

# Student is top Kampala drug baron, says Police

By Simon Masaba

Police has bust a racket involving a suspected drug distribution kingpin identified as Peter Odong, a university student at Young Men Christian Association (YMCA).

Odong, 23, is alleged to be behind a big racket dealing in trafficking of narcotics in the country. His accomplices include foreign nationals living large and owning property worth millions of shillings around the city.

The revelations were made by the Director of Criminal Investigations, Grace Akullo, during the destruction of 105.7kgs of narcotic drugs at the Nsambya Police barracks in Kampala, on Tuesday.

Narcotic drugs destroyed included 98.80kg of heroin, 4.4kg of a mixture of heroin and cocaine, 0.69kg of a mixture of cocaine and methamphetamine and 1.13 of cannabis, all worth sh3.7b.

Authorities from the anti-narcotics department said Odong also mixes cannabis oil with dough to make snacks that include cookies and *mandazi* for distribution.

They are said to sell cookies worth sh100m per distribution chain, which is done in a period of one month. Their clientele is dominantly university students and outlets where youth gather for social functions. The gang also vends drugs, which they claim boost sexual prowess.

"The gang has also penetrated secondary schools around Kampala. According to his testimony, he also supplies to merry-makers around beaches," according to excerpts of a preliminary Police report seen by *New Vision*.

In a recent operation, Police discovered that the drug-laced cookies cost between sh5,000 and sh10,000.



**Sabiiti (second-left) overseeing the destruction of Narcotic drugs worth sh3.7b at Kibuli on Tuesday.** Photo by Abou Kisige

A kilogramme of heroin goes at \$18,000 (about sh66.4m) on the international market.

However, investigations revealed that the highly addictive intoxicating substance is adulterated before being sold in Uganda and Tanzania, at between \$6,000 (about sh22.1m) and sh\$8,000 (about sh29.5m). On the other hand, a kilogramme of cocaine is valued at \$50,000 (about sh184.6m).

While presiding over the destruction of the drugs, the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Maj. Gen. Muzeyi Sabiiti requested that proceeds (sh3.7b and other monies) from suspects be channelled to constructing a rehabilitation centre since several victims, especially youth, have fallen victims as a result of addiction from drug use.

During the briefing, the aviation

Police commander, Jasper Oloka, said cargo handlers at the Entebbe Airport were fuelling drug trafficking by aiding traffickers smuggle narcotics in and out of the country.

Oloka said they (cargo handlers) have contracts to handle aircraft and have access to aircraft which makes it hard for Police to detect the 'merchandise' (drugs).

Police investigations indicate that Uganda remains both a destination and transit route for narcotic drugs.

In 2016, Police detectives interrogated and recorded statements from hostel managers seeking information regarding a student at Makerere University over allegations of selling to fellow students potent cookies laced with marijuana.

In the probe, Police sought details

**July 2008:** A total of 1,052 pellets of heroin destroyed.

**August 9, 2011:** A total of 37.4kgs containing 25.5kgs of heroin, 10.9kgs of cocaine and 1.5kgs of Methamphetamine were destroyed.

**June 27, 2014:** A total of 153.6Kgs of narcotics were destroyed.

**March 14, 2019:** A total of 370.36Kgs were destroyed.

**OTHER DRUGS DESTROYED**

of the prime suspect only identified as Alpha, then a fifth year student of architecture. He remains on the run, according to the force's authorities.

His alleged accomplice, James Galiwango was picked but later released on a Police bond and turned into a state witness.