

Gen. Muhozi Kainerugaba talking to UPDF troops in Gulu



President Museveni inspecting armored vehicles made by NEC Streit in Uganda



UPDF fighter jets are part of the modern equipment acquired by UPDF



Passing out of Uganda People's Defence Forces recruits at Oliver Reginald Tambo School in Kaweweta



The Uganda People's Defence Forces rescuing a child from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebel captivity

The Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs, together with the Uganda People's Defence Forces, join Ugandans in commemorating the 40th National Resistance Movement Liberation Day, under the theme, *Tribute to the patriots who ushered in a fundamental change*.

Liberation struggles symbolise freedom and renewed hope. The NRM stands as a tribute to the patriots who restored stability and laid the foundation for national rebuilding. Under President Museveni's leadership, Uganda has registered steady progress in economic growth, infrastructure development, education, healthcare, social services, and inclusion. The gains of liberation are evident today, with Uganda enjoying steady progress. The country has made significant strides in rebuilding institutions, promoting economic growth, and improving social services. The NRM's commitment to peace and stability has been a cornerstone of Uganda's development.

The outcome of the fundamental change ushered in by the liberation struggle is

# UPDF respected on African continent

evident today. Liberation has brought about a shift in safeguarding values and protecting the future. The call to protect the gains of liberation is a reminder of the sacrifices made and the responsibility to secure the nation's progress.

Liberation has enabled Uganda to enjoy peace, stability, and economic growth. The country's infrastructure development, education, and healthcare systems have also improved significantly.

The NRM's strength lies in its institutional foundation built on clear ideology, discipline, and consistent leadership. Guided by President Museveni, the Commander-in-Chief, the party remains committed to unity, prosperity, and service to the people.

As Uganda confronts

evolving security challenges, including terrorism, organised crime, and cyber threats, the NRM continues to respond through decisive operations at home and regional peace support missions.

Beyond security, the NRM has played a significant role in restoring peace across the country, supporting wealth creation, infrastructure development, and social services. Initiatives like the East African Crude Oil Pipeline and the National Enterprise Corporation underscore its commitment to strategic national projects.

The NRM remains a key partner in Uganda's socio-economic transformation, from restoring peace to supporting health initiatives and strategic projects.

## DEFENCE REVIEW

The Defence Review Commission was



established in the 1990s, and in early 2000 a White Paper was produced. This document set in motion the transition of Uganda's military from a conventional fighting force into a professional army. Many years later, the UPDF has firmly entered the professionalisation phase.

Structured recruitment, standardised training, capacity building and modernisation of equipment have been the cornerstone of this process. Between 2000 and 2025, several state-of-the-art training institutions were established, modern equipment acquired and clearly defined formations created within the force.

According to the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs spokesperson, Col Chris Magezi, transformation is visible. "If you compare the army that marched into Kampala in 1986 with the UPDF today, the difference is clear. There have been major

improvements and realignments that have made it a stronger, more professional force."

"We are not just a professional force; we are also a people's army," Magezi adds.

Since 1986, the UPDF has fought and defeated at least 20 insurgent groups in different parts of the country. This is in addition to successfully disarming the Karamojong cattle rustlers in northeastern Uganda. At the peak of the insurgencies, the Commander-in-Chief repeatedly notes that the Government could not commit extensively to military training because the army was constantly engaged in active combat. However, around 2005, internal officer training courses began to take shape.

## TARGETED TRAINING

"When the NRA captured power in 1986, very few soldiers had received any form of specialised training," Magezi says.

In the early years, most senior officers had to be sent abroad for advanced courses. Over the last two decades, however, that reality has changed significantly.

Today, officer training from the rank of Major and above can be conducted locally. In the past, such officers were sent to institutions in the UK, Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania, the US and Nigeria.

## BETTER FACILITIES

UPDF training institutions are now used by foreign forces from Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Kenya.

"That is the level of confidence regional armies now have in us," Magezi says.

## IMPROVED HOUSING

The UPDF Engineering Brigade's involvement in barracks construction has

significantly reduced costs and completion time compared to private contractors," says Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs permanent secretary Rosette Byengoma.

"Our target is to provide at least 30,000 housing units for general, senior and junior officers across all formations, including Mbuya headquarters, divisions and brigades," she says.

For decades, soldiers earned what many described as "peanuts." That has changed. "A private now earns sh650,000, up from sh480,000 two years ago," Byengoma says, adding that plans are underway to increase the figure to sh1.2m.

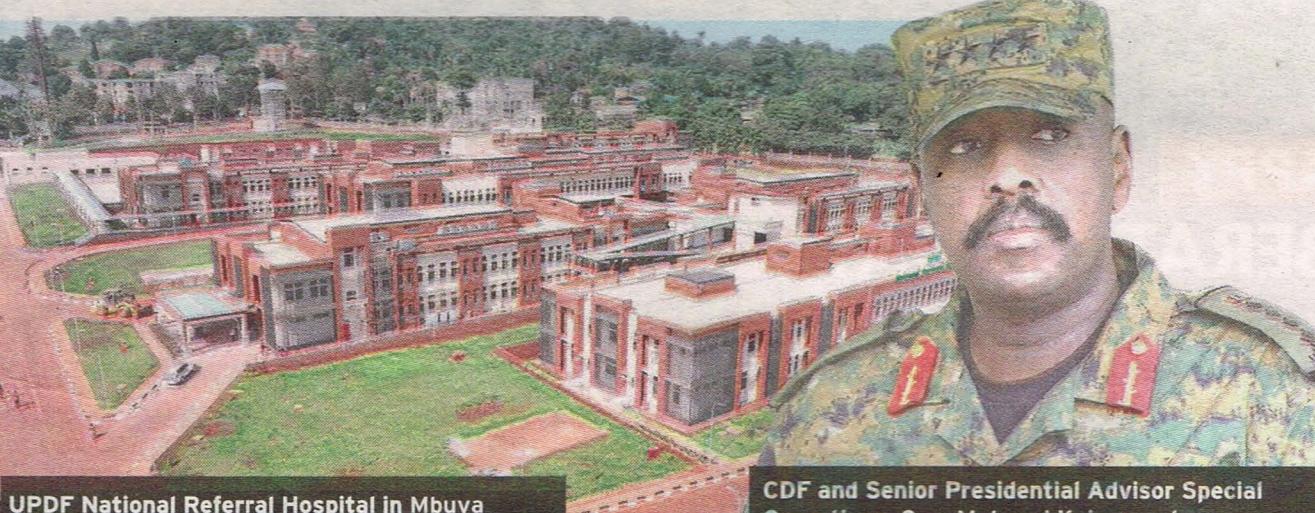
Images of UPDF soldiers in tattered uniforms and worn-out gumboots during the height of the northern war once shocked the world. "We simply did not have the resources to properly clothe the force," Magezi recalls.



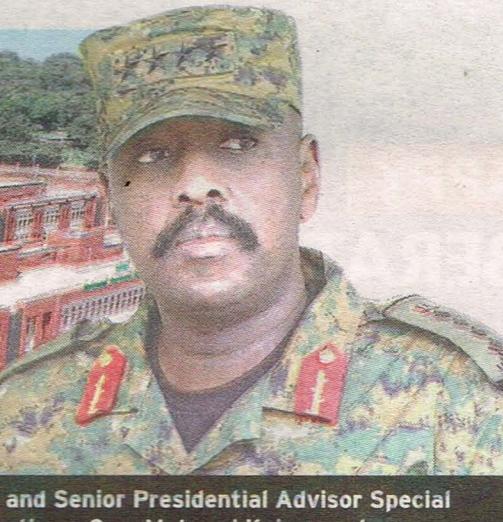
The artistic impression of the new MODVA/UPDF Headquarters due for completion in November 2026 will enhance operational efficiency.



UPDF National Referral Hospital, Mbuya in Kampala offers services to all



UPDF National Referral Hospital in Mbuya



CDF and Senior Presidential Advisor Special Operations, Gen. Muhozi Kainerugaba.