



HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK-UGANDA (HURINET-U)

CONCEPT NOTE

GAMMAC III MAKING PREVENTION A REALITY IN UGANDA

21st – 22nd, MAY 2018, KAMPALA, UGANDA

GURANTEERING EFFECTIVE CSO PARTICIPATION

I. BACKGROUND TO GAAMAC (The Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes)

- 1.2 The World is littered with a history of mass atrocities that have led to untold suffering, loss of life, dehumanization of communities, destruction of infrastructure and general degeneration of the world to barbarism due to the savage nature of these atrocities. The Cambodia and Kosovo massive killings in the name of ethnicity in the Balkans are constant reminders of this human failure.
- 1.3 In these atrocities, victims have been turned into perpetrators-children forcefully conscripted, molded into lethal youth treated as killing weapons as the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the later 2000s clearly showed. At the receiving end has been the vulnerable social groups of women and children who have been targeted specifically for dehumanization as it happened in Rwanda where rape was a weapon of war. Efforts of dealing with these atrocities seemed to have gained more ground in trying to solve them but minimal input has been geared towards preventing them from taking place in the first place.
- 1.4 The continuance of these atrocities has until recently with the formation of the GAAMAC has not had the necessary attention it deserves beyond the resolution statements that have come to be the features of the UN Security Council with minimal action beyond mere condemnation. The creation of the GAAMAC speaks



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to this loophole-the need for a sustained discourse among various stakeholders across the government and non-State actors on how to prevent and respond to mass atrocities.

II. BIRTH OF GAAMAC

2.1 GAAMAC is;

- **A GLOBAL** inclusive state-led initiative to prevent mass atrocity crimes (genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity);
- **PROVIDES A PLATFORM** for exchange, dialogue, and dissemination of learning and good practices on prevention;
- **SUPPORTS STATES** to build their capacities to prevent mass atrocity crimes as well as to develop and implement national preventive strategies;

2.2 This platform came into being in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania in March 2013 starting off as a combined enterprise of States and civil society stakeholders practicing in among other spheres-that of Responsibility to Protect (R2P); mass atrocities and genocide prevention. So far, two GAAMAC international conferences/meetings have taken place the first having been attended by over 120 participants in San José, Costa Rica in March 2014.

2.3 **GAAMAC II** took place in Manila, Philippines from 2nd to 4th February 2016 to ‘discuss and identify the challenges and opportunities of developing national architectures on atrocity prevention and to strengthen the capacities and strategies of states, international bodies and non-governmental organizations in this field.’¹ This particular GAAMAC II, attended by over 200 participants including 52 State Delegations, and presided over by Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General, was organized by the Governments of the Philippines and Switzerland jointly. The mechanism has a structure presided over by a Steering Group working closely with the UN Office of the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and R2P.

2.4 **GAAMAC III** will take place in Kampala, Uganda jointly organized by the Government of Uganda and GAAMAC Steering Group. The three day Conference

¹The Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes (GAAMAC) II Out Come Document. Accessible at http://www.gaamac.org/media/reports/day3/gaamac_ii_outcome_document_final.pdf [Accessed on 5/03/2018]



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shall take place from 23rd to 25th May 2018 this time focusing more on mutual co-operation between the State and CSOs to ‘make prevention a reality at the local, national, regional and international level.’²

III. GAAMAC AND CSO PARTICIPATION IN KAMPALA

- 3.1 Uganda and indeed East Africa have had their share of mass atrocities. Both Rwanda and Uganda are post-conflict countries on a recovery lane from such atrocities of mass suffering. In DRC, the scourge continues unabated with War Lords ruling over most parts of Congo ruthlessly characterized by mass rape and displacement. In Southern Sudan, over a million people have left the country to Uganda as refugees in the quest for a safe haven from the ongoing indiscriminate killings between the rebels and government forces. Burundi is at the verge of collapse with the sharp ethnic undertones on the electoral processes in the Country.
- 3.2 There have been various efforts to deal with the above situations amicably but in vain. The peace deals in Southern Sudan and Burundi are still shaky while in DRC, the rich country is a den of war mongers whose survival rests on continued war in the country. Efforts at using legislation as a means to combat such mass atrocity crimes remain elusive due to inaction from States. The holding of the GAAMAC in Kampala-Uganda, a key player in the aforementioned atrocious situations either as a victim; mediator; provider of shelter to runaway communities is timely. However for it to have impact, there is need to ensure effective participation of the regional actors, more especially the CSOs operating in the sphere of mass atrocities from the surrounding affected countries and indeed from within Uganda.
- 3.3 There is also need for members of the communities from post-conflict regions within Uganda to be part of this discourse by injecting in lived realities of these heinous mass atrocities. Many a times, the views of such groups are drowned in the massive voices of the experts both from government and non-governmental entities there by perpetrating a discussion of issues concerning ‘them without them.’

IV. TARGETTED PARTICIPANTS

² GAAMAC III: Making Prevention a Reality. Accessible at <http://www.gaamac.org/events/#.Wp062GpubIU> [Accessed on 5/3/2018].



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- 4.1 The participants in these envisaged set of activities shall be mainly members of the CSOs fraternity both within Uganda and the international sphere with particular attention to those within East Africa. These will vary from academics, researchers on the subject; practitioners and representatives from the government agencies that will be part of the GMACC conference as well including victims/survivors of these horrific events. These various Forums shall provide space to the aforementioned diverse actors to deliberate on among other issues the notion of Responsibility to Protect, Prevention of Mass atrocities with particular focus on Africa and more so Sub-Saharan Africa and the mechanisms of responding to those already existent. These platforms will enhance where existing and initiate where non-existing inter-generational, inter-continental and inter-disciplinary discourse, discernments and experiences aimed at contributing further to prevention of mass atrocities in the World and Great Lakes Region in Particular.

V. ENVISAGED ACTIVITIES

- 5.1 Activities are planned to precede the Conference, during the subsistence of the Conference and in its aftermath. More particularly;

A. Pre-Conference CSO/Practitioners Symposium.

The CSOs Symposium on Mass Atrocities in Africa will precede the GAAMAC III main conference. It will attract various stakeholders mainly practitioners in the sphere of Mass Atrocities Prevention from the CSOs, transitional justice, peace, conflict and security from within East and Central Africa, unique regions that have been at the beset of these mass atrocities. The symposium shall be organized with particular bias to the political and economic context of Africa anchored on the main Conference theme of *Making Prevention (of Mass Atrocity Crimes) a Reality*. A solidarity event with victims of mass atrocities shall also be held on the eve of the main GAAMAC conference aimed at highlighting the gravity of these heinous acts, their impact on communities and why every person should join in the agenda of prevention.



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The symposium shall be run under thematic mini-sessions aimed at bringing experts and other stakeholders with interest in such particular themes together. The mini-session thematic discussions shall be framed around the following:

1. **Human Rights Defenders as Agents of Early Warning and Documentation of Mass Atrocity Crimes.** This session shall bring together HRDs operating within the region of East and Sub-Saharan Africa to deliberate on their two fold potential roles in prevention of mass atrocity crimes-i.e. as part of an early warning mechanism in prevention and also as a resource towards documenting of these crimes for accountability of the perpetrators. HRDs shall share best practices from their works around East Africa, from countries infested with these atrocities. The discourse shall also devolve into protection of HRDs in their quest of undertaking works that aim at prevention of such atrocities. It will go further into seeking to galvanize support from the GAAMAC conference towards State recognition (through a legal framework) and protection of human rights defenders in their countries.
2. **Balancing Freedom of Expression, Media Rights and Hate Speech.** This session shall bring together media practitioners and broadcasting entities as well as defenders of freedom of expression to deliberate on the delicate balance between protection of freedom of expression and media rights and the triggers of mass atrocities such as hate speech or spreading of violence inciting information.
3. **Women and Children in/against Mass Atrocities.** This session will provide a platform to inculcate aspects of gender and vulnerability in the discourse of prevention of mass atrocity crimes.
4. **State and Regional Institutions, Good Governance and Democratization.** This particular session shall probe the notion, at least, as has been advanced within Africa that there is a synergy between the occurrences of mass atrocity crimes and flawed State institutions, good governance and democratization generally. It will seek to cast the debate beyond the usual suspects of security agencies, further to potential root causes arising from defective democratic processes that place the citizen at the peripheral as a passive participant in governance-with disastrous resultant conflicts premised on marginalization. Within this sphere, we shall probe further accountability of State institutions and whether legislative reform can be a conduit of prevention of such mass atrocity crimes.



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5. **Youth:** this thematic sphere shall dwell on the discourse around unleashing the full potential and demographic advantage of youth as enablers of peace and preventers of Mass Atrocities from the peripheral use of them as weapons of war during such conflicts.

This symposium shall be held two days to the Main GAAMAC on the 21st and 22nd of May, 2018 at Serena Hotel-Kigo which is also the venue for the Main GAAMAC Conference.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- B. Documentary: An Interface with the Communities with lived realities of mass atrocities** shall be organized prior to the Conference to further provide platforms/space to the victims for more specific tailored discussions on emerging issues in relation to Prevention of Mass atrocities. These shall include special focus on youth, refugees, and women among others. This will take place in Northern Uganda-highlighting voices from the grass root communities anchored in lived realities rather than theories. Documentation paints an accurate, unusual and persuasive form of the situation and in a time such as ours creates a wider scope of awareness and understanding of the effects of conflict in light of the realities of mass atrocities, therefore it is to be used as a tool and play a significant role in memory and remembrance as preventive measure in the reoccurrence of mass crimes and atrocities. This documentary shall be shown at the pre-events and at the summit to further entrench and deepen the discussions on prevention from an informed perspective with the view of the victims of mass crimes..
- C. Public Awareness and discourse on prevention of mass atrocities through multi-media campaigns with activities such as radio and television topical talk shows, spot advertisements, press conference, press release, social media campaign, Information, Education and Communication materials (IEC) with various practitioners on the subject matter.** This is also critical to provide a platform to the community in Uganda especially post-conflict communities to contribute to the discussion especially in light of relapses into conflict becoming an emerging threat. This public discourse is a dissemination tool to educate and engage the people on GAAMAC as a preventative state led mechanism with a strategy geared to develop and implement national preventive strategies.

VI. Expected Outcomes and Out puts



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- Formulation, Presentation and Adoption of Communique ; The Symposium will conclude with the formulation and adoption of a communique highlighting critical concerns and recommendations from CSOs on prevention of mass atrocities with a view of submitting it to the main conference for consideration;
- Sharing of best International Practices; Domestically for Ugandan CSOs, it shall be used as a platform of sharing best practices from foreign practitioners more specifically on use of legislative reform as a means of combating mass atrocity crimes and post-conflict stability. This shall inform Ugandan CSOs efforts at having the National legislation on Transitional Justice and Prevention of Mass Atrocities Bill and Reconciliation which are in their early stages of conceptualization;
- Networking and Effective Civil Society Organisation participation ; The local CSOs will have an opportunity of networking with the some of the leading experts on peace, conflict, accountability, International Criminal Justice among other aspects which are critical to Uganda's post-conflict discourse/ streams them into the global community of practitioners on prevention;
- Informed Citizenry on State led mechanisms; Popularization of the existence of the GAAMAC to different stakeholders- such as CSOs actors in peace and conflict as a potential State-led mechanism they can relate with in the quest for prevention of conflict. The activities therefore carry an education and awareness raising value to post-conflict Uganda;
- Documentation and Presentation of Victim voices; It will, through the Documentary, provide a platform for the amplification of the voices of the affected communities who will not take part in the main GAAMAC conference.

VII. Implementing Agencies

HURINET-U as part of and in conjunction with the National Steering Committee on Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities-Uganda shall plan and execute the aforementioned activities. HURINET shall also corroborate with the Uganda National



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Committee for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities. This Committee was established on 15th of October 2012 bringing together experts from Government, Military, Civil Society, Academia, and Religious Organizations to comprehensively contribute to the implementation of the ICGLR Protocol on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crimes of Genocide, War Crimes, and Crimes against Humanity and all forms of Discrimination. HURINET-U is a member of this National Committee and sits on the steering committee. Since these are existing entities, they shall also carry forward, in a sustainable manner, the outcomes of the activities that may require taking forward. HURINET-U is host to the Uganda Coalition on the International Criminal Court (UCICC) and the National Coalition on Transitional Justice which too shall be looped into the implementation.

