

Telephone: +260-211-252611/252772
Fax+260-211-250349
Telegrams: AUDITOR, RIDGEWAY
LUSAKA, ZAMBIA
E-Mail:auditorg@ago.gov.zm



In reply please quote:

NO.....

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL

P.O.BOX 50071
RIDGEWAY,
LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

PRESS RELEASE *For Immediate Release*

26th September 2019

To: The News Editor

STATEMENT ON THE RELEASE OF THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Performance Audit Report on the Juvenile System in Zambia for the period 2014 to 2017 is out.

The purpose of a Performance audit report is to bring out the 3Es which is efficiency, effectiveness and economy of government programmes and activities.

The report highlights the numerous challenges that exist across the criminal justice institutions in Zambia which inhibit the efficient and effective service delivery of justice to citizens particularly juveniles that come into conflict with the law and how they are handled through the juvenile justice system.

What is of paramount to this matter is the Sustainable Development Goal 16 which aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies in order provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions for all levels.

The SDGs are premised on various principles one of which is the principle of leaving no one behind which principle aims at ensuring inclusion of the marginalised, excluded and disempowered groups which includes juveniles in conflict with the law.

The objective of the audit was to assess whether the four named institutions (Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, Zambia Police Service, Zambia Correctional

Services and the Judiciary) have put in place measures that support the welfare and rehabilitation of juveniles that come into conflict with the law.

The summary findings of this audit report are that the Zambia Police Service has not ensured that adequate measures are in place to ensure the welfare of juveniles in conflict with the law at the time of their arrest, reception and referral such as non-separation of juvenile suspects from adult suspects at police stations.

The audit report also observed weaknesses in the handling of juvenile cases by the Judiciary such as lack of child-friendly court facilities and prolonged processing of juvenile cases through the courts. Juveniles are mixed with adult offenders due to absence of holding cells as well as unsuitable court facilities for juveniles.

The report also found that there were inadequate custodial measures by the Zambia correctional services to ensure welfare and rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. For instance juvenile offenders were put together with adult offenders in crowded correctional facilities.

There was also ineffective management of the welfare of juvenile offenders throughout the process by the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services such as absence of officials during the recording of statements at the police stations among others.

The office recommends that the four institutions addresses the weaknesses the report has highlighted and strengthens their mechanisms aimed at welfare, rehabilitation and reintegration of the juveniles that come into conflict with the law.

The report was tabled on the floor of the House and is now a public document which can be accessed from the Office of the Auditor General headquarters in Long acres, Lusaka and on the website www.ago.gov.zm.

For more information or clarification, contact the undersigned.

Issued by: Ellen Chikale (Ms.)

Head of Public Relations

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