



President Museveni with higher ranking army officers and some of the 223 officer cadets during the passing-out ceremony at the Uganda Military Academy, Kabamba

UPDF turns Kabamba into university

AFFILIATION

Brig. Byaruhanga said to beef up the degree, the academy will be affiliated to Makerere University

By David Lumu

By the end of August, the first 60 cadets drawn from East Africa would have started their three-year cadet course as a pioneer group for the newly introduced degree course of bachelor of arts in defence studies at the Uganda Military Academy, Kabamba in Mubende district.

According to President Yoweri Museveni, turning Kabamba into an East Africa Military University means that cadets will acquire military and academic skills, which will equip the army with highly grounded soldiers to combat the needed skills of a modern force.

"This academy is going to be transformed into a military university, where you can get both military leadership qualifications, as well as academic qualifications. The course, which is open to all countries in East Africa, will take three years, instead of one. Therefore, do not misuse this

opportunity," Museveni said.

The President said the necessary infrastructure, especially dormitories for cadets, will be built to ensure that the university takes shape as planned.

Museveni added that transport, especially paving roads around the Kabamba barracks, will also be done through an arrangement with road companies that have been contracted to work on the Kabamba-Nkogi-Ntusi-Ssembabule road.

The Deputy Army Commander, Lt. Gen. Wilson Mbadi, said the process of accreditation has been completed and that he briefed the President about the financial implications.

"The Uganda Military Academy aims at achieving a status of centre of excellency for cadet training not only for Uganda, but also regional partner states," Mbadi said, adding that the introduction of the three-year course in defence studies is in line with the East African defence corporation protocols.

The commandant of the military academy, Brig. Charles Byaruhanga, said to beef up the degree course, the academy will be affiliated to Makerere University.

Kabamba will be the second Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) training school to offer degrees to military officers, following

the introduction of a master's degree in defence studies at the Kimaka Senior Command and Staff College last year.

Honour to join UPDF

Commissioning the 223 cadets, Gen. Museveni, the Commander-in-Chief of the army, said the group has joined the UPDF at a time when the country's resources have expanded, opening doors for the army to grow into a much more modernised force.

"You have a chance to be leaders in the UPDF. This is a rare opportunity for you. If you use it well, your future will be bright. UPDF is a force that was historically needed in Uganda, otherwise, Uganda would by now have disintegrated. The army was able to reverse the decline of Uganda because of our ideology, strategy and discipline," he said.

Museveni added: "Therefore, for you to be part of this is great honour. Joining the UPDF is a rare opportunity and an honour for one to serve their country because as the country's resources expand, so does the capacity to grow a modern army."

The commissioned cadets included 24 females and 20 Somalis, who Uganda trained as part of the process of beefing up the Somali National Army ahead of the proposed transition from the African Union

Five officers, including Somalis, received awards for their outstanding performance.

- Abdul Wahab Haruna was the overall performer during the course duration
- Sumaya Nangobi was the best in class
- Clovis Mutegeki was the best in field operation
- John Mugarura emerged as the most disciplined student
- Abdullahi Ahmed Diiri from Somalia was the best fraternal student.

OUTSTANDING CADETS

Mission in Somalia to the national army in the conflict-torn country.

The officers were trained for 52 weeks in basic military skills, combat and operational technical skills, among other professional doctrines.

"In the past, we fought wars without resources. Now that Uganda is stable and progressing, we are working hard to expand the economy so that we build a modern army," he said.

The President also urged parents not to bother the newly commissioned cadets, especially by begging them money, saying their unending demands will force the cadets to engage in corruption to meet the demands.

"When you demand from them, you make them steal," Museveni said, rallying the cadets and their parents to engage in wealth creation projects instead of depending on subsistence farming.

According to Museveni, the 68% of Ugandans that are still trapped in subsistence farming need to be helped to transform into commercial farmers in order to improve their household income and fight poverty.

Mbadi urged the cadets to use their qualifications as a springboard to help Uganda and East Africa battle the emerging new security challenges, such as terrorism, cross-border transitional insurgencies, cyber threats and other negative forces.

"I caution you to observe, among others, ideological conscientiousness by understanding who you are, the history of your country, what we stand for, where we are going and our revolutionary methods," he said.

Byaruhanga said 363 students were recruited for the course, but 63 trainees fell out.