always guarantee the quality of assistance. Others turn to private providers, particularly NGOs on Human rights, with mixed results.

To address the funding problems of legal aid, some states resort to development assistance, but this solution remains precarious since, in case of cessation of aid, the consequences affect the beneficiary litigants.

The legal aid systems in African French-speaking countries and the Maghreb region deserve to be reconsidered both structurally and in terms of their financing. Funding anchored on state budgets constitutes a guarantee of stability, provided that these budgets are substantial. However, budgetary expenditures related to justice do not always constitute a priority for states, especially in this time of widespread instability and the global fight against terrorism. In any case, the African Court of Human and Peoples’ Rights holds that the state cannot use lack of financial resources as a factor to deny legal assistance to an accused person prosecuted for a serious crime.

Following these observations, experts have proposed many solutions for improving the provision of legal aid in the African French-speaking countries and the Maghreb region to facilitate access to justice for disadvantaged groups.

UNAFRI expresses profound gratitude to all participants, speakers, and partners for their valuable contributions to this enriching and interactive experience.



## UNAFRI APPOINTS NEW LEADERS

On June 24, 2024, the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFRI) conducted a recruitment process for the positions of Deputy Director General and Director of Training and Programmes. This process was marked by a comprehensive evaluation and selection procedure, reflecting UNAFRI's commitment to excellence and transparency in its leadership appointments.

The recruitment process was meticulously organized, ensuring that all candidates underwent a rigorous assessment. Candidates from various African nations submitted their applications, bringing diverse expertise and backgrounds to the table. The evaluation criteria were multifaceted, encompassing academic qualifications,

professional experience, leadership capabilities, and a vision for advancing UNAFRI's mission.

On June 25, 2024, the selection committee convened to deliberate on the candidates. The committee comprised distinguished members of the Technical Advisory Committee, including representatives from Ghana, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, and was chaired by the Director General of UNAFRI. The deliberation process was intense, with each candidate's strengths and potential contributions meticulously weighed against the organization's strategic objectives.

After thorough discussions and assessments, the committee reached a consensus which was later approved by the chairman of UNAFRI's Governing Board.

**The following appointments were made:**

- **Deputy Director General (DDG): Mr. Munanura Karokora Andrew,** a Ugandan national, emerged as the top candidate for this critical role. His extensive experience in criminal justice reform, coupled with his proven leadership skills, positioned him as the ideal choice to support UNAFRI's mandate and drive its strategic initiatives forward.
- **Director of Training and Programmes (DTP): Dr. Ahmed Linga,** a Tanzanian national, was appointed as the Director of Training and Programmes. Dr. Linga's rich background in training and

programme management, along with his innovative approach to capacity building, made him the perfect fit for this role. His vision for enhancing UNAFRI's training programmes and expanding their impact across the African continent was particularly compelling.

Both appointment signifies a new chapter for UNAFRI. Their combined expertise and leadership will undoubtedly strengthen the organization's efforts in crime prevention and criminal Justice. Both leaders are expected to collaborate closely with member states, partner organizations, and stakeholders to develop and implement effective strategies that address the unique challenges faced by African nations.







