



Republic of Uganda

**STATEMENT**  
**BY**  
**HON. FLORENCE NAKIWALA KIYINGI**  
**MINISTER OF STATE FOR YOUTH AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS**

**ON**

**THE STATUS OF STREET CHILDREN AND CHILDREN  
HOMES**

**DELIVERED AT THE**

**MINISTRY'S MAIN BOARDROOM**

**JUNE 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2018**

**Dear People of Uganda**

**Members of the Press**

I welcome you to this press briefing where we are going to talk about the pertinent issue of street children and Children Homes.

## **1. STREET CHILDREN**

We have noted with great concern the increase in the number of children on the streets of Kampala and other major Urban Centres across the Country like Jinja, Mbale, Tororo, Iganga, Busia and Malaba, among others.

It is estimated that there are as many as 1,000 street people in Kampala alone. Some of the children being as young as 6 months. These children suffer physical, psychological and emotional torture; they are exposed to harsh environmental conditions, hunger and are abused and discriminated against.

We have established that the emerging leading cause of children being on the streets is some unscrupulous individuals who have been encouraging children especially from Karamoja to come to Kampala based on promises of better life, only to engage them in street begging as a business.

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is working very closely with the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry for Karamoja Affairs, Ministry for Disaster Preparedness, Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Uganda Police Force, Kampala Capital City Authority, the Local Government of Napak District, and other partners including UWESO, Cooperation and Development, Divine Care Ministry and various NGOs working with street children to address the issues of street children.

### **KEY STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS BY MGLSD**

The Ministry has developed The Street Children's Strategy, Children Approved Homes Rules 2013, as well as Standard Operating Procedures for Tracing, Resettlement and Re-integration of Children.

It is important to note that the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, working in collaboration with the above Ministries, Departments and Agencies as well as NGOs, has successfully withdrawn and facilitated resettlement and integration of 7,927 street children since 2007.

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development runs Kampiringisa National Rehabilitation Centre has established Kobulin Youth Skills Training Centre in Napak District as a transit and skills development centre for children withdrawn from the streets. The Ministry works in collaboration with UWESO through Masuliita Children Village (Mpigi District) and Dwelling Places and other partners in preparation of the children withdrawn from the streets for resettlement. The MGLSD is working to improve the capacity of these centres effectively handle the cases as they come.

The Ministry is also operating a Child Toll Free Helpline (116) that facilitates reporting cases of child abuse and ensuring rapid response to any of the cases reported.

However, the commercialization of begging, which includes trafficking of children from Karamoja to beg on the urban streets for personal benefits, still remains a big hindrance to realizing the intended results in the handling of street children. There are adults who live off the money collected by the children. This vice is also extending to other places.

Although at face value, such assistance helps the children to meet some basic needs, it has proved to be the most important in exacerbating the problem by reinforcing the factors that pull children to the streets.

Arising from the above, the Task Force on Street Children has resolved as follows:

- i) KCCA working with Police will immediately launch an operation to withdraw children from the streets and maintain permanent presence on the streets to manage new cases.**
- ii) The children withdrawn from the streets will be taken to designated Children Homes. In the meantime, members of the public who wish to support them are encouraged to do so from those homes or at the point of their re-integration to their respective communities. The MGLSD will work closely with the KCCA, MICT-NG and MFPED to device mechanisms of engaging the public to contribute to the welfare of the affected children.**

- iii) **Members of the public are accordingly advised to desist from giving handouts to street children on the streets, as this has proved more disastrous to the children. The MGLSD is working on a law to reinforce this.**
- iv) **The Police and the Local Governments as well as the public should be vigilant in identifying the perpetrators of child trafficking and street-begging by children, and ensure that they are brought to book in accordance to the Children’s Act Cap 59 (as amended 2016) sections 10 and 11.**

## **2. ILLEGAL CHILDREN HOMES**

Relatedly, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development has noted with great concern, the proliferation of illegal children homes, most of which have been involved in abuse of children rights for selfish gain. A number of them are conduits for child trafficking, while others have turned into business enterprises to siphon money from unsuspecting and well-meaning donors at the expense of the Ugandan children.

Our recent survey has revealed that only 70 Children Homes across the Country are operating with valid licences, while 569 Children Homes are operating illegally.

According to the Children’s Act Cap 59 (As amended 2016):

- (1) A government or non-government home set up for the purposes of caring for children shall be approved by the Minister, in consultation with the probation and social welfare officer within six months of receipt of application for approval.
- (2) A person who establishes or runs a home without the approval of the Minister under this section commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding one hundred and twenty currency points or imprisonment not exceeding five years or both.

The same law states that the Minister shall only approve a Children’s Home when:

- a) the applicant is a body corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal or a non-governmental organization;
- b) the Public Health Inspector has inspected the premises of the home and found that the home is in conformity with the requirements of rule 16;
- c) the District Probation and social welfare Officer's report confirms a critical number of children in the area that require institutional care and protection, rather than alternative community care; and
- d) a recommendation from the District Probation and Social Welfare Officer justifying the need to establish the approved home in the District, is given to the applicant.

Lastly, the law also guides on how children are admitted in an Approved home. The Homes can only receive children in the following ways-

- a) in an emergency situation from a police officer, a Probation and Social Welfare Officer or any other person for a maximum period of forty eight hours pending production of the child in court; or
- b) on an interim care order or a care order.

Arising from the above, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is informing the public as follows:

- 1) All illegal Children Homes have been given up to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018 to close their operations or risk drastic action.
- 2) All Chief Administrative Officers and Resident District Commissioners are asked to ensure that the above instruction is implemented without exception.
- 3) All stakeholders, including the Police, are urged to take note of the above requirements regarding placement or admission of children in any children home. You are advised to consult the Ministry where clarification is needed.
- 4) Any organization that would like set-up a Children Home is advised to apply for the same and obtain a licence, prior to establishment of a Children Home.

In conclusion, I would like to appeal to all Local Government leaders to take responsibility and ensure that children don't migrate from their areas of jurisdiction under unclear circumstances.

As a Ministry and Government, we reiterate our firm commitment to offering a lasting solution to the issues of Street Children and Children Homes.

Lastly, I would like to commend the media for supporting the Government in the promotion and preservation of the rights of the Ugandan child

I thank you for listening to me.

**For God and My Country.**

**Hon. Florence Nakiwala Kiyingi**

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR YOUTH AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS**