



## **ANTI CORRUPTION COALITION UGANDA**

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### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

## **MEDIA INVESTIGATION ON UGANDA'S WITNESS PROTECTION FRAMEWORK AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU) was established in January 1999 and officially registered as an NGO in 2004. ACCU unites like-minded individuals and organizations dedicated to raising awareness, exposing, and advocating for the reduction of corruption in Uganda. Since its inception, ACCU has demonstrated commitment to fostering an accountable and corruption-free society through diverse initiatives, often with support from various development partners. At the national level, ACCU collaborates with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) operating in the accountability sector while on the local front, ACCU works with and through Regional Anti-Corruption Coalitions (RACCs) distributed across the country, as well as grassroots member organizations to ensure that voices of citizens are effectively represented across the national agenda.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

Uganda has been in the midst of several corruption scandals involving billions of shillings which has fragmented the government's stride towards sustaining the various anti-corruption efforts despite the established policy, legal and institutional frameworks. According to the Inspectorate of Government, the country loses approximately Ugx. 9.14tn to corruption annually. In 2024, Transparency International ranked Uganda in the 140<sup>th</sup> position out of 180 countries in terms of fighting corruption, with a score of 26%.

Corruption in Uganda is systemic, endemic, syndicated, sophisticated and astronomical in proportion, precipitated by a patronage political system, impunity and a culture that is increasingly tolerant of corruption. Despite constitutional guarantees and existing anti-corruption frameworks, the country continues to face challenges in successfully prosecuting all corruption cases. One of the main hindrances is the lack of a robust and functional whistleblower and witness protection mechanism. Witnesses often face intimidation, retaliation, social exclusion, and violence due to their role in exposing corruption and supporting prosecution of

corruption cases. This has discouraged many from coming forward or testifying in court, which in turn weakens the pursuit of justice.

To address some of these challenges, ACCU is implementing a 4-year project titled “Citizen Engagement for Accountability Project (CEAP)”. The project aims to strengthen accountability of state actors in Uganda and; enhance the capacity of non-state actors to demand for accountability, and ultimately contribute to improved transparency and accountability among state and non-state actors in Uganda.

The project is implemented in the 8 districts of Yumbe, Terego, Madi-Okollo and Obongi in West Nile and Moroto, Napak, Nakapiripirit and Nabilatuk in Karamoja and at national level. It focuses on tackling corruption in critical service delivery sectors of health, education, justice, livelihood and environment, which directly affect ordinary Ugandans, and supplements efforts by government’s anti-corruption and accountability institutions in the fight against corruption at all levels.

### **3.0 JUSTIFICATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The right to a fair trial, access to justice, and protection from harm are fundamental human rights recognized in various international, regional, and national legal instruments. Witness protection is a critical component of a justice system, especially in cases involving corruption-related offenses. International frameworks such as the United Nations Convention Against Corruption and regional instruments like the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, underscore the obligation of states to protect witnesses from retaliation and intimidation. These protections are vital to ensure that witnesses can come forward, testify and participate in the justice process without fear.

Uganda is a signatory to many of these international and regional instruments and has demonstrated some level of commitment to combating corruption. However, the country does not have a comprehensive and functional legal and institutional framework for witness protection. While the Whistleblower Protection Act (2010) exists, it focuses mainly on whistleblowers, not on witnesses in legal proceedings and its enforcement remains limited. Consequently, individuals who agree to testify in corruption cases often face threats, harassment, social exclusion, loss of employment and violence, creating an environment of fear and silence, which severely undermines the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts.

Many corruption cases in Uganda have stalled, collapsed, or failed to achieve convictions due to the withdrawal or disappearance of witnesses, often due to lack of protection. This not only weakens public trust in the justice system but also emboldens corrupt actors. The failure to protect witnesses directly contributes to impunity and undermines broader efforts to uphold the rule of law and accountability.

To address this gap, there is an urgent need to investigate the state of witness protection in Uganda to bring to the fore real experiences of witnesses who have suffered due to the absence of protective mechanisms, examine the institutional and legal gaps, and assess how these challenges affect the investigation and conclusion of corruption-related cases.

Based on this background, ACCU seeks to engage a media house or investigative journalist(s) to conduct an investigation into witness protection in Uganda. The findings from this investigation will inform ACCU's advocacy and policy recommendations aimed at strengthening the witness protection framework in Uganda.

#### **4.0 GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTANCY**

To analyze the impact of Uganda's witness protection system on the investigation and prosecution of corruption cases, and provide evidence-based recommendations for policy and institutional reforms.

##### **4.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- a) To document experiences of witnesses who have suffered harm or threats due to their involvement in corruption cases.
- b) To show how the absence of witness protection affects the investigation, prosecution, and conclusion of corruption-related cases.
- c) To recommend legal and institutional reforms necessary to establish an effective witness protection system for Uganda.

#### **5.0 NATURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

- a) The investigation will document experiences of witnesses who have suffered harm or threats due to their involvement in corruption cases.
- b) Demonstrate the nexus between the absence of witness protection and the failure to effectively investigate, prosecute, and conclude corruption-related cases.
- c) Based on the findings, propose practical solutions and policy recommendations for ACCU's advocacy to strengthen the witness protection framework in Uganda.

#### **6.0 METHODOLOGY**

The selected media house/investigative journalist will be expected to develop a detailed methodology for this assignment, stating how each of the assignment objectives will be achieved. The media house/investigative journalist will be required to engage the relevant state and non-state actors, including those in the project implementation districts on the assignment. The methodology will be discussed and finalized in consultation with ACCU.

#### **7.0 EXPECTED OUTPUTS**

The successful media house/investigative journalist is expected to:

- a) Produce an inception report with an agreed upon methodology and implementation plan.
- b) Produce one investigative story.
- c) Make necessary corrections / changes on the advice of ACCU to the investigative story and re-submit within the agreed timeframe.
- d) Relay the investigative story on a national television/publish in a national newspaper.

## 8.0 SCOPE OF WORK

This assignment will be focused at the national level and implementation districts of Terego, Yumbe, Madi Okollo, Obongi in West Nile and Nakapiripirit, Moroto, Napak and Nabilatuk districts in Karamoja sub region. The final product shall be a write-up for the newsprint or a 15-30 minute audio visual that shall be relayed on a reputable national television. This will draw the attention of policymakers, citizens, and stakeholders involved in shaping and implementing justice and anti-corruption efforts, to the urgent need for effective witness protection.

## 9.0 TIMEFRAME FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

No.	Activity	Timeframe	Responsible Party
1.	Publication of the terms of reference	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	ACCU
2.	Delivery of Expression of Interest/Technical and Financial Proposals including the Methodology	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Consultants
3.	Submission of Inception Report	29 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Consultant
4.	Conclusion of contractual processes	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Consultant & ACCU
5.	Delivery of the first version of the investigative story	16 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	ACCU & Consultant
7.	Publication/relay of final investigative story in national newspaper / television.	20 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	Consultant

## 10.0 LEVEL OF EFFORT

This assignment is expected to take a total of 20 days.

## 11.0 QUALIFICATIONS

The suitable media house/media practitioner is expected to have at least 5 years of experience doing similar investigations. Samples of similar work will be required during assessment.

## 12.0 REPORTING AND SUPERVISION

The consultant will report to the Project Manager at ACCU.

## 13.0 SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Media houses/media practitioners who meet the above requirements should submit their technical and financial proposals to the Executive Director, Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda on [info@accu.or.ug](mailto:info@accu.or.ug) with a copy to; [amarlon@accu.or.ug](mailto:amarlon@accu.or.ug) not later than 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025.