

By Apollo Mubiru

The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) National governance, peace and security survey report released in April 2018, showed that 88% of the adult population were aware of their rights.

The level of awareness of human rights was slightly lower among females (87%) and the rural population (88%) compared to males and the urban population (with 90% respectively).

Persons aged 31 to 59 years were more likely to be aware of their human rights compared to the other age groups.

Furthermore, knowledge of their human rights increases with an increase in the level of education. All respondents aged 18 years and above were asked to establish whether they claimed their human rights during the 12 months before the survey. Only 15% of persons aged 18 years and above had claimed their human rights with more males (16%) than females (14%).

Similarly, persons with disabilities (19%) were more likely to have claimed for their human rights compared to those without a disabilities (13%). The central region (22%) had the highest proportion of respondents who reported to have claimed their human rights, while the western region (10%)

Human rights awareness, violation rates in Uganda



Human Rights activists marching. According to the UBOS report, persons aged 31 to 59 years were more likely to be aware of their rights compared to other age groups

had the lowest. The survey also collected information on whether individuals thought that human rights were respected in the country.

Although the level of awareness of human rights was quite high, only three in every five respondents (60%) indicated that human

rights were often respected in Uganda. The female population, residents of rural areas, those from western Uganda and persons with disabilities were more likely to report that human rights in Uganda were respected compared to the other sub-populations. Overall, the

proportion of the population aged 18 years and above who perceived human rights to be respected in the country slightly decreased from 69% in 2014 to 60% in 2017.

Human rights violations
Human rights abuses include actions such as torture by

security forces, harsh prison conditions, arbitrary detention, restrictions on freedoms of press expression, assembly, political participation and corruption among others.

Police tops human rights violators

The Uganda Police still tops the list of human rights violators, according to a report of the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) released in June.

When contacted, the Police spokesperson, Emilian Kayima, declined to respond.

A total of 419 cases were recorded against the Police last year, followed by private individuals with 210 complaints and Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) with 44.

The cases against the Police, however, showed a decline in violations from the 620 recorded the previous year.

The report showed that 25 complaints were filed against the Uganda Prisons Service with, 15 against private companies, 11 against local governments, seven against education institutions and four against Kampala Capital

ALTHOUGH THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IS HIGH, ONLY THREE IN EVERY FIVE RESPONDENTS INDICATED THAT HUMAN RIGHTS WERE OFTEN OR ALWAYS RESPECTED IN UGANDA

City Authority (KCCA) law enforcers.

In total, the Uganda Human Rights commission recorded 682 complaints during the year. Most of the rights violations relate to the deprivation of rights to personal liberty, deprivation of the right to life and deprivation of property.

According to the report, Hoima district had the highest number of complaints relating to persons detained beyond the required 48 hours, while most complaints of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment were recorded in the central region.

The Cultural Rights of Young People Matter – a Call for Collective Action

Cultural rights are a dimension of human rights seldom mentioned by activists or policy makers. Yet, culture – as the “being” (identity) and “doing” (way of life) of a people – places cultural rights as arguably the foundation for all other rights.

What are cultural rights?

Cultural rights can be defined as “human rights that aim at ensuring the enjoyment of culture and its components, in conditions of equality, human dignity and non-discrimination”. They include the rights to access, to express and to enjoy one's culture with the support (and without interference) from the State.

What does the law say?

As the world marks the International Human Rights Day, we note that the Constitution of Uganda does not provide a direct and detailed reference to cultural rights (apart from Article 37 which vaguely refers to “the right to culture and similar rights”).

Yet the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1987 International Convention for Economic Social and Cultural Rights provide for the right of everyone to freely participate in the cultural life of the community. The Convention encourages State parties to develop steps to achieve the full realisation of this right, including the conservation, the development and the diffusion of science and culture.



Young people learn about culture

In Uganda, the 2006 National Culture Policy (currently under review), the 2016 Museums and Monuments Policy and the 1967 Historical Monuments Act partly provide for cultural rights.

Why focus on young people?

Despite the fact that young people constitute more than 70% of Uganda's population, they are not sufficiently supported to enjoy, express and access their cultural heritage. The current formal education system provides young people with only a limited opportunity to speak their mother tongues, and culture is almost absent from the secondary school curriculum.

What needs to be done to promote cultural rights among young people in Uganda?

1. Educational institutions should promote young people's understanding of culture through co-curricular activities which utilise mother tongues.

2. Government should facilitate the development of orthographies of local languages where they do not exist and of instructional materials focused on culture.
3. Government should take deliberate steps to include heritage education as part of the mainstream primary and secondary schools', and tertiary institutions' curricula, for example by mainstreaming cultural knowledge, skills and values in all subjects taught.
4. Government should domesticate and implement the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and all international legal instruments that provide for the protection and promotion of cultural rights.
5. Government should allocate at least 1% of the national budget to promote cultural activities that guarantee access, expression and enjoyment of cultural rights. A separate, well-resourced Ministry for Culture is preferable for managing Uganda's tangible and intangible elements of culture, developing and implement relevant plans, policies and other legislation in support of cultural rights.
6. Government should facilitate the Uganda National Culture Centre, establish functional infrastructure in all parts of Uganda to enable young people enjoy their cultural rights by appreciating and participating in cultural activities of their choice.

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