



RWANDA NATIONAL POLICE

A glance at the policing landscape in Northern Province

SECURITY is a major pillar for sustainable peace, unity and development. In the year 2000, when Rwanda National Police (RNP) was created, it started off with a new approach – a proactive community-oriented policing shifting from the traditionally reactive system that instead created a gap between security institutions and the population, with the latter viewing the former as an oppressor.

Like in other provinces of Rwanda, community policing has played a significant part in ensuring security and peace in the Northern Province. The region is composed of five districts – Musanze, Gakenke, Gicumbi, Burera and Rulindo – with 89 Sectors. At least RNP has a Police station in each of the sectors.

“Rwanda National Police developed the Community Policing strategy to effectively fulfill its duties by involving the public in solving localized problems and make specific improvements that enhance the overall quality of life in their localities, and the Northern region, like any other part of the country, has embraced it at every level where wrongdoers are identified by the people and call police to arrest them and seize anything illegal,” says ACP Faustin Ntirushwa, the Regional Police Commander (RNP) for the Northern Province.

“There is a high sense of responsibility among the people in the region for personal safety and problem solving,” he adds.

According to ACP Ntirushwa, several approaches were initiated to combat crimes in the region.

“We started by first identifying the security threats, hotspots/black-spots and we drew deliberate plans to address the concerns involved in partnership with other stakeholders, security organs and the residents themselves,” he says.

Drug abuse, domestic and gender based violence, theft, assault are among the common crimes in the Northern Province, with Burera, Gicumbi and Musanze the most vulnerable.

“There were cases of enemy infiltration in the past, but this is no more after those, who tried were arrested through strong collaboration with the residents, who were quick to provide credible information,” he says.

Awareness campaigns

Indeed, RNP has conducted specific awareness campaigns in the Northern like anti-drugs and GBV awareness campaigns.

These are part of the RNP crime

prevention and reduction strategies through which Youth Volunteers in Community Policing, Community Policing Committees (CPCs), and anti-crime clubs in schools and motorcycle cooperatives in the Northern have been formed, on top of joint operations to address specific security issues.

“There’s a lot to celebrate in terms of crime reduction; crimes like assault, house break-ins, domestic violence, drug trafficking and abuse have decreased tremendously. Through the existing Police-public partnership, suspects were detected, the mutual confidence between the public and police has also eased flow of information leading to crime prevention,” he says.

Reformed drug abusers in the region, who have since formed business cooperatives, for example, have been instrumental in the awareness against the vice through their testimonies while debates in schools, the youth, the most targeted or involved, have



Governor Aimé Bosenibamwe and DCGP Stanley Nsabimana distributing mosquito nets to selected residents of Musanze.



ACP Damas Gatere giving a cheque of Rwf1 Million to Safari Muberuka, the president of COTAMONO, a cooperative of motorcyclists in Northern Province.

either quit abusing drugs or taken on the mantle to fight it.

“We have deliberate initiatives in partnership with local leaders to identify families affected with disputes and there are CPCs to the village level where such issues are discussed and tangible solutions adopted,” he says.

With human trafficking being among the high impact crime, ACP Ntirushwa says it is one of the issues they give much attention through awareness, adding that even those identified or suspected to have been trafficked, they have been rescued owing to the fact that RNP currently enjoys good bilateral relations with neighbouring countries.

Human security

Security goes beyond just dealing with crimes to the welfare and health of the people and this is what Rwanda National Police embarked on.

Indeed, Police has constructed and renovated houses for the vulnerable in the region, like in other parts of the country, financially supported motorcycle and bicycle cooperatives to strengthen their business profession, gave cows under the one-cow per household programme – Gir’Inka – and awarded people with motorcycles for their exemplary and significant role in fighting and preventing crimes through their talents like composing community policing songs and poems.

Muberuka Safari, the head of COTAMONO, a cooperative of motorcyclists in Northern Province, says

the community policing spirit among the motorcyclists has been entrenched.

“There’s a strong bond between motorcyclists and Police in the province, which was also boosted by the support Police gives us,” says Muberuka

“People have been empowered to fight and prevent crimes by themselves and beyond that the Police have gone an extra mile to uplift the poor with its commendable human security programme, which every Rwandan credits,” he adds.

In health care, Police also distributed a considerable number of mosquito nets and medical insurance premiums – Mutuelles de Sante – to vulnerable families.

“At the moment, we are vigorously involved in the campaign against malaria, because an unhealthy or sick person is



Some of the cows Police donated to vulnerable residents in Rulindo District last year.

automatically insecure,” emphasizes ACP Ntirushwa.

“We are active partners in varied government policies and programmes where we build houses for the people; identify safe zones where families residing in high risk zones are relocated and in crop intensification programme,” says ACP Ntirushwa.

National Police College

The Northern Province hosts the RNP National Police College (NPC) in Musanze District, which is dubbed the regional Centre of Excellence in the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (EAPCCO) member states. As a professional, academic and career development College, it offers a Masters in Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation, Police Senior Command and Staff Course (PSCSC), Bachelors in Professional Police Studies (PPS), Command Post Exercises (CPX), Intermediate and Supervisory courses, among others, and hosts the CID school. The College has so far attracted Police students from 15 African countries.

Environmental protection

RNP, last year established an Environmental Protection Unit (EPU) to protect natural reserves like forests, national parks and water bodies, and to conserve the environment in general. Most of these natural resources that deserve protection reserves are in the Northern Province, and Police has played a significant part to protect them, including promoting and planting of trees.

Cooperation

Cooperation is among the RNP priorities. This is because today’s crimes are cross-border in nature which required partnership with other countries to effectively combat them.

At the moment, RNP enjoys a unique partnership with Uganda Police Force and at the provincial and district levels, police officers in the two countries have been working together to track down suspected drug traffickers, smugglers, traffickers in human beings and suspected thieves who attempt to find refuge in either country.

“We hold cross-border meetings with our counterparts of South-South West region in Uganda and we work closely at all levels,” explains ACP Ntirushwa.

“The public have been vital at all policing levels. We all work for common national interests in the transformation process, towards sustainable development. Community policing is theirs and we come in as support. Through timely information sharing, we will ensure sustainable security and peace,” notes ACP Ntirushwa.



National Police College.