

Role of Uganda Police Land Desks on Conflict Management in Wakiso and Mukono Districts



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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to examine the role of Uganda police land desks in conflict management in Wakiso and Mukono districts.

Methodology: The research adopted a cross sectional and descriptive survey research designs which involving both qualitative and quantitative studies. The study population consisted of community members in Wakiso and Mukono districts who were affected by (victims of) land conflicts; Police land desks officials and the district land boards with purposive and stratified sampling used to select them. A sample of 385 respondents was used and questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussion and documentary review were used to collect data with both SPSS and content analysis was used to analyze the field data.

Findings: According to the findings from the field, respondents agreed that police land desk in Mukono and Wakiso district carried out sensitizing of communities on crimes associated with land wrangles and their penalties as represented with 26.75% of respondents. In addition, police land desk in Mukono and Wakiso districts expressed hearing of crimes associated with land wrangles as represented with 30.65% of respondents. Also to note, police land desk controls eviction of people from their land as represented with 27.27% of respondents. Police land desk department authorizes the protection of sites where land wrangles are taking place in the district of both Mukono and Wakiso, this was represented with 27.79% of respondents. Police land desk in their role in conflict management, majority of 70% of the respondents believe that the police are ineffective.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: findings from the study would shed light on how police land desks are developing and identify the determinants of this development, and the implication of the development processes on land conflict management. Further findings would offer different experiences of the land desks both in Uganda police and elsewhere in the world and validate the need for long-term processes to address some of the critical barriers to achieving justice especially women, children among others trying to enforce their land rights, as opposed to short-term projects or work on individual cases.

KEYWORDS: Uganda police land desks, conflict management

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

This study was carried out in order to examine to examine the role of Uganda police land desks in conflict management in Wakiso and Mukono districts. Police land desk is an office in Uganda Police force that was set up in 2008 under presidential directive to the Inspector General of Police, Genral Kale Kayihura, to protect the less privileged from exploitation by land grabbers and stop illegal evictions around the country especially in the districts of Wakiso, Mubende Mukono, Mpigi, Kiboga and Lyatonde. Land is an essential natural resource for human activities and for the maintenance of all terrestrial ecosystems.¹ Land conflicts can only be resolved and avoided if addressed by an integral and system-oriented approach. Core elements of conflict resolution and prevention are therefore the establishment of a state under the rule of law and implementation of good governance to minimize abuse of power and corruption. Good governance is of particular importance in this context. Criteria such as sustainability, subsidization, equality, efficiency, transparency, account-ability, public participation and security, if applied to land tenure and urban land management, form a good basis for development in developing countries to be relatively free from land conflicts.

Globally, during an ANGO 2018 study on land conflicts in Philippine, around 352 cases have been documented, covering 1,317,024 hectares, or about four (4) percent of the total territory of the Philippines. In Mexico, land conflicts have been noted to occur as urban areas expand into the surrounding rural areas, where land tenure regimes and patterns of ownership usually differ

¹ FAO, "The state of the world's Land and Water resources for Food and Agriculture". FAO Rome 2011.

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from those within the official urban administrative boundaries.² This has been the same scenario here in Uganda, where we have seen Kampala city growing towards the districts of Wakiso and Mukono which surrounds the city Kampala and with that there has been continued increase demand for land by different actors which as well has caused land conflict hence calling for the setup of Police land desks to handle land conflict management.

In Africa, it is evidenced that even limited land conflicts can erupt into large-scale civil strife and violence,³ especially if 'political entrepreneurs' capitalize on the underlying grievances to further their cause.⁴ Numerous studies conducted in Tanzania have examined factors contributing to the occurrence of farmer-herd conflicts, pointing to policy deficiencies and contradictions, corruption practices, insecurity of land tenure, inadequate capacity in village land use planning, and lack of land information as major contributing factors.⁵ By contrast,⁶ analyze land conflicts concerning land reforms and the extent to which pastoralists and peasants are involved in the decision making for land-related issues. Moreover, different government programs and strategies meant to address land conflicts have been examined.⁷ However, there is a paucity of studies investigating land conflicts concerning the immigrations caused by vulnerable populations fleeing social and political conflicts. Kigoma region is unique in that it is periodically impacted by refugees from neighboring countries, particularly Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.⁸

Uganda's dualist land tenure system is a root cause of conflict over land use and ownership. The current land tenure laws facilitate land alienation, threaten livelihoods and contribute to food insecurity. Over half of Uganda households consider agriculture to be the single most important source of their livelihood, and as such, land is a critical resource for the 42 percent of households that earn a living from subsistence farming⁹ and for the 65 percent of the population employed in agriculture and hunting.¹⁰ Taken together, land is of critical importance to many Ugandans, especially considering that 85 percent of the rural population depends on it for their livelihood and income. The Districts of Mukono and Wakiso in Central Uganda (Buganda Kingdom), is known for having much Mailo land, which is relatively easy to change ownership. Also, the advantage of Mailo is that one can own the land forever. No newer titles of Mailo tenure are being issued, as all titles were issued before 1928. The Mailo tenure system sees two types of ownership: titled and Kibanja ownership. This former type of ownership is considered an occupancy right, and Kibanja holders are described as "tenants" as opposed to landowners. Kibanja holders have a significant vulnerability risk to property grabbing due to the perceived uncertainty related to this tenure system, even though the Ugandan government recognizes Kibanja as a form of land ownership. In its 2014 baseline study, IJM considered Kibanja ownership as one of four statistically significant risk factors for the prevalence of property.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Land conflicts in Uganda are broadly categorized into three major types: boundary, inheritance, and eviction (sometimes termed as land grabbing-related conflicts), which emerge differently.¹¹ Originally, Uganda land conflicts were consequences of colonial legacy structure around relations and management. Colonialists introduced individualized ownership of property rights in land previously held either communally or on the basis of sovereign trustees. However, in response to settle the land question and deal with fundamental issues in land tenure, land management and administration Uganda police force under presidential directive to the Inspector General of Police, Genral Kale Kayihura, established a land Police Protection Unit (LPPU) to protect the less privileged from exploitation by land grabbers and stop illegal evictions around the country especially in the districts of Wakiso, Mubende Mukono, Mpigi, Kiboga and Lyatonde.¹² The land police protection unit (LPPU) later expanded to all police stations and formed land police desks as one of the reforms of land conflict management, getting its powers from,¹³ and,¹⁴ which lists the functions of the police as: protecting life and property and the Penal Code Act Cap 120 section 338 and 339.

² A. Hasan, Land contestation in Karachi and the impact on housing and urban development. Environment and Urbanization Google Scholar | SAGE Journals | ISI [2015](#). 27(1): 217–230.

³ C. & J. P. Platteau. "Land Relations under Unbearable Stress: Rwanda Caught in the Malthusian Trap." Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization 1998 34 (1):

⁴ B. K. Mensah, "Capturing Ambiguities: Communal Conflict Management Alternative in Ghana." World Development, 1999, 27 (6): 951-65.

⁵ D. Mwamfupe, *Persistence of Farmer-Herder Conflicts in Tanzania*. J. Sci. Res. Publ. 2015, 5, 8.

⁶ L. Massoi, *Land Conflicts and the Livelihood of Pastoral Maasai Women in Kilosa District of Morogoro*, Tanzania in Kilosa District of Morogoro, Tanzania. Ph.D. Thesis, Ghent University, Gent, Belgium. 2015; Shayo, (2010)

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⁸ URT, 2018

⁹ Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2010; 2011

¹⁰ Kaggwa et al, 2004

¹¹ Ngologoza, 1998; Ministry of Lands, 2011; Mwebaza and Ziwa, 2011

¹² News 07th sept, 2008

¹³ Article 212 of the Uganda Constitution 1995

¹⁴ section 4 of the Police Act, 2006

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Despite the progress made to address land-related legislative issues, the land sector in Uganda still faces several challenges that include insecurity of tenure, overlapping and conflicting land rights, and glaring inequity in access to and ownership of land. According to the Uganda criminal investigation directorate (CID) spokesperson, Charles Mansio Twine, land cases are on the increase and were greatly registered in the areas of Kampala Metropolitan (KMP) policing areas of Kampala, Wakiso, Mukono. Therefore, it's against this background that the study seeks to examine the role of Uganda police land desks in conflict management in Wakiso and Mukono districts.

1.3 General objective of the study

The general objective of the study was to examine the role of Uganda police land desks in conflict management in Wakiso and Mukono districts.

2.0 THEORETICAL REVIEW

The study was anchored by Conflict Theory updated by Adam Hayes in 2020 and first purported by Karl Marx. The theory assumes that competition exists as a result of the scarcity of resources, including material resources; money, property, commodities, and more. Beyond material resources, individuals and groups within a society also compete for intangible resources as well. These can include leisure time, dominance, social status, sexual partners, among others. Conflict theorists assume that competition is the default (rather than cooperation). Conflict occurs between social classes, one outcome of this conflict is a revolutionary event. Human relationships and social structures all experience inequalities of power. In this way, some individuals and groups inherently develop more power and reward than others. Conflict theorists tend to see war as either a unifier or as a 'cleanser' of societies.

2.1 Strength of conflict theory

Conflict theory seeks to explain political and economic events in terms of an ongoing struggle over finite land resources in Wakiso and Mukono districts. In the same struggle, Marx emphasizes the antagonistic relationship between social classes, in particular the relationship between the owners of capital which Marx calls the 'bourgeoisie' and the working class, which he calls the 'proletariat'.

2.2 Criticisms of Conflict Theory

One common criticism of conflict theory is that it fails to capture the way in which economic interactions can be mutually beneficial to the different classes involved. For example, conflict theory describes the relationship between land owners and grabbers as one of conflict, in which the grabbers do not wish to pay for the land and owners are set in a position of defending their land as a resource. Moreover, institutions such as Uganda police, courts of law, land tribunals and land commission are failing to execute their duties.

3.0 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Methods and data

The research adopted a cross sectional and descriptive survey research designs. Description of data in both qualitative and quantitative was helpful to establish the views and opinions, feelings and attitude of respondents about the role of Uganda police land desks in conflict management in Wakiso and Mukono districts. The study population consisted of community members/victims of land conflict, police land desk officers and district land boards/committees in Wakiso and Mukono districts.

Data collection methods catered for both primary and secondary sources (Amin, 2005). Primary data was collected from the field using questionnaires, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Secondary data was collected by documentary reviews that were done in the course of the study. Survey questionnaires were administered to household's victims of land conflicts and these included heads of families' fathers and mothers, children ages above 18 years and other clan members in the districts of Wakiso and Mukono.

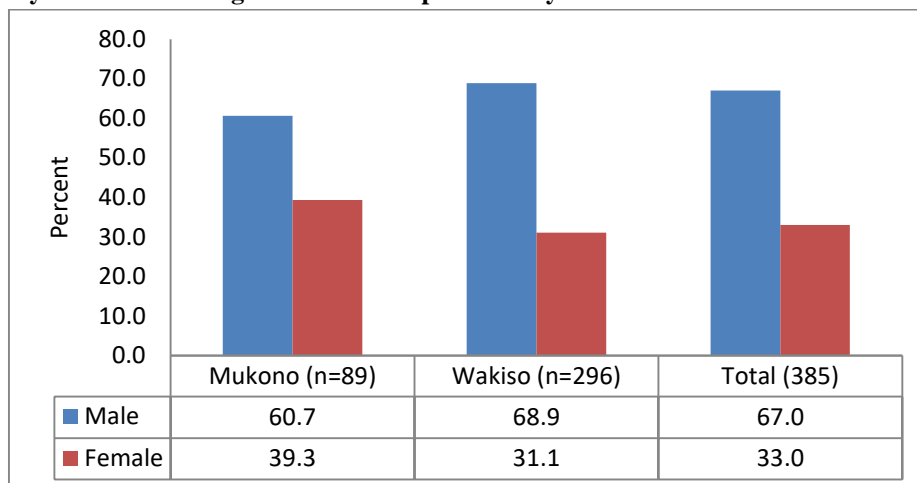
Data Analysis Methods was used to analyze data where quantitative data encompasses calculations such as averages totals as compared to grand totals of responses expected. A statistical package for social scientist (SPSS) software. SPSS was used to capture data, and to conduct data analysis and management (Lind et al., 2006). Qualitative data analysis was done where the researcher organized and prepared data for analysis by sorting and arranging the data into various themes as reflected in the key informant guide and Focus Group Discussion Instrument. A mixture of thematic content analysis and narrative analysis was adopted¹⁵. This was through getting familiar with the data by reading and re-reading after previewing the recordings with the written interviews per selected interviewees. This was followed by coding (labeling) the whole text.

¹⁵ C. Marshall, *Designing Qualitative Research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. has been cited by the following article: 2010.

4.0 RESULTS OF THE STUDY AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Gender distribution by district

Figure 1: The summary statistics on the gender of the respondents by districts

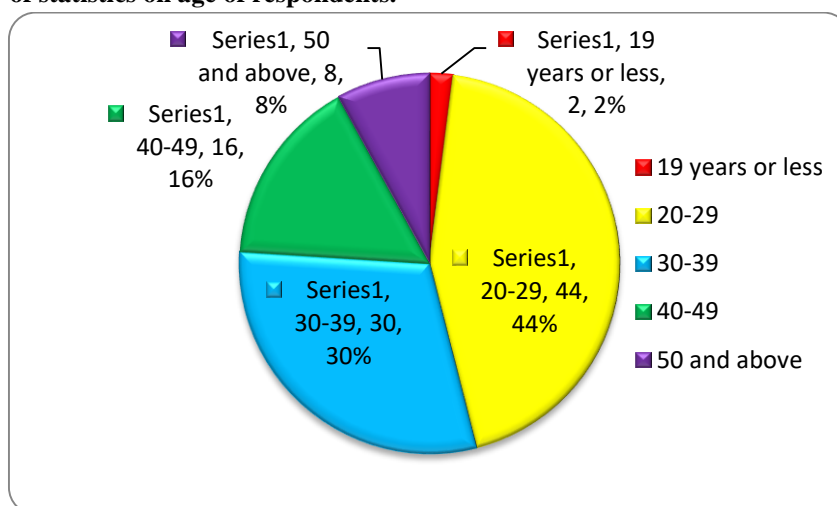


Source; Field Survey (2021/2)

The above findings in figure show that; male’s respondents from Mukono district greatly participated in the study as represented with 60.7% whereas 39.3% of the respondents were female’s respondents. Findings from Wakiso district reveal that male respondents strongly participated in the study compared to females as represented with 68.9% of respondents whereas women were represented with 31.1% of respondents. The results from the findings shows differences in the representations of gender in the study because of the following reasons; first was that the male respondents actively participated in the study and had good views since they are they are heads of families who almost take control everything in the family including responsibilities, decisions during conflicts like in this case land wrangles. Secondly according to the result, women were less represented in both district of Mukono and Wakiso due to the fact that in Uganda when it comes to inheritance of family property such as land, women are less recognized and this therefore also justifies their numbers in this study. The issue of gender in this study was important because land conflict in Uganda affects both male and female genders and therefore it was vital for the researcher to analyse gender in the study of land desk in Uganda police force and its implications on conflict management.

4.2 Classification of respondents by age

Figure 2: The summary of statistics on age of respondents.



Source; Field Survey (2021/2)

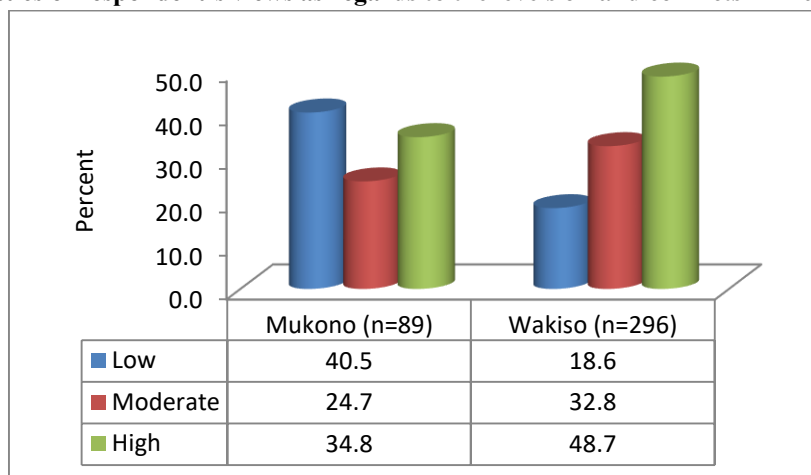
From the figure above; the biggest percentage of the respondents from the studied districts of Mukono and Wakiso represented by 44% was found to be 20-29 years these were followed by 30% of the respondents who were in the age bracket of 30-39 years, then 16% of the respondents were between 40-49 years and lastly but not the least were 2% of respondents who were 19 years or less and lastly were 8% of respondents who were 50 years and above. The age group (20-29) comprises of the biggest percentage which reflect a likely high number of many youths in Mukono and Wakiso district. The reason for the high representation of youth in this study was that, they are the future father, decision makers of communities in the coming generation. This also attracted their attention

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to participate in the study. Secondly the youth in most cases when there is any conflict regarding to land, they tend to physically participating using weapons such as pangas, arrows, iron bars among other to cause harm to either claimants or anyone who joins the conflict at that particular time. Therefore, the classification of age in this study, explores the views from different age groups on the issue of land desk in Uganda police force and its implications on conflict management.

4.3 Levels of land conflicts in Mukono and Wakiso districts

Figure 3: Summary statistics of respondent’s views as regards to the levels of land conflicts in Mukono and Wakiso districts



Source; Field Survey (2021/2)

Figure presents the comparative results from Mukono and Wakiso districts on the levels of land conflicts in the following ways; from Mukono district where (n=89) as the number of respondents interviewed or who answered the questionnaires out of the total number (total n=385), 40.5% of respondents revealed that land conflict was low in Mukono district, followed by 24.7% of respondents who revealed that land conflict in Mukono district and 34.8% of respondents said land conflict was high in Mukono district.

4.4 Roles of police land desks in land conflict management in Wakiso and Mukono districts

In this section the researcher describes the findings of the study on the roles of police land desks in land conflict management in Wakiso and Mukono districts. The items showed the average response from the respondents for each item in relation how police land desks contribute to land conflict management in Wakiso and Mukono districts. The items were rated on the 5 point likert scale ranging between strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree and strongly agree. The findings are shown in table below;

Table 1: Summary statistics of respondent’s views on the roles of police land desks in land conflict management in Wakiso and Mukono districts

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
B1	Frequency	79	73	68	103	62
	Percent	20.52	18.96	17.66	26.75	16.10
B2	Frequency	60	80	81	118	46
	Percent	15.58	20.78	21.04	30.65	11.95
B3	Frequency	67	72	88	105	53
	Percent	17.40	18.70	22.86	27.27	13.77
B4	Frequency	68	76	83	99	59
	Percent	17.66	19.74	21.56	25.71	15.32
B5	Frequency	56	75	103	107	44
	Percent	14.55	19.48	26.75	27.79	11.43
B6	Frequency	75	87	91	91	41
	Percent	19.48	22.60	23.64	23.64	10.65
B7	Frequency	70	65	80	109	61
	Percent	18.18	16.88	20.78	28.31	15.84

Source; Field Survey (2021/2)

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From table above, respondents agreed that police land desk in Mukono and Wakiso district carried out sensitizing of communities on crimes associated with land wrangles and their penalties as represented with 26.75% of respondents. This implies that the community in Mukono district was aware of the role of police and they were willing to learn and cooperate with an aim of finding a lasting solution on land conflict in their area.

Further to note, respondents from the field agreed that police land desk in Mukono and Wakiso districts expressed hearing of crimes associated with land wrangles the was represented with 30.65% of respondents. This implies that communities in Mukono and Wakiso district experience land wrangles and Uganda police force listens to these complains and makes attempts to address them.

Also to note, respondents in both Mukono and Wakiso districts agreed that police land desk controls eviction of people from their land as represented with 27.27% of respondents. This implies that had it not been Uganda police land desk department to control the evictions there would be a lot of blood shade in areas where they are done.

In addition, respondents agreed that police land desk investigates land conflict cases and wrangles in the both Mukono and Wakiso districts as represented with 25.71% of respondents. This implies that normally land cases and wrangles happen in these districts, the police land desk department carries out investigation before any other step is done.

According to table also, police land desk department authorizes the protection of sites where land wrangles are taking place in the district of both Mukono and Wakiso, this was represented with 27.79% of respondents. This implies that whenever there was a land conflict in the areas around these districts, the land sites become danger zones. This has been so because people tend to meet and clash from the sites with Pangas, arrows among others.

An assessment of respondent's views in both Mukono and Wakiso district on whether police land desk gathers evidence over land conflict in a timely manner was that 23.64% of respondents agreed. This implies that causes of the land in districts of Mukono and Wakiso are sometimes not clear which required evidences gathering by police land desk in order to get the right facts.

Lastly respondents agreed that courts of law in Uganda depend on investigations by the police land desks to try cases, this was revealed by field respondent in Mukono and Wakiso districts. The findings imply that courts corporates the police land desk department on the land conflict matters.

5.0 SUMMARY CONCLUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

According to the findings from the field, respondents agreed that police land desk in Mukono and Wakiso district carried out sensitizing of communities on crimes associated with land wrangles and their penalties as represented with 26.75% of respondents. This implies that the community in Mukono district was aware of the role of police and they were willing to learn and cooperate with an aim of finding a lasting solution on land conflict in their area.

Further finding indicated that police land desk in Mukono and Wakiso districts expressed hearing of crimes associated with land wrangles the was represented with 30.65% of respondents. This implies that communities in Mukono and Wakiso district experience land wrangles and Uganda police force listens to these complains and makes attempts to address them. Also to note, field results are similar with the theoretical studies which suggest that land institutions endogenously evolve towards individual land ownership in response to population pressure and economic dynamics.

Field analysis revealed that respondents in both Mukono and Wakiso districts agreed that police land desk controls eviction of people from their land as represented with 27.27% of respondents. This implies that had it not been Uganda police land desk department to control the evictions there would be a lot of blood shade in areas where they are done. In addition, police land desk investigates land conflict cases and wrangles in the both Mukono and Wakiso districts as represented with 25.71% of respondents. This implies that normally land cases and wrangles happen in these districts, the police land desk department carries out investigation before any other step is done.

It was also found out that police land desk department authorizes the protection of sites where land wrangles are taking place in the district of both Mukono and Wakiso, this was represented with 27.79% of respondents. This implies that whenever there was a land conflict in the areas around these districts, the land sites become danger zones. This has been so because people tend to meet and clash from the sites with Pangas, arrows among others. Still to note, respondent's views in both Mukono and Wakiso district on whether police land desk gathers evidence over land conflict in a timely manner was that 23.64% of respondents agreed. This implies that causes of the land in districts of Mukono and Wakiso are sometimes not clear which required evidences gathering by police land desk in order to get the right facts.

Further findings revealed that courts of law in Uganda depend on investigations by the police land desks to try cases, this was revealed by field respondent in Mukono and Wakiso districts. The findings imply that courts corporates the police land desk department on the land conflict matters. In addition, results mean that in order to reduce the cases of land conflict in both districts there is need for collaboration of more different stakeholder to ensure land wrangles are reduced in Mukono, Wakiso and elsewhere Uganda.

Findings reveal that opinion of the respondents on the role of the UPF on conflict management in Mukono and Wakiso districts shows that a majority of 47.5% relate the role of police land desk was to keep their land property safe, 30% associate police to

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upholding laws and preservation of the status Quo of the government power and the minority of 22.5% associate police officers with investigative roles Based on the data obtained and presented in table 3 above, it is vividly clear that majority of the people in the case study believed that the police is restricted to an investigative role, operational role, the role of holding exhibits and the role of diversion.

With the role of holding exhibits in land conflict management as a role of police land desk respondents say police is supposed to hold exhibits obtained in conflict management but however it is not supposed to pick them if they are useful to the people and this sometimes falls police to obtain evidence against arrested people and therefore causing injustice. With the role of diversion, the way respondent perceived it was that police land desk which is supposed to stop and avoid conflict in Mukono and Wakiso districts to a raise and when a conflict happens the public always pose a question that "where was police be force the conflict" and this sometime makes the public redundant from giving information to the police because it wasn't on the group before the conflict.

On the effectiveness of the police land desk in their role in conflict management, majority of 70% of the respondents believe that the police are ineffective whereas 30% believe otherwise. On account of the data presented above, it is true that the majority of the respondents lack confidence in the institution of the Uganda Police Force. This suggests a need for a radical surgery in the force to unveil the short comings. On the effectiveness of the Uganda police force inter role in peace and conflict resolution. Police has to be appreciated for the work done on reducing conflict with in the country and particularly northern Uganda and some of the areas where police has effectively managed and caused peace include: The Uganda police force is also very active in starting up cases and investigations however this just become a song to police that investigation have been set and there are ongoing for every issue but reports cannot come out and this has led respondents to loss trust in police.

5.2 Conclusions

In a nutshell police land desk plays a very vital role in conflict management in the district of Mukono and Wakiso. The mission of the Uganda police force as an institution is to secure life and property like land in partnership with the public in a committed and professional manner in order to promote development. Importantly one of the major components of UPF mission include police normally has to serve the needs of the community/public without hesitation to the law and in this case with reference to resolving the issue of land conflict management in Mukono and Wakiso districts. Service delivery, the police is duty bound to provide its customer with free and universal services which are qualitative. Image protection: police in a course of serving the public the organization has to keep its image. The police force land desk must adopt its mission through these major components in order to achieve the organizational goals or objectives as such they are core activities in protecting peoples land, observe access and the right of ownership of land by citizens and support functions of the UPF however police may not reach full Potential in attaining conflict management of land disputes as long as corruption , bad leaders , poor technology among others as sited by respondents are still persisting

5.3 Recommendations

Provision of legal advice; The police land desk department while executing its duty in peace and conflict resolution should seek legal advice for carefully and critical examination of the provisions of the constitution and police code of the conduct and how they relate to their duties to avoid injustice and legal mistake.

There is need for training of police land desk officers in current policies and land tenure systems its interpretation access, ownership and rights. This will help the investigating officers working in police land desks to be conversant with the land laws. This will in turn benefit them to avoid errors and prosecute the criminals who cause land conflicts.

The Police land desk should be facilitated as the measure to help the weak investigate their cases reported. This will aid to find out the truth rather than police receiving facilitation from the land grabber who has all money and is ready to facilitate the investigating officer who at the end will be compromised by the so called the rich.

Independent establishment of directorate of lands. The Uganda Police management should propose to police authority establishment of independent directorate of lands with the increased powers to approval against political interference.

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