

Trademark Law and the Protection of Brand Value in Uganda: Addressing Counterfeit Trade, Digital Commerce, and Bad-Faith Trademark Registration

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Publication Date: 2026/06/01

Abstract: Trademark protection has become increasingly important within modern commercial systems characterised by globalisation, digital commerce, and transnational market integration. In Uganda, trademarks play a critical role in protecting brand value, consumer trust, market competitiveness, and investment security. However, the effectiveness of Uganda's trademark protection framework continues to face significant challenges arising from counterfeit trade, digital infringement, and bad-faith trademark registration. This article critically examines the legal and policy framework governing trademark protection in Uganda within the context of counterfeit goods, e-commerce expansion, online trademark abuse, cybersquatting, and opportunistic trademark registration. Using a qualitative doctrinal legal research methodology complemented by comparative constitutional and international analysis, the study interrogates Uganda's constitutional, statutory, institutional, and international intellectual property framework together with institutional enforcement records and anti-counterfeit operations documented by the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), and Uganda Communications Commission (UCC). The article finds that although the Trademarks Act Cap. 225 modernised Uganda's trademark regime, the existing framework remains insufficiently adapted to digital commercial realities and is constrained by weak institutional coordination, inadequate enforcement mechanisms, porous borders, and limited technological capacity. The study further establishes that counterfeit trade and online trademark infringement undermine consumer protection, fair competition, investor confidence, and commercial legitimacy, while bad-faith registration exposes weaknesses within trademark examination and opposition procedures. Comparative analysis from Kenya, South Africa, China, the European Union, and the United States demonstrates that technologically adaptive intellectual property systems increasingly integrate digital enforcement mechanisms, intermediary liability, judicial specialisation, and stronger anti-counterfeit governance. The article concludes that Uganda requires comprehensive legislative modernisation, strengthened institutional coordination, digital enforcement reforms, and technologically responsive trademark governance in order to effectively protect brand value and commercial integrity within an increasingly digitalised and globalised economy.

Keywords: Trademark Law, Brand Protection, Counterfeit Trade, Digital Commerce, Bad-Faith Registration, Intellectual Property, Uganda, Cybersquatting, Consumer Protection, Commercial Governance.

How to Cite: Lubega Farouq (2026) Trademark Law and the Protection of Brand Value in Uganda: Addressing Counterfeit Trade, Digital Commerce, and Bad-Faith Trademark Registration. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 11(5), 2649-2655. <https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26may1490>

I. INTRODUCTION

Trademarks have become central intangible assets in the contemporary commercial economy, where value is increasingly driven by brand identity, digital presence, and consumer trust. Beyond their traditional role of distinguishing goods and services, trademarks now function as strategic

business tools that safeguard reputation, signal quality, and sustain competitive advantage in both domestic and global markets (Dinwoodie & Janis, 2022). As a result, effective trademark systems are essential for promoting fair competition, protecting consumers from deception, and enhancing overall market efficiency.

However, the rapid expansion of globalisation, e-commerce, and digital communication has significantly complicated trademark protection. While these developments have expanded market access, they have also created new and evolving forms of infringement, including online counterfeiting, cybersquatting, unauthorised use of brand identities on social media, and the proliferation of fake digital storefronts (Goldman, 2021). At the global level, the scale of the problem is substantial, with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) estimating that trade in counterfeit and pirated goods reached approximately USD 467 billion in 2021, representing about 2.3% of global trade (OECD & EUIPO, 2021). Increasingly, enforcement agencies have identified online marketplaces and social media platforms as major facilitators of counterfeit distribution and digital trademark abuse (WCO, 2022).

Recent enforcement records from the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) further demonstrate the growing scale of counterfeit trade within Uganda's commercial system. URSB enforcement operations have resulted in multiple seizures and destruction exercises involving counterfeit lubricants, cosmetics, cartridges, alcoholic products, and other trademark-infringing goods. In one notable enforcement exercise, URSB destroyed counterfeit toner cartridges and printing products valued at approximately UGX 7.2 billion following the successful prosecution of offenders involved in trademark infringement operations in Kampala (Daily Monitor, 2019). More recent URSB enforcement actions involved the destruction of counterfeit Shell, Total, and JIK-branded products as well as counterfeit HP cartridges and illegally branded consumer goods through court-sanctioned disposal exercises, reflecting the persistence and sophistication of counterfeit networks operating within Uganda's market environment. These developments demonstrate that trademark infringement is no longer an isolated commercial violation but a systemic challenge affecting consumer safety, business legitimacy, tax administration, and investor confidence.

In the African context, these challenges are further amplified by expanding informal cross-border trade and the rapid growth of digital commerce ecosystems. Uganda, in particular, continues to experience widespread circulation of counterfeit goods across sectors such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, electronics, agrochemicals, beverages, and fast-moving consumer goods, affecting both formal retail systems and informal markets (URA, 2023). At the same time, rising internet penetration and digital adoption have exposed businesses to increasing risks of online trademark misuse, including impersonation, cybersquatting, and the operation of fraudulent online shops. According to World Bank indicators, Uganda's growing digital engagement has significantly increased reliance on online platforms for business and marketing activities, thereby expanding the vulnerability of brand owners to digital infringement (World Bank, 2023).

Legally, trademark protection in Uganda is primarily governed by the Trademarks Act, Cap. 225, administered by URSB, and supplemented by international obligations under the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), the Paris Convention, and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) framework. These instruments provide a formal foundation for trademark protection; however, practical enforcement remains limited. Key challenges include weak institutional coordination, inadequate technological and investigative capacity, limited customs surveillance at borders, and insufficient mechanisms for addressing digital and cross-border infringement. Additionally, emerging issues such as bad-faith trademark registration and domain name abuse further strain the effectiveness of the current legal framework.

Against this backdrop, this article critically examines Uganda's trademark protection regime within the evolving context of counterfeit trade, digital commerce, and bad-faith registration practices. It argues that although a legal framework exists, it is not fully responsive to contemporary digital and commercial realities. Accordingly, the study highlights the need for comprehensive legal reforms, strengthened institutional capacity, and the integration of modern technological enforcement tools to safeguard better brand value, consumer welfare, and the integrity of Uganda's increasingly digital market economy.

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

Despite Uganda's Trademarks Act, Cap. 225 and international obligations under frameworks such as TRIPS and WIPO, trademark protection continues to face significant legal and enforcement challenges that undermine brand value, consumer protection, and fair competition. Counterfeit trade remains widespread in key sectors including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, electronics, beverages, and agrochemicals, with Uganda remaining vulnerable due to porous borders, weak customs surveillance, institutional fragmentation, and expanding informal markets; globally, counterfeit and pirated goods were estimated at USD 467 billion in 2021, representing about 2.3% of world trade (OECD & EUIPO, 2021), while Uganda Revenue Authority reports continue to document seizures of counterfeit goods entering the country through regional trade routes (URA, 2023). Institutional enforcement statistics equally reveal the magnitude of the challenge. According to the URSB Annual Report 2023/2024, the Bureau's Enforcement Unit handled 42 intellectual property complaints, conducted 24 enforcement operations, seized multiple counterfeit products, and processed several trademark-related prosecutions, while numerous investigations remained ongoing before courts and enforcement agencies. Earlier URSB annual reports similarly documented dozens of counterfeit-related investigations, convictions, pending prosecutions, and enforcement operations targeting trademark infringement and piracy. These figures illustrate both the increasing prevalence of counterfeit trade and the growing pressure on Uganda's trademark enforcement institutions,

whose operational and technological capacity remains comparatively limited relative to the expanding scale of infringement.

The rapid expansion of digital commerce has further intensified the problem through cybersquatting, online impersonation, fake online stores, and unauthorised digital branding, exposing weaknesses in a legal framework still largely oriented toward traditional physical-market infringement, with limited provisions on online enforcement, intermediary liability, and platform accountability (World Bank, 2023). This is compounded by increasing cases of bad-faith trademark registration arising from weak examination procedures and limited institutional capacity. Despite the growing significance of these issues, there remains limited integrated legal scholarship addressing the intersection of counterfeit trade, digital commerce, and bad-faith registration in Uganda, resulting in persistent legal, institutional, and policy gaps in effectively safeguarding brand integrity in a digitalising economy.

➤ *Purpose*

The purpose of this article is to critically examine the effectiveness of Uganda's trademark law framework in protecting brand value against counterfeit trade, digital infringement, and bad-faith trademark registration within the context of emerging digital commerce and transnational market integration.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative doctrinal legal research methodology complemented by comparative constitutional analysis and normative jurisprudential inquiry to examine the effectiveness of Uganda's trademark protection framework in addressing counterfeit trade, digital infringement, and bad-faith trademark registration. The study critically analyses constitutional provisions, statutory instruments, judicial decisions, policy documents, and institutional enforcement mechanisms relating to trademark law, digital commerce, and intellectual property governance, with particular focus on the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, the Trademarks Act, Cap. 225, customs and commercial legislation, and Uganda's obligations under international intellectual property instruments such as TRIPS, the Paris Convention, and WIPO treaties. Comparative analysis is undertaken using selected jurisdictions, including Kenya, South Africa, China, the European Union, and the United States, in order to examine evolving approaches to digital trademark governance, anti-counterfeit enforcement, cybersquatting, and bad-faith registration. The study is theoretically grounded in intellectual property theory, consumer protection theory, economic analysis of law, and digital governance theory. Both primary and secondary data sources are utilised, including legislation, treaties, institutional reports, judicial decisions, academic literature, policy papers, and international intellectual property reports, which are analysed thematically with emphasis on

commercial governance, digital regulation, institutional enforcement, consumer protection, and technological transformation within Uganda's trademark protection regime.

III. THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study is grounded in Intellectual Property Theory, Economic Analysis of Law, Consumer Protection Theory, and Digital Governance Theory, which collectively provide a framework for understanding the legal and economic significance of trademark protection in modern markets. Intellectual Property Theory conceptualises trademarks as legal instruments for protecting commercial identity, goodwill, brand reputation, and competitive advantage (Dinwoodie & Janis, 2022), and is relevant in explaining how counterfeit trade, online infringement, and bad-faith registration undermine brand value and market legitimacy, particularly in contexts like Uganda, where scholarship has largely focused on traditional infringement rather than emerging digital violations. Similarly, Economic Analysis of Law highlights trademarks as tools for enhancing market efficiency, reducing consumer confusion, and promoting investment and innovation (Landes & Posner, 2003), while also exposing how counterfeit trade and trademark squatting distort competition and weaken investor confidence, with limited attention in existing research to how informal markets and weak enforcement structures affect Uganda's evolving digital economy.

Consumer Protection Theory further underscores the role of trademark law in safeguarding consumers from deception, unsafe counterfeit goods, and unfair commercial practices (OECD & EUIPO, 2021), which is particularly relevant in Uganda, where counterfeit pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and agrochemicals remain prevalent within informal distribution systems. Complementing this, Digital Governance Theory explains the need for adaptive legal and institutional frameworks capable of regulating e-commerce, cybersquatting, online branding, intermediary liability, and cross-border digital infringement (Goldman, 2021), yet Uganda's current trademark regime remains largely oriented toward physical-market enforcement despite increasing digital commercial activity. Collectively, these theories reveal a clear gap in existing scholarship regarding how Uganda can modernise its trademark governance system to effectively respond to digital trade, strengthen enforcement mechanisms, and protect both consumer welfare and brand integrity in a rapidly digitalising economy.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly literature broadly recognises trademarks as key instruments of commercial governance, consumer protection, and market regulation, with Dinwoodie and Janis (2022) highlighting their role in protecting goodwill, brand reputation, and competitive advantage, while Cornish, Llewelyn, and Aplin (2019) emphasise their importance in

promoting fair competition and investment confidence. In the African context, however, intellectual property systems continue to face persistent challenges, including weak enforcement, limited technological adaptation, institutional fragmentation, and expanding informal markets (Ncube, 2016). Although Uganda has updated its framework through the Trademarks Act, Cap. 225, existing local scholarship remains limited in its doctrinal engagement with digital infringement, counterfeit trade, and bad-faith registration, revealing a gap in understanding how the legal framework responds to technological change and evolving commercial realities. Empirical studies further confirm that counterfeit trade is a major global and regional concern, with OECD and EUIPO (2021) estimating it at 2.3% of global trade, while the World Customs Organization (2022) links its persistence to weak border control systems and transnational criminal networks; in East Africa, porous borders and informal trade systems continue to facilitate circulation of counterfeit goods (Kafeero, 2020), yet limited attention has been given to how these structural weaknesses interact with Uganda's trademark enforcement regime.

Institutional reports and enforcement records from URSB reinforce these scholarly observations by demonstrating the operational realities of trademark enforcement within Uganda. URSB enforcement activities have involved the prosecution and destruction of counterfeit lubricants, fake consumer products, pirated copyrighted materials, and counterfeit printing cartridges through court-authorized disposal exercises conducted in Kampala, Mukono, and Wakiso districts (URSB, 2023; URSB, 2024). The Bureau's reports further indicate increasing trademark counterfeiting complaints, investigations, prosecutions, and coordinated enforcement operations involving police and customs authorities. These enforcement patterns reveal that trademark infringement in Uganda has evolved beyond small-scale imitation into organized commercial counterfeiting with broader implications for consumer welfare, commercial governance, and market legitimacy. However, despite increasing institutional activity, there remains limited academic engagement with how enforcement practice, digital commerce, and trademark governance intersect within Uganda's evolving intellectual property system.

Recent literature increasingly focuses on the impact of digital commerce on trademark protection, noting that e-commerce platforms and social media have transformed infringement patterns through cybersquatting, fake online stores, impersonation, and unauthorised digital branding (Goldman, 2021), while Burrell and Handler (2020) argue that these developments challenge traditional territorial approaches to enforcement. Global evidence also shows that online platforms have become major channels for counterfeit distribution (OECD & EUIPO, 2021), yet Ugandan scholarship has not sufficiently explored issues of intermediary liability, platform accountability, and digital enforcement within its trademark system. Additionally,

contemporary studies highlight the rising threat of bad-faith trademark registration, with Gangjee (2018) describing it as opportunistic filing aimed at exploiting another party's goodwill, while reforms in jurisdictions such as China and the United States demonstrate increasing legal responses through stricter examination procedures and anti-cybersquatting laws (Zheng, 2021; Lemley, 2019). However, African and Ugandan literature remains limited in examining how weak institutional safeguards, digital commerce, and counterfeit trade collectively shape trademark vulnerabilities, leaving a significant doctrinal and policy gap that this study seeks to address.

V. FINDINGS

The study established that Uganda has a formally recognised trademark protection framework anchored in the Trademarks Act Cap 225, the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, and international obligations under TRIPS, WIPO, and the Paris Convention. The legal framework modernised trademark registration by expanding registrable marks and strengthening remedies against infringement, while constitutional protections on property rights and fair commercial regulation indirectly reinforce trademark protection. Uganda's participation in regional and international intellectual property systems also reflects growing recognition of trademarks as tools for trade governance and economic development. However, the framework remains largely designed for traditional physical-market infringement and provides limited regulation for digital commerce, intermediary liability, cyberspace-based infringement, and online platform accountability, leaving significant gaps in addressing contemporary digital realities.

The study further found that counterfeit trade remains a major challenge to trademark protection in Uganda, with widespread circulation of counterfeit pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, alcoholic beverages, electronics, agrochemicals, and fast-moving consumer goods across both formal and informal markets. This problem is exacerbated by porous borders, informal cross-border trade, weak customs surveillance, institutional fragmentation, corruption risks, and limited technological capacity.

Reports from URA further demonstrate the scale and transnational nature of counterfeit trade within Uganda. URA customs enforcement operations have documented seizures of counterfeit cosmetics, alcoholic beverages, electronics, agrochemicals, and falsely branded imported products entering Uganda through regional trade corridors and border points. URA enforcement reports also reveal increasing challenges associated with smuggling networks, under-declaration of imported goods, and concealment of counterfeit products within legitimate commercial consignments, thereby complicating trademark enforcement and customs surveillance efforts (URA, 2023). These developments reinforce concerns regarding the limited institutional and technological capacity

available for combating sophisticated counterfeit distribution networks operating across borders.

The study additionally found that URSB enforcement records demonstrate a sustained increase in counterfeit-related investigations and enforcement operations. URSB annual reports reveal multiple prosecutions and convictions involving counterfeit lubricants, counterfeit cartridges, pirated products, and falsely branded consumer goods. In several court-authorized enforcement exercises, counterfeit products were destroyed to prevent their re-entry into the market, including the destruction of counterfeit Total and Shell lubricants, counterfeit JIK products, counterfeit HP cartridges, and other trademark-infringing goods. These operations indicate increasing institutional recognition of the threat posed by counterfeit trade; however, they also expose persistent enforcement limitations arising from inadequate investigative resources, limited forensic capacity, weak border surveillance systems, and the transnational nature of counterfeit distribution networks.

Enforcement is further constrained by inadequate resources, limited technical expertise, weak inter-agency coordination, and low public awareness of intellectual property rights. Consequently, counterfeit trade results in significant economic and social harms, including tax revenue losses, market distortion, unfair competition, reduced investor confidence, consumer deception, and serious public health and safety risks.

The findings also show that Uganda's expanding digital economy has increased exposure to online trademark infringement, including cybersquatting, fake online stores, social media impersonation, unauthorised digital branding, and online distribution of counterfeit goods. However, the existing legal framework provides limited guidance on intermediary liability, platform accountability, and cross-border digital enforcement, and lacks specialised institutional mechanisms for online trademark monitoring and rapid response. This challenge is compounded by limited coordination between trademark regulators and digital communications regulators such as the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), particularly regarding online commercial impersonation, fraudulent digital advertising, fake online marketplaces, and cross-border digital infringement. The absence of comprehensive intermediary liability rules and coordinated digital enforcement frameworks continues to weaken Uganda's capacity to effectively regulate trademark violations occurring within online commercial environments. As a result, businesses face growing risks of reputational damage and loss of consumer trust in digital spaces, while enforcement remains slow and largely ineffective in addressing online violations.

Finally, the study established that bad-faith trademark registration and trademark squatting are emerging concerns within Uganda's intellectual property system. Opportunistic

filings involving well-known or established marks create disputes over ownership and commercial legitimacy, reflecting weaknesses in examination procedures, opposition mechanisms, and verification of applicants. These challenges are compounded by limited institutional capacity and inadequate technological systems for detecting malicious filings. Consequently, bad-faith registration undermines investor confidence, increases commercial uncertainty, and weakens market integrity, exposing both domestic and foreign businesses to significant risks within Uganda's trademark registration system.

VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study generally confirm existing scholarship that trademarks have evolved beyond simple indicators of commercial origin into key instruments of commercial governance, consumer protection, and investment security, as argued by Dinwoodie and Janis (2022) and Cornish, Llewelyn, and Aplin (2019). Although Uganda has a formal trademark under the Trademarks Act, Cap. 225, enforcement remains constrained by institutional fragmentation, limited technological capacity, and inadequate adaptation to digital commerce, reinforcing Ncube's (2016) observation that many African intellectual property systems continue to struggle with structural and operational weaknesses despite legislative reforms. The findings also align with OECD and EUIPO (2021) reports on the broad economic and social harms of counterfeit trade, including undermining market integrity, innovation, and consumer protection. In Uganda, counterfeit goods continue to circulate through porous borders, informal trade networks, and weak customs enforcement, supporting Kafeero's (2020) findings on the role of informal cross-border trade in facilitating illicit goods within East Africa, while also extending the discussion by showing how these dynamics implicate broader issues of consumer welfare, investment security, and economic governance.

The practical realities of these challenges are increasingly reflected within URSB enforcement operations and annual institutional reports. The destruction of counterfeit lubricants, printing cartridges, pirated materials, and falsely branded consumer goods through court-sanctioned operations illustrates both the persistence and commercialisation of trademark infringement within Uganda's economy (URSB, 2023; URSB, 2024). URSB enforcement statistics showing numerous ongoing investigations, prosecutions, and counterfeit-related complaints further support the argument that trademark infringement has evolved into a broader governance and regulatory challenge rather than merely a private commercial dispute. These institutional experiences reinforce the need for technologically adaptive enforcement systems, stronger inter-agency coordination, specialised intellectual property enforcement mechanisms, and digitised monitoring systems capable of responding to increasingly sophisticated counterfeit and online infringement networks.

The findings are equally supported by enforcement experiences from UNBS, whose market surveillance and product inspection operations have repeatedly identified counterfeit and substandard cosmetics, beverages, agrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, and electrical products circulating within Uganda's formal and informal markets. UNBS reports indicate that counterfeit and falsely branded goods pose serious risks to consumer safety, public health, and commercial integrity, particularly where fake products imitate established trademarks in ways capable of misleading consumers regarding quality, origin, and authenticity. These institutional realities further demonstrate that trademark infringement extends beyond private commercial disputes into broader questions of consumer protection, regulatory governance, and public welfare.

The study further supports emerging digital scholarship by Goldman (2021) and Burrell and Handler (2020), which highlights how e-commerce and online platforms have transformed trademark infringement through cybersquatting, social media impersonation, and counterfeit distribution. The findings show that Uganda's trademark regime remains largely designed for traditional physical-market enforcement and lacks sufficient provisions for intermediary liability, platform accountability, and digital enforcement mechanisms, thereby confirming a key gap in existing Ugandan legal scholarship. Additionally, the study corroborates international literature by Gangjee (2018), Lemley (2019), and Zheng (2021) on the growing threat of bad-faith trademark registration and trademark squatting, revealing that weak examination procedures and limited institutional safeguards continue to expose Uganda's system to opportunistic filings. Unlike much of the existing African literature, this study integrates counterfeit trade, digital infringement, and bad-faith registration into a single analytical framework, thereby addressing a critical doctrinal and policy gap in understanding trademark governance within Uganda's evolving commercial and digital economy.

➤ *Contribution to Trademark Law Scholarship and Practice*

This study will contribute to growing scholarship on trademark law, intellectual property governance, digital commerce, and consumer protection in developing economies, particularly Uganda, where limited critical analysis has been undertaken on the combined challenges of counterfeit trade, online infringement, and bad-faith trademark registration. It advances doctrinal legal understanding by situating trademark protection within broader debates on commercial regulation, digital governance, and market accountability in an increasingly globalised economy.

The study is also important because trademarks function as key commercial assets that influence consumer trust, investment security, fair competition, and business sustainability; thus, weak enforcement in Uganda contributes to counterfeit trade, commercial deception, unfair competition, and the circulation of unsafe goods such as pharmaceuticals,

cosmetics, and agrochemicals, negatively affecting both public welfare and economic development. From a comparative and policy perspective, the study draws insights from jurisdictions such as Kenya, South Africa, China, the European Union, and the United States to illustrate how effective systems integrate digital enforcement mechanisms, customs surveillance, judicial specialisation, and online platform accountability. In doing so, it offers practical recommendations for policymakers, regulators, judicial officers, enforcement agencies, and businesses on strengthening Uganda's trademark protection framework in response to evolving digital and global market realities.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study established that although Uganda possesses a formal trademark protection framework under the Trademarks Act, Cap. 225 and international intellectual property obligations, effective protection of brand value remains constrained by counterfeit trade, weak institutional enforcement, technological limitations, and inadequate regulation of digital commerce. The findings revealed that increasing online infringement, cybersquatting, and bad-faith trademark registration continue to undermine consumer trust, investor confidence, market integrity, and commercial legitimacy within Uganda's evolving digital economy. The study, therefore, concludes that trademark protection is no longer merely a private proprietary issue but a broader matter of commercial governance, consumer protection, and digital regulation requiring legislative modernisation, stronger institutional coordination, technological adaptation, and enhanced enforcement mechanisms to effectively safeguard brand value and fair competition in Uganda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Uganda should reform the Trademarks Act Cap. 225 to strengthen the regulation of digital trademark infringement, cybersquatting, online counterfeiting, intermediary liability, and bad-faith trademark registration within emerging e-commerce environments.

The government should strengthen institutional coordination between the Uganda Registration Services Bureau, customs authorities, law enforcement agencies, and the Judiciary through specialised intellectual property enforcement units, technological modernisation, and stronger customs surveillance systems to combat counterfeit trade and improve trademark enforcement.

Uganda should modernise trademark examination and opposition procedures through digitised verification systems and stronger scrutiny of malicious trademark filings to reduce trademark squatting and enhance investor confidence and commercial legitimacy.

The Judiciary and intellectual property regulators should strengthen judicial specialisation, digital enforcement mechanisms, and institutional capacity for handling online trademark disputes and digital commercial infringement.

The government should expand public awareness and business sensitisation on intellectual property rights, counterfeit risks, and trademark protection, particularly among small and medium enterprises operating within digital commercial environments.

Uganda should strengthen regional and international cooperation with organisations such as ARIPO, WIPO, and the East African Community in order to improve cross-border enforcement, consumer protection, and protection of brand value within an increasingly digitalised and globalised economy.

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