REPUBLIC OF KENYA

IPOA Independent Policing Oversight Authority

THE

INDEPENDENT POLICING OVERSIGHT AUTHORITY

FROM APPLICATION TO ENLISTMENT: IPOA's OVERSIGHT OF THE 2025 POLICE CONSTABLES' RECRUITMENT

2025



GUARDING PUBLIC INTEREST IN POLICING

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Independent Policing Oversight Authority's (IPOA) monitoring of the 2025 Police Constable recruitment exercise, undertaken pursuant to Section 6(c) of the IPOA Act which mandates the Authority to safeguard the public interest and oversee police conduct and compliance with the law.

The recruitment process was significantly influenced by legal developments. The National Police Service Commission (NPSC) initially advertised the exercise on 19 September 2025 after gazetting the NPSC Recruitment and Appointment Regulations, 2025. However, following a petition by Mr. Harun Mwau, the Employment and Labour Relations Court on 30 October 2025 declared the regulations and advertisement unconstitutional, affirming that the mandate to recruit Police Constables lies with the National Police Service (NPS). Consequently, NPS issued a fresh advertisement on 4 November 2025. Although a subsequent petition temporarily halted the exercise, the stay orders were lifted on 14 November 2025, allowing the recruitment to proceed nationwide on 17 November 2025.

IPOA was formally invited by the Inspector General to observe the exercise. The Authority deployed 103 monitors across 103 recruitment centres in 25 counties. Monitoring focused on compliance with recruitment criteria, adherence to constitutional values and principles of fairness, conduct of recruitment panels, transparency of the process, and effectiveness of complaints handling mechanisms.

The monitoring noted general improvements in the early stages of the process, including registration, verification of academic credentials, physical assessments, and the humane treatment of applicants. Most recruitment panel members conducted themselves professionally. Observers from various oversight institutions were present, although the National Police Service Commission did not participate in the oversight**.** Notwithstanding the gains, key gaps were identified. The NPS recruitment guidelines were not publicly accessible, resulting in inconsistent application across recruitment centres. Public turnout was low, largely due to inadequate publicity following the court rulings. Transparency diminished in some centres during the medical examination and final selection phases, as outcomes in some instances were not clearly communicated to candidates or observers.

The allocation of National Youth Service (NYS) slots created inequities, particularly where unfilled NYS positions were not reallocated to qualified non-NYS applicants. Many centres exceeded the official 5.00 pm closing time, with some concluding late at night or the following day. Allegations of corruption, nepotism and substitution of successful candidates were raised and documented. In some centres, recruitment panel chairs were uncooperative or hostile towards IPOA monitors, while structured complaints desks were largely absent.

Adherence to constitutional principles was uneven. While the process aligned with Article 243 and partially with Article 238, gaps were noted in relation to Articles 10, 27(8), 232 and 244, particularly concerning transparency, gender balance, fair competition, non-discrimination and accountability.

The monitoring further identified systemic weaknesses, including the absence of a publicly available NPS regulatory framework, non-transparent medical and selection procedures, inequitable slot allocation, weak complaints-handling mechanisms, logistical challenges at recruitment venues and instances of non-cooperation with IPOA monitors.

The report recommends that the Inspector-General develops and publishes a comprehensive regulatory framework for NPS-led recruitment; strengthens transparency across all stages; ensures equitable allocation of slots; establishes formal complaints desks; strengthens cooperation with IPOA; enhances public communication; adopts digital registration systems; and ensures recruitment centres are adequately facilitated.

Overall, while the initial and key stages of the 2025 recruitment exercise showed noticeable improvement compared to previous cycles, persistent challenges especially around transparency and fairness during medical and final selection phases must be addressed to enhance the credibility and constitutional compliance of future recruitments.

1. INTRODUCTION

IPOA's mandate under Section 6 (c) of CAP 86 of the Laws of Kenya provide for monitoring and investigating policing operations affecting members of the public.The principal function of the Authority in relation to monitoring of police operations is to guard public interest in all policing activities; monitor police actions or inactions as per the law; ascertain the emerging trends in policing; review the patterns of police misconduct; publish findings including by means of the electronic or printed media and make recommendations to the police service or any State organ as well as report on all monitoring functions under its Act or any written law.

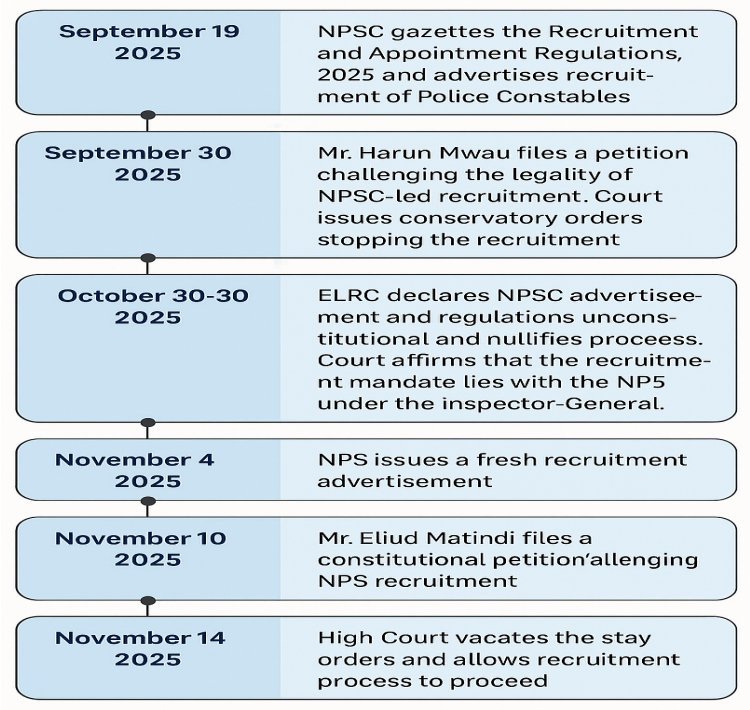
1.1 Background

In 2025, the National Police Service Commission (NPSC) initiated a process to develop new regulations to guide police recruitment. The Commission drafted the National Police Service Commission (NPSC) Recruitment and Appointment Regulations, 2025, subjected it to public participation and eventually gazetted (Legal notice 159 of 19/09/2025) the regulations. Subsequently, NPSC issued an advertisement on the Daily Nation newspaper, calling for the recruitment of Police Constables on 19th September 2025. The recruitment was scheduled to take place between 3rd and 9th October 2025. This recruitment was scheduled to proceed under the framework of the proposed regulations.

Following the publication, on 30th September 2025, Mr. Harun Mwau filed a petition challenging the legality of the NPSC-led recruitment and questioning whether the Commission possessed the constitutional authority to conduct the exercise. Conservatory orders were issued stopping the NPSC from conducting the recruitment until the case was heard and determined. After hearing the matter, the Employment and Labour Relations Court (ELRC) delivered a judgment on 30th October 2025, declaring the NPSC advertisement and the accompanying Recruitment Regulations unconstitutional, null, and void. The Court held that the constitutional mandate to recruit Police Constables rested exclusively with the National Police Service (NPS) under the Inspector-General. Shortly after the NPS released its notice, a new constitutional petition was filed by Mr. Eliud Matindi challenging the legality of the NPS recruitment. On 10th November 2025, the High Court issued conservatory orders staying the implementation of the NPS advertisement and halting all recruitment activities pending the hearing of the petition. On 14th November 2025, the High Court vacated (lifted) the earlier stay orders, restoring the position that existed before 10th November 2025. This decision effectively allowed the NPS to proceed with the recruitment exercise. With the legal impediments removed, the National Police Service conducted the nationwide recruitment of police constables on 17th November 2025, in accordance with the requirements set out in its advertisement of 4th November 2025.

Following the Court's ruling, the NPS assumed responsibility for the recruitment process and issued its own formal advertisement on 4th November 2025.

Fig. 1 shows major legal events affecting the 2025 recruitment.



The advert stated that NPS would be guided by Article 238, 243, 244, 245 as read with Articles 10, 27(8) and 232 of the Constitution of Kenya and the National Police Service Act during the recruitment. The notice invited applications from qualified candidates and set out the eligibility requirements/criteria as follows:

Table 1: Shows the advertisement conditions for compliance by prospective recruits (numbers 1-11)

No	Item	Details
1.	Legal basis	Articles 238, 243, 244, 245 read with Articles 10, 27(8) and 232 of the Constitution; National Police Service Act
2.	Recruitment date & time	Monday, 17th November 2025, 8.00am–5.00pm
3.	Reporting time	By 8.00am at designated recruitment centres
4.	Citizenship	Must be a Kenyan citizen with a valid National ID
5.	Age requirement	18-28 years
6.	Academic requirement	Minimum KCSE grade D+ with at least D+ in English or Kiswahili
7.	Medical & physical fitness	Must be physically and medically fit
8.	Height requirement	**Male:** Minimum 5 ft 8 in; **Female:** Minimum 5 ft 3 in
9.	Criminal record	Must have no criminal record or pending criminal charges
10.	Pregnancy requirement	Female candidates must not be pregnant at recruitment and during the entire training period
11.	NYS consideration	NYS graduates meeting minimum requirements were encouraged to apply
12.	Application procedure	Forms to be downloaded from Huduma Centres or official NPS websites
13.	Documents required	Academic certificates and testimonials, National ID, Birth Certificate, NYS discharge certificate where applicable

No	Item	Details
14.	NYS instruction	NYS graduates to present themselves at their home recruitment centres
15.	Document handling	All original documents to be returned before leaving the centre
16.	IPOA involvement	IPOA invited by NPS through a letter dated 3 November 2025 to observe the recruitment nationwide

1.2 Objectives of the monitoring

The objectives of the monitoring exercises are represented in the below matrix.

No	Objective
1.	Monitor and document police conduct and compliance with the recruitment criteria set out in the advertisement for Police Constables.
2.	Evaluate whether the recruitment adhered to national values and principles of governance (Article 10), the two-thirds gender rule (Article 27(8)), values and principles of public service (Article 232(g, h, i)), diversity of the Kenyan people (Article 238), and Articles 243, 244 and 245.
3.	Identify gaps in the recruitment process and recommend measures to improve future recruitments by the Service.

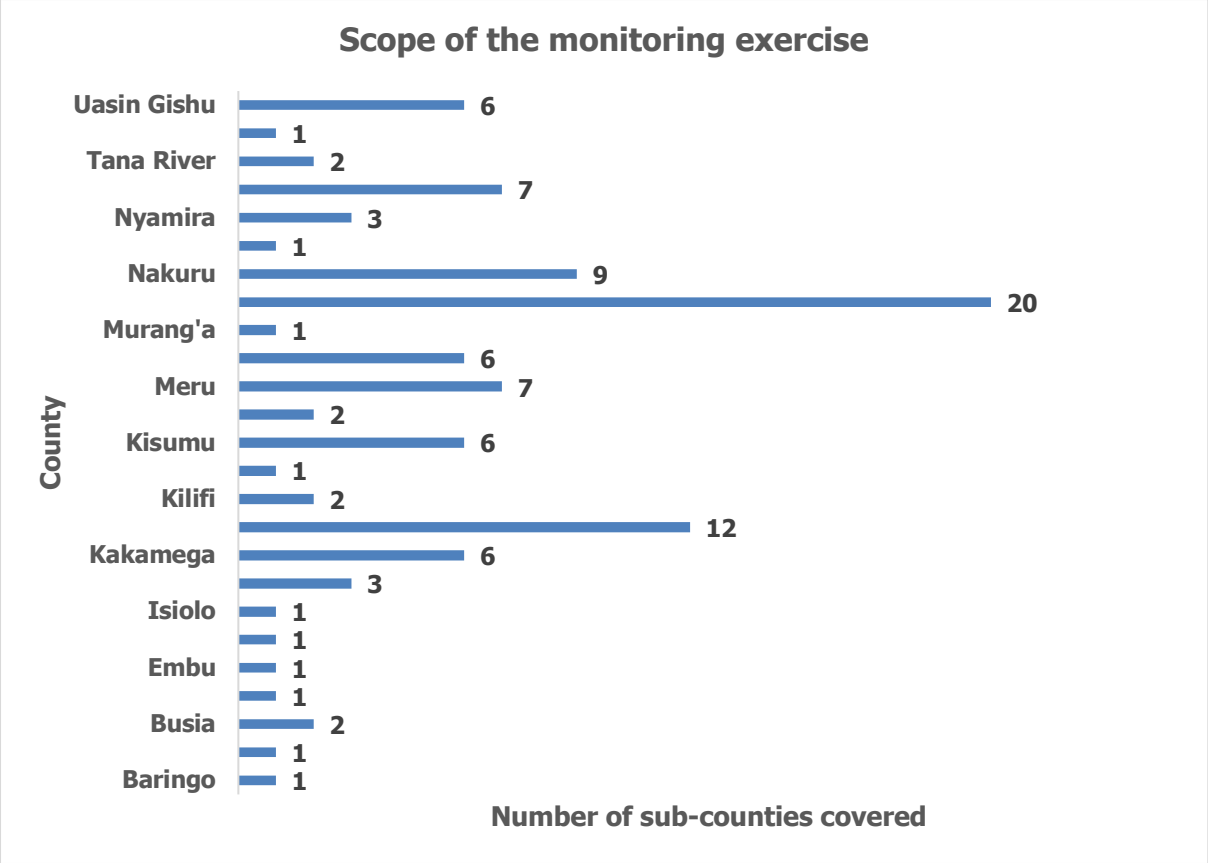
1.3 Methodology

The IPOA monitoring teams used observation, interviews, desktop review of applicable laws and photography to monitor and document the conduct of the 2025 Police recruitment exercise. The teams documented the observations using the Authority's structured Police recruitment monitoring tool. The monitoring criteria was based on the tool which covers the following thematic areas; composition of the recruitment panel; briefing of the officers taking part in the recruitment exercise; security arrangements at the recruitment centre; briefing of the candidates on the code of conduct and the requirements of the exercise; general overview of the environment at the recruitment venues; complaints handling mechanisms; emerging issues and challenges; concerns from candidates and members of public; name, age and ethnicity of the recruits; Services recruiting (KPS, APS, GSU) including recruit gender composition of each Service and any other observations. This is the criteria that was applied by IPOA monitors during the monitoring exercise.

1.4 Scope

The Authority physically covered **103** recruitment centres **(24%)** out of the advertised **422** centres. The centres were distributed across **25** Counties **(53%)** out of the **47** Counties in Kenya.

The Authority deployed **103** monitors. During the monitoring, IPOA also collaborated with other stakeholders including the NIS, NPS, NGAO and CAJ.



2 KEY OBSERVATIONS.

2.1 November 2025 guidelines on recruitment of Police Constables

The National Police Service developed its own guidelines for recruitment of Police Constables following nullification of the guidelines developed the NPSC. The recruitment was conducted in line with these guidelines some of which were on the 4th of November 2025 advertisement. The NPS guidelines were not known to the public.

2.2 Security at the recruitment venue

The recruitment venues varied in terms of infrastructure across the centres monitored. Regardless of their condition, the respective Area Ward Commanders (OCS) ensured that all venues remained secure throughout the recruitment process. However, in some centres, disqualified candidates managed to re-enter the process due to inadequate security controls and even proceeded to the medical examination stage, which prolonged the overall exercise.

2.3 Compliance with the recruitment guidelines set out on the advertisement

2.3.1 Turnout

The advertisement invited qualified candidates for the recruitment into the NPS. However, across the centres monitored low turnout was observed. Interviews with members of the public showed lack of awareness of the exercise as the main reason for the turnout.

2.3.2 Observers

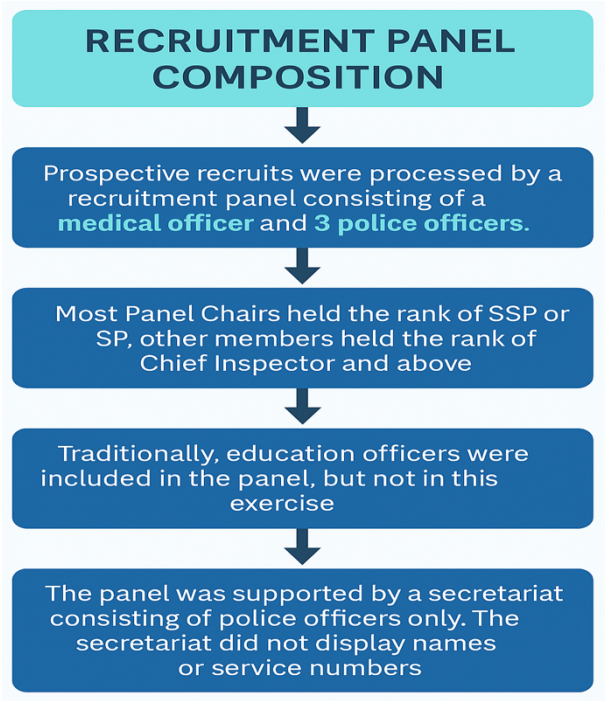
The NPS recruitment exercise was observed by IPOA, CAJ, NIS, EACC, NGAO, media, representatives of Members of Parliament, Community Based Organisations, like HURIA and members of the public. In all the centres monitored NPSC was not present.

2.3.3 Recruitment process

Across the centres monitored and as per the advertisement, candidates showed up by 8 a.m.; although few candidates came in after 8 a.m. and were still allowed to participate in the recruitment exercise.

Would be recruits were received by the recruiting panel comprising of a medical officer and 3 police officers (majority of the panel Chairs were of the rank of SSP and SP with the other 2 being of a rank of Chief Inspector and above). Traditionally, educational officers were part of the panel but during this time they were not. The panel was assisted by a secretariat comprising of Police officers only.

Figure 2 shows the composition and structure of recruitment panels during the 2025 Police Constable recruitment



The secretariat did affix their names/service numbers for identification. The Chairs of the panel briefed the candidates on their mission and the expectations during the day. They highlighted some of the requirements the candidates should fulfil as advertised. Although some centres did not indicate to the recruits the numbers they intended to recruit at the briefing stage, most centres communicated that there were slots meant for NYS only and non-NYS candidates were to compete for the remaining slots. After the briefing, the candidates were required to register.

2.3.4 Registration of candidates

Registration of candidates was done by the secretariat manually. As a candidate registered, he/she also handed over their hand filled NPS application forms. It was observed that some candidates had filled in the NPSC application forms. The panel allowed such candidates to look for the NPS application form and fill in details afresh. Registration took time depending on the turnout at a recruitment centre. Original certificates were also taken for verification and later returned to the candidates. No issues were noted regarding the return of the certificates.

2.3.5 First elimination stage

After registration, the Panel Chair called out candidates and required those who did not meet the advertised academic qualifications to leave the recruitment centre. Except in Nairobi County, the Chairs also directed candidates whose National Identity Cards did not indicate they were residents of the respective Wards to leave the venues. While most candidates complied, in some centres a number remained within the vicinity. There were also allegations that some of the disqualified individuals later re-entered the process and were ultimately recruited. Candidates who met the requirements proceeded to the document verification stage. This phase was largely transparent and conducted in a humane manner across most of the centres monitored. The duration of this stage varied depending on the turnout at each centre.

2.3.6 Physical and medical examination stage

IPOA monitors noted that the NPS was using the NPSC Police Recruitment physical and medical examination form.

2.3.7 Physical examination

After the first elimination stage, candidate's physical features including height (5,6" -men, 5,3"-ladies), flat foot, limping while walking, all teeth available, ability to wink eyes and if one wore spectacles, squint eyes (eyes look sideways), straight stretch of the hands, availability of all figures with clear print marks, bow leg, knock knees and permanent scars indicative of surgery. This stage eliminated some candidates including ladies who had given birth through C-section. Those who made through the stage were subjected to a running exercise. The form used by the medical examination officers showed that men were to run for 6 kilometres while women were to run for 4 kilometres. Monitors were unable to ascertain if these distances were covered. After the run, no elimination occurred at this stage. This stage took the shortest time of all the stages.

2.3.8 Medical examination

Candidates were subjected to medical tests including gender (in some centres, genitals were not checked as per the medical form); eyesight(short/longsighted) blood pressure (120/80 to 145/90); and urine (protein percentage, STDS and pregnancy). This stage took the longest time due to unique factors at the recruitment centres including few medical personnel and travel to medical facilities to conduct the examinations. Monitors also observed that delays could have been occasioned by lack of specialisation as the test parameters touched on specialised medical fields making one medic not efficient in conducting all the tests. No elimination was done at this stage. Feedback on the medical findings was also not given to the candidates. Due to this, this stage was not transparent.

2.3.9 Selection stage

After the physical and medical examinations, the panel convened to select successful candidates to fill the slots allocated to each recruitment centre. This process was largely opaque and took a considerable amount of time to conclude. In most centres, the selection was conducted at night and, in some instances, away from the main recruitment venues. The selection involved assigning candidates to the Kenya Police Service (KPS), Administration Police Service (APS) or General Service Unit (GSU). In some centres, monitors observed cases where candidates initially announced as successful were later replaced by others, even after being issued with docket numbers and joining instructions. Across the centres monitored,

National Youth Service (NYS) slots were more than non-NYS slots. However, many NYS slots remained unfilled due to factors such as lack of interested candidates, failure to meet recruitment requirements, and absence of valid NYS discharge certificates.

2.3.10 Non-cooperation with IPOA Monitors

The Chair of some recruitment centres monitored exhibited low unprofessional standards and hostile to IPOA monitors. They failed to provide optimal support of to the monitors notwithstanding the IG's invite to IPOA to observe oversight the exercise. Some other Panel Chairs were cooperative throughout the exercise, and failed to provide IPOA monitors with the official lists of the successful candidates citing orders from the Inspector General Office.

2.3.11 Oath taking by the recruitment panel

Some panel members began the recruitment exercise without being sworn in. They were sworn in the middle of the day while the exercise was still going on.

2.3.12 Complaint handling mechanisms

Few centres had complaint desks to formally receive, document and handle complaints. In majority of the centres, complaints and inquiries were made and resolved verbally by the chairs of the panels. Some centres referred complainants to IPOA monitors.

2.3.13 General concerns from candidates and members of the public

Majority of the candidates and members of the public interviewed, expressed their satisfaction with the conduct of the recruitment process. However, few concerns were raised as shown in the matrix below:

Table 4: General concerns from the candidates and public

No	Feedback Area	Observations
1.	Overall Perception	Majority of candidates and members of the public expressed satisfaction with the recruitment process.
2.	Corruption & Transparency	Allegations of corruption and lack of transparency, especially during the selection stage.
3.	Duration of Process	Complaints that the recruitment process took too long to conclude.
4.	Welfare of Candidates	In some centres, there was lack of meals and drinking water for candidates.
5.	Sanitation Facilities	Some recruitment centres lacked adequate toilet facilities.
6.	Slot Allocation	Concerns over allocation of very few slots to certain centres.
7.	Gender Consideration	Complaints about lack of designated female slots in some centres.

2.3.14 Emerging issues

Out of the 103 centres monitored, only 2 recruitment centres had ethnic hostilities; allegations of corruption were made in 6 out of the 103 centres monitored; 1 centre had a nepotism allegation; 10 centres were reported to be non-adherent to laid down recruitment standards, regulations, rules and procedures; none of the centres had imposters although fake documents were identified at some ; and majority of the monitors observed some level of improvement in the recruitment process comparing with the previous ones.

Table 4: Matrix of summary on dissatisfaction and operational concerns across monitored recruitment centres

No	Observation	No. of Centres	Remarks
1.	Ethnic hostilities reported	2 out of 103	Isolated incidents of ethnic tension during the recruitment process
2.	Allegations of corruption	6 out of 103	Corruption concerns raised by candidates and members of the public
3.	Nepotism allegations	1 out of 103	Limited to one recruitment centre
4.	Non-adherence to recruitment standards and procedures	10 out of 103	Centres did not fully comply with laid down recruitment regulations, rules and procedures
5.	Imposters detected	0 out of 103	No cases of imposters reported
6.	Fake or falsified documents	Reported in some centres	Fake documents were identified, although no confirmed imposters
7.	Overall improvement compared to previous recruitments	Majority of centres	Monitors observed noticeable improvements in recruitment conduct and organisation

3 ANALYSIS OF THE OBSERVATIONS MADE

3.1 Compliance with the constitutional framework on Police Recruitment

3.1.1 National Values and Principles of Governance (Article 10)

The recruitment exercise as advertised was to be carried out within the framework of the national values and principles enshrined in Article 10 of the constitution. Some of the values that were to be complied with included: rule of law, democracy and participation of the people; human dignity, equity, inclusiveness, social justice, human rights and non-discrimination; integrity, transparency and accountability.

From the observations made, the Service was not fully compliant with these principles. For instance, there was seemingly lack of transparency during the medical examination phase as well as the selection phase. The exercise largely lacked participation of the candidates and observers especially on sharing of information informing decisions that were made.

The recruitment also discriminated against non-NYS candidates by setting aside more specific slots for the NYS candidates and by giving NYS candidates two (2) chances to compete at the recruitment venues; they could participate as NYS and otherwise they could also participate as non-NYS. This situation led to some slots meant for the Wards going unfilled due to lack of qualified NYS candidates. There were non-NYS candidates who met the qualifications and were not considered for the vacant slots. There were no criteria known to the public on how the unfilled slots would be filled. The process was also discriminatory to ladies who had given birth through C-section as their scars were permanent as classified under medical examination form. Slot allocations were also discriminative to ladies as some centres did not have slots for ladies

In some centres, Monitors observed candidates who were read as successful being replaced with others later even after being issued with the Docket Number and the Joining Instructions defeating the principle of social justice, integrity and accountability.

3.1.2 Two Third Gender Principle (Article 27(8))

The article requires implementation of the principle, that not more than two-thirds in all appointive bodies shall be of the same gender. From the observations made across the centres monitored, none implemented this principle. Men recruited were way more than ladies. Some centres did not have slots for ladies.

3.1.3 Values And Principles of Public Service (Article 232 (g, h, i))

The Article emphasizes fair competition and merit as the basis of appointments and promotions. The appointments should ensure representation of Kenya's diverse communities; and should afford adequate and equal opportunities for appointments, training and advancement at all levels of public service of men and women, members of ethnic groups and persons with disabilities.

From the observations made, the NPS did not fully implement the provisions of this article especially in ensuring fair competition and merit in appointments. The recruitment gave the NYS candidate an upper hand defeating the principle of fair competition and merit as the basis of appointments in the public Service. Despite the lack of jobs in Kenya, NPS could not fill NYS slots with qualified non-NYS candidates.

3.1.4 Article 238(d)

The article provides that recruitment by a national security organ shall reflect the diversity of the Kenyan people in equitable proportions. In the centres monitored, Kenyans were recruited at the ward levels as evidenced by their ID cards. NPS panellist disqualified individuals who hailed from different wards thereby ensuring that diversity of Kenyans all the way to the ward level was guaranteed. However, in some set ups where clannism is a major factor the recruitment process did not make clannism as a criterion for selection. The article was partially adhered to.

3.1.5 Articles 243

The article establishes the Services of the National Police Service. The recruitment exercise was to align to the two Services: KPS and APS. Throughout the centres monitored, candidates were recruited as either KPS or APS. There was full compliance to this article.

3.1.6 Article 244

The article requires the NPS ensure high standards of professionalism and discipline among its members; prevent corruption, and practice transparency and accountability; and comply with constitutional standards of human rights and fundamental freedoms. From the observations made, majority of the panel members were professional while some were unethical and unprofessional while carrying out the recruitment exercise. Some of the unprofessional panellists showed hostility towards IPOA and to the prospective recruits. Across the centres monitored, the medical and selection phases were largely characterised with opacity. This implies violations of fundamental right to access of information regarding the decisions that led qualification or disqualification of candidates. There were allegations raised against hostile panellists on possibility of engaging in corrupt practices. The Recruitment did not entirely comply with the provisions of article 244 of the Constitution.

3.1.7 Article 245(4, c).

The Article provides for the independence of the IG in respect to employment of any member of the Service. It states that nobody should give the IG any directions regarding the employment of members of the Service. From the observations made majority of the panellists appeared independent and acted without influence from any quota. However, there were allegations of members of the Service who were trying to influence employment of certain candidates at some recruitment centres. There were also allegations of members of the public who were trying to influence employment of their preferred candidates especially Members of Parliament and NGAO officers.

3.2 Compliance to the Police Constables recruitment advert criteria

3.2.1 Academic qualifications and certifications

To a larger extent, the NPS across the centres monitored complied with the academic qualifications and certifications as advertised. However, there were centres where the panel recruited lower grades allegedly with authorisation from the IG's Office.

3.2.2 Physical examination

The NPS largely complied with the criteria set out in the advertisement although there were variations in height. The advertisement for instance required male candidates to be 5feet and 8 inches tall while in some recruitment centres it was lowered to 5 feet and 6inches. The NPSC medical form in use also had 5 feet and 6 inches as the required height for male candidates.

3.2.3 Medical examination

The parameters to be examined were not advertised. However, Eye tests, urine protein percentage tests, Pregnancy tests, STDS tests and Blood pressure tests were carried out in line with the NPSC medical and physical examination forms. The candidates were not informed whether they had passed the tests or not. This exercise also took a lot of time to complete in majority of the centres monitored.

3.2.4 Selection of successful candidates

There was no publicly known criterion for selection of successful candidates. This phase took a lot of time, and it was not transparent. Information leading to decisions made by the panellists was not shared with the candidates, members of public and observers including IPOA. The exercise, majority of the centres was carried out at night. Some centres due to various challenges like tensions amongst the members of the public and lack of lighting did their selection at Police Stations. After selection, as expected, successful candidates were issued their D-numbers and joining instructions. Many allegations of bribery and corrupt practices were raised by the unsuccessful candidates and their parents and friends.

3.2.5 Compliance to start and end time

The NPS stated in its advert that the recruitment would start at 8:am and end at 5:00pm on the 17$^{th\ of}$ November 2025. While opening time was largely complied with, ending time did comply with the advert. Only 29 centres completed their recruitment on time as advertised. At Ruaraka Sub-County-NYS headquarters recruitment centre, the recruitment ended on 18th November 2025 at 1pm. In other centres like Embakasi West Subcounty-Tena grounds Recruitment centre, the recruitment ended at 4 am on 18th November 2025.

3.2.6 Humane treatment of candidates

Across most of the centres monitored, candidates were treated humanely and with compassion. Some panel chairs ensured the were fed. There were some who also provided drinking water and juice. This was a good practice, and it promotes public confidence in the NPS.

3.2.7 Complaints received at IPOA

As of 24th November 2025, IPOA had registered **16** complaints from members of the public regarding the recruitment process. Their allegations included:

i. Persons being recruited while not actually coming from the locality of recruitment.
ii. Discrimination against females during the recruitment
iii. Corruption and Bribery during the recruitment
iv. NPS Non-cooperation and obstruction to IPOA and CAJ observers
v. Disqualification of candidates with result slips while it was the government that had not released the certificates
vi. Some Candidates arriving at the recruitment venue late and ending up successful while disqualifying others due to lateness.
vii. Disqualification despite excellent performance in the running exercise. Visibly unfit candidates got successful.
viii. Unprofessional conduct of the recruitment exercise by the Panel Chair
ix. Disqualification based on age despite being within the advertised age bracket
x. Ethnic favouritism

Table 1: Complaints received per County

No	County	Number of Complaints
1.	Bungoma	1
2.	Embu	1
3.	Garissa	1
4.	Homabay	1
5.	Kiambu	1
6.	Kirinyaga	1
7.	Nairobi	7
8.	Nakuru	1
9.	Samburu	1
10.	Taita Taveta	1
	Total	**16**

3.3 Identified gaps in the recruitment process

i. Lack of public known regulatory framework for NPS led Police recruitment of constables.
ii. Discriminative slot allocation to NYS. The recruitment should allow qualified non-NYS candidates to have the opportunity to take those positions.
iii. Unknown criteria for filling the slots that were not recruited for NYS.
iv. Time for carrying out the recruitment exercise was inadequate.
v. Lack of transparency and accountability in the medical examination and selection

phase of the recruitment.

vi. Hostility and non-cooperation of some panel members towards IPOA monitors.
vii. There is need for IPOA liaison officer at the IG's Office on matters related to recruitment of police constables.
viii. Lack of complaints desk at the recruitment centres.
ix. Lack of adequate publicity to the recruitment drive.
x. Recruitment centres lack basic amenities like water, electricity and toilets.
xi. Failure to immediately disqualify those who fail medical test and waste their time waiting for the selection phase to end for the disqualification message to reach them.
xii. Dropping of successful candidates in favour of unsuccessful candidates presented a serious credibility problem for the Service
xiii. Manual application and registration of candidates wasted a lot of time for the panel.
xiv. Change of recruitment panel and some of the secretariat having affiliation to the host community. This wasted time and raised credibility questions.
xv. Un-identifiable members of the secretariat.
xvi. Recruitment at NYS Headquarters requires to be addressed as over time it has been having time compliance challenges.

3.4 Recommendations to improve future recruitments by the Service.

To improve future Police recruitment by the National Police Service:

i. The IGP should develop and publish the regulatory framework for NPS led Police recruitment of constables and cadets.
ii. To ensure the Service recruits the numbers it has advertised, it should lock slots for NYS and instead make all slots open to all to ensure full compliance with article 232(g, h, i) of the Constitution. If it is a must that there be NYS slots, the recruitment should allow qualified non-NYS candidates to have the opportunity to take the unfilled positions instead of returning such positions to NPS headquarters amid qualified and deserving Kenyans.
iii. The National Police Service sought to recruit 10,000 Police Constables but did not achieve this target. The Service should formally communicate to the public the criteria that will be applied to fill the unutilised slots, particularly those initially intended for National Youth Service (NYS) candidates. The proposed criteria should fully comply with the provisions of Article 232(g), (h) and (i) of the Constitution.
iv. Previously, IPOA has recommended staggering of the recruitment process and dates; a recommendation the Service has not adopted. The IGP should devise own mechanisms of ensuring that recruitments end at designated times to enhance transparency in the recruitment process.
v. The IGP should ensure that all critical information leading to disqualification of candidates is shared with the concerned candidates without much effort or restrictions. Observers including IPOA should have sufficient access to the information leading to decision making both at the medical and selection phase to promote transparency and accountability of the recruitment exercise.
vi. The IGP should take appropriate measures to address the recurring non-cooperation by some officers during recruitment exercises, to enable IPOA to effectively discharge its oversight mandate and support the Service in enhancing transparency and public confidence in the recruitment process.

vii. Traditionally, IPOA has received complaints regarding members of public on police recruitment and has forwarded such complaint for redress by the NPSC. In the absence of the NPSC, IPOA needs liaison officer at the IG's Office to receive and address complaints from members of public related to recruitment matters. This liaison person can also be instrumental in reporting non-cooperative and unprofessional panel members during police recruitments.

viii. The IGP should consider deploying IAU members to accompany the recruiting panels for purposes of setting up and manning complaints desk at the recruitment centres. IAU should be charged with the responsibility to document the complaints raised by members of public as opposed to the current situation of handling complaints casually without any sense of responsibility.

ix. The 2025 police recruitment was marred by low turnout due to inadequate publicity to the recruitment drive following the cases filed in court. In future the IGP should ensure adequate time for publicity of the recruitment exercise to ensure maximum participation from the members of the public. This will assist the IG to comply the principle of Democracy and participation of the people.

x. The recruitment exercise was carried out at venues without basic amenities like water, electricity and toilets. Others were carried out in Police Stations. In future, the IGP should ensure proper planning and mapping of the recruitment centres to ensure public access to these amenities. This would be in line with the principle of ensuring human dignity during recruitment.

xi. There were centres that called successful candidates and later recalled their appointment in favour of others. This taints the credibility of the recruitment and that of NPS. The IG should therefore ensure that the panels do not subject successful candidates into mental torture for fear that their success could be recalled at any time in favour of another. If a mistake happens, the regulations to be developed should set humane ways of addressing mistakes made by the panels.

xii. The IGP should adopt an online application and registration system to enhance efficiency, reduce manual processing, and minimise time spent on candidate registration and verification during recruitment exercises.

xiii. The IGP should ensure that candidates who fail the medical examination are formally disqualified at that stage, rather than being kept until the end of the selection process. This will save time for affected candidates and enhance their satisfaction with the recruitment exercise.

xiv. In future recruitment exercises, the IGP should ensure that all members of the secretariat are clearly identifiable and that only designated secretariat staff are allowed to participate in the recruitment process. Other officers should strictly provide security at the venues. This will minimise the risk and perception of undue influence by non-secretariat officers and enhance confidence in the integrity of the process.

xv. The IGP should consider an alternative arrangement for recruitment at the NYS Headquarters. Historically, recruitment at this centre has been characterised by persistent challenges, including extremely high turnout against limited recruitment panels, prolonged processes beyond the advertised timelines, and the absence of adequate contingency measures for transport, accommodation and welfare of candidates. Addressing these gaps will improve efficiency and safeguard the welfare

of applicants.

4 CONCLUSION

The 2025 recruitment of Police Constables marked a significant milestone for the National Police Service (NPS), occurring against the backdrop of legal developments that reaffirmed the Inspector General's exclusive constitutional mandate to recruit members of the Service. Despite these complexities, IPOA's monitoring noted notable improvements compared to previous exercises, particularly during the initial stages where registration, academic verification and physical assessments were generally conducted in a structured, humane and professional manner.

However, systemic and procedural challenges persisted and were perceived to have affected the integrity and transparency of the process. The absence of publicly accessible recruitment regulations, inadequate publicity, discriminatory slot allocation, and opacity during the medical and selection phases weakened public confidence. Additional operational gaps, including weak complaints handling mechanisms, logistical limitations, delays beyond stipulated timelines, and allegations of corruption and candidate substitution, further undermined the process.

Although the Service demonstrated partial compliance with constitutional requirements, especially in relation to diversity and recruitment into Kenya Police Service and Administration Police Service, significant gaps remained in transparency, accountability, gender balance, non-discrimination, and adherence to merit-based recruitment as envisaged under Articles 10, 27, 232 and 244 of the Constitution.

The findings highlight the need for the National Police Service to strengthen its recruitment governance framework by institutionalising transparency, enhancing collaboration with oversight bodies including IPOA, adopting technology-driven registration systems, improving public communication, and establishing effective complaints handling mechanisms.

In conclusion, the 2025 recruitment exercise reflected both commendable progress and notable shortcomings. The Service now has an opportunity to consolidate the gains and address the weaknesses identified to enhance the credibility of future recruitment exercises and strengthen public confidence in policing professionalism, accountability and integrity.

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