

The GSU



GENERAL SERVICE UNIT

1st EDITION

YOUR BI-ANNUAL PUBLICATION

DECEMBER 2023

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“Thank You For Your Service”

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CHANGE OF COMMAND



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SECURING THE NORTH



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GENERAL SERVICE UNIT

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Editorial

I am pleased to welcome all our readers to our magazine *The GSU* that has been re-launched after many years of absence.

The production of this publication is inspired by the need to appreciate the selfless service that General Service Unit officers provide to the public and also tell our story as the leading paramilitary Unit of the Kenya Police Service.

May I at the onset welcome the decision of our Commandant Mr Eliud Lagat, in supporting the revival of this publication that is aimed at improving our interaction with the public through providing an insight of what we do in operational policing, which is at the core of our mandate.

This publication introduces the command of Mr Lagat who is our 18th Commandant and cordially welcomes him as the Patron of the magazine. Mr Lagat, took over from the Deputy Inspector

General-Kenya Police Service Mr Douglas Kanja, who prior to his appointment as the Kenya Police chief, was the Commandant of this Unit.

To understand the man in command of Kenya's leading police paramilitary unit, we invite you to read Mr Lagat's inspiring story of a young man who dreamt of becoming a Catholic Priest but became a police officer and as fate would have it, ended up being the Commandant of the most revered formed-up Unit across the region.

Mr Lagat's return to the General Service Unit after many years of service at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations marks a turning point for the Unit as it welcomes a man with a criminal investigations background into the GSU operational policing concept, a combination that is expected to herald a new dawn in the manner we discharge our mandate to the benefit of Kenyans.

Read about the resolve of His Excellency President William Ruto, to adequately equip the Service and look into the welfare of police officers, as part of the government's commitment to support the National Police Service deliver on its mandate

We also bring you an insight into the President's directive on environment conservation, in order to mitigate against the effects of climate change by planting 15 billion trees by 2032 and the role that GSU is playing in supporting this directive.

Also, on the Government's relentless efforts to guarantee the safety and security of all Kenyans, get apprised on the ongoing multi-agency security operations in the North-Rift spearheaded by the Cabinet Secretary for Interior and National Administration, Prof Kithure Kindiki, and the mitigating measures that have been put in place to ensure that normalcy resumes.

As we look into the future with optimism, this edition taps into the wisdom and experience of senior retired officers who offer the serving officers a reflection of the colourful journey of the Unit. The 10th Commandant of the Unit and one time Head of the Presidential Escort Unit Mr Samson Cherambos, has been featured in this edition as one of the pioneers of change who steered the Unit on a transformational path and is credited with major institutional reforms that were effected at the Unit during his tenure.

In their routine operations on the frontline, our officers are often involved in battlefield encounters, most of which bring remarkable glory and pride to the Unit and the National Police Service. In this edition, we highlight the success stories of our officers on the frontline based on individual and team experiences. The stories are meant to be an inspiration to other officers to diligently discharge their duties in light of the most difficult of circumstances.

One such story is the real-life experience of Inspector Robi Kizito's encounter with Al-Shabaab militia on the frontline in the Boni Forest.

The inspiring story of markswoman police constable Belinda Akoth, who has won more than sixty trophies in her illustrious career bringing immense pride to the Unit, closes our review. The markswoman alongside the GSU-Rapid Response Tactical team performed remarkably during their maiden competition in the United Arabs Emirates SWAT 2023 shooting challenge, clinching the second position amongst African teams.

I wish to sincerely thank every writer, photographer and any other officer who took part in making the publication of this magazine a success. I also urge all the officers in the field to seize this opportunity to pen their own stories or make any contribution that will improve the content and quality of future editions.

The magazine will be published twice every year. If you have any comments or suggestions, please email us on gsumagazine23@gmail.com

As we look into the future with optimism, the magazine taps into the wisdom and experience of senior retired officers which offers the serving officers with a reflection on the colourful journey of the Unit.



Mr. Bashane M. Omar, MBS, DSM
Deputy Commandant, General Service Unit
Chairman, Editorial Board



Commandant's Message

Over the last few years, the General Service Unit has instituted far reaching reforms in the manner it discharges its operations, with the aim of ensuring that it supports the National Police Service in fulfilling its mandate to the latter, as demanded by the Constitution, the National Police Service Act, the Service Standing Orders and other established laws.

These changes have led to deliberate steps being taken to improve service delivery since public institutions in Kenya have undergone reforms influenced by the prevalent socio-political environment and administration of the day. The shifts have impacted greatly on institutional performance as public institutions strive to contextualize their operations to fit into the contemporary demands of time. As a public institution dealing with matters of public safety and security and also owing to the ever-expanding global democratic space, the General Service Unit has a duty to communicate to the public on how crime

can be detected, reported and contained. Equally, we have a constitutional responsibility to communicate to Kenyans on matters regarding their safety, in conformity to Article 35 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) that guarantees Kenyans the right to access to information. The provision allows information held by the state or any public institution that is of public interest to be availed to any citizen on demand.

This is as a result of considerable rise in public demand for information from state institutions and it therefore makes Public Communication essential; but in a structured way geared to influence the public positively. However, the General Service Unit has over the years been viewed as a closed institution that is out of touch with the public and lack of a clear understanding of the Unit has reinforced this position. This is the reason why we have taken this deliberate step to embrace Communication as an information sharing and crime management tool that is expected to place the Unit at par with other progressive 21st

century security agencies. It therefore gives me great pleasure to present to you this publication, which is one of the communication tools that the General Service Unit has adopted in a bid to inform and educate the public on some of our daily operations.

We are alive to the realities of the 21st century security dynamics brought about by rapid technological advancements and an increasingly techno-savvy society. Accordingly, the natures of operations that the General Service Unit is dealing with today have gradually changed in their scope and complexity. This has led to a complete shift in the manner we respond to such operations by employing contemporary policing methods while complimenting with the traditional methods that we have employed over the years.

This deliberate shift has resulted in the huge gains that we are witnessing today in the Unit, as a result of improving the human resource capabilities of our officers through continuous training, adopting modern technology in our operations and embracing the multi-agency security framework in crime management among others. The rebirth of this magazine during my tenure as the 18th Commandant after more than a decade's absence, is therefore a critical milestone not only for Kenya's foremost police paramilitary Unit, but also for the entire National Police Service.

Besides providing an understanding of what GSU is all about, the publication provides a platform for the Unit to tell its story, keep our officers informed on the on goings in the Unit, foster a sense of community partnership within the Unit by highlighting our achievements, values and culture, and providing a platform for employees to share their ideas and experiences. The General Service Unit has an exemplary history of policing excellence

and I am glad to be in the steering position, to lead the Unit to the next level of its service to the public. Under my leadership, the Unit shall strive to uphold professionalism in strict fidelity to the law, while being timely and responsive to the security needs and requirements of the public.

I am particularly proud of the resilience and efficiency of our officers in handling operational emergencies, thus safeguarding our national and strategic interests. Working with other security agencies in the multi agency security framework, the General Service Unit remains on the forefront in the fight against transnational organized crimes including terrorism and violent extremism, banditry, cattle rustling, drugs and human trafficking among others.

The Unit is also at the forefront in implementing the Presidential directive on environmental conservation, through increasing the country's forest cover by planting 15 billion trees by 2032. So far, the unit has planted over 100,000 tree seedlings across our various units and commands in the country.

Finally, we celebrate the role played by every police officer in the service of our Nation especially those working under extremely difficult circumstances in

operational areas. We appreciate their relentless and selfless service to the public and their discipline, and commitment to duty cannot go unmentioned. The Unit equally celebrates and recognizes the sacrifices made by our men some of whom have lost their lives on the frontline, as they protect the lives and properties of Kenyans. Their sacrifices shall never be in vain.

The rebirth of this magazine during my tenure as the 18th Commandant after more than a decade's absence, is therefore a critical milestone not only for Kenya's foremost police paramilitary Unit, but also for the entire National Police Service.



Mr. Eliud K. Lagat , OGW, HSC, ss, 'ndc' (K)
Commandant - General Service Unit (GSU)



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His Excellency The President of Kenya Hon. William Samoei Ruto and the National Chairman David Mategwa during the 50 Year Celebrations and the Launch of the Police SACCO Stadium.



H.E. The President Hon. William Samoei Ruto awards the National Chairman David Mategwa alongside the Vice Chairman David Kangogo for the Best Managed SACCO Country-wide during the Ushirika Day 2023.



His Excellency The President of Kenya Hon. William Samoei Ruto, Cabinet Secretary for Cooperatives and MSME's, Hon. Simon Chelugui, Nairobi City County Governor, Hon Johnson Sakaja and other invited senior guests pose for a photo with the Board of Directors led by the National Chairman David Mategwa during the 50th Year Celebrations.



“Thank You For Your Service”

His Excellency President William Ruto Hails Police as he Presides Over 49th GSU Parade

By, Police Constable Ezekiel Muthoka



After a grueling training period of nine months, it was time for the General Service Unit (GSU) recruits to reap the fruits of their toil by celebrating their passing out parade, in a ceremony that was presided over by none other than His Excellency Hon. William Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces. The graduation of 991 officers held on January 12, 2023, was a culmination of similar passing out parades held at



H.E President William Ruto inspects the passing out parade of 991 recruits at the GSU Embakasi B Campus on January 12, 2023 PHOTO / EDWIN KIPKORIR

the Kenya Police College Main Campus-Kiganjo and the National Police College, Embakasi A campus, where 2,881 and 1,995 respectively had graduated. This was the latest cohort of officers to be enlisted, bringing the total number of those who joined the National Police Service this year to 5,867.

The Inspector General of Police, Mr Japhet Koome, received the Commander-in-Chief whose motorcade snaked past the majestic entrance to the paramilitary training school, minutes to 10am. The police chief who was flanked by former Deputy Inspector General-Kenya Police Service, Mr Edward Mbugua, the GSU Commandant, Mr Douglas Kanja and other top security commanders were also at hand to welcome the Head of State, to the home of the red berets.

Kenya's national flag, the East African flag, and the Presidential Standard, flew high up the sky, a clear indication that the Head of State was



H. E Dr William Ruto standing on the Presidential podium ready to inspect parade mounted by recruits at the GSU Embakasi B Campus on January 12, 2023 PHOTO / EDWIN KIPKORIR

within the vicinity. The recruits, smartly dressed in their number one combat working dress ready to demonstrate the high standards of discipline and hard work, marched on to the parade square in divisions, ready to showcase some of the drills that they had learnt during their training. Passing-out is the official graduation ceremony following the completion of a course by uniformed personnel that also consists of police bands and other displays of synchronization discipline. It is the most revered moment for a serviceman, after months of successful training in both academic and fieldwork.

The unforgiving journey begins at recruitment where the best are selected to join the service and after a grueling 9-month training exercise, His Excellency the President is invited to review the parade. For the recruits, it is the defining moment of their lives as it marks the beginning of their career as officers of the law. And for the family, friends and relatives attending the ceremony, it is a moment of entertainment, celebration and thanksgiving.

into their divisions ready for inspection by the Commander-in-Chief, after which he awarded the most outstanding graduands with various awards. The newly crowned officers showcased a spectacular parade display to the applause of the guests as they marched past the Presidential

dais eyes-right, indicating their loyalty and readiness to serve the country, and to commit themselves to duty in the National Police Service. They later took the oath of office binding them to selfless service to the people of Kenya and undertook to discharge their duties without favor, malice, or ill will.

You are the custodians of our freedom and prosperity and you have a duty to live up to the expectation -

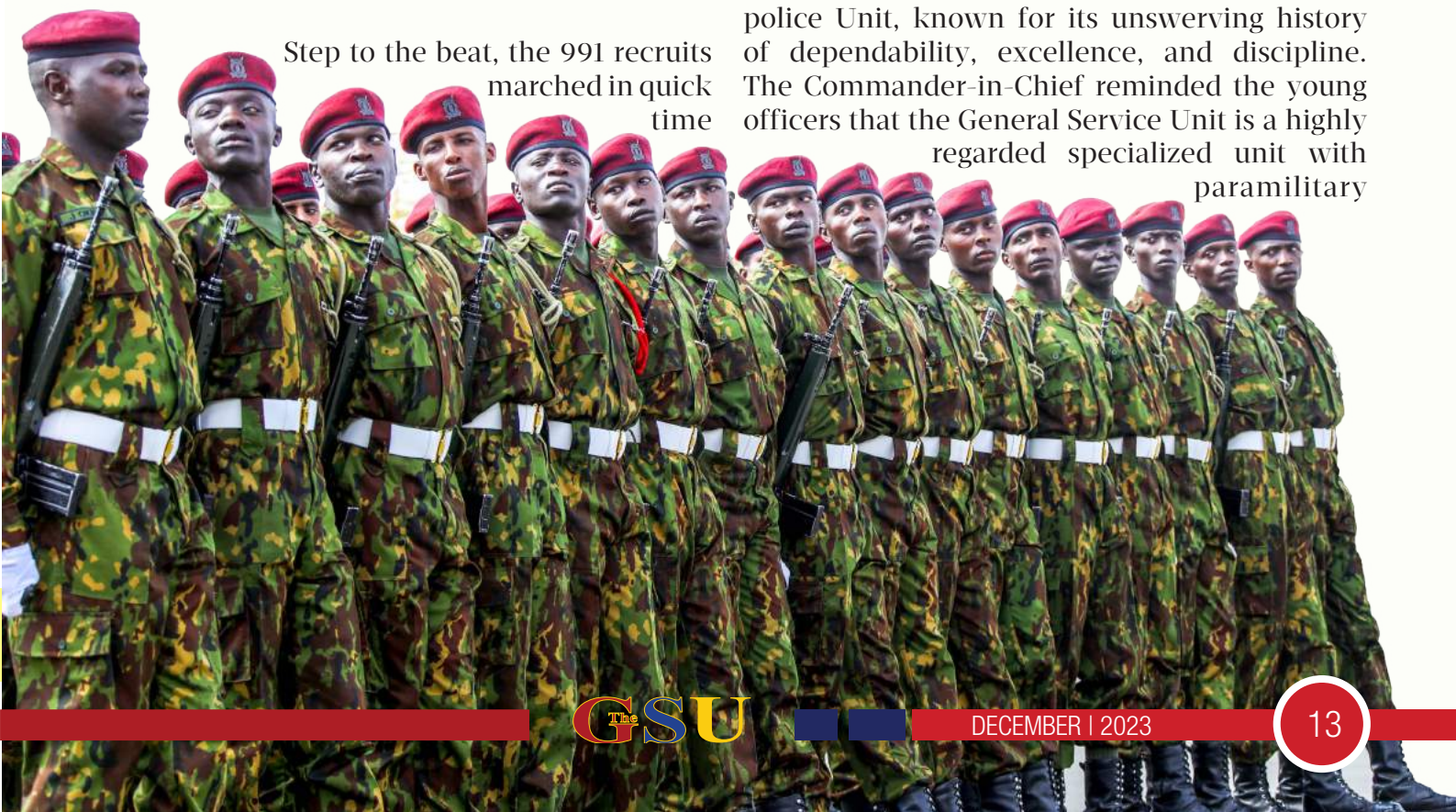
President William Ruto



In his address to the graduands, the Head of State congratulated them and expressed his satisfaction with the quality of training the officers had received which rightly matched with courage, commitment, discipline associated with a GSU officer.

The President further noted that the officers had been skillfully trained to meet the standards required to become part of the country's foremost police Unit, known for its unswerving history of dependability, excellence, and discipline. The Commander-in-Chief reminded the young officers that the General Service Unit is a highly regarded specialized unit with paramilitary

Step to the beat, the 991 recruits marched in quick time



capabilities and the capacity to be deployed on short notice and engage effectively with security threats in any part of the country. He informed them that the General Service Unit is the cutting edge of police response to armed conflict and other security challenges, underscoring the ability of the Unit to respond

in all types of combat. He said they are the best in their Police Service, to being a

of terrain including urban further reminded them that ambassadors of the National tasking them to be the profession. “You are tasked good example to Kenyans and live to the highest ideal of policing as a high calling and an essential service to the people of Kenya,” said the President.

Additionally, the Head of State called on the newly enlisted officers to uphold the virtues of discipline, integrity, and selflessness in their work, in order to restore confidence and hope to Kenyans on the security challenges facing them. Being a new generation, President Ruto implored them to promote national cohesion and to shun tribalism and other forms of discrimination in their work.

At the same time, President Ruto reiterated his commitment to enhance the safety and security of all Kenyans by putting criminal elements on notice, of the government’s resolution to stage an all-out war against criminals and criminal gangs. In the ongoing war against banditry and cattle rustling, the President warned that it would not be business as usual, as the government would deploy





an additional number of troops in the troubled regions. “The interests of Kenyans are not to be infringed without serious consequences. The rights and freedoms of Kenyans shall not be interfered with without effective response,” he said.

While assuring Kenyans of the government’s commitment to protect their lives and property, the President said the government would enhance the capacity of the National Police Service by providing contemporary crime fighting tools and equipment to deal with modern crimes.

He affirmed that investing in technology was the foundation of modern policing since we were operating in a highly challenging policing environment. “We are serious about investing in enhanced recruitment, technology, conditions of service and welfare of police officers,” reiterated the President.

President Ruto, implored the officers to exercise patriotism and courage, while living up to their oath of office and the service standing orders. He reminded the officers to be mindful of the law particularly the constitutional provision on national values and principles of governance,

principles of national security in Article 238, and the Bill of Rights as stipulated in chapter four of the constitution, to help them offer excellent policing services to Kenyans. “We are determined to provide security to every part of the country without compromising fundamental human rights and freedoms as this is the governance imperative of our times,” he stated.

While concluding his remarks, the President highlighted the need for the Service to play its critical role in nation-building by planting trees which goes hand in hand with the government’s plan of turning the country green.

He directed the GSU Commandant to liaise with the county government of Nairobi to plant 10,000 trees within NPC Embakasi B Campus in line with the government’s effort to protect the environment to cushion the country from the effects of climate change.

The Cabinet Secretary for Interior and National Administration, Prof. Kithure Kindiki, who also addressed the graduands, outlined the government’s plan to implement institutional reforms within the Service, in order to ensure the professionalization of security services for effective policing. He also assured of the



GSU recruits taking their oath of service during passing out parade at the GSU Embakasi B Campus on January 12, 2023 PHOTO / EDWIN KIPKORIR

government's commitment to prioritize modernization of the equipment used by police in the fulfillment of its mandate in order to ensure efficient delivery of services to the people of Kenya. "The government is determined to provide modern tools of trade to our police officers in order to ensure that our men and women in uniform have the capability to respond to contemporary security challenges," said the Interior Cabinet Secretary.

On his part, the Inspector General Mr. Japheth Koome reiterated the commitment of the members of the National Police Service to provide professional services to the people of Kenya, devoid of tribal, political, or social status bias. He urged the new



GSU recruits cheering to the guest of honour, H.E President William Ruto during passing out parade at the GSU Embakasi B Campus on January 12, 2023 PHOTO / EDWIN KIPKORIR



H.E President William Ruto signing the visitor's book during recruits passing out parade at GSU Embakasi B Campus on January 12, 2023. Looking on is the Interior CS Prof. Kithure Kindiki, IG Mr Japhet Koome, DIG Mr Edward Mbugua, GSU Commandant Mr Douglas Kanja and CO Embakasi B Campus Mr Charles Naibei PHOTO / EDWIN KIPKORIR

graduates to serve the country diligently without fear or favour and exercise professionalism as required of them by the constitution. Mr. Koome also expressed his profound delight at the commitment of the government to support the National Police Service with resources and vowed to safeguard them jealously for the benefit of the people of Kenya. He further assured the President of his commitment to have officers serve the country with diligence noting that service to the people is their priority.

High-ranking national leaders including Cabinet Secretaries, Principal Secretaries, and County officials including Nairobi Governor, Hon. Johnson Sakaja, also attended the ceremony. Top security commanders from other security agencies in the country were also in attendance.

With the parade wrapped up, the newly graduated police officers saluted The Head of State and matched off to their duties ready to join their colleagues in different locations across the country.



H.E President William Ruto watering a tree seedling at GSU Embakasi B Campus on January 12, 2023 PHOTO / EDWIN KIPKORIR



CHANGE OF COMMAND

Change of Command





The Deputy Inspector General Mr Douglas Kanja inspects a quarter guard at General Service Unit Headquarters during the handing-over ceremony of the incoming Commandant on April 17, 2023 PHOTO / VINCENT KIPKEMOI

Mr Eliud Lagat Assumes Command of the GSU

By Chief Inspector Francis Kafue

The Commandant General Service Unit Mr. Eliud K. Lagat took over as the 18th Commandant on April 17, 2023. This followed the appointment of the immediate former Commandant Mr Douglas Kanja, as the Deputy Inspector General – Kenya Police Service by His Excellency President William Ruto, vide gazette notice number 82 of April 12, 2023. Mr Lagat’s appointment was announced in a communique issued by the Chief of Staff & Head of Public Service, Mr Felix Koskei, on April 12, 2023. The press release noted in part that the Head of State and Government had on behalf



The DIG Mr Douglas Kanja hands the handing-over notes to the GSU Commandant Mr Eliud Lagat at the Commandant's office during the handing-over ceremony on April 17, 2023 PHOTO / VINCENT KIPKEMOI

of the National Security Council noted the changes effected by the National Police Service Commission that also included the appointment of Mr Munga Nyale, as the commandant of the National Police College Main Campus – Kiganjo.

Mr Lagat, who until his appointment was the Director of the Investigations Bureau, was accorded a warm reception back to his roots where he began his career as a law enforcement officer. In an elaborate ceremony witnessed at the General Service Unit headquarters, Mr Lagat who had

replaced his signature suit with the GSU fatigues received the formation's maroon flag from Mr Kanja, amid pomp and razzmatazz. His assumption of command was preceded by a change of guard ceremony at the General Service Unit headquarters in Ruaraka, climaxed by an elaborate handing and taking over of the Unit.

The brief ceremony was held in the Commandant's office where the instruments of command and crucial documents related to the management of the Unit were handed over. As the ceremony progressed, Mr Lagat's badges of ranks rested



FORMER GSU COMMANDANTS



MR. DOUGLAS K. KANJA
EBS, OGW – SAIG
2018 – 2023



MR. STEPHEN T. CHELIMO
EBS SAIG
05.09.2015 – 03.05.2018



MR. JOEL M. KITILI
MBS SAIG
18.03.2014–01.09.2015

NO	NAME	RANK	DAY IN	DAY OUT
1.	MR. S. G THOMPSON	SSP	1958	27th July 1987
2.	MR. J. A. S SMITH	SSP	28th July 1987	28th March 1987
3.	MR. M. MACKENZIE	SSP	27th March 1987	28th Feb 1984
4.	MR. R. J ANGEL	SSP	27th Feb 1984	17th April 1987
5.	MR. B. N. GETHI	DCP	16th April 1987	1st Sept 1978
	MR. P. N. MBUTHIA	SIACP	2nd Sept 1978	24 Aug 1982
	MR. E. K. MMBUWE	S/DCP	25th Aug 1982	8th April 1987
	MR. J. A. KOSKEI	S/DCP	8th April 1987	8th Mar 1983
		S/DCP	10th Mar 1983	28th Mar 1988
		S/DCP I	28th Mar 1988	27th Aug 2002
		S/DCP II	1st Sept 2002	18th Jan 2003
		S/DCP B	18th Jan 2003	2nd June 2003
		S/DCP H	2nd June 2003	8th Sept 2008
		S/DCP I	28th Sept 2008	16th Mar 2014
			16th Mar 2014	1st Sept 2015
			1st Sept 2015	3rd May 2018
			3rd May 2018	



FORMER GSU COMMANDANTS



MR. WILLIAM SAYIA
CBS OGW S.DCP I
22.09.2009 - 08.03.2014



MR. MATHEW K. ITEERE,
OGW, S.DCP II
03.06.2005 - 09.09.2009



MR. LAWRENCE MWADIME N.
EBS, S.DCP I
16.01.2003 - 03.05.2005



MR. DAVID M. KIMAIYO,
MBS, S.DCP II
1.9.2002-16.1.2003

In an elaborate ceremony witnessed at the General Service Unit headquarters, Mr Lagat who had replaced his signature suit with the GSU fatigues received the formation's maroon flag from Mr Kanja, amid pomp and razzmatazz.



majestically on his shoulders and black gorget patches with a strip of silver embroidery fitting flawlessly on his collar. The much-revered red beret with the Kenya Police Service emblem stitched on it rested on his head authoritatively. Its wool-felt had undergone 5 days of continuous brushing, as is standard practice at GSU just to ensure that not a single strand of yarn was out of place.

While addressing senior officers who had gathered at the headquartersto welcome him, the new commandant expressed his delight at being back to GSU where he had served under the much esteemed RECCE Company in his hey days. In the meeting, Mr Kanja, urged the officers to accord the incoming commandant maximum support, as he steered the Unit to the next level.

The DIG Mr Douglas Kanja briefs the GSU Commandant Mr Eliud Lagat during the handing-over ceremony on April 17, 2023 PHOTO / VINCENT KIPKEMOI





FORMER GSU COMMANDANTS



MR. SAMSON K. CHERAMBOSS,
CBS S.DCP I
30.6.1999 - 30.8.2002



MR C.C KIMURGOR S.DCP
10.3.1993 - 29.6.1999



MR.J .K .A KOSGEI S.DCP
4.4.1987-9.3.1993



MR.E.K M'MBIJIWE S.DCP
25.8.1982-8.4.1987

While thanking the top commanders for the support that they had accorded him during his tenure, Mr Kanja committed to continue supporting the Unit in his new role as the Deputy Inspector General.

On his part, Mr Lagat committed to discharge his duties diligently while reminding the officers that they had a duty to serve their country selflessly and protect humanity. He also commended his predecessor Mr Kanja, for his tremendous performance during his tour of duty.

Mr Lagat is also an explosives and post blasts expert who headed the forensic Bomb disposal unit and the directorate of Reforms at DCI headquarters.

He is also an alma mater of the esteemed National Defence College of Kenya. Undoubtedly, the General Service Unit deservedly acquired the services of a man with an operational policing background as well as criminal investigation skills, a combination of great sets of competencies, essential in the modern operational policing Unit.

The DIG Mr Douglas Kanja hands over the GSU flag to the new GSU Commandant Mr Eliud Lagat outside GSU Headquarters main office during the handing-over ceremony on April 17, 2023. Looking on are senior officers of the Unit. PHOTO / VINCENT KIPKEMOI





FORMER GSU COMMANDANTS



MR. P. M MBUTHIA S/ACP
2.9.1978-24.8.1982



MR. B. GETHI DCP
18.4.1967-1978



MR. R.J ANGEL SSP
27.4.1964-17.4.1967



MR S.G THOMPSON SSP
1958 - 27.7.1961



Former GSU Commandants (from Second left) Mr Douglas Kanja, Mr Lawrence Mwadime, Mr Samson Cherambos and Mr. J.K. A Kosgei at Embakasi B Campus flanked by the Deputy Commandant Mr Bashane Omar (extreme left) and the CO Embakasi B Campus(extreme right) and the former GSO Mr Ranson LolModoni(second right) PHOTO / KENNEDY MUTHUI



Former Commandant Mr Lawrence Mwadime watering a tree at GSU Headquarters. He is cheered on by the Commandant Mr Eliud Lagat and other senior officers of the Unit. PHOTO / KENNEDY MUTHUI



Former Commandant Mr William Aswenje watering a tree at GSU Headquarters. He is cheered on by senior staff officers of the Unit. PHOTO / KENNEDY MUTHUI



GENERAL SERVICE UNIT

GSU COMMAND



GENERAL SERVICE UNIT



MR. ELIUD K. LAGAT
OGW, HSC, ss, 'ndc' (K), SAIG

COMMANDANT



MR. BASHANE M. OMAR
MBS, DSM, AIG

DEPUTY COMMANDANT



MR. GEORGE NDIRITU
OGW, AIG

GSO



MR. GODHARD KAMAU
MBS, HSC, ndc (K), AIG

CO RECCE



MR. CHARLES NAIBEI
OGW, AIG

CO NPC - B CAMPUS



MR. BENARD MBATHA
OGW, CP

CO HQS



MR. STEPHEN K. CHEBET
HSC, CP

SOOPS



MR. IBRAHIM AKHENDA
CP

SOP

JOB TITLE GUIDE

GSO - GENERAL STAFF OFFICER
CO - COMMANDING OFFICER

SOOPS - STAFF OFFICER OPERATIONS
SOG & W - STAFF OFFICER GENDER / WELFARE

SOP - STAFF OFFICER PERSONNEL
SOC - STAFF OFFICER COMMUNICATION



GENERAL SERVICE UNIT

GSU COMMAND



GENERAL SERVICE UNIT



MRS. JUDY KALONDU
CP

SOG & W



MR ERNEST CHERUIYOT
CP

CO G-COMPANY



MR FREDRICK EGESA
CP

SOC



MR. JOSHUA KASOKA
SSP

DEPUTY SOOPS



MR DANIEL LEKOLUA
HSC, SSP

SOQ



MR DIPHUS CHEMOSS
SSP

SOT



MR WILLIAM SAWE
SSP

HQS I



MR MAURICE ODANGA
SSP

FOT



MR EMMANUEL MAINGI
HSC, SP

UCO



MR NICKSON AUKA
SP

HQS II



CI KIBET YEGON

PLNN & R



CI FRANCIS KAFUE

PRO

JOB TITLE GUIDE

SOQ - STAFF OFFICER QUARTERMASTER
SOT - STAFF OFFICER TRANSPORT

FOT - FIELD OFFICER TRAINING
UCO - UNIT COMMUNICATION OFFICER

PRO - PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER
PLNN & R - PLANNING & RESEARCH



His Excellency President William Ruto Takes Lead in Climate Talks

As GSU Supports Drive to Plant 15 Billion Trees

By, Inspector Paul Gitau

Climate change has significantly impacted livelihoods across the world. Environmental degradation has had far-reaching implications such as disruption of ecosystems, altered weather patterns, and global warming. These effects of climate change underscore the importance of mitigating ecological disruption and greenhouse gas emissions.

H.E President William Ruto addressing delegates during the African Climate Summit convened at Kenyatta International Convention Centre, Nairobi on September 6th, 2023. PHOTO/ COURTESY



Speaking during the inaugural African Climate Summit convened in Nairobi's Kenyatta International Convention Centre on 4th -6th September 2023, President William Ruto called on African leaders to raise their investments in green energy to open the untapped potential that the African continent holds. He termed Africa as the key to increasing elimination of gas emissions noting that it was time everyone contributed to environmental conservation.

Convened under the theme, "Driving Green Growth and Climate Finance Solutions for Africa and the World", the Summit which was the first of its kind in Africa, was a convention of global leaders, development partners, and civil society organizations to outline their position concerning how people should engage in effective actions to save the world from the effects of climate change. The Summit intended to address the swelling exposure to climate change and its connected costs, globally and in Africa. It further concentrated on climate action from the perspective of developing African solutions to global challenges.

The Head of State who is also the Chairperson of the Committee of African Heads of State and Governments on Climate Change opined that climate change is a big challenge to the well-being of humanity as well as the existence of every life on earth, noting that only speeded and coordinated action on a global scale could stop the looming danger occasioned by climate change.

In a Summit attended by over 20,000 delegates including United States climate diplomat John Kerry and the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, President Ruto further orated that Africa is swayed towards slowing industrial development noting that environmental factors suggest that climate focus supersedes industrialization. "We are persuaded that not only is it urgent for us to execute an audacious leapfrogging of development pathway to industrialization but urgent ecological imperatives also dictate that Africa must go green first before industrializing," highlighted the President.

He challenged African leaders to unlock renewable resources in the continent as he called for commitment when investing in climate-friendly agriculture and environment conservation. President Ruto observed that this would enhance global decarbonization, promote sustainable development, push economic growth, and create millions of jobs.

“We must invest in green growth not just a climate imperative, but also a fountain of multi-billion-dollar economic opportunities that Africa and the world are primed to capitalize on,” he added.

The Summit that was organized by the African Union Commission in collaboration with the government of Kenya culminated in the “Nairobi Declaration”, a blueprint for Africa’s green energy transition.

In the declaration, which is a strong pronouncement of Africa’s determination and climate leadership, African leaders implored the developed countries to reduce carbon emissions, emphasizing the importance of decarbonizing the global economy

In compliance with this directive, the General Service Unit has so far spearheaded the planting of over 100,000 tree seedlings in the last 8 months at its various units and commands scattered across the country.



for equality and shared prosperity. The leaders further urged for investment to support the sustainable use of Africa’s natural resources for the continent’s shift to low carbon development and contribution to the elimination of gas emissions globally. The successful convention of the Summit was a bold reiteration of the president’s commitment, and clarion call to conserve the environment to avert the harsh ramifications of climate change.

15 Billion Trees

In December 2022, the Cabinet approved the national tree growing restoration campaign aimed at planting 15 billion trees so as to scale up Kenya’s forest cover to 30 per cent by 2030. The move by Cabinet was part of long-term measures instituted by government to address the devastating effects of climate change and desertification in the country.

This ambitious initiative was also aimed at combating other effects of climate change including droughts, floods, diseases, and unpredictable rainfall patterns, by reducing greenhouse emissions and addressing varying climate changes.

The Cabinet that was chaired by President William Ruto also resolved that all public engagements presided by the President, his deputy, Cabinet Secretaries, Principal Secretaries and all other cadres of State of public officers would be marked by planting a designated number of trees ranging between 200 and 500 seedlings. “The tree growing campaign targets to mobilize the nation in planting 15 billion trees by the year 2030, translating to 30 per cent national tree cover,” a communication following the Cabinet resolution stated.

The President had earlier on indicated the government’s plan to secure and protect public forests, and rehabilitate and restore all degraded water towers and other forest ecosystems across



Cabinet Secretaries who joined the delegates at the African Climate Summit, Kenyatta International Convention Centre, Nairobi on September 6th, 2023. PHOTO/COURTESY

THE KENYATTA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE



H.E President William Ruto, African Heads of States and other international delegates pose for a photo during the African Climate Summit convened at Kenyatta International Convention Centre, Nairobi on September 6th, 2023. PHOTO/COURTESY

the country. At the same time the Cabinet approved the scaling-up of drought responses aimed at alleviating the suffering of Kenyans owing to drought and famine.

In compliance with this directive, the General Service Unit has so far spearheaded the planting of over 100,000 tree seedlings in the last 8 months at its various units and commands scattered across the country.



Delegates follow proceedings during the African Climate Summit convened at Kenyatta International Convention Centre, Nairobi on September 6th, 2023. PHOTO/COURTESY





SECURING THE NORTH

Securing The North

Prof. Kithure Kindiki's high calling on the Fight against Banditry and Terrorism

By Inspector Paul Gitau

The Cabinet Secretary for Interior and National Administration, Prof. Kithure Kindiki, has promised a sustained campaign against terrorism and banditry in a bid to guarantee the safety and security of Kenyans.

The menace of banditry has for many years, caused untold suffering and anguish to the communities living in the North Rift part of our country. Many families have lost their loved ones and have been left in the deep pit of poverty. Banditry has also greatly affected the socioeconomic activities in this region by scaring away potential investors and cutting the region off from the rest of the country. Security officers have also not been spared by the

blunt effects of banditry as many have paid the ultimate price in their quest to eradicate the vice. However, the CS is the man to watch as he has tightened his boots and put his best foot forward to ensure there is peace in the region. To the inhabitants, Prof. Kindiki is a heaven-sent savior, giving them hope that the guns will go silent.

In a press brief on the security situation in the country on October 14, 2022, the CS pointed out clearly that the fight against security threats will not only be directed at bandits but also the whole circus that sustains the cattle rustling activities including the supporters, financiers, and beneficiaries.

Prof. Kindiki noted that the activities of cattle rustling in the areas covering the North Rift which have remained rampant for a long time can only



The CS Interior Prof Kithure Kindiki flanked by the GSU Commandant Mr Eliud Lagat (right) and the Officer Commanding S-Company Mr Sammy Nyongesa during the launch of Akwachatis GSU Camp, Tiaty Constituency PHOTO/COURTESY

The CS has stressed the need to deal mercilessly with the practice of banditry which has been a cultural practice among the local communities from time immemorial noting that securing the North Rift from the claws of bandits and armed criminals requires the participation, commitment, and support of all stakeholders. He has called on the political, religious, and community leaders from North Rift counties to partner with national security agencies to silence the guns, encourage peaceful coexistence among communities, and create conducive environment to develop the region.

be compared to crimes against humanity, owing to the devastating pain and suffering left on the local communities. He further indicated that the government had resolved to deploy a multifaceted, multi-agency approach response to banditry for a one-time solution. “We want to reiterate as government that we are coming to dismantle not only the criminals themselves but also to bring down the entire chain that has been the livestock rustling industry; the financiers, the benefactors, and those who purchase livestock stolen from Kenyans,” highlighted the cabinet secretary.

His dedication to firmly deal with the menace was witnessed when he launched a multi-agency security operation, “Operation Maliza Uhalifu” that included the military and other operational units of the National Police Service and also by the many security tours, he has made to the affected areas to check on operation progress.

We want to reiterate as government that we are coming to dismantle not only the criminals themselves but also to bring down the entire chain that has been the livestock rustling industry

The sustained war on banditry by the security services has borne fruits as evidenced by the drastic reduction of cattle rustling activities and recovery of illegal guns. The communities feel safer and have returned to their daily routine. Most of the schools that had been closed as a result of insecurity have been re-opened reviving the lost hope amongst many young children whose dreams of receiving education were under threat.

The CS has expressed his satisfaction with the steps made in the fight against banditry noting that it has been deliberate to first silence the guns and make sure that there is law and order for long-term solutions. He has disclosed that the government plans to establish education and agriculture policies for peace initiatives along the

Kerio Valley belt to bolster the region's economic and social fortunes.

The interior CS also has his sight trained high on the war against terrorism in his effort to fully eradicate the threat posed by terror operatives in the Coastal

and Northern regions of Kenya as well as the whole country at large. He has lauded the security measures put in place by the security services to curb terrorism, efforts that have borne fruit. “Terrorism remains a serious threat and it remains a high priority. I want to thank our officers who have done a great job, especially those serving in the frontline in the areas where some of these threats come through,” Prof. Kindiki said while speaking at the Senate.

Prof. Kindiki has also underscored the need for a collaborative approach to the problem urging the community and religious leaders to support government efforts in combating violent extremists and cross-border crime. While speaking when he toured Wajir and Mandera counties on July 4, 2023, the CS called upon the public to volunteer information to the security agencies for action reiterating the need for a cooperative approach in addressing the menace of terrorism which threatens not only the security stability of the country but also the economic stability.

“Residents are key partners in the war against Al-Shabaab and other violent extremists. By sharing information, you will be helping our security officers to deal with these criminals who continue to threaten our national security and destabilize communities in North Eastern Kenya,” the CS called.



The CS Interior Prof Kithure Kindiki addressing officers during the launch of Akwichatis GSU Camp, in Tiaty Constituency PHOTO/COURTESY

The CS is committed to addressing security threats facing the country by wholesomely dealing with terrorism, banditry, and other cross-border criminal activities. He applauds the great work the National Police Service does, especially the operational formed-up units, and has expressed the government’s plan to procure modern equipment to enhance the capacity of security officers in the frontline through the modernization of their equipment, technology, and capacity to effectively tackle the complex security challenges of terrorism. He further notes that with the modernization of security equipment, political goodwill, commitment by the security officers and partnership with the community and religious leaders, terrorism and banditry will be defeated.





“I am With You”

Inspector General Japhet Koome Assures Officers on the Frontline

By Constable Sammy Kipsagat

The Inspector General of police Mr Japhet Koome, has embarked on a morale boosting visit of officers in formed up units across the country. Mr Koome who took over office on November 10, 2022 as the fourth Inspector General of the National Police Service, has conducted personal visits to operational camps as one of the many ways through which he intends to motivate the officers serving in difficult conditions.

This is in appreciation to the selflessness and dedication to duty that has been portrayed by the officers deployed in far-flung areas, who go out of their way to ensure that the public safety and security of Kenyans is guaranteed. Officers in formed up units are mainly deployed on operational duties including anti-banditry and anti-terror operations in disturbed areas within the country, and a visit by the Inspector General is a great motivating force in their work, since the officers are technically on operation mode throughout.

The officers are our frontline heroes who have dutifully given their best to keep our country safe from external and internal security threats of terrorism, banditry, smuggling among others. Whereas they are adequately trained to operate in the challenging environment they do, the officers require motivation and a pat on the back to reassure

them that their service to the nation is not in vain.

It is against this backdrop that the police chief embarked on a mission to meet the officers in their areas of duty. On June 19, 2023, Mr Koome, made a security assessment tour in Meru County, where he visited Bulo Anti Stock Theft Unit camp to motivate officers and address security concerns in the area.

While addressing the officers, the Inspector General expressed his deep commitment in improving the general welfare of officers serving in the National Police Service and urged them to remain committed to duty. Mr Koome, who served in the Anti-Stock Theft Unit in his formative years in the Service, expressed his understanding of the numerous hiccups the officers faced in their work and committed to support the Unit deliver on its mandate.

The Inspector General in expression of the resolve to the fight against terrorism and violent extremism visited the Quick Response Unit (QRU) officers at Fafi in Garissa County, in June, where he expressed his appreciation for their patriotism and dedication to duty in fighting terrorism. The Quick Response Unit is a tactical unit that comprises of special counter-terror operatives who tirelessly navigate the terrain of North Eastern to ward-off terrorists and keep our country safe.

Mr Koome assured the officers of the government's commitment to supporting police operations and noted that the government

was in the process of procuring modern tools of trade to enable police discharge their mandate effectively. He further reiterated his resolve to look into the welfare of the officers and urged them to



The Inspector General Mr Japhet Koome shakes hand with a police officer during his visit at Bulo ASTU Camp in Meru County on June 19, 2023. PHOTO/COURTESY

remain committed to duty. In the same month, the police chief visited the fragmented multi-agency units operating within the larger Boni enclave in Lamu County. The visit offered a platform for the Inspector General to interact with the officers on several issues and also check on their operational preparedness and sense to duty.

He assured the officers of the unwavering support by the National Police Service and the government to enable them perform their duty efficiently. Mr Koome, expressed his satisfaction for the officers' resilience in the fight against terrorism, adding that their efforts had realized security stability in the region save for some isolated insecurity challenges.

The Inspector General who also held a meeting with the local community living within Mokoe, urged the locals to support security

officers by volunteering information to help them offer their much needed security services. He further assured the public of the commitment of the offices to protect their lives and property and

Mr Koome assured the officers of the government's commitment to supporting police operations and noted that the government was in the process of procuring modern tools of trade to enable police discharge their mandate effectively



The Inspector General Mr Japhet Koome addresses officers at Lokori Police Station during his visit in Turkana in August, 2023. PHOTO/COURTESY



The Inspector General Mr Japhet Koome shares a light moment with Quick Response Unit officers at their camp in Fafi, Garissa County in June, 2023. PHOTO/COURTESY

maintain peace and stability in the region. Since the launch of the police-led multi-agency ‘Operation Maliza Uhalifu’ in the North Rift comprising of operational units of the National Police Service and the Kenya Defence Forces, the operation has borne the desired results with recovery of hundreds of illegal firearms as well as recovery of hundreds of stolen cattle.

Calm has been experienced, business activities and learning has resumed thanks to the Kenya Defence Forces who are rehabilitating schools that had been vandalized by bandits. While on a visit to Turkana County, the Inspector General visited officers deployed in Lokori in August, 2023.

He implored the officers to continue embracing the spirit of multi-agency approach by working in unison with other security agencies, the local leadership and communities to effectively tackle cattle rustling and banditry. The police chief thanked the officers for their dedication to duty and urged them to sustain the war against banditry and cattle rustling, further assuring them of his support.

Officers in the formed-up units appreciated the timely visits by the Inspector General adding that they were a morale booster and went far in keeping their spirits alive



The Inspector General Mr Japhet Koome inspects a quarter guard mounted by GSU Officers in Mokowe, Lamu County on March 17, 2023. PHOTO/COURTESY



**Mr. Japhet Koome , EBS, HSC, 'ndc' (K)
Inspector General
National Police Service**

Former Inspectors General



**Hilary Nzioki Mutyambai
2019-2022**



**Joseph Kipchirchir Boinett
2015 - 2019**



**David Mwole Kimaiyo
2012 - 2014**



GSU - RRT Operator



MAIN FEATURE

Eliud Lagat



The Impressive Story of a Man who Aspired to become a Catholic Priest but ended up becoming a Bomb Expert and Commandant of Kenya's Elite Paramilitary Police Unit

By Chief Inspector Mike Mugo & Inspector Paul Gitau



“Lord, if fate is against me and I’m killed, may your will be fulfilled, but may it be quick and painless. If I’m wounded, don’t let me be crippled. But above all, don’t let me fail in the task”

So goes the bomb technician’s prayer before every bomb he defuses. For Mr Eliud Lagat, it is a prayer he prayed many times in his tenure as the head of the DCI Bomb Disposal Unit and during the over 20 years that he worked as an explosive ordinance disposal expert.

His assignment was one of the most dangerous jobs in the world especially at the height of the Alshabaab terror attacks in the country, when explosives would go off unabated in the city and other parts of the country. To make safe scenes of terror attacks against the most hardened and technically advanced terrorists in the world wasn’t an easy task. This is because the Al-qaeda linked terrorists don’t play by the Geneva Convention. For them, there are no rules, only results which meant death by any means necessary. His job was a lonely one. In most instances, it was him and the sound of his own breathing coupled by the drumming of his heart in a protective suit baking in 40+ degrees of heat. It was him and the bomb.

But for Eliud Kipkoech Lagat, just when life couldn’t get any more dangerous, the stakes were raised again. In March 2014, he led a team of bomb disposal experts in one of the most dangerous assignments that he has ever handled. Anti-terror detectives based in the coastal city of Mombasa had intercepted a suspicious vehicle and detained it at their yard.

Experts from the bomb disposal unit were invited to inspect the vehicle, a sports utility Toyota Surf. In the course of their inspection, the experts discovered explosives concealed under the seats of the vehicle. The explosives included six cylinders weighing 60, kilograms, six detonators, six grenades, an AK-47 assault rifle and a cache of ammunitions.

As the lead expert, it was Mr Lagat’s duty to diffuse the explosives that were connected to a mobile phone and avert a disaster whose consequences would have been disastrous. This is the incredible story of a man who has dedicated over 20 years of his life as a bomb expert and saved the lives of many innocent Kenyans from acts of terrorism. Paradoxically, Mr Lagat’s dream was to become a Catholic priest. His ambition was to preach the good gospel and save the souls of men through salvation. Little did he know that God had planned to fulfill his dream to save the lives of humanity through science.

He may be soft spoken but soft is not one of the adjectives one would use



Mr Eliud Lagat illustrates a map of the Nationwide deployment of the GSU during the interview PHOTO/KENNEDY MUTHUI

to describe the graduate of Automotive Engineering. When he left the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton in 1998, he wanted to join one of the country's established automobile garages such as the DT Dobie or Toyota Kenya. But as fate would have it, he was recruited into the police service, and swapped his overall for the blue uniform.

His training in technology at Baraton was to come in handy. Within no time, he was dismantling bombs and other hazardous materials. Beneath his calm and unassuming demeanour, are nerves of steel which have won him many accolades as he led special forensic in pre-empting many otherwise catastrophic plots by terrorists.

It is his distinguished and outstanding work as a detective, forensics and tactical expert on counter-terrorism that earned him the Order of the Grand Warrior of Kenya (OGW), Head of State Commendation (HSC) and the Silver Star of Kenya (ss) amongst many other recognitions for his selfless service to the Nation.

His experience spans over 20 years in various fields, touching on criminal investigations, weapons, explosive ordinance devices, improvised explosive devices and post-blast investigations. He is also a certified trainer in counter-terrorism. Prior to his

appointment as the GSU Commandant, he served as the Director of Reforms at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations and the Director of the Investigations Bureau.

Mr Lagat is also contradiction of sorts. Between dealing with bombs and other hazardous materials, he led the police thanksgiving pastoral programme for three consecutive years whilst at the Directorate of Criminal Investigations.

A staunch catholic raised in Kipkaren in the salient Nandi County, the GSU Commandant is a strict disciplinarian, a meticulous worker, a mentor and a police officer who believes in teamwork as well as unity in diversity. He has served in many critical agencies including the Kenya National Project on Chemical Security and Safety, Nuclear Regulatory Authority and the Radiation Protection Board of Kenya.

In April 2023, the Commandant returned to Ruaraka where he served 21 years ago as a junior officer servicing Unit's motor vehicles. The forensics and tactical detective and an alumni of the prestigious National Defence College, is an all rounded-officer who brings to his new role unparalleled commitment and dedication to the country.

Briefly tell our readers about your upbringing

Well, I was born in the early 70s in a village known as Kipkaren Seriat in Nandi County, in the then Nandi north district.

I was brought up in a polygamous family of 9 girls and 3 boys, in a strict Christian set up. I assisted my parents in farming activities and most importantly gave my father a helping hand in the buying and selling of maize during school holidays.

I consider being brought up in a Christian home the greatest privilege my parents ever gave me and the highest act of God's providence, that I grew up in a Christian home. This is because Christianity has shaped me all through my life from primary school, to the university and now in employment.

After completing my primary school education at Laboret primary school, I joined Mother of Apostles Seminary for my secondary school education. It is while at the Seminary that my lifelong dream of becoming a priest began becoming actualized as I dedicated most of my free time to activities related to the church. This elevated me to the position of Chairman of the Young Catholics Students for the entire diocese of Eldoret. The main objective of the movement was to make the students' world a better and happier place to live in, both spiritually and materially.

Through the YCS motto "See, Judge and Act, part of my responsibility was to help students build a solid and balanced personality so as to enable them take responsibility in school and the wider society. This I achieved through assisting the school administration in developing my fellow students spiritually and morally. It is against this backdrop that after completing my secondary school education I joined the University of Eastern Africa-Baraton, a private Seventh Day Adventist Christian University, to pursue a degree in Industrial Technology, with a bias in Automotive Engineering. These two institutions shaped my Christian background immensely and laid the strong foundation upon which my faith is built.

Upon graduation my intention was to seek employment in one of the country's established automobile companies such as Toyota Kenya or join the then Kenya Army as a specialist. Little did I know that God had other plans as I was later enlisted in the Kenya Police Force after failing to get an opportunity at the Kenya Army.



Mr Eliud Lagat in his youthful years



Mr Eliud Lagat with his mother at their rural home PHOTO/KENNEDY MUTHUI

How did you progress in your career after joining the Kenya Police?

After graduation at the Kenya Police College in Kiganjo, I was posted to the Directorate of Criminal Investigations Bomb Disposal Unit. After a while, I was transferred to the General Service Unit's auto workshop, where my expertise in automotive engineering was required. After a brief stint, I went back to the Directorate of Criminal Investigations where I rendered my expertise in the Crime Scene Support Unit, which is today the Forensic Crime Scene Investigations Unit, before going back to the Bomb Disposal Unit.

It is while at the unit that I was molded into a professional bomb expert through training locally and abroad in specialized fields related to forensic investigations and handling of explosives. In 2001, I attended a specialized training on analysis of explosive residue, fundamentals of handwriting and post blast investigations at the prestigious FBI Academy in Quantico, USA. I also undertook a comprehensive course on use of DNA in investigation of terrorism and its application in law

enforcement. This course was offered in Lyon, France. In the course of my career as a forensic expert, I undertook many other trainings locally and internationally all of which I believe shaped and prepared me for my current responsibilities.

What is your vision for the Unit and where do you want to see the Unit in terms of operational capability?

I am happy to note that GSU has a solid and functional structural system that has kept the Unit going since its establishment. It is therefore my intention to build on the existing system, make it stronger to position the Unit as a dependable security agency as it has always been.

GSU has remained efficient in its operational mandate amidst the challenging dynamics and contemporary security issues of the 21st century policing. It is therefore my aim to enhance the operational capacity of the Unit by investing in modern policing equipment, technology and training to leverage on the emerging threats to security in our country.

Every security agency must be responsive to the



Mr Eliud Lagat fields questions posed by Chief Inspector Mike Mugo during the interview at the GSU headquarters in Ruaraka PHOTO/KENNEDY MUTHUI

needs of the people and I will strive to build a responsive and proactive workforce by enhancing training, morale and welfare of officers to augment their output. We will enhance our operational competence and create resilience amongst our officers to promote our service delivery. I am very passionate about humanity and dignity, and respect for human rights. This is a virtue that I wish to see inculcated and replicated across all ranks and file of the Unit.

The presence of GSU is mostly felt in anti-terrorism and banditry operations. How do you intend improve the Unit's response to these threats?

Whereas terrorism is a global threat to security, our country has borne the consequences of terror ranging from loss of lives, damage to property and social destabilization. This is due to the country's strategic significance in the world's geopolitics and our proximity to Somalia, which has been lawless for many years.

Banditry on the other hand has metamorphosed from the outdated cultural practice it had been into a lucrative business venture squarely fitting description of an organized crime. GSU officers are therefore deployed in every area susceptible hit by these crimes, significantly highlighting our capacity to deal with them.

I recognize the complexity of these crimes and appreciate the need for partnership with every stakeholder as an effective approach towards fighting these crimes. I am a firm believer in building trust and creating lasting partnerships through collaboration with the local communities to boost information sharing. This is aimed at triggering prompt response by our officers, to the security needs and requirements of Kenyans, whenever need so arises.

In this regard I intend to mobilize resources to roll out corporate social responsibility programs to

promote cohesion between our officers and the local communities effectively solidifying joint efforts in the fight against terrorism and banditry.

The General Service Unit shall also be seeking to improve the synergy of multi agency collaboration in the fight against terrorism, banditry, smuggling among other crimes. We will be working towards improving the existing channels of collaboration with the political leadership and religious leaders in warring communities, for the sole purpose of ensuring peaceful co-existence between neighbouring communities.

As you are all aware, due to rapid technological advancement brought about by increased globalization, criminals adopt new trends each passing day. It is therefore important that we improve our capability to respond to the contemporary security threats that confront us through enhancing the human resource capacity of our officers to deal with such emerging threats. This will be achieved through continuous training and provision of modern tools of trade.

With the support that we continue to receive from the Deputy Inspector General and the Inspector General's office, I am confident that we shall manage these and other crimes effectively.

How do you intend to have a motivated workforce in the Unit?

I strongly believe in teamwork and the diversified strengths of every member where every person is of value and contributes to the growth of the team.

Albert Einstein, the brilliant physicist and Nobel laureate, gets all the credit for discovering the theory of relativity, but the truth is that he relied on conversations with friends and colleagues to refine his concept. And that's almost always the case. Behind every success in an organization is a team.

When people play off each other's skills and knowledge, they can create solutions that are practical and useful. It is my desire that officers of

all cadres feel appreciated for the difficult work that they do in the provision of public safety and security services to the communities they serve. In this regard, I am encouraging all senior officers to maintain an open door policy in order to foster collaboration, performance and unity of purpose.

I am particularly focused in promoting the general welfare of officers to enhance their morale and in effect boost their service delivery.

Since my appointment, I have been encouraging cohesive interaction amongst officers through re-introduction of games and sports competitions across all companies.

Additionally, my predecessor established a modern dairy farm at the headquarters, where the Unit is rearing super pedigree Freshian dairy cows. The farm, houses animals in a climate-controlled boma in order to protect the cows from harsh weather. Cows eat and sleep whenever and wherever they choose in a free stall barn, which is furnished with bedding material. The cows are high yielding and this is a project that can be emulated by our officers' back at home, to boost the incomes of their families.

This is one of the reasons why I have been reaching out to former commandants of the unit who performed with distinction in order to share our experiences for a better and prosperous unit. It is my commitment to have every officer proudly carry my dream and vision for the Unit by being an indispensable part of the team.

What is the personal philosophy guiding you as you lead the GSU?

I am devoted and committed in all my undertakings. I always strive to give my all and I have always been steadfast for the over 20 years that I have served in the police service. It is your half and my half that makes it full and I therefore believe in the philosophy of teamwork.

I believe that teamwork shows how determined, dedicated, and diligent a person can be and their expression to becoming something significant other than themselves. I believe that teamwork allows several people to accomplish things that one mind may not be able to do.

I have learnt a lot from my past experiences that for teamwork to work, the individuals in the team must communicate well and learn to work together. If one person does not carry throughout, the team fails to succeed. I appeal to all officers to embrace the spirit of teamwork since unity is our greatest strength and alone we can do so little while together we can do so much.

I also subscribe to the belief that professionalism, accountability, integrity, discipline and fidelity to the rule of law are indispensable attributes in a progressive society.

What legacy do you wish to leave in the GSU?

I desire to cement the General Service Unit as a reliable paramilitary unit of the National Police Service that is effective in response to contemporary security threats. I aspire to build a reliable workforce that is duty-bound and steadfast to the needs of the public with respect for human rights at the core of their service. It is my prayer that at the end of my tour of duty, I will leave an indelible mark in the hearts and minds of every officer serving in the General Service Unit.



A word of encouragement for the officers

As an officer of the law, a police officer is a servant of the people. We have an obligation to offer our services selflessly to the citizens as it is our patriotic call and we must live up to it.

Protecting and enforcing the law does not mean that you are above the law.

May professionalism and fidelity to the law be your guiding principle as you discharge your duties. Uphold the values of integrity and serve with zeal and utmost loyalty.

I sincerely register my gratitude for your dedication to serve our great nation. You are the rays that have maintained the shining image of the Unit and your commitment and devotion to duty is highly appreciated.

I urge you to remain resilient in your work as I assure you of my unwavering support as we transform GSU into a fully professional second tier response Unit that is dedicated to efficient and effective service delivery.

Lastly I believe all Kenyans are duty-bound to contribute to national security, since a safe and stable country provides the environment for all of us to thrive.



Mr Eliud Lagat inspects one of the GSU water canons at the GSU headquarters in Ruaraka PHOTO/KENNEDY MUTHUI

Mr Eliud Lagat tours the welfare dairy farm at the GSU headquarters in Ruaraka PHOTO/KENNEDY MUTHUI





The Red Berets

The Paramilitary Unit of the Kenya Police Service

By Inspector Paul Gitau

Synonymous with speedy riot control and quick deployment during operational emergencies, the General Service Unit stands out. While many talk of the GSU by its swift response to duty and the signature red beret, others are in muddle to get the hang of the GSU.

The General Service Unit is a specially trained paramilitary unit of the Kenya Police Service designed to deal with special operations and civil

disorders. It is an operational unit intended to deploy on short notice to render quick and special support required by other police formations and units. The original mandate of the Unit has since expanded owing to the emerging threats to security and has seen the Unit deploy on permanent operations. The General Service Unit was originally formed as the Armoured Mobile Unit in 1948 consisting of 50 strong men armed with Bren guns and armoured vehicles to deal with special security emergencies during the colonial period. The idea was to have



GSU special tactical operators of the Rapid Response Team in action during the 14Riverside Dusit D2 rescue operation on January 15, 2019. PHOTO/ COURTESY



Constable Ali Kombo in action evacuating civilians during the rescue operation at DusitD2 hotel on January 15, 2019. PHOTO/COURTESY

of other ranks, organized into five provincial companies. The Unit was further reorganized in 1957, and Mr. S.G Thomson became the first Commandant of the Unit who was responsible to the Commissioner of Police.

The Unit, as it is today, was efficient in operations in its early years which saw its deployment outside the country to Zanzibar in 1961 to quell a prolonged civil unrest that had claimed over 90 lives. So efficient was the GSU that it only took them two days to restore normalcy. The operational and tactical prowess of the Unit was so marvelous that other states including Somalia, Zambia, Uganda, and Swaziland sent their officers on attachment to the Unit for benchmarking and training.

Operation prowess of the Unit came into display when it was deployed in North Eastern province between 1963 and 1967 to fight a secessionist movement that was violently campaigning to have part of northern Kenya territory secede to Somalia. In what came to be known as the 'Shifta War', the GSU fought aggressively against the movement fighters who adopted guerilla tactics, an operation that earned the Unit respect as they succeeded in crashing the Shifta movement. The

a highly mobile unit for special operations which required immediate response. The Unit was renamed Emergency Company in 1952 after the colonial government declared a state of emergency to counter the aggressive freedom fighters. The Emergency Company was designated to General Service Unit in 1953 and its strength expanded to 47 senior European officers and 1,058 African officers

General Service Unit is today headed by a Commandant who is responsible to the Deputy Inspector General – Kenya Police Service for effective administration of the Unit. The Commandant is assisted by a Deputy Commandant and Staff Officers at the Unit Headquarters and Company Commanders at the company level.

GSU is organized into Sub-units and Companies with the four Sub-units (the big four) headed by Commanding Officers (CO) and twenty field companies headed by Company Commanders, referred to as Officer Commanding (OC). The four Sub-Units include; the Headquarters Sub-Unit, Recce company, Presidential Guard Sub-Unit, and National Police

College Embakasi B Campus (formerly GSU Training School). Field companies are named alphabetically from A to Y with

GSU is organized into Sub-units and Companies with the four Sub-units (the big four) headed by Commanding Officers (CO) and twenty field companies headed by Company Commanders, referred to as Officer Commanding (OC)



the omission of O, P, and U, and each is organized into company headquarters and three platoons.

Over the years, GSU has continued to improve its operational effectiveness and

capacity through training and acquisition of modern equipment in response to the evolving security challenges. GSU trains its officers at GSU-specific training college where recruits undergo a vigorous nine-month training to specially prepare them for the demanding operational mandate of the Unit.

The presence of the General Service Unit is more than often felt and seen in riot control during demonstrations as well as banditry operations. However, the Unit has been involved in other major security operations in the country. In November, 2013 two gangsters had engaged police in a shootout after escaping to a private residence along M z i m a S p r i n g s



in Lavingtone estate, Nairobi after their robbery mission was aborted by the police. GSU Recce's special tactical team who are battle-hardened and close-quarter battle experts were called into action and neutralized the two gunmen in a record seven-minute operation to bring to a close the dramatic shoot-out that had lasted for over five hours.

GSU Recce tactical team, steadily and sequentially as trained, conducted a successful rescue operation during the Garissa University attack on April 2, 2015 against Al-Shabaab gunmen who had taken hostage over 700 students.

In a well-coordinated mission, the Recce commandos with unmatched precision staged an assault and neutralized the four militants ending the siege within twelve minutes. The success of the operation saw the rescue of over 600 students and staff of the university. GSU also successfully conducted a rescue operation during the 14Riverside DusitD2 terror attack on January 15, 2019.

In what was initially thought to be a robbery targeting a bank at the Dusit complex, suspected Al-Shabaab gunmen stormed the hotel firing indiscriminately and detonating explosives. The Recce Rapid Response Team (RRT) was quickly mobilized from their base at Ruiru, and swiftly and tactically swung into action.

The operation which was led by then General Service Unit Commandant, Mr. Douglas Kanja saw the special tactical operators stage a well-guided offensive against the gunmen who holed themselves up on the sixth floor of the upscale complex.

The team tactically charged effectively neutralizing the four gunmen, bringing the twelve-hour siege to an end. The well-organized response saw the rescue of more than 700 people from

the DusitD2 complex. The General Service Unit has been tasked with the security of His Excellency the President, visiting heads of State and Governments as well as security of the state house and state lodges. The Unit has also been providing security to selected foreign airlines, foreign embassies, and diplomatic missions.



GSU officers on a patrol in Boni Forest, Lamu County on November 22, 2023 PHOTO/COURTESY



GSU officers in a single file formation while on foot patrol. PHOTO/ERIC MATUNDA





GSU & KDF Battle Shabaab

How GSU Men and KDF Soldiers are fighting Al - Shabaab in multi-agency synergy

By Inspector Paul Gitau

Sounds of heavy gunfire echoed across the Boni forest in the morning of May 18, 2021, following a fierce exchange of fire between GSU officers and Shabaab militants. The fierce gunfire rat-a-tat-tat! punctuated by screams from hyenas whose territory had rudely been invaded and birds that were taking flight for dear life reverberated in the dense forest, as our men responded to provocation from the shameless Shabaab gang.

Chocking smell of gunpowder filled the air as Milimani GSU camp platoon commander Inspector Robi Kizito led his men in the onslaught. As he shouted orders while covering fire, his battle-hardened young men whose skills in fire and movement came in handy, engaged the enemy in a shootout that lasted for about 10 minutes.

And when the guns went silent, over 7 bodies of Shabaab fighters lay sprawled on the ground in a thicket that had been cleared by the hail ammunition, following the attack. Luckily, Kizito's 10 men escaped the attack unscathed.

Inspector Kizito and his men had run into an ambush that morning, about 18 kilometres from his camp. The officers were on an escort patrol for road construction machinery along Milimani-Baure route within the larger enclave of Boni forest.

Boni forest is an extensive indigenous forest covering parts of Lamu and Garissa Counties and has been one of the operating bases for the Al-Shabaab militia. The area around Milimani GSU Camp is unique with diverse resources including a thick tree cover and thicket with plenty of water and an array of wild food, which is attractive and conducive for the militia.

The platoon commander of the camp, which is kilometers away from the porous Kenya-Somali border had began his day at first light by issuing a situational report to headquarters. His men had conducted a clearance patrol around the camp, taken breakfast and were ready for the day's main assignment, which was to hand over the road construction machinery to a patrol team from Kenya Defence Forces patrol based at the Baure forward operation base.

After a briefing with his O group, the commander briefed his men accordingly and embarked on the mounted escort patrol to the earlier agreed upon link-up point at Drum area about eighteen kilometers from his camp. He was to hand over the machinery to the KDF patrol team. On arrival, the patrol noticed that the KDF patrol team was not in

their position as per the coordinating instructions of the operation. Immediately, IP Kizito raised the KDF patrol team via the radio but he could not reach them. From his intuition, he realized that all was not well.

The patrol commander then ordered his men to mount and continue with the patrol, with the hope that they would meet on the way or better still deliver the machinery at KDF Baure FOB. "I put my men on high alert and told them to be ready for any offensive that we might encounter along the way," said IP Kizito. He knew all was not well since their KDF counterparts were known to be steadfast in conforming to operation orders. At this point, the anticipation levels of the patrol rose higher owing to the volatile route and suspicion arising from the sudden change of the patrol orders.

His fears were confirmed when a few kilometers from the link-up point, they came under heavy enemy attack from Al-Shabaab militia. Unknown to the patrol, the militia had ambushed the KDF patrol team with a command-instigated Improvised Explosive Device (I.E.D) and reinforced the attack with heavy gunfire.



IP Robi Kizito briefing his patrol team before embarking on a dismounted patrol at GSU Pandanguo Forward Operation Base. PHOTO/ERIC MATUNDA



KDF officers on patrol within our borders
Photo Courtesy

Immediately, the Commander ordered his men to dismount and with precision countered the assailants in a fierce gunfight, killing 7 of them on the spot while others fled from the scene with life threatening injuries.

He then raised his command for reinforcement as his men continued to offer first aid to injured soldiers and conduct clearance patrol around the area of ambush awaiting evacuation. Military reinforcement arrived moments later and evacuated the injured soldiers to KDF Baure Camp for treatment.

It was the call of duty that drove Inspector Kizito to change his patrol orders to meet with the KDF patrol team along the way, a move that risked the lives of his officers, but a much greater move that saved the

lives of the KDF soldiers who were under enemy attack. Kizito's battle leadership and command skills were again put to test on June 18, 2023 during a dominance patrol when he had just reported to his new operating base at Pandanguo GSU Camp from the changeover exercise.

With his men, as an experienced fighter, he had embarked on familiarization patrols to dominate the ground and the routes in his area of operation. He briefed his patrol team and went out

on a dominance dismounted patrol along the Pandanguo-Witu main supply route. On reaching Mlima Faru, about 8km from his camp, the patrol came under heavy attack from Al-Shabaab militia.

Their patrol vehicle, a Mine Resistant and Ambush Protected vehicle, was blown out by a remote-controlled IED and landed in a ditch created by the blast, before stalling. The militia then reinforced the attack with heavy gunfire on the patrol team amidst the shock in such a situation.

In a quick appreciation of the prevailing situation, he ordered his men into battle and engage the attackers as he called for reinforcement from KDF Witu Camp who responded effectively. The joint teams fiercely managed to repulse the attackers numbering about 50 men who escaped deeper into the forest. They demonstrated great team spirit and composure in handling the situation, which would have been catastrophic.



A display of RPG launcher, warhead, boosters and IED components recovered by IP Kizito at Millmani GSU Camp on June 12, 2022.
PHOTO/ERIC MATUNDA

“For a moment, everything went silent as I admired the courage and the resilience that the team had exhibited. We exhibited a great sense of determination in fighting the enemy and there couldn’t have been a much better way of demonstrating the multi agency team spirit,” said a determined Kizito.

Inspector Kizito’s experience in countering the Shabaab Militia within the Boni enclave is a great lesson for other commanders. On the dawn of July 14 2022, Milimani GSU Camp came under heavy attack. Together with Inspector Samuel Muigai, they led their men into a swift defense of their camp from the determined attackers who suffered fatalities and injuries. After clearing the area around the camp, they recovered one rocket propelled grenade launcher, two RPG warheads and four boosters among other weapons.

His experiences from as many gunfight encounters speak of a commander with great quality of composure, able to make quick and accurate appreciation in immensely adrenaline-rushing situations. It is only insightful, excellent command and leadership as demonstrated by IP Kizito that can make such battles a success.

“I strongly believe that discipline is a key element if any unit is going to achieve any battle success, especially in volatile areas such as this one. Soldiers need to be responsive to orders and instinctively battle-ready”, notes Inspector Kizito.

His experiences in various gunfight encounters speak of a commander with great quality of composure, able to make quick and accurate appreciation in immensely adrenaline-rushing situations. It is only insightful, excellent command and leadership as demonstrated by IP Kizito that can make such battles a success.

As a result of his bravery and unmatched command during the encounter with Al-Shabaab on May 18 2021, he was awarded the Manu Chandaria Bravely Award.

“The encounter is a memorable one as it not only illustrates the commitment of our officers in this volatile and dangerous forest but also demonstrates the cooperation and determination of the multi agency security teams in Boni, while countering terrorism and violent extremism,” noted Inspector Kizito after receiving the award.



The DCI Director Mr Mohammed Amin awards the Manu Chandaria Bravely Award Certificate of Appreciation to IP Robi Kizito on March 22, 2023 PHOTO/ COURTESY



GENERAL SERVICE UNIT

CONSERVATION



Going Green

GSU at the Forefront in Environment Conservation

By Inspector Paul Gitau

The best time to plant a tree was ten years ago. The other best time is today, so the saying goes.

From removing carbon dioxide from the air, regulating the climate, preventing soil erosion, providing food and medicine as well as contributing to the economy, the benefits of trees cannot be exhausted. With the clarion call by His Excellency Dr. William Ruto to mitigate against the harsh effects of climate change, the General Service Unit has embarked on a sustained tree planting campaign to complement the efforts of the government to achieve thirty percent of tree and forest cover in our country. The environmental-related problems have stemmed from irresponsible behavior such



The CS for Environment Hon. Soipan Tuya (left) and Ushiriki Wema Patron Madam Tessie Mudavadi during a tree planting event at Embakasi B Campus on July 29, 2023 PHOTO/ EZEKIEL MUTHOKA

as deforestation, logging, and charcoal burning among others leading to unnecessary human suffering due to drought and floods. The endeavor to protect the environment starts with appreciating its importance. It is within this realization to repair the damage and maintain it for future generations that the General Service Unit has taken up the tree planting initiative as a duty.

Following the directive of the President to plant ten thousand trees at National Police College Embakasi B Campus during the recruits passing out parade on January 12, 2023, the campus has partnered with other key institutions in this effort. They include Equity Bank, KCB Bank, Hand in Hand, Ushiriki Wema, and Kenya Forest Service among other organizations and important personalities to support the government's goal of planting fifteen billion trees by 2032.

Taking environment restoration efforts as a duty, the Unit partnered with Ushiriki Wema to plant two thousand seedlings at Embakasi B Campus in a colorful event held on July 29, 2023 graced by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Hon. Soipan Tuya and Ushiriki Wema patron, Mrs. Tessie Mudavadi

raising the number of the seedlings planted in the campus to over eight thousand five hundred within the last eight months. Speaking at the event, Hon. Soipan Tuya noted that the ministry has identified the National Police Service as a critical partner in propagating seedlings and is particularly upbeat being in partnership with the General Service Unit.

She noted that planting trees will benefit the country in taming the devastating effects of climate change; increase our water flows as well as provide the country with ecosystem services. While still at it, she expressed her wish to work with the Unit in creating awareness of the importance of planting trees.

Ushiriki Wema patron, Mrs. Tessie Mudavadi, observed that the involvement of the police in environment conservation initiatives would help to create unity and harness collaboration between the community and security agents. The patron further expressed her pride to partner with the General Service Unit due to their discipline and sense of duty, in the realization that the Unit bears a spirit of togetherness and exemplifies the commitment towards a shared vision.



GSU officers participate in tree planting during tree planting drive at Recce Company, Ruiru on October 24, 2023. PHOTO/ WYCLIFFE MORACHA

While appreciating the effort of Ushiriki Wema and the Ministry of Environment, the Commandant General Service Unit Mr. Eliud Lagat noted that the tree planting initiative will go a long way in mitigating climate change in the country and expressed his commitment to drive environment restoration efforts. Climate change as observed by the commandant has a direct correlation to security.

The General Service Unit has faced challenges brought about by climate change where private farms and ranches are invaded by pastoralists in search of pasture and such cases escalate into serious security issues causing great danger to the country. Environmental degradation also brings conflict between people and animals due to competition for limited resources such as water and food.

The Unit supports environmental conservation efforts to bring a solution to the security challenges brought about by environmental degradation and is therefore taking pride in being at the forefront of a well-intentioned initiative that promotes safety in society.

The Unit appreciates that environmental conservation is one of the easiest ways to bring awareness to GSU officers and has made it mandatory to plant trees during all official functions. Being at the forefront of environmental restoration, the Unit has engaged its officers stationed all over the country to support efforts

put in place by the Ministry of Environment to spearhead tree planting and encourages them to plant trees at their homes and nurture them to growth for the benefit of future generations.

Efforts towards the realization of 15 billion tree cover by 2030, have become a dutiful task for the General Service Unit. In carrying on with the momentum to plant trees in all camps, the GSU took the initiative to Recce Company in Ruiru on October 24 2023, where 25,000 seedlings were planted in a colourful event that was again graced by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment Hon Soipan Tuya.

The Recce commandos have already planted 60,000 trees in a bid to play their role in combating climate change. While speaking at the GSU Recce camp, the CS who was accompanied by the Permanent Secretary for Environment Hon Elijah Mugambi emphasized her commitment to



GSU officers participate in tree planting exercise at Embakasi B Campus. PHOTO/ WYCLIFFE MORACHA



partner with the General Service Unit in achieving the ambitious resolve of the president to achieve 30% tree cover by 2032. She expressed her will to catalyze the Kenya Forest Service to produce 1.5 billion seedlings annually as part of a tree-planting stimulus plan to help farmers across the country access the seedlings in time.

The Cabinet Secretary disclosed her goal plan to plant over 500 million trees during the short rains and expressed her intention of making GSU camps a hub of tree seedlings to help in tree-planting initiatives. While recognizing the GSU as a worthy partner in her effort to green the country, the CS delightfully promised to join the GSU in their tree planting drives and committed to

support the commandant as he moves out to plant more trees in GSU camps across the country. The Commandant in his address undertook to plant an additional 30,000 seedlings to culminate the effort to 110,000 trees in Recce camp, Ruiru. Mr Lagat who has since made environmental conservation a social responsibility for the Unit expressed his next move to lead a tree planting drive at GSU camps in Tot in Elgeyo-Marakwet, Chepchoina in Transzoia and Molo GSU Camp in Nakuru County.

Robust tree planting exercises have been undertaken in all GSU companies across the country, especially the Nairobi-based commands; tree planting efforts have been concerted at GSU Headquarters, GSU Recce Camp, Ruiru, and NPC Embakasi B Campus where over 100,000 seedlings have been planted. General Service Unit appreciates the support of all partners and welcomes others willing to work with the Unit in complementing the government's determination towards a preserved environment.



The Cabinet Secretary for Environment Hon. Soipan Tuyu is assisted to plant a tree by a young girl during tree planting drive at Recce Company, Ruiru on October 24, 2023. PHOTO/ EZEKIEL MUTHOKA



PICTORIAL



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1 The DIG - KPS Mr Douglas Kanja plants a tree at GSU Headquarters during the - Change of Command - handing over ceremony on April 17 2023 PHOTO/ EZEKIEL MUTHOKA

4 Mrs. Tessie Mudavadi is assisted by the Deputy GSU Commandant Mr Bashane Omar and other officers in planting a tree during the National tree planting day at Embakasi B Campus on November 13, 2023 PHOTO/ WYCLIFFE MORACHA

2 The Cabinet Secretary for Environment Hon. Soipan Tuya waters a tree during a tree planting drive at Recce Company, Ruiru on October 24, 2023. PHOTO/ EZEKIEL MUTHOKA

5 The Officer Commanding Y - company Mr Daniel Karmushu waters a tree at Nadapal GSU Camp during the National tree planting day on November 13 2023 PHOTO/ ABDI YUSSUF

3 GSU Commandant Mr. Eliud Lagat waters a tree during the - Change of Command - handing over ceremony on April 17 2023 PHOTO/ EZEKIEL MUTHOKA



5



Retired But Not Tired

The inspiring story of a celebrated GSU commandant who brought about change in a hitherto closed institution and is now happily enjoying his retirement

By Chief Inspectors Mike Mugo and Francis Kafue

This is the motivating story of a remarkable man who is credited with the rebirth of the General Service Unit, from a near colonial outfit to the modern paramilitary unit that the GSU is today. The mention of his name evokes awe in the minds of officers both serving and retired, for the positive contributions that he made during his tour of duty as the 10th Commandant of the Unit.

Samson Cheramboss, who served for 3 years from 1999 to 2002, is the man credited with creating the foundation upon which progressive reforms that are being enjoyed by officers in the Unit up to date was built. Among the key reforms introduced by Mr

Cheramboss, was the enlistment of female police officers in the Unit that was formerly a reserve for men since its establishment in 1948. This was a critical milestone for the Unit at a time when the country was grappling with issues of gender inclusivity.

Mr Cheramboss who until his appointment was the head of the Presidential Guard also made the decision that increased the number of off days that an officer would apply for, from a paltry 3 days to 7 days. Officers from across the Unit celebrated this move as it had become practically impossible for officers in far-flung camps to attend to private affairs that required their immediate attention, including family emergencies.





Retired Commandant Mr Samson Cheramboss points at a framed photo taken in his days as GSU commandant - during the interview at his home PHOTO/VINCENT KIPKEMOI

His tenure as Commandant is therefore remembered as one of the most progressive in the history of the GSU, prompting the editorial team to feature him in this inaugural edition.

Born in 1947 in the rolling hills of Nandi County, Samson Cheramboss was born to a family of peasant farmers and grew up in abject poverty. His parents worked as casual labourers in neighbouring white settler farms. The income they earned was meager and could not sustain the needs of the family prompting his parents to venture into brewing of local alcoholic brews to sustain the needs of the family.

Luckily for him, his elder brother stepped in to give him the much-needed education. After completion, he was invited to join Kabete Technical Training College, an opportunity which he turned down and opted to work as an untrained teacher as he waited, hopefully, for better prospects. Later on, in active employment, he sat for his Kenya Junior Secondary Examination (KJSE). It was while still working as an untrained teacher that he showed up at a police recruitment exercise in his home area

and was lucky to get recruited as a police officer in 1968 in Kapsabet, marking the beginning of his long, colourful and illustrious career. The former top cop retired at the mandatory 55 years in 2003 at the rank of Senior Deputy Commissioner I of police. He had served in the Kenya Police for 35 years.

In his illustrious career, he served as GSU commandant, head of Presidential Escort Unit, Deputy Director in charge of security at the Kenya Wildlife Service, Provincial Police Officer, OCPD, OCS, head of investigations among others.

Outside the police service, he has served as the chairman of Kenya Airports Authority, Director Ewaso Nyiro Development Authority, council member of Moi University, and chairman of various Anglican sponsored schools in Nandi.

Twenty years after retirement, Mr Cherambos is as active as he was while still in the service. He is a Lay Canon at the Anglican Church and the patron of St Andrews Tendwo ACK Church, which he founded. The former commandant also spearheaded the



Retired Commandant Mr Samson Cheramboss fields questions posed by Chief Inspector Francis Kafue and Chief Inspector Kibet Yegon during the interview at his home
PHOTO/VINCENT KIPKEMOI

establishment of Kapkolei Girls High School, now a leading extra-county school in Nandi. He engages in various farming activities that include a 14-acre tea farm at his rural home, cane farming and dairy rearing at his farm in Soy in Uasin-Gishu among other activities. The editorial team caught up with the retired commandant at his Nandi home and he gave us a detailed interview.

Kindly tell us about your career life

Upon recruitment, I joined the Kenya Police College, Kiganjo, where I completed my basic recruits training and later got deployed to begin my career. After four years of discharging my duties as a police constable, I was posted to the then Criminal Investigations Department (CID). I did my inspectorate exams, which I passed and I was selected to attend the promotional board interview and was successful.

I went back to Kiganjo for the Subordinate Officers to Inspector (SOIP) course with other sixteen officers and got promoted to the rank of inspector of police. After three years, I was promoted to the rank of Chief Inspector of Police and posted to Kisii police station and thereafter to Kabete Police

Station as the officer in-charge Police station (OCS).

After serving at various stations for some time, I was transferred back to Nyanza Province where I was later promoted to the rank of Superintendent of Police.

The then Commissioner of Police found it fit that I undergo paramilitary training with GSU and I was posted there. I trained together with Recce constables, who had been selected, immediately after the GSU pass out.

I was later posted to the Presidential Guard Section as the officer in charge.

During my tenure as the Officer Commanding the Presidential Section, I did a research and prepared a strategic plan on the need for the Presidential Guard Section to be independent with the help of Mr. Mwivanda, who was then my office assistant.

I presented it to the Commandant, Mr. Mbijiwe, who after studying it, allowed the formation of the Presidential Guard Sub-Unit, to handle the security of His Excellency the President, State Houses, and Lodges. The sub-unit selected and trained its personnel from the existing companies and we used a shooting range at Ngong for our training.

I was later promoted to the rank of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) and posted to Meru as the Officer Commanding Police Division (OCPD), a transfer that was receded and redirected to Nyanza Province as the Staff Officer Operations. After a while, I was appointed Traffic Police Commandant for four months then was posted back to Nyanza as the Provincial Police Officer.

From there on, I was seconded to Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) as the Deputy Director of Security. During my tenure at KWS, we started Manyani KWS Training grounds and I advocated for KWS personnel to be armed to deal with the poaching menace.

Seven months later, I was appointed as the Presidential Escort Commander and I was promoted to the rank of Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP). It was from here that I was transferred to GSU as the Commandant where I served until my retirement in the year 2002.

What was the driving force towards the many positive changes you introduced at the Unit?

The changes that I helped bring about in the Unit were made possible through the staff officers and every other officer including the lowest cadre. During my time in the Unit, we used to receive very little operational intelligence that would help our officers succeed.

I therefore saw the need for the Unit to have its intelligence wing. This gave birth to the Combat Intelligence Section (CIS) that turned out to be a formidable intelligence section.

The then National Security Intelligence Service and one of our American partners trained officers posted at CIS. The section was equipped with modern intelligence equipment by our worthy partners. I also introduced changes at the Recce Company by moving officers from the barracks to more decent houses. It was also during my time that we were started training our special teams

overseas. As the commandant, I visited all GSU camps in the country. This was to show solidarity with our officers on the ground and boost their morale. It resonated well with the Unit as it improved communication and made officers feel proud to be part of the Unit.

I also saw it prudent that GSU gets its distinct tunic ceremonial dress, peak cap, and sam browne that is brown in colour.

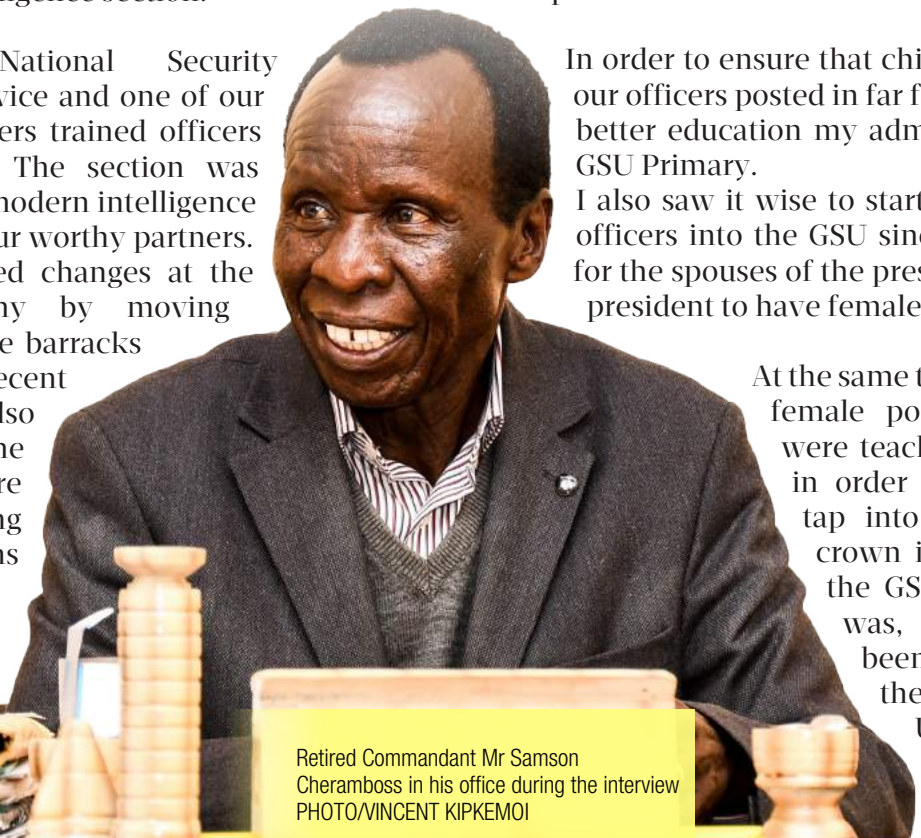
Also, officers based at the Unit would get three days off duty, which I thought was not enough, say for example, if an officer deployed in Lokichogio wanted to attend to family issues in Mpeketoni-Lamu County, that would have been impossible. I therefore directed that all officers be granted seven (7) days off-duty, since there was no regulation barring the commandant from doing so.

I also remember having initiated the payment of disturbance allowance for the annual changeover exercise. I also proposed the payment of tentage and family separation allowances to GSU officers since they could not live with their families in camps.

In order to ensure that children belonging to our officers posted in far flung areas enjoyed better education my administration started GSU Primary.

I also saw it wise to start recruiting female officers into the GSU since there was need for the spouses of the president and the vice president to have female bodyguards.

At the same time, we employed female police officers who were teachers by profession in order for our school to tap into their skills. To crown it all, I introduced the GSU flag. My dream was, and has always been the autonomy of the General Service Unit. That is



Retired Commandant Mr Samson Cheramboss in his office during the interview
PHOTO/VINCENT KIPKEMOI

why during my time I fought hard to ensure that the Unit was at par with the Administration Police Service (APS) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) with the commandants holding the same rank of Senior Deputy Commissioner of Police I (S/DCP I).

I undertook my duties seriously and prioritized work whenever the need arose. I never allowed my job and matters of faith to clash. This way, I was able to be at peace with God as I worked. Remember that service to humanity is service to God.

We have known you as one of the most outstanding Commandants GSU has ever had. Any comment about that?

Cheramboss the Commandant was seen as vibrant and outstanding. But what most people did not know is that my team got full support from all officers across all ranks and most of the accomplishments were suggestions from my staff officers and other officers within the Unit. I received the accolades, but officers under direct supervision from the Commandant's office performed the actual work.

You are known for your strong Christian faith (Anglican). How did you manage to balance your faith and career life?

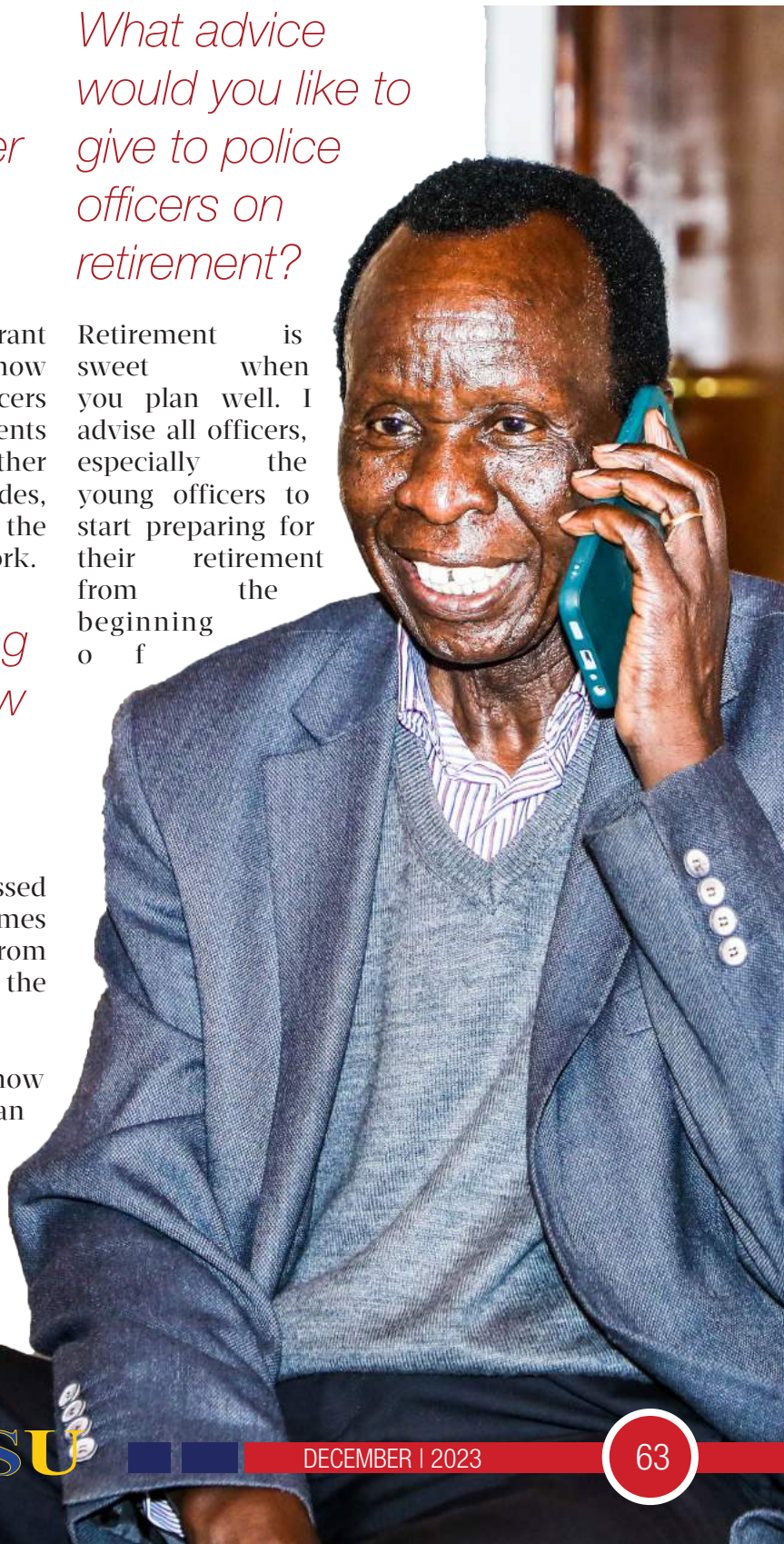
I am indeed a staunch Christian and I never missed a Sunday service. I used to worship at St James ACK Church Buruburu each Sunday morning from 9:30am to 11:30am. In 1978, I was confirmed in the Anglican Church.

I have held on to my faith all along, and am now entrusted with several positions in the Anglican Diocese of Nandi.

I urge officers to embrace spirituality, as it is God who has sustained and kept us up to where we are right now. That notwithstanding,

What advice would you like to give to police officers on retirement?

Retirement is sweet when you plan well. I advise all officers, especially the young officers to start preparing for their retirement from the beginning of f



their careers. People, especially close family members will shun you if you retire without any investment or source of income.

They consider you a burden and this will only lead to your early demise. But if you have investments, they will want to be associated with you.

I am retired, but I have a close relationship with my children since I am not a burden to them. In addition, I advise officers not to have loans by the time they retire and have good friends to work with to ease loneliness. Also, have something to do during your retirement. This will keep you active and you won't age very fast. I am now prioritising supporting the needy in the society. That is how I spend my little pension and income from my three-posho mills.

How did you manage to balance your finances?

During my time in the service, we earned very little but I made sure I used it prudently. With the help of my elder brother, I acquired my first piece of land when I was an Inspector of Police and started building my first permanent house when I was the Provincial Police Officer (PPO) in Nyanza.

I invested enough during my time in the service, and I am now enjoying the fruits of my labour. Nowadays, I see officers making bad decisions in financial management. They take their first loans and buy vehicles that depreciate instead of land or other investments that can help them. Such imprudent decisions will only lead to suffering in the future.

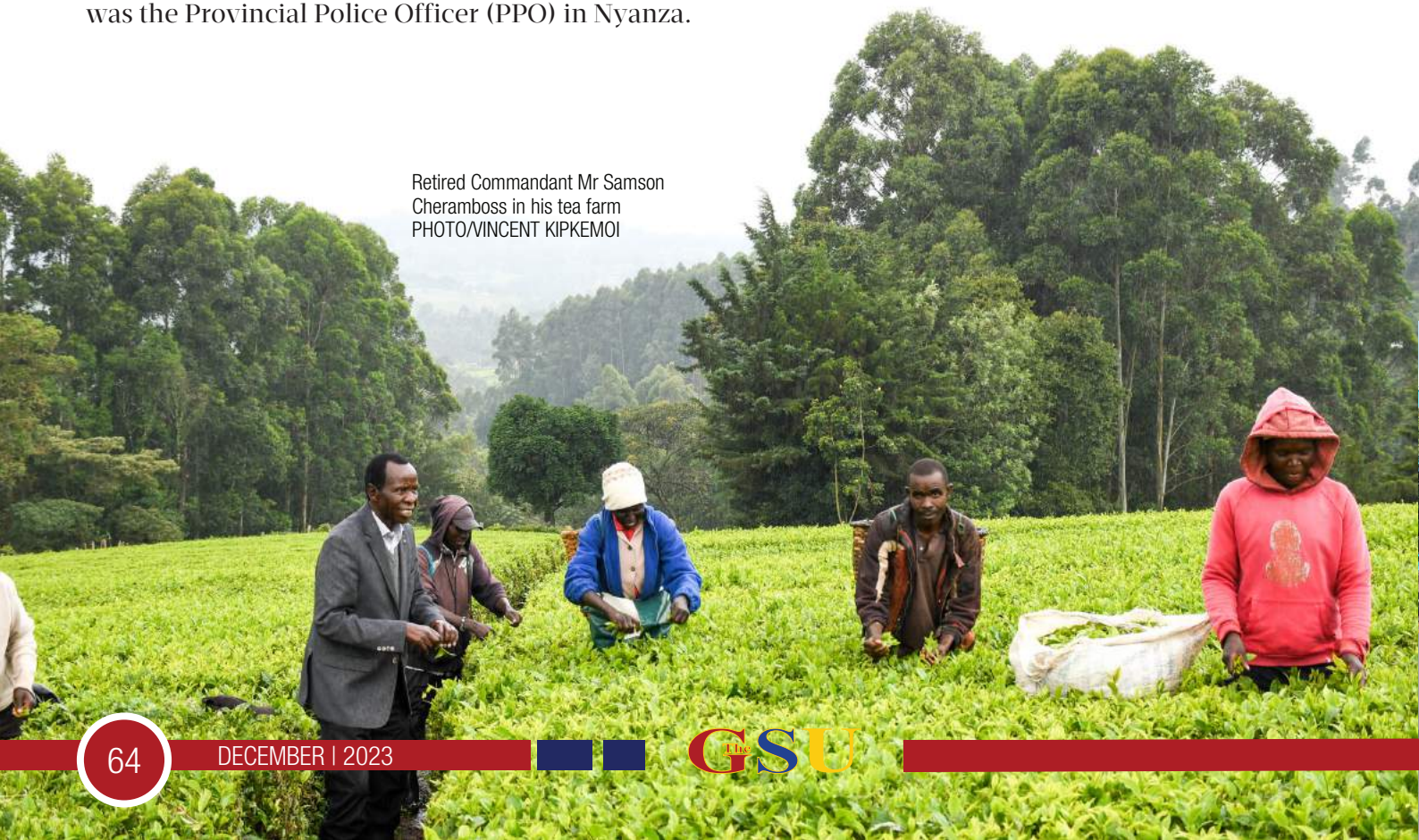
Your parting shot

The General Service Unit has improved its capacity than it was a few years ago. I appreciate the good leadership of the Commandants who came after me and maintained the image of the Unit untainted. The rigorous involvement of the Unit in the fight against terrorism which is presently the most serious threat to security worldwide is a testament to the Unit's enhanced operational capacity.

I also wish to thank the Commandant for coming up with this noble idea of visiting former commandants as it shows his appreciation for the commanders before him.

"When I look back at the sacrifices I made and the selfless work I did for my country, I am happy and satisfied"

Retired Commandant Mr Samson Cheramboss in his tea farm
PHOTO/VINCENT KIPKEMOI





PICTORIAL

GENERAL SERVICE UNIT



1 The CS Interior Prof Kithure Kindiki inspects a quarter guard during the launch of Akwichatis GSU Camp, Tiaty Constituency PHOTO/COURTESY

2 GSU choir entertaining guests during Tree Planting drive at Recce Company, Ruiru on October 24, 2023 PHOTO/ VINCENT KIPKEMOI

3 Sgt. Cyrus Ololi waters a tree at Nadapal GSU Camp during the National tree planting day on November 13 2023 PHOTO/ ABDI YUSSUF

4 GSU band leads the procession during the annual joint service thanksgiving prayers at the Holy Family Basilica on November 3, 2023 PHOTO/ EDWIN KIPKORIR



Police Hold Joint Thanksgiving Mass

Mr Lagat Leads GSU in Annual Prayers

By Chief Inspector Mike Mugo

The Principal Secretary, State Department for Correctional Services Salome Beacco has acknowledged members of the country's 7 disciplined services for their sacrifices and dedication to duty while offering their services to their fellow countrymen.

In a thanksgiving mass for uniformed disciplined services celebrated at the Holy Family Basilica in Nairobi on November 4, 2023, the Principal Secretary who was the chief guest commended the officers for discharging their duties professionally and guided by the rule of law, adding that they were Godly acts of selflessness and patriotism. Ms Beacco, who acknowledged the challenges faced by police officers in the execution of their duties, encouraged the men and women from across the 7

services not to relent but continue performing their duties with commitment, honesty and integrity. "I thank you all police officers for the services that you render to our people and for your resilience despite the difficult circumstances that you sometimes find yourselves in." said the Principal Secretary.

The prayer day is an annual event organized by chaplaincy from the disciplined services comprising the Kenya Police, Directorate of Criminal Investigations, Kenya Prison, Administration Police, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service and the National Youth Service. Besides the Holy Mass that is conducted to thank God for His blessings during the year as well as invoke His blessings in the coming days, officers take the



The IG Mr Japhet Koome and the DIG Mr. Douglas Kanja leads the offering procession at the Holy Family Basilica PHOTO/ EDWIN KIPKORIR

initiative to remember the less privileged in the society by conducting joint social responsibility programs which include visiting children’s homes with donations contributed by officers from across the country. In his homily, the main celebrant of the mass His Grace Most Reverend Philip Anyolo, who is the Archbishop of Nairobi metropolitan, noted that the celebration was special for members of the disciplined services and their families as it was the only time of the year that the services converged as a team, to give thanks to God.

The Archbishop reminded the officers that theirs was a sacred duty to protect the lives and property of Kenyans and urged them to always seek God’s guidance while discharging their duties. “I beseech you officers to always seek God’s favour and blessings as you serve humanity since policing is a calling to serve,” he said.

The Archbishop also blessed the tools of trade used by officers in the daily execution of their duties in their respective services, so that they are not misused to harm Kenyans but become tools of peace. The General Service Unit commandant Mr Eliud Lagat, led GSU in celebrating the Holy Mass.



The PS State Department for Correctional Services Salome Beacco addresses the congregation at the Holy Family Basilica PHOTO/ EDWIN KIPKORIR

Mr Lagat who is a staunch Catholic was among top security chiefs who had gathered at the Holy Family Basilica, to lead their respective Services in giving thanks to God for his love and protection for the past year.

Mr Lagat, had spearheaded the pastoral program across the whole country for two years, while he was the Director of Reforms at the Investigative agency. During the Service, the Directorate of Criminal Investigations handed over the mantle of spearheading the pastoral programme to the Kenya Wildlife Service. Earlier in his remarks

during one of the Services, Mr Lagat had observed that the programme had been very instrumental in the spiritual nourishment of police officers, amidst the challenges that they face as they offer public safety and security services to Kenyans.

In a symbolic ceremony to mark the changeover, the DCI flag was handed back to the Directorate as the KWS flag was waved to the congregants facing the altar, amid pomp and razzmatazz from the police bands. The service was a culmination of several other thanksgiving services held across various counties that had accorded officers an opportunity to give thanks and reflect on God's blessings for the past year. This is in line with a pastoral programme developed between the disciplined services and the leadership of the Catholic Church.

The programme, which has been ongoing for the past 30 years, has been very instrumental in the spiritual nourishment of our officers amidst the challenges that they face as they offer public safety and security services to Kenyans. The mass whose theme was "Do not fear for I am with you" inspired by Isaiah 41:10, is celebrated by members of the disciplined services and their families every year, to thank God for his blessings.

The disciplined services represented during the Mass included the Kenya Police Service, Administration Police Service, the Directorate of Criminal Investigations, Kenya Prisons Service, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service and the National Youth Service.



His Grace Most Reverend Philip Anyolo, the Archbishop of Nairobi metropolitan presides over the mass. Bottom photo - Members of the Disciplined services follow proceedings during the Mass at the Holy Family Basilica PHOTO/ EDWIN KIPKORIR





GSU Shines Abroad

Tactical Team Flies Kenya’s Flag High in Dubai Contest

By Inspector Stephen Mugendi, HSC

The General Service Unit - Rapid Response Team (GSU - RRT) from the Kenya Police Service (KPS), made an impressive debut at the 2023 UAE SWAT Challenge held in Dubai. Ten highly skilled operators, their coach, and leaders, embarked on a five-day challenge from February 16 – 26, 2023.

Their exceptional performance not only secured them first place among Kenyan teams but also earned them second place among African teams and a commendable 16th place globally.

The Challenge which took place at Al Rowaiyah Police Training Centre, is an annual gathering that unites Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams from around the world in a challenge of five types of tests; tactical, assault, officer rescues, tower events, and obstacle courses. The challenge evaluates the tactical sharpness, mental clarity, and physical endurance of the teams. It has been designed to promote the exchange of expertise and the development of SWAT capabilities.

Led by a shared purpose, the teams converge in Dubai to showcase their skills to safeguard global communities and foster prosperity for a safer future. The challenge also acts as a centre for learning and growth, forging new friendships as well as exchanging new tactics and ideas.

The GSU-RRT, famously known as “Recce commandos” is a detachment of Recce company based at Ruiru, comprising of highly skilled and trained officers in marksmanship and combat precision. The commandos are picked from the finest of the fine officers

right after the initial



recruits training after which they undergo enhanced tactical training locally and overseas. The team has made a name for executing missions with precision including the Garissa University attack, the Westgate attack, Dusit-D2 Complex hotel attack rescue missions among others.

The team owes its outstanding performance to the meticulous and comprehensive preparatory training led by their team coach IP Stephen M. Amos, HSC, which was further bolstered by the unwavering support and guidance of key figures in the Kenyan Police Service: The Inspector General, the Deputy Inspector General (DIG), the Commandant of GSU, and the entire GSU Recce company leadership and its instructors.

Participating alongside two other Kenyan teams, namely the Special Operations Unit (SOU) and the Special Operations Group (SOG), representing the Administration Police Service (APS), the GSU-RRT team showcased their

exceptional and commendable capabilities throughout the challenge despite this being their inaugural participation. Indeed, it is an achievement that stands out as a testament to the team's dedication, training, and professionalism. The stellar performance has ignited the team's ambition

Their exceptional performance not only secured them first place among Kenyan teams but also earned them second place among African teams and a commendable 16th place globally.



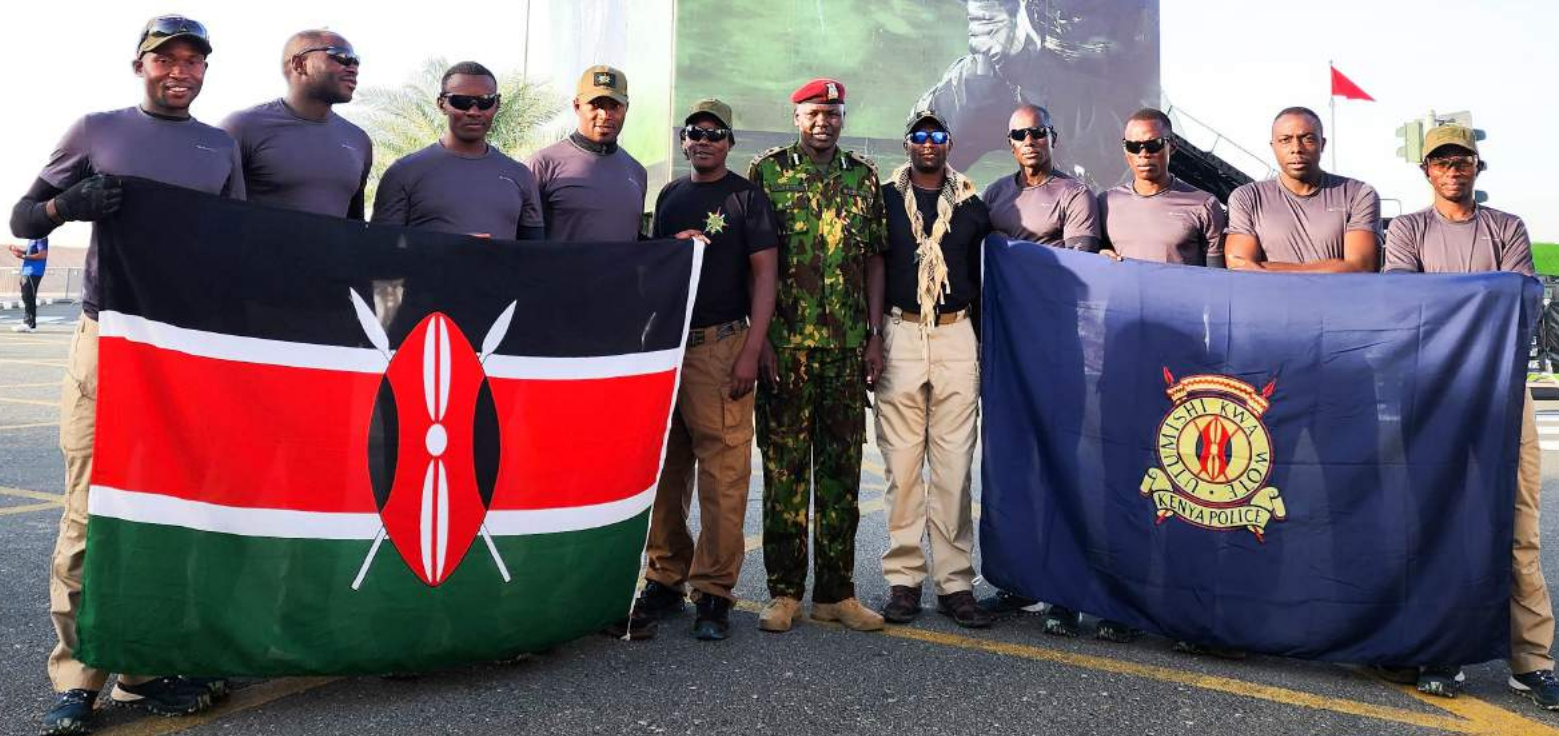
to compete on a global scale. With ample training time in the coming years, the team aspires to challenge and surpass globally renowned teams, including the likes of Russia, Dubai Police, South Africa, and others. This ambition reflects their commitment to continuous improvement and their unwavering pursuit of excellence.

The participation provided the GSU-RRT team with invaluable experience and skills as they acquired crucial knowledge, honed their existing skills, and gained practical experience that will enable them to deliver better results in future challenges.

The exposure not only enhanced their professional development but also positioned them as ambassadors of the Kenya Police Service, fostering a culture of excellence within their ranks. The resounding success showcases the capabilities and commitment of the Kenya Police Service in maintaining law and order.

Through their exceptional performance, the team has set a new benchmark for Kenya law enforcement agencies and has laid the foundation for future participation at an international level. With their sights set on competing against esteemed global teams, the GSU-RRT team is poised to continue representing Kenya with unwavering dedication, professionalism, and excellence.





The GSU - RRT tactical operators pose for a photo during the 2023 UAE Dubai SWAT Challenge. At the centre is the Recce D/Commanding Officer Mr Jack Ekakoro PHOTO/VINCENT KIPKEMOI



GENERAL SERVICE UNIT

VIP PROTECTION

VIP Protection

The Role of GSU in VIP Protection

By Constable Victor Ongeri

In a challenging and eruptive world today, the need for protective security is essential for many high-ranking individuals in society. These high-profile persons are exposed to a myriad of threats ranging from bodily harm, stalking, privacy intrusion, harassment, and many more. The provision of such security therefore requires experience and expertise from the individual security officer.

The General Service Unit has for many years provided VIP protection to high-profile individuals including the president, political leaders, business persons, and members of foreign diplomatic missions among others. VIP protection is a demanding responsibility that requires a set of skills critical to every VIP

The GSU VIP protection officers are highly trained and are instilled with skills that enable them to spot potential threats before they happen



A GSU officer providing close protection to H.E. President William Ruto and H.E. Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua. PHOTO/COURTESY

protection officer. The GSU VIP protection officers are highly trained and are instilled with skills that enable them to spot potential threats before they happen. They are also skilled in detailed planning to achieve coordinated security of the dignitary. The excellence of the GSU in VIP protection has been

evident in the provision of security to respectable world leaders.

The Unit provided close protection to the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama in July, 2015 during his state visit to Kenya. The Unit was also instrumental in the security of Pope Francis' state and pastoral visit to Kenya in November, 2015 further showing the brilliance of the Unit in VIP protection. With their unmatched tactical skills in close protection, the Unit offers security to the Head of State. These hawk-eyed officers

conduct reconnaissance patrols to ensure the safety of the Head of State and his entourage.

They are keen to detail with an excellent trait of discretion that enables them to have good judgment and tact essential for the security of the president. In addition, the officers provide security to state houses and lodges including his private residences.

The highly perceptive officers have cut a niche in VIP protection as their services are sought by embassies and high commission offices within the country. They ensure the safety of the diplomatic missions which enhance good relations between Kenya and other countries, and builds trust thus promoting effective diplomacy.

The Unit boasts of the capacity and trust it has built over time in providing protection services with diligence and dedication.



GSU officers providing security to the Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua while addressing members of the public. PHOTO/COURTESY





Police Constable Leonard Ngari presents his electric motor cycle to H.E. President William Ruto during the launch of Talanta Hela at State House, Nairobi on June 9, 2023. PHOTO/COURTESY

Creativity

How GSU Technician Based at State House - Control Room Assembled an Automobile in The Middle of COVID Pandemic

By Inspector Paul Gitau

When the deadly Corona Virus (COVID-19) struck in 2020, the government introduced lockdown as a cautionary measure and directed staff and employees to work from home. Leonard Ngari, a GSU officer took the directive literally and made use of his spare time to work on his errands. Ngari, is a polite, soft-spoken officer stationed at State House, Nairobi, where he works in the control room as a security officer and technician of control room equipment and systems.

Having some free time to spare due to reduced activities at work, Ngari came up with the idea of inventing a pollution-free means of mobility. He shared his idea with his close friends but many dismissed it as nothing but just a far-fetched pipe dream. Who would, anyway, buy that idea from an ordinary GSU officer? But alas! Nothing would kill his resolve.

On his own, he designed a sketch of the car he intended to make including the measurements. Determined and unbowed on his course, Ngari started sourcing the materials necessary to actualize his dream.

With a clear understanding of the cost implications of his project, he knew he had to approach his course with simplicity by assembling locally available materials. “I started by sourcing locally available materials by collecting used laptop batteries to make a lithium battery. I further bought two recycled complete electric hubs after

which I bought a control unit and two 12-inch wheels. I also sourced for bodybuilding materials which included a square tube and angle line mile steel,” says Ngari.

After having the guiding sketch that was his master plan and the materials ready, ‘the engineer’ as he has come to be known lately, started assembling and fabricating the vehicle in February 2021. Clad in welding attire, Ngari would get into his new self-assigned duty armed with his welding tools early in the morning or late in the evening after work. “I literally converted the space I was using into a jua kali site with welding noise from the fabricating machine,” notes Ngari.

Committed to his course, “the engineer” completed his automobile a two-wheeled drive solar-powered automobile with a load capacity of three passengers after two months of dedicated work. Those who doubted his efforts were surprised to see a complete car with a dashboard fitted with a radio, speedometer, ignition switch, and a voltmeter.



Leonard Ngari presenting his electric vehicle to the then GSU Commandant Mr Douglas Kanja at GSU Headquarters. On-lookers are other senior officers of the Unit PHOTO/VINCENT KIPKEMOI



Satisfied with his work, he took his vehicle on a road test drive within the internal roads of the State House, and on April 14, 2021, he presented his craft to the then Commanding Officer (CO) Presidential Guard Sub-Unit, Mr George Nderitu, OGW, who was impressed by the creativity showcased by the officer. “The CO advised that I increase the overall power from two to four-wheel drive, which I did and made the car more powerful,” observes Ngari, who further affirms that he continued modifying the car to make it more stable and also improved its front appearance to look more attractive. He then presented the vehicle to the Commandant, Mr. Douglas Kanja, now the Deputy Inspector General, who was greatly impressed by his work and encouraged him even more.

With the encouragement he had received from his superiors, he came up with the idea of making another environmentally friendly automobile in December 2022. This time it was an electric motorbike. He sourced the materials locally and embarked on the fabrication and assembly of the motorbike by January 2023. He juggled between his official work and the fabrication of the motorbike, which he resolutely completed and was functional by April 2023. The motorbike that runs on a

mortar powered by a chargeable battery clocks a top speed of 40km/h offering him easy mobility and convenience. Ngari presented his motorbike to the Commandant GSU, Mr. Eliud Lagat who was greatly fascinated by his creativity and promised his support in the improvement of his projects and other craft work, that he may undertake in the future.

Leonard Ngari’s creativity has caught the attention of many including the His Excellency the President. During the launch of Talanta Hela held on June 9, 2023 at State House, Nairobi, an initiative conceptualized by the President and implemented by the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Sports and Arts as a platform for the youth to showcase



The solar-powered vehicle made by constable Leonard Ngari. PHOTO/ VINCENT KIPKEMOI

their talents and creativity, he was privileged to present his motorbike to His Excellency the President Dr. William Ruto. The President who has been at the forefront in promoting green energy to achieve a pollution-free environment, was encouraged by Ngari’s invention and promised to support more of such creativity.

Ngari is currently working on his two automobiles to improve their efficiency as he seeks to make improved versions of the same in the future.

“The motor vehicle and the motorbike are projects in progress and this being my pilot project, I intend to make improved versions having learnt a lot along the way,” added Ngari who uses his motorbike and motor vehicle as to shuttle around the State House as he performs his duties.



The battery-powered motor cycles made by constable Leonard Ngari. PHOTO/ VINCENT KIPKEMOI



GENERAL SERVICE UNIT

The Challenge of Riot Control

By Constable Sammy Kipsagat

Citizens are prompted to march to the streets whenever they are expressing their grievances or championing their rights. They are guaranteed in law, of their social rights including right to assembly, demonstration, picketing, and present petition, peaceably. They are also assured of their freedom of expression in strict respect to the rights and reputation of others.

It is however unfortunate that “peaceably” is a foreign adverb and “respect to the rights of others” is a strange statement during demonstrations, especially in the Kenyan context. Violence! Choking smoke, blockaded roads, hurling stones and projectiles, looting, vandalism, running battles, paralyzed business and lawlessness bear the hallmarks of a social protest in our country. There’s no doubt that various outcomes meet the eye of the media and citizens in the management of civil



disturbances, but has anyone ever posed the question, what the anti riot squads experience when quelling riots?

More than often, rioters engage law enforcement officers in running battles which they seem to enjoy oblivious of the ramifications when the law catches up on them. In the guise of exercising their freedom of expression, they propagate and glorify lawlessness, incite to violence through social media, which though appears appealing and fun, is subversion of the law.

Kenyan policing encompasses a myriad of law procedures that guide police officers when executing their mandate in maintaining law and order. Police officers are guided by law when dealing with civil unrest as stipulated in Chapter

IX of the Penal Code on unlawful assembly and riot, Chapter four of the constitution on the Bill of Rights and other relevant laws.

Demonstrations are characterized by confrontations between law enforcement officers and demonstrators. Police officers inform rioters of their rights as citizens and the consequences of disobeying lawful commands before the assembly degenerates to riot. However, more often than not, rioters have one mindset – to destroy property, provoke police officers, interfere with traffic by blocking roads and general civil disobedience in intentional disregard of the law. Whereas demonstrators have a right to picket, present petitions and demonstrate, other people not engaged in the demonstrations equally have equal privileges. Law enforcement officers



PHOTO COURTESY



therefore have to strike a balance between protecting the rights of the unlawful assembly and the victims of demonstrations.

In the management of civil disturbances Police suffer physical harm as demonstrations are mostly characterized by violence. In some instances, officers have succumbed to injuries or suffer permanent disability as a result of injuries sustained during demonstrations. For example, during the unlawful demonstrations staged

in June, 2023, one police officer was killed while more than 305 others were injured while in their cardinal duty of maintenance of law and order. Police vehicles and police stations were severely damaged, negatively impacting police response and service delivery.

Public and private property worth millions of shillings were destroyed when rioters vandalized businesses, burnt vehicles and damaged infrastructure.

The officers also receive a barrage of insults from rioters when they are executing their mandate. It should not go without saying that sometimes, rogue politicians are at the forefront of charging and inciting rioters against law

enforcement officers during the demonstrations. The alleged excessive use of force by police officers has been the launching pad upon which some civil rights organizations, civilians, and politicians use to discredit and portray them as rogue, whereas police officers are guided by law and often use the necessary and proportional force given the prevailing circumstances. When rioters disobey the law, damage property, threaten lives, infringe the rights of other people, hurl stones, and use actual violence against police officers, the appropriate response should be as much.

Civil disturbance management is a strenuous task. In the wake of riots and demonstrations, police officers go the extra mile to conduct beats and patrols in the morning up to the wee hours of the morning, to ensure there is civil order.



EXPERT OPINION

Mental Health

Recognizing Common Mental Health Disorders

By Dr. Michael Njeru, PhD

Our thoughts, emotions, and actions are all influenced by our mental health which is an important component of total well-being and includes psychological, emotional, and social well-being and not merely the absence of a mental illness.

Mental health is a state where one can think clearly, can handle life stressors, and work well with fellow humans to achieve better outcomes for themselves and the community. On the flip side, mental disorder refers to a condition where the cognitive activities of the brain are inhibited affecting one's thoughts, emotions, behavior, mood, and well-being. Mental disorders can be influenced by several factors such

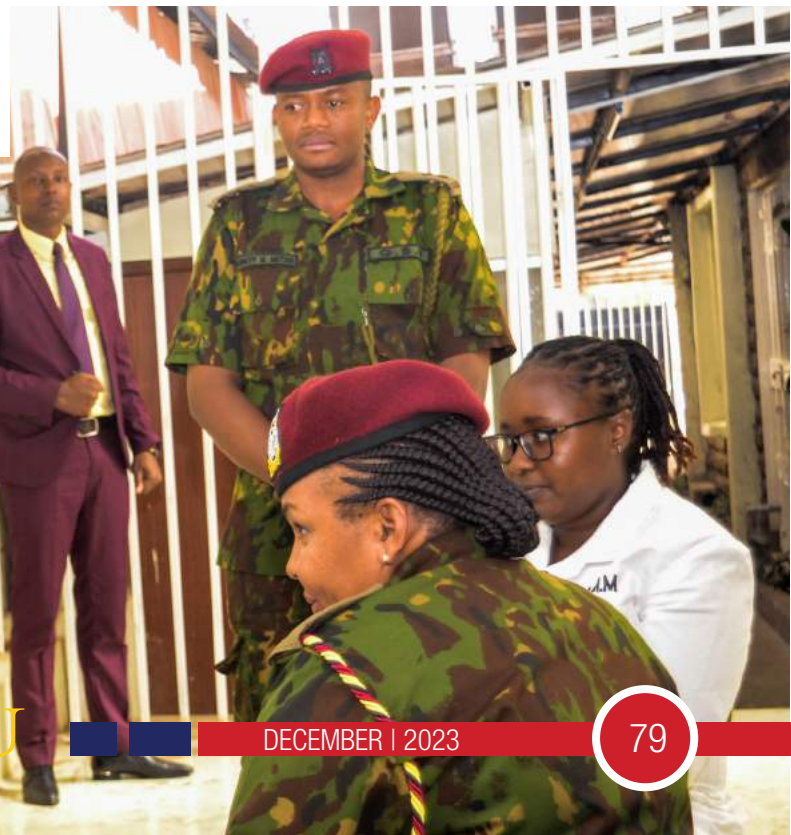
as genetic predisposition, environmental stressors, trauma, or chemical imbalances in the brain.

Some of the most common mental disorders are anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, alcohol and substance use disorders, bipolar mood disorder, and schizophrenia.

The causes of mental disorders are multifactorial and can vary from one person to another. In Kenya, common risk factors include poverty, unemployment, social inequalities, violence, trauma, and substance abuse. Furthermore, family history and genetics contribute to the development of mental disorders. Mental disorders can manifest through a wide range of symptoms. These may include persistent sadness, extreme mood swings, changes in sleep patterns, social withdrawal, difficulty in concentrating, excessive worries or fears, hallucinations, and thoughts of self-harm.

Among the specific disorders prevalent in Kenya, alcohol and substance use disorder, Acute Stress Disorder (ASD) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are of great concern. Alcohol and substance use disorders are characterized by a compulsive need to consume alcohol or drugs, especially for sensation-seeking (fun) or for self-medicating, leading to negative consequences on physical health, relationships, and overall functioning.

Acute Stress Disorder (ASD) and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) on the other hand are triggered by exposure to traumatic events such as injuries from



The GSU Commandant Mr Eliud Lagat and the Staff Officer Gender and Welfare Ms Judy Kalondu visiting a police officer admitted at Nairobi West Hospital. PHOTO/ VINCENT KIPKEMOI

Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), combat, and assault. Acute Stress Disorder occurs shortly (within 30 days) after the trauma and involves symptoms such as being more vigilant than usual, intrusive thoughts, nightmares, and avoidance of reminders of the event. If these symptoms persist for more than 30 days and continue to cause significant distress, a diagnosis of PTSD may be considered. Seeking professional help, especially from mental health practitioners is vital for early diagnosis and treatment.

Treatment approaches may include counseling and psychotherapy especially Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), and psychiatric medications when necessary. It is important to note that people can be affected differently by traumatic incidences thus the need for professional assessment and interventions. While it is not always possible to prevent mental disorders entirely, certain strategies can help reduce their occurrence. Promoting mental health education and awareness, reducing stigma, and providing early intervention and support services are vital.

Encouraging healthy coping mechanisms, such as exercise, stress management techniques, social support networks, and access to quality healthcare, can also make a significant difference.

Friends and families play a crucial role in supporting those dealing with mental disorders. Providing a safe and non-judgmental environment, encouraging open communication, and actively listening to their experiences are essential. Offering practical assistance, such as accompanying them to therapy sessions or helping them adhere to medication can provide valuable support.

Promoting self-care practices, engaging in enjoyable activities together, and being patient and understanding are all vital in fostering recovery. It is important to get persons with mental disorders to health facilities

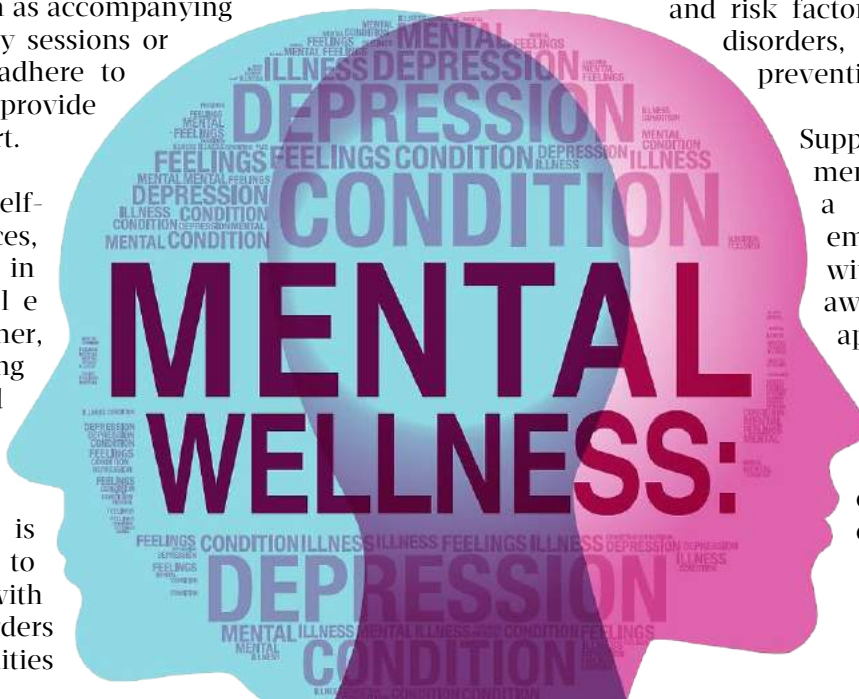


The Staff Officer Gender and Welfare Ms Judy Kalondu in conversation with GSU officers on mental health PHOTO/VINCENT KIPKEMOI

that provide professional and psychiatric services for proper interventions, especially Trauma therapy.

Mental health is a fundamental aspect of overall well-being which can significantly impact individuals and communities. By recognizing the causes, symptoms, and risk factors associated with mental disorders, we can work toward prevention and early interventions.

Supporting individuals with mental disorders requires a compassionate and empathetic approach, with a focus on education, awareness, and access to appropriate resources. By fostering a society that prioritizes mental health, we can create a positive impact on the well-being of individuals, families, and communities as a whole.



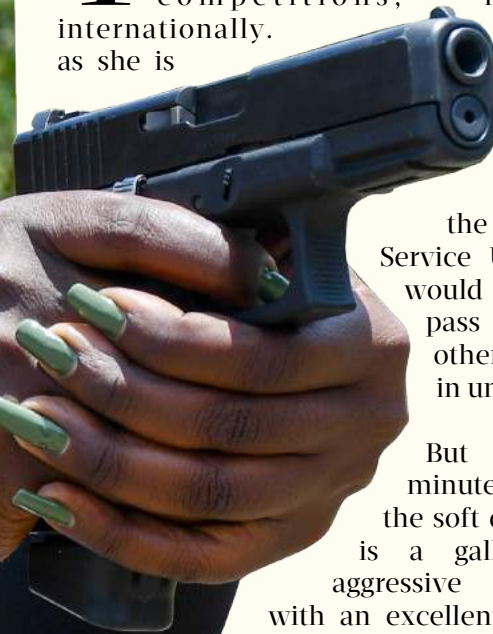


Perfect Shot

The Story of GSU's Markswoman Who Has Excelled in a Male Dominated Field

By Inspector Paul Gitau

The legend! Amuom Akoth Belinda is her name. A name that sends shivers in the circles of shooting competitions, locally and internationally. Belinda as she is known



is a soft-spoken officer in the General Service Unit who would easily pass for any other officer in uniform.

But wait a minute! Beneath the soft demeanor is a gallant and aggressive shooter with an excellent mastery of shooting skills well put into practice and winning accolades and laurels in local and international stages.

Belinda fell in love with firearms during her early days as a recruit and has been in the shooting sport, competing in both handgun and rifle category since 2015. She has never looked back. "I became interested in pistol shooting as a sport back in 2013 during my basic recruits course at GSU Embakasi B Campus," notes Belinda.

Born and bred on the shores of Lake Victoria in Homabay County 31-years ago, Belinda attributes her resilience and determination to succeed, to the challenging background she was brought up in, which gives her the motivation to be the best in whatever she

does. Waking up early armed with her fishing hook and rod down to the bay of Lake Victoria and hooking her catch at the first throw, probably prepared her to be the sharpshooter that she is, hitting the bull's eye of the target on her first aim at the squeeze of the trigger.

She understood much earlier that skills in weapon handling would not only make her an efficient police officer but equally understood that she could use the same skills to her advantage.

A look at the shooting records during her initial training depicts a consistent individual determined to achieve the best. Her unflinching spirit to become the best kept her going and was obsessive about standing out tall amongst the rest.

"I am a go-getter, I chose to ride in the opportunity and become one of the best recruits in the marksmanship encounter. Even though I missed the top position by a whisker, I was encouraged to fight on and I became dedicated to becoming the best one day. I am delighted this dream has come to pass," she accounts.

Shooting sports or rather any sport requires a lot of dedication and commitment to be better at it, and the basics of success are discipline and passion. Belinda works around a routine of continuous training and practice to remain competitive.

She equally underscores the importance of having a positive mindset and a

strong family support system as one factor that has kept her afloat being one of the best handgun shooters. "I am a hard worker and my motivation comes from my family which believes so much in me especially my mom who is my number one fan. Having friends and family who wish you the best is just what I need to become a successful sportsperson," she asserts. If accomplishment was a person, it would fit rightly and squarely in the image of Belinda as she has achieved much in her shooting sport to the beauty of her career as a police officer.

I have over sixty achievement trophies and thirty medals in my cabinet which give me the impetus to work for more



Her shooting experience is a success story that many of her competitors only dream of, having won trophies, medals, certificates of participation, officiating, and training. "I have over sixty achievement trophies and thirty medals in my cabinet which give me the impetus to work for more," she highlights proudly.

Her shooting expertise has won her gold medals in all the East Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation





Belinda takes aim during the Brian Hawkings tournament at Laikipia Air base on September 27th 2023

Organization (EAPCCO) editions 2018 in Tanzania, 2021 in Kenya, and 2023 in Rwanda, as well as lifting the flag of the General Service Unit high. “I am very delighted to mention that I am a gold medalist. I love raising the Kenyan flag high, whenever I compete,” she remarks joyfully.

Having conquered local championships, her exploits in the shooting sport have seen her compete on international stages in China, South Africa, Italy, and the United States of America where she has won several medals and awards. Belinda performed exemplarily at the Rocky Mountain Regional International Defensive Pistol Association (IDPA) championships that were held in Colorado, USA, where she was awarded a Glock pistol of her choice.

She takes immense pride in being one of Kenya’s accomplished top shooters; the first Lady Sharpshooter in IDPA and an expert shooter.

Shooting sport is an expensive expedition and equally demanding in training and other logistics. With the understanding that no man is an island, Belinda unpretentiously appreciates the effort of those who have supported her in her journey to becoming the accomplished shooter that she is, including financial and technical support in training. “I would wish to thank all my sponsors, mentors, and instructors, for it would not have been easier without them.

This is a very expensive and competitive sport considering the cost of equipment, ammunition, training, and travel locally and abroad,” notes Belinda. She equally thanks the commandant’s office for the support that she has continued to receive over the

years whenever she needs to attend any competitions Belinda is a member of various shooting clubs including Ngao Kenya Defensive Pistol Federation, the Kenya Regiment Rifle Club (KRRC), and the Nyanza Club where her membership is significantly valuable in offering training.

Belinda is an inspiration to many young female officers in the police service as she cuts an image of a determined individual with a resolve to overcome all hurdles and become the best. She underscores the importance of having personal discipline and commitment combined with a working support system as one of the easiest ways to succeed. “I have learnt that everything is possible provided you are on the right path, with the right people around you. Focus on your dreams and make them come true. she concludes.



Akoth Belinda is awarded 2nd runners up trophy at the Stoni Athi Shooting range during the NGAO Kenya IDPA chairman’s cup tournament held on November 23rd 2023



TUG OF WAR



The Rope Masters

By Constable Victor Onger



The Heroic GSU Tug-of- War team

The true test of strength. As fun and competitive as it is, Tug of War is an engaging sport that pits the strength of two opposing teams in a rope-pulling contest. It is a classic game that combines physical work and strategy making it an enjoyable sporting activity.

The General Service Unit tug-of-war team was formed in the year 1992. They represented the Unit in their inaugural police inter-provincial competition registering their first win during the encounter. The team was registered under the Kenya Tug of War League (KETWA) in 1995 where they represented the National Police Service in the highly competitive league.

Led by the head coach Cpl Patrick Omondi, the team comprises twenty-four strong and heavily built officers of the Unit who for a decade have raised the General Service Unit flag high. To maintain their top performance, the rope masters tirelessly work around a routine of training and exercise to remain at an optimal level of competition.

The team comprises twenty-four strong and heavily built officers of the Unit who for a decade have raised the General Service Unit flag high

In a broad manifest of the might of the General Service Unit, the team has won the KETWA championship since its inception and only relinquished the title in the year 2013 to the Rift Valley Province Police team. With much zeal and determination, they regained the title in the subsequent year and have become indomitable by retaining the national title since then. The team has always emerged top in every entry made in all tournaments. In the year 2002, they represented the country in the World Inter Club Championship held in South Africa and managed to scoop a bronze medal for the country. The rope masters perfected their pulling skills and subsequently won the African Club Championship the same year in South Africa.

The team has also participated in other tournaments and won titles which include; the Machakos County Governors Cup, Madaraka Cup, Mount Kenya Open Tournament, Nyanza Open, Mashujaa Cup, and the Nairobi Trade Fair Cup. The team has over the years maintained its excellence and dominance in the sport. During the East Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation Games (EAPCCO) held in Nairobi in 2019, the team showed their unmatched prowess by effortlessly defeating Tanzania in the championship.

Tug of war is a physically demanding sport that requires teamwork and strategy. As such, the team works in unison and tact to coordinate their efforts in achieving their goal.



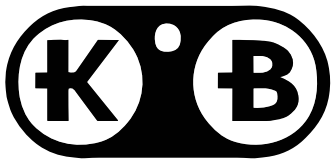
The DIG Mr Douglas Kanja presents the winners' trophy to the GSU Deputy Commandant Mr Bashane Omar at Moi Sports Centre Kasarani during the NPS Track & Field Championship 2023. PHOTO/KENNEDY MUTHUI



GSU officers lift the GSU Deputy Commandant Mr Bashane Omar in celebration after emerging the winners during the NPS Track & Field Championship 2023 at Moi Sports Centre Kasarani. PHOTO/KENNEDY MUTHUI



GSU sport teams pose for a photo as they presented their trophies to the Commandant Mr Eliud Lagat at GSU Headquarters. PHOTO/KENNEDY MUTHUI



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