

Protect children's rights

Uganda poses the laws aimed at protecting children's rights to enable them to grow into skilled, virtuous, and responsible citizens.

These laws are aimed at ensuring that children are educated, given the necessities of life, shielded from child labour, and protected from cruel and inhuman punishment, among others.

However, these laws are not adequately implemented, leading to the rights of children being trampled on across the country.

Some parents neglect their responsibilities of feeding their children, clothing them, putting a roof over their heads, and ensuring that they get adequate medical care whenever they are sick.

Some men make women pregnant and abandon them with the children. Women are also culprits in child abandonment, with some who do this heinous, shameful act justifying it with the excuse that the children's fathers have forsaken them. However, this lame excuse cannot justify the dereliction of parental duties.

The issue:

Children's rights.

Our view:

It is the duty of every adult to protect children from all forms of harm, and anyone who infringes on the rights of children, even their parents, must face the full force of the law.

The fact that education is the fuel that drives social and economic development of a country is generally undisputed.

It is for this reason that the right to education must be upheld. The duty of ensuring that children are educated lies with both the government and parents.

The government has made some inroads in increasing access to education, with the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and the Universal Secondary Education (USE) programmes playing a significant part in this progress.

Be that as it may, the government should not rest on its laurels because more still needs to be done to increase access to and improve the quality of education in the country.

To the parents, we say, do your part in ensuring that children are educated. Provide food for children at UPE and USE schools and give them the scholastic materials required. This is your responsibility, not that of the government, as assumed by some misguided and irresponsible parents.

It is also imperative that authorities crack down on administrators of UPE and USE schools who charge illegal fees that hinder access to education.

Parents must also desist from engaging children in unnecessary home chores and other activities during school hours.

Both boys and girls must be given equal access to education, shielded from paedophiles, and protected against child labour. Authorities must see to it that children are shielded against cruel and inhuman punishments such as being flogged and denied food, as practiced in some homes and schools.

It is the duty of every adult to protect children from all forms of harm, and anyone who infringes on the rights of children, even their parents, must face the full force of the law.