



AUTO STATEMENT ON THE ONGOING GORILLA PERMITS FRAUD AND EMBEZZLEMENT INVESTIGATIONS AT THE UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY

The Association of Uganda Tour Operators (AUTO) is Uganda's leading tourism trade association, representing the interests of the country's leading and experienced professional tour operators.

Our over 320 members have for more than 25 years been offering a range of services, including, special interest safaris, air safaris, incentive travel group safaris as well as custom safaris for individual travelers camping safaris for both luxury and budget domestic, regional and international clients.

We are united by a collective vision and aspiration to become a leading and valued association of tour operators in Africa in service of destination Uganda and our motherland, the Pearl of Africa.

It has come to our attention that in the ongoing investigations regarding gorilla permits fraud and revenue diversion by Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), some tour operators have been found to be conniving with UWA staff in this vice. These operators have been named in some of the media reports about the matter.

While we are yet to get an official position from UWA, AUTO has engaged some of our members who were mentioned in the said media stories, who have all denied ever having bought the impugned tickets or tracked gorillas on the said dates and or tracked the said gorilla groups. It is possible that the fraud racket, within the Uganda Wildlife Authority, has been using the names of these legitimate companies to buy the tampered-with tickets and thereafter selling them to their accomplices on the black market. Preliminary investigations also show that most of the mentioned companies are not AUTO members.

AUTO doesn't condone such illegal and dishonest acts. Our strict code of conduct holds our members to very high integrity standards. We would like to call for a full and quick investigation into the matter; even beyond gorilla permits to include chimpanzee tracking permits and park entry fees, where we understand the racket has also been selling permits reserved for East African residents to Foreign Non-Residents especially.

Should any of our members be found to be culpable, our internal disciplinary procedures shall fully be applied.

We would like to encourage our visitors to continue visiting Uganda, the Pearl of Africa, using only AUTO-registered tour operators.

Management

