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**Holding Ugandan Police to Account:  
Case study of the Police Accountability and Reform Project<sup>1</sup>**

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**1. Introduction**

Discussions about the police play an important role in the thinking about public accountability. The importance of the police is evidently based on the key role of the police in providing one of the central public services that are rendered by the state in modern society, viz. guaranteeing safety, security and rule of law, or to put it more succinctly, ‘law and order’. Yet, another feature of policing may even be more vital when reflecting on police accountability. That feature concerns the so-called ‘paradox of violence’ of the democratic state: the police is one of the strong arms of the state, and holds the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence, but at the same time it needs to respect legal restraints on the actual use of its powers. The paradox of violence was summarised very well by Gary Marx (2001), who argued that ‘a democratic society needs protection both *by police* and *from police*’.

This chapter focuses on police accountability in Uganda, and in particular a project aimed at enhancing accountability. Uganda may be considered a very difficult environment for strengthening accountability, exemplified by the results of the National Service Delivery Study 2015, which reported that an overwhelming majority of its respondents consider the Uganda Police Force to be the most corrupt institution in the country (Kato, 2016). The bad reputation of the police force prompted a Ugandan NGO, HURINET-U (Human Rights Network-Uganda), with financial support of the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Kampala, to initiate the Police Accountability and Reform Project (PARP).

The chapter presents the findings of research on the police accountability project, which are relevant as an example of how civil society engagement with government agencies may lead to enhanced awareness among public servants of their accountability relationship vis-à-vis citizens and their need

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based on research conducted for the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Section 3 draws on chapter 2 of the research project’s final report, which was published as Hout et al. (2016), while sections 4 and 5 use material from chapter 4 of the report.

to adhere to basic principles of public integrity. We argue, in particular, that the activities of the human rights NGO, HURINET-U, have contributed to a better understanding of the relation between the police and Ugandan citizens, political parties and media. Significantly, HURINET-U's project resulted in better knowledge of the rights of citizens, either individually or as part of a collective, and potentially more respect for civil and political liberties.

This chapter discusses various aspects of police activities in Uganda. The next section introduces the notion of police accountability as a special case of public accountability. The third section focuses on Uganda and describes some relevant characteristics of the country's political system and its police force. Section 4 outlines the key features of the Police Accountability and Reform Project (PARP). Section 5 sketches how our evaluation of the effectiveness of PARP was designed, how we executed the research project and what its major findings were. The final section of the chapter contains our conclusions.

## **2. Police accountability**

Like most other public service providers, the police has increasingly become subjected to accountability requirements. It is difficult to disagree with Mark Bovens that, according to dominant political discourse,

Accountability has become a Good Thing, and, so it seems, we can't have enough of it. The concept has become a rhetorical device; it serves as a synonym for many loosely defined political desiderata, such as transparency, equity, democracy, efficiency, and integrity.  
(Bovens, 2005: 183)

Paraphrasing Bovens' (2005: 184) words, public accountability can be understood as a social relationship in which public actors feel an obligation to explain and justify their conduct to some significant other in the public domain. In democratic societies, the police is normally held to account in various different ways, just as (almost) all public agencies (Bovens, 2005: 187-188). Police officers face organisational/hierarchical accountability to their superiors. The police force is subjected to political oversight by parliaments, who represent the population at large. Individual police officers may be the target of legal accountability in criminal or civil courts, if they are suspected of excessive use of force or gross omissions. Increasingly, the police also faces administrative accountability relations with inspectors and auditors for their use of public resources and ombudsman for their interactions with the general public. Finally, professional accountability measures are implemented by peers, either in professional associations or in disciplinary committees.

In the case of the police, however, various other aspects of their work impact on accountability relations. First, as Lister and Rowe (2016: 1) have argued, discussions about police accountability attain almost inevitably also a political dimension, because the role of the police is connected to the maintenance of a particular social and political order. Secondly, the police is facing the ‘paradox of violence’ that was mentioned in the introduction: since the police is holding the monopoly of violence, it needs to apply force with great restraint. Anything that is done by the police requires, in principle, very careful assessment, because of the power asymmetries that characterise the relations between police officers and ‘ordinary civilians’, who do not command the same means of coercion. Third, as argued by Lister and Jones (2016), police action is not a technical activity. Instead, ‘policing is a normative enterprise that holds significant implications not only for principles of human rights, due process, and fair treatment, but also for utilitarian objectives of ensuring that citizens live in just and safe societies’ (Lister and Jones, 2016: 192-193). This requires respect for important democratic values, such as equity, delivery of service, responsiveness, distribution of power, information, redress, and participation (Lister and Jones, 2016: 199-206).

In the context of this chapter, we argue that several of the democratic values actually come together in the notion of police integrity. A well-known definition describes integrity as ‘the quality of acting in accordance with relevant moral values, norms, and rules’, and can be a quality both of individuals and organisations (Lasthuizen et al., 2011: 387). Democratic values, built on notions of police integrity, and accountability are important determinants of public confidence in the police, and can be seen as two sides of the same coin. As it has been put in a recent synthesis of work on police accountability,

As citizens are more likely to cooperate with requests for information and assistance if they perceive those delivering policing to have integrity and legitimacy, then accountability has an important role in delivering core policing functions of law enforcement, security and order maintenance. (Lister and Rowe, 2016: 5).

Linked to the understanding of policing as a normative activity, it seems important to look at accountability not just in a formal way, but take into account also the moral dimension of police work. In this sense, Davids and Boyce (2016: 91) have made a plea for the adoption of a ‘social accountability perspective’ to address ‘multiple dimensions of answerability (to formal systems of accountability) and responsibility (in the sense of virtue)’. The latter dimension, in particular, relates to the ethical significance of policing, which is ultimately built on integrity and trustworthiness of police officers’ behaviour, and thus is the basis for the public’s trust in the police.

### **3. The Ugandan context**

#### *Politics in Uganda*

Ugandan politics has been dominated, since 1986, by the National Resistance Army or NRA (later institutionalised as a political force and renamed to National Resistance Movement, NRM), led by Yoweri Museveni. The NRA was the victor of the Ugandan Bush War, the protracted civil war against the regime of Milton Obote (1980-1985). The Ugandan ‘Movement System’, which was in place between 1986 and 2005, was a non-party political system, where individual representatives were elected on the basis of their personal merit instead of a party platform.

Museveni has been the undisputed strong man of the NRA/M regime since 1986. He won the first elections in 1996 and was elected president, an office that he managed to retain by winning four subsequent national elections (2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016). Museveni was able to stand for president during the latter three elections as a result of the abolition of the presidential term limit in 2005. Despite (or also: because of) the fact that Uganda has had multi-party elections since the mid-2000s, the Museveni regime became increasingly authoritarian. Regime maintenance became an important objective, and this led to the search for instruments to broaden the regime’s support base among the Ugandan population (Khisa, 2014).

The growing importance of opposition parties in Uganda, in particular, made it more important for the regime to secure political support for the NRM at the local and national level by using patronage arrangements and condoning corruption, the starkly increasing costs of which have been referred to as ‘inflationary patronage’ (Khisa, 2014: 32-36; Barkan, 2011; cf. Tangri and Mwenda, 2013). Decentralisation has operated as an instrument in the patronage relations: the rapid increase of the number of districts in the country, rapidly from around 40 in the mid-1990s to 111 since 2012 (Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, 2017), made it possible for the regime to reward its supporters with positions in local government (Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 2013: 16-17). Next to this, enhanced activities of opposition politicians and internal NRM challengers spurred government activities targeting independent media, the judiciary and opposition parties (Anderson and Fisher, 2016). The latest National Development Plan chose to place less emphasis on poverty reduction and service delivery as policy priorities and instead opted for investment in ‘growth opportunities’, especially agriculture; tourism; minerals, oil and gas; infrastructure and human capital development (Government of Uganda, 2015: xxv; Hickey, 2013). Government support for justice and law and order activities seems to receive less priority: according to the National Development Plan II, the allocation to those activities was foreseen to fall from 1.26 per cent of GDP in 2015 to 1.05 per cent in 2019 (Government of Uganda, 2015: 280). The Uganda Police Force has been and will remain a priority

within the justice, law and order sector, as its budget is predicted to grow by 29 per cent between 2016 and 2022 (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 2017: 165).

### ***The Uganda Police Force***

The Uganda Police Force was established in 1906 (Uganda Police Force, 2007). It is organised on the basis of 20 directorates, related to functional tasks (such as traffic and road safety, human rights and legal services, and criminal investigation and crime intelligence), and geographically divided into regional and district offices, police stations and posts (Uganda Police Force, 2017). In 2003, Uganda had around 15,000 police officers, while this number had increased to over 43,000 officers in 2013 (Government of Uganda, 2015: 50). The Inspector-General of the Uganda Police Force announced expansion of the police to 65,000 officers at the end of 2014 (Kakamwa, 2014). As a result of the growth of the police force, the potential for service delivery increased: the police to population ratio improved from 1:1,734 in 2005 to 1:754 in 2012, while 95 per cent of all sub-counties had a police station by 2015 (Government of Uganda, 2015: 50).

However, the Corruption Perceptions Index 2016, which measures the perceived levels of public sector corruption worldwide, placed Uganda among the top fifteen per cent of most corrupt countries in 2016 (Transparency International, 2017). The Ugandan police force is regarded as particularly corrupt (Wambua, 2015; Basheka, 2013: 72-74; Transparency International-Kenya, 2013). Results of various surveys – including Uganda’s National Service Delivery Study 2015 that was quoted above (Kato, 2016) and older surveys carried out by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (2006b) between 1998 and 2005 – indicate that a majority of Ugandan citizens have consistently rated the police as the most corrupt institution in the country. It is generally felt that integrity problems such as corruption affect service delivery by the police and complicates accountability. In particular, the lack of accountability of the Ugandan police is felt to be responsible for delayed justice, illegal acts, excessive use of force and the failure to conclude investigations (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2006a: 7-11).

To put the accountability issues of the police in perspective, we collected crime statistics. They reveal that 99,959 crimes were reported in Uganda in 2013. This resulted in a crime rate of 273 per 100,000 inhabitants. Investigations of crimes involving employees in the public sector have increased steadily over time. While 214 investigations were reported over 2012, the Ugandan police force reported 413 cases in 2013. The statistics do not contain further details about the forms of corruption in the public sector, which leaves open whether corruption among the police is also included in these figures. The Ugandan police report 2013 mentions 19 cases of police officers who were under investigation of suspected crimes (Uganda Police, 2013).

#### **4. The Police Accountability and Reform Project (PARP)**

The Police Accountability and Reform Project (PARP) was implemented by HURINET-U between October 2010 and January 2013 in the second phase of a broader project focusing on improving police accountability, which had started in 2007. The project was executed with financial support from the Royal Netherlands Embassy, which provided €260,355 for the duration of the project, following on an allocation of €230,000 for the activities in the earlier phase of the project. While the project was carried out by HURINET-U, the National Working Group on PARP included seven other local and international NGOs: Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), the African Centre for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (ACTV), the African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF), the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-U), Human Rights Concern (HURICO), and the Uganda Prison Aid Foundation (UPAF).

The project was implemented against the background of the perception that the police force in Uganda is a partisan force that rules in colonial mode. The main concerns were police brutality, lack of respect for human rights, abuse of power and corruption. The implementing agency HURINET-U has had a longstanding relationship with the police. According to the Dutch embassy in Uganda, ‘HURINET-U is the only Civil Society Organization with good rapport with the police and has established good channels of dialogue on Public Order Management, human rights violations etc.’ (Royal Netherlands Embassy, Kampala, 2013: 1).

The overall objective of the project was ‘to contribute to the establishment of an accountable and democratic police service that works in close cooperation with the public in order to ensure a safe and secure society’ (HURINET-U, 2013: 6). The project brought together the police and civil society to foster exchange and establish a stronger civilian oversight over the police. In the final report about PARP, the following four objectives of the intervention were detailed (HURINET-U, 2013: 6):

1. Stronger civilian oversight of the police in Uganda;
2. Establishment of public safety and security networks based on the premise of a shared responsibility between the police and the public with regard to public safety and security;
3. Contribution by civil society and the public to the police review process;
4. Public order management that is conducted in an environment that promotes and protects the rights and freedoms of Ugandans to assembly.

The envisaged final outcomes of PARP were (a) enhanced police accountability and (b) more effective public order management, which were supposed to contribute to improvements in the

observance of human rights in Uganda. The following expectations were the key elements of PARP's intervention theory:

- More contacts between citizens and the police and more information about the role of the police would contribute to establishing a better police force that attends to societal needs;
- Contacts and exchange of information were expected to start a process that would change the role of the police force from an instrument in the hands of the regime towards a service for the people;
- More knowledge about the role of the police would restore trust of the community in the police and would improve the image of the police among the Ugandan people;
- Civilian oversight over the police would make the police more accountable;
- Knowledge and understanding would be promoted by dialogues between the police on the one hand and civil society organisations and specific groups of civilians (journalists and students) on the other hand;
- The optimal model for the dialogue would be the coalition: coalitions of civil society organisations, journalists and students would take the lead in the process of building knowledge and trust;
- Tools for dealing with complaints about the police would be useful in bringing malfunctioning in the open, as would be various forms of research and publications.

The Police Accountability and Reform Project consisted of a rather loose set of activities, which were held together more by the logic of activism driving HURINET-U than by a well-conceived logic of achieving impact on the population at large. Target groups of the various activities differed from police officers to representatives of the media, students, members of parliament and leaders of civil society organisations. Most activities were workshops aiming to create rapport between the police and a variety of societal actors. The workshops took the form of 'dialogues'. Next to this, activities undertaken as part of PARP were aimed at creating awareness about impending changes in the Ugandan public order management regime.

The main activities of the project that related to the objective of strengthening police accountability were the following (HURINET-U 2011a, 2011b):

- Six one-day dialogues between police officers and civil society organisations, covering nine districts, each attended by approximately 60 people;
- Two dialogue meetings of the reform coalition with police commanders;
- Advocacy dialogues of the project team with the police;

- The creation of a police reform website;
- Field missions to document the role of the army and police during elections, leading to a pre-election statement, the distribution of 700 copies of the final report plus digital reports for HURINET-U members and CSOs, and the issuing of press releases;
- Distribution of 700 copies of the police accountability newsletter ‘Police Watch’;
- Police station visits in four places in Acholi, with 850 people attending;
- Organisation of three media-police dialogues, with approximately 150 participants in total;
- Introduction of a module on the media at the Police Training Department;
- Analysis of the impact of the Public Order Management Bill/Act on human rights and freedoms (distribution of 300 copies and encounters with parliament);
- Airing of 15 radio talks shows in partnership with police leadership, dealing with rights, freedoms and responsibilities of the general public during gatherings and demonstrations;
- Organisation of a national dialogue workshop for media, civil society and police, with 45 participants;
- Distribution of 10,000 copies of the review of a police complaints form; and
- Distribution of 5,500 copies of the police complaints handling manual.

It needs to be noted that HURINET-U’s work covered only part of the country. The organisation worked mainly in 13 of the more than 120 districts, namely Arua, Bushenyi, Gulu, Kabale, Kabarole, Kampala, Lira, Masaka, Mbarara, Moroto and Soroti.

## **5. Evaluation of PARP’s effectiveness**

### ***Design and methods***

Research on the effectiveness of the Police Accountability and Reform Project involved three different methods of data collection, which mainly focused on the normative dimensions of accountability that were discussed in section 2 above: integrity, justice and respect for (human) rights. All three methods used a logic of differences, and involved the comparison of districts where PARP was implemented with ‘non-PARP districts’ in order to evaluate how effective the project has been. The methods aimed to chart attitudes of police officers, as well as police characteristics and crime incidence rates. In consultation with HURINET-U, we randomly picked five districts in which HURINET-U had carried out its activities (Bushenyi, Kabale, Kabarole, Mbarara and Soroti) and purposively matched them with five other randomly chosen districts in which HURINET-U had not



been active (Iganga, Jinja, Luwero, Mityana and Tororo).<sup>2</sup> We never chose more than one district per region to ensure regional coverage.

Our first method aimed to collect (administrative) data on the police and the prevalence of crime in the ten districts selected for the purpose of this evaluation. The second method consisted of a survey among 600 police officers from ten selected districts. The third method involved in-depth interviews with 23 police officers from the higher ranks, drawn from eight different districts. The next three subsections analyse the findings based on the three sets of data.

### *Analysis of administrative data*

The first part of our data collection focused on several characteristics of the police organisation and on crime incidence in the ten districts selected for the purpose of this study. Table 1 presents an overview of some key indicators per district.

The data demonstrate quite substantial variation among the ten districts in terms of the average numbers of police stations, the average strength of the police force and the average number of riots in the 2005-2012 period. As can be seen in the last two columns of table 1, variation does not necessarily relate to the districts' population size. The district Mityana has disproportionately many police stations given that it is the smallest district in the sample in terms of actual population. Most riots are documented in Jinja although it is only a mid-sized district. All things considered, it is clear that the number of police officers per district is broadly in line with population size.

*Table 1: District-level police statistics for the period 2005-2012*

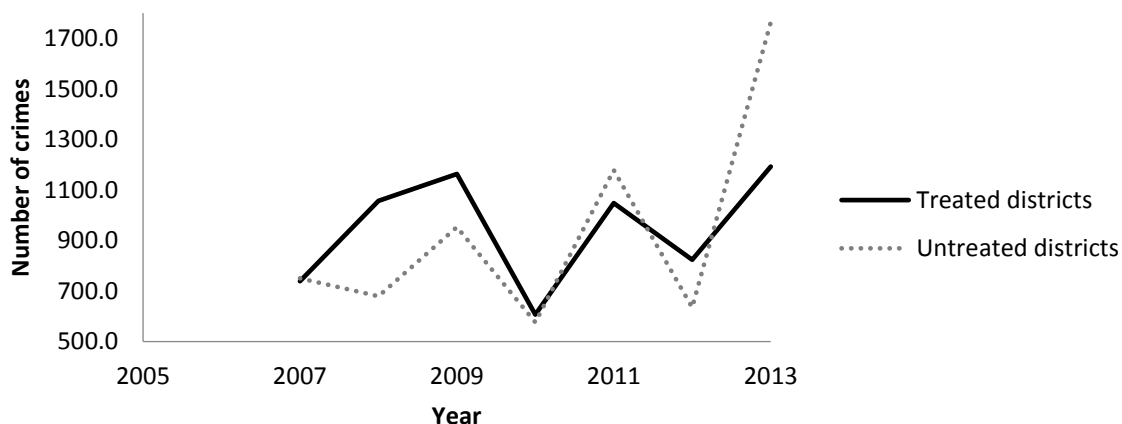
District	Number of police stations in the district	Total number of police officers in the district	Average number of riots in the district per year	Number of protests in the district	Total population in the district	Population growth in the district
<b>Bushenyi</b>	1	645	0.78	0	698,256	1.20
Iganga	2	837	0.38	0	628,856	3.14
Jinja	2.78	618	3.00	0	464,256	1.68
<b>Kabale</b>	2	648	0.89	0	486,222	1.36
<b>Kabarole</b>	1	529	1.67	0	397,200	2.52
Luwero	–	543	0.38	0	408,033	2.61
<b>Mbarara</b>	3.22	558	2.33	0	418,822	2.41
Mityana	2.75	399	0.38	0	299,325	1.94
<b>Soroti</b>	1	619	0.38	0	464,478	3.82
Tororo	1	603	0.38	0	452,644	2.91

*Notes:* Districts targeted by PARP are reported in bold. Figures are the average of all available observations per district.

*Source:* Administrative data, Ugandan Police Force.

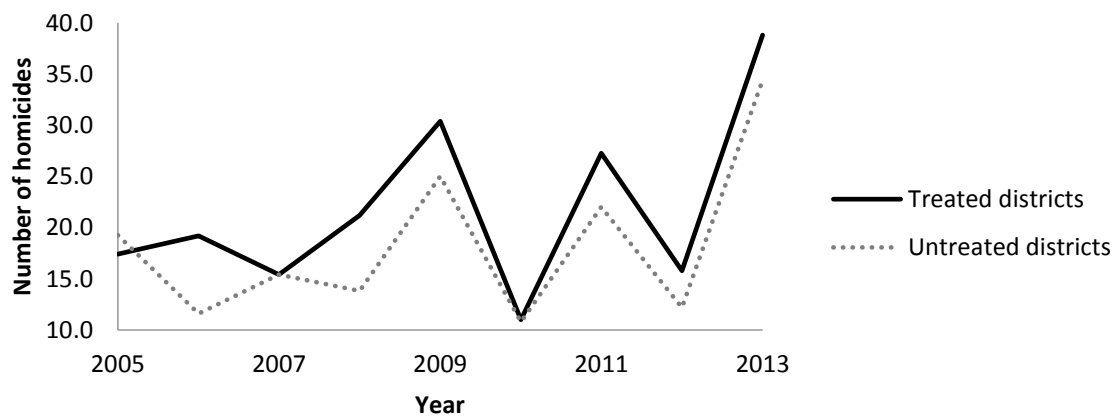
<sup>2</sup> We did not include districts in Northern Uganda in the sample as this part of the country was affected by major conflicts until 2006, and this had great impact on the involvement of the Northern districts in a variety of governance-related programmes.

Figure 1: Average number of crimes in districts (2005-2013)



Source: Administrative data, Ugandan Police Force

Figure 2: Number of homicides in districts (2005-2013)



Source: Administrative data, Ugandan Police Force

Next, we assess the evolution of crimes and homicides. Data on the aggregate number of crimes between 2007 and 2013 in figure 1 indicate that the absolute annual crime rate per district shows a similar trend across treatment and control districts. The number of annual crimes has varied from a minimum of 167 in Mityana to a maximum of slightly over 3,000 in Jinja. In terms of reported homicides between 2005 and 2013 (see figure 2), there are again also substantial differences across

districts, ranging from a minimum of 0 (Luwero in 2006) to a maximum of 74 (Mbarara in 2013). There appears to be considerable fluctuation in the number of reported crimes and homicides: the fact that many districts experience similar fluctuations suggests that the volatility may result from differences in reporting standards rather than actual crime rates. On the basis of available data on police statistics of crimes and homicides, it seems impossible to relate the quality of policing in Uganda to the impact of PARP activities.

### *Analysis of the police survey*<sup>3</sup>

An important part of our data collection focused on individual-level attitudes on proper policing by focusing on police officers' assessments of various forms of police misconduct. As part of a survey, respondents were provided with identical, hypothetical vignette cases (see Appendix A) depicting undesirable behaviour of varying degrees. The cases ranged from small-scale bribery to traffic offences, and from robbery to murder. Our survey questions elicited an assessment of the depicted cases based on police officers' judgment of good policing and the perceived best practice standards among the colleagues. The approach to researching individual-level attitudes was inspired by earlier research on police integrity and accountability pioneered by, among others, Klockars et al. (2000, 2006) and Kutnjak Ivkovic (2005a, 2005b).

Overall, 600 police officers were selected for participation in the survey, using randomised, stratified sampling. As a result, 60 police officers were included from each of the districts that had been chosen in consultation with HURINET-U. The survey aimed at capturing perceptions and attitudes of good policing and the extent to which these are applied at the police stations of the respondents. Therefore, we did not directly ask police officers what type of behaviour they engage in since such questions are likely to yield biased responses. Instead, after each case, police officers answered the following normative questions:

1. How serious do **you** consider this behaviour to be?
2. Do you think **you** would report a fellow police officer who engaged in this behaviour?
3. How serious do **most police officers in your office** consider this behaviour to be?
4. If an officer in your agency engaged in this behaviour and was discovered doing so, what if any disciplinary measure do **you** think **should** follow?
5. Would this behaviour be regarded as a violation of official policy in **your agency**?

Data obtained from the survey were analysed with matching techniques and simultaneous regressions. By applying these techniques, we were able to assess whether differences in responses between police

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<sup>3</sup> This section contains a condensed report of the findings, which are described in more detail in Wagner et al. (2017).

officers from PARP and non-PARP districts can plausibly (and statistically significantly) be ascribed to participation in the project.

*Table 2: Main results of analyses of survey data per normative question*

	1. Severity of behaviour	2. Likelihood of reporting a fellow police officer	3. Assessment of severity of behaviour in the eyes of colleagues	4. Preference for disciplinary action	5. Assessment of violation of official policy	Global average across all five questions
<b>Panel A: Propensity Score Matching</b>						
Treatment effect	0.610 (0.000)	0.351 (0.000)	0.252 (0.000)	0.223 (0.000)	0.273 (0.000)	0.342
<b>Panel B: Average Effect from Simultaneous Regression</b>						
Treatment effect	0.532 (0.000)	0.363 (0.000)	0.341 (0.000)	0.179 (0.006)	0.254 (0.000)	0.228 (0.000)

*Notes:* Robust *p*-values in parentheses. Sample size is 7,200 (12 vignette cases à 600 respondents).

*Source:* Authors' own calculations.

A summary of the results is presented in table 2. The findings show that there are consistent differences between PARP participants and non-participants on all questions, and that the differences are highly statistically significant. This implies that PARP had a positive impact on normative judgments of police accountability and integrity, importantly including human rights as one of its main target areas.

### ***Analysis of police interviews***

In-depth qualitative interviews were held with 23 district police officers,<sup>4</sup> selected from the higher ranks. Interviewees included Regional Police Commanders (RPCs), District Police Commanders (DPCs) and Officers in Charge of the Criminal Investigation Department (OC-CIDs). The interviews were held in four PARP districts (Bushenyi, Kabale, Kabarole and Mbarara) and four non-PARP districts (Iganga, Jinja, Luwero and Tororo). The interviews consisted of a set of open questions related to the functioning of the police, the main challenges encountered in day-to-day work, the handling of complaints about the police, as well as questions regarding the observed impacts of the roll-out of PARP. The latter set included questions on the positive and negative impacts generated by

<sup>4</sup> We had initially planned 24 interviews across eight districts. One interviewee, however, dropped out, and the work schedule did not allow replacing this police officer.

PARP, the overall relevance of projects such as PARP and the officers' assessment of the sustainability of the results achieved by PARP.

Overall, the assessments of the situation of the Ugandan Police Force and the problems encountered by the police in their daily work did not show important differences across districts targeted by PARP and districts that were not included in HURINET's project. The problems mentioned by senior police officers related mainly to three issues:

- Logistical problems, such as insufficient means of transport and insufficient petrol to use cars and motor cycles where these are available;
- Office problems, related to insufficient quality of police stations, limited availability of stationery, and sub-standard prison complexes;
- Personnel problems, as a consequence of qualitative or quantitative understaffing of the police stations, as well as of inadequate housing for police officers.

In addition, some of the senior police officers reported political issues, such as interference by the central government or local and regional government officials with the work of the police.

With regard to citizens' complaints about the police, a variety of issues were mentioned, which do not seem to differentiate PARP from non-PARP districts. These issues related to corrupt police practices (such as the asking for a contribution before cases are investigated, or the demand of payment before releasing arrested people on bond), a general impression of ineffectiveness of police activities leading to delays in investigations, the mismanagement of case files by police officers, and police officers getting compromised by collaborating with criminals.

In terms of the police officers' assessment of the activities undertaken within the context of PARP and the impacts deriving from these, there seemed to be a marked difference in assessment between officers working in districts that had been targeted by PARP and those that had not been included. All twelve police officers stationed in non-PARP districts were unable to comment on the activities undertaken in the context of PARP, and were equally unable to point at any positive or negative impact resulting from the project. Several of those police officers indicated explicitly they had not heard about the project before.

Police officers who were stationed in PARP districts gave very different responses compared to their colleagues in the non-PARP districts. The comments provided by the officers from the PARP districts were generally at a rather abstract level, but it can be argued that those remarks showed a certain level

of knowledge about, and possibly a shift in attitude towards, police behaviour, particularly when compared to officers working in districts that had not been included in PARP. Thus, at least some of the difference in knowledge and attitude between the two groups of police officers of equivalent rank could possibly be attributed to the impacts of PARP.

The responses provided by nine (out of the total of eleven interviewed)<sup>5</sup> police officers in PARP districts typically related to a limited set of issues, connected to desirable police behaviour in terms of respect for human rights, the treatment of arrested people and interactions with the community in general. Although it is difficult to generalise on the basis of a limited number of police officers from PARP districts, the convergence in the answers provided to the interview questions is striking. This convergence could possibly be ascribed partially to the norm-setting effect produced by the involvement of police officers in PARP. Obviously, nothing can be said about the concrete impact of the acceptance of particular norms on behaviour, but it is probably safe to surmise that people who demonstrate adherence to particular norms will reflect some of that in their behaviour in daily practice. Box 1 contains examples of what interviewed police officers themselves raised as positive impacts of PARP.

*Box 1: Quotes from interviews with police officers on perceived impacts of PARP*

‘Well, there are a number of positive changes I have rated as a result of the PARP project with HURINET-U. For instance as a result of the PARP project with HURINET-U impunity is no longer there and service delivery has improved especially in the areas of detention of suspects for long hours, torture of suspects, and corruption.’ (Regional Police Commander, Bushenyi district)

‘Cases of torture of suspects have reduced. Police officers now respect the law, have customer care and handle suspects better.’ (Acting District Police Commander, Kabale district)

‘More citizens know their rights and entitlements and can engage police officers on this. For example, it is common knowledge that police bond is free. More still, the intervention has bridged the gap between police and the citizens, and today, more private citizens can demand accountability from the police. More still, civil society can better engage with police as stakeholders to enforce the implementation of the desired human rights standards.’ (Officer in Charge of the Criminal Investigation Department, Kabarole district)

‘Police are more inclined to their mandate of protecting people and their property than ever before. This has been enhanced with public sensitisation through the print and electronic media on citizen awareness campaigns.’ (Regional Police Commander, Kabarole district)

‘The project taught me to be accountable, to improve on service delivery, to improve on democratic governance; that whatever you do, you should do it democratically. Even while talking, we need to talk to people like we do to our masters, we should not shout at them. If public officers know that people are our masters, then we would never abuse them.’ (Officer in Charge of the Criminal Investigation Department, Mbarara district)

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<sup>5</sup> Two police officers indicated they had been posted to PARP districts only recently, and were not able to comment on the possible impacts of the project.

Possibly, answers to the questions what police officers saw as ‘ideal practices’ in daily police operations, as well as suggestions made by police officers on how the quality of policing can be improved may be seen, to some extent, as a reflection of their normative conviction about proper police behaviour. In a way, these can be seen as validation of what PARP claimed to have brought about. In this respect, the comment of one of the interviewees, who was stationed in the PARP district Mbarara, is also relevant: ‘I did not go for those trainings but on the side of respecting human rights, I have seen a change in people who went for those courses. They now know what human rights means; there is now less violation of human rights’ (District Police Commander, Mbarara district). Some typical examples of such best policing practices and suggestions for improving the quality of policing, given by police officers in PARP districts are presented in box 2.

*Box 2: Quotes from interviews with police officers on best practices and quality improvement*

‘The procedure of handling crimes begins with a report about a crime from members of the public, or media, or police officer. The complaint is then registered and investigations begin within a few hours and a response is made within a short time. The maximum time it should take is two days.’ (Comment about best practice, Officer in Charge of the Criminal Investigation Department, Kabale district)

‘There are a number of areas of improvement within the police force. And such areas basically include the following: human rights; training the different officers in the area of forensic investigation; crime management and investigation; public relations.’ (Comment about improvements to the quality of policing, Acting District Police Commander/Officer in Charge of the Criminal Investigations Department, Bushenyi district)

‘When I go for radio talk shows as well as meeting villagers where crimes are committed, I observe we need crime preventers within the villages. We also need to bridge the gap between community and police by having enough community liaison officers.’ (Comment about improvements to the quality of policing, District Police Commander, Mbarara district)

In contrast to police officers stationed in PARP districts, officers from other stations tended to answer the questions about best practices and improving the quality of policing more in terms of technical solutions to the concrete problems experienced by the police, as well as the need to train police officers through refresher courses and similar activities.

The interviews addressed, more in particular, also the role of civil-society organisations such as HURINET-U and the perception of such organisations by police officers. Some officers commented that PARP had taught the police about civil-society organisations, and particularly about the fact that the latter should not be seen as adversaries but also as partners, whose activities can benefit the work of the police. Comments related to civil-society organisations were mainly addressing the following aspects of the role of those organisations:

- Enhancing transparency of police activities;
- Contributing to the learning capacity and improvement in the functioning of police officers;
- Sensitising citizens about their entitlements and the mandate of the police;
- Enhancing oversight over the behaviour of police officers;
- Establishing a better relationship between citizens and the police.

## **6. Conclusions**

In this chapter, we have approached the issue of police accountability not just from a formal perspective, which would have led us to zoom in on the ‘answerability’ of the police in relation to other organs of the state. Rather, the chapter has been informed by ideas about the special position of the police amidst other state institutions – in particular, the notion of ‘the paradox of violence’ – and has thus argued that police accountability should include normative and moral aspects of the relationship between the police and the public, as well.

The Ugandan NGO HURINET-U has been attempting to enhance police accountability by engaging the Netherlands Embassy in Uganda to support a project that focused on police accountability and reform. By taking a broader perspective on accountability and service delivery, HURINET-U managed to involve police officers across 13 districts in Uganda. The Police Accountability and Reform Project, which was executed from 2010 until 2013 as a follow-up to an earlier project that started in 2007, targeted the Ugandan police, alongside with a host of other important actors drawn from Ugandan society and politics. Project activities involved dialogues between police and civil society organisations, including representatives from the media, as well as a variety of broader outreach activities aimed at the Ugandan people at large. Those outreach activities included the setting up of a website, the airing of radio talk shows, and the publication of materials on the functioning of the police and the state of public order management in Uganda.

Our case study of the Police Accountability and Reform Project was aimed at assessing the impact of accountability measures at the level of individual police officers. The methodological assumption, based on a logic of differences, was that the impact of the project would be demonstrable by comparing the attitudes of police officers in districts that had participated in PARP activities with those of officers that had not been part of the project. Our main instruments for assessing attitudinal change were a large-scale survey involving 600 police officers, based on a set of hypothetical vignette cases, and in-depth interviews with 23 police officers. The survey tried to assess differences in attitudes with respect to integrity dilemmas that are likely to occur in daily police work, while the interviews related to various aspects of police behaviour, including respect for human rights,



treatment of suspects and police-community interaction. Both the large-scale survey and the interviews demonstrate how PARP had impacted police officers' attitudes in relation to their policing activities. The survey showed a marked difference between the responses of officers in PARP and those in non-PARP districts, which led us to the conclusion that PARP activities have left an impact on the way police officers respond to integrity issues in their day-to-day work. The interviews likewise demonstrated an enhanced sense of awareness of important accountability issues, related to the treatment of civilians and their rights, among officers who participated in PARP, compared to those from non-participating districts.

The case study of the Police Accountability and Reform Project in Uganda shows how the attention to accountability issues of public service providers may have impacted the attitude of people working in the public service. The difficult case of the police in Uganda shows that attitudes of police officers appear to be malleable when there is focused attention to the roles and responsibilities of those working in public service. Attitudinal change is by no means a *sufficient* condition for behavioural change, as the latter is co-determined by a range of other factors, including control and command structures within the police, and the use of the police force for political objectives. Thus, accountability projects such as PARP should not be judged only by their immediate impact on behaviour. Projects like these may have an impact on attitudes towards accountability of service providers, and such attitudinal changes are undoubtedly a *necessary* condition for alterations in the behaviour of the police vis-à-vis the public. In this sense, the potential effect of accountability projects should not be underestimated, as they could hold great benefit for the lives of ordinary citizens.

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## **Appendix A: Vignette cases**

### ***Group 1: Code of conduct among the police officers***

*Case 1:* A police officer, who happens to be a very good auto mechanic, is scheduled to work during coming holidays. The supervisor Catherine offers to give him these days off, if he agrees to repair her personal car. Evaluate the supervisor's behaviour.

*Case 2:* At 2:00 a.m., a police officer, who is on duty, is driving his patrol car on a deserted road. He sees a vehicle that has been driven off the road and is stuck in a ditch. He approaches the vehicle and observes that the driver is not hurt but is obviously drunk. He also finds that the driver is a police officer. He transports the driver to her home. Evaluate the behaviour of the police officer on duty.

### ***Group 2: Situations of undue advantage, bribery and fraud***

*Case 3:* A police officer routinely accepts free meals, cigarettes, and other items of small value from merchants on his duty. She does not solicit these gifts and is careful not to abuse the generosity of those who give gifts to her.

*Case 4:* The police officer Godfrey stops a motorist for speeding. The officer agrees to accept a personal gift of half of the amount of the fine in exchange for not taking the offending motorist to court to answer to charges for the traffic offence.

*Case 5:* A police officer finds a wallet in a parking lot. It contains an amount of money equivalent to a full day's pay for that officer. She reports the wallet as lost property but keeps the money for herself.

*Case 6:* The police officer Glory discovers a burglary of a general merchandise shop. The display cases are smashed, and it is obvious that many items have been taken. While searching the shop, she takes 10 jerry cans of cooking oil and 1 sack of posho of 100 kilograms worth about a month's pay for that officer. She reports that the items had been stolen during the burglary.

### ***Group 3: Refusal to register complaints***

*Case 7:* A formerly arrested man comes to the police station and wants to fill in a complaint form. He claims that he was not treated properly during his arrest. The police officer Sarah who is in charge laughs at him and sends him away.

*Case 8:* Samwel goes to a police station to register a complaint over one of their officers who had beaten and tortured him. At the station he finds a friend of the officer who tortured him. The friend refuses to register his complaint and instead decides to detain him for a week over giving false information to the police. Evaluate the behaviour of the friend.

### ***Group 4: Reported severe crimes against individuals not followed up upon***

*Case 9:* Mary goes to the police station to report a case where her husband has been beating her for the last one year. She lost one of her teeth and has a damaged eye due to the beating. The police officer on duty thinks this is a mere family dispute and not a crime for the police to handle. He refuses to register the case.

*Case 10:* A police officer on duty receives a woman who wants to register a case of murder of her child by a neighbour. The officer registers the case and promises to follow up and arrest the suspect in a few hours' time. Two days down the road, the suspect has not been arrested and was sending messages threatening to harm the complainant. The woman went back to the same police station to report the scenario and the suspect was arrested and detained at the police station. However, the suspect was released immediately on account that there was not enough evidence to convict him. Evaluate the behaviour of the police officer who first received the woman.

***Group 5: Undue force used by the police***

*Case 11:* Two police officers on foot patrol surprise a man who is attempting to break into a shop. The man flees. They chase him for about half a kilometre before apprehending him by tackling him and wrestling him to the ground. After he is under control, both officers punch him a couple of times in the stomach and step on his back several times as punishment for fleeing and resisting.

*Case 12:* A subdistrict has a challenge of water shortage for a period of four months. The area leader together with residents decide to petition national water for the poor services and failure to deliver. However, the situation continues for two more months. The area leader and the residents opt to stage a peaceful demonstration as a way of showing their dissatisfaction. No sooner had the demonstration started than the District Police Commander deployed a team of officers with teargas and firing of live ammunitions killing 20 of the demonstrators including the area leader. Evaluate the District Police Commander's behaviour.