



# HURINET - UGANDA

Human Rights Network - Uganda

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*For immediate release, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016*

## *The State Has a Responsibility to Protect Its Citizens*

We are shocked and dismayed by the ghastly pictures of wanton mayhem and blood-letting in Kasese awash in the media since the recent hostilities in the Rwenzori sub-region. It's regrettable that this conflict has been allowed to such unbespeakable levels given earlier indications that the region was still hurting from unresolved issues.

We are also concerned with the increasing trends of criminality and killings in the country including the case of Kenneth Akena and Sheik Kigundu and a series of Muslim clerics that have lost their lives in the hands unknown assailants. This is a worrying trend for the country and must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

It should be remembered that, the developments that unfolded on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2016 were a climax of a long standing and unresolved conflict in the region that began to manifest in 2012 leading to tribal clashes and attacks on police and military installations in 2014. Violence was also witnessed recently following the end of 2016 general elections.

HURINET-U is deeply concerned about the animosity that has pervaded the region, the attacks on security installations by civilians and the repressive response from police and other armed forces. This situation sends a message of lack of tolerance and the unwillingness from different parties to find a long lasting solution to the conflict in the Rwenzori sub-region.

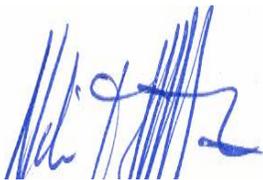
The Uganda Police Force is constitutionally mandated to keep law and order, detect and prevent crime as well as protecting life and property of the citizens. However, following the events in the Rwenzori sub-region in the last ten years and the skirmishes of violence and attack on the *Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu* on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2016 by police and the military undermines this constitutional mandate. What continues to baffle most stakeholders is the increased blatant abuse and violation of human rights perpetuated by state security agencies against civilians with impunity.

We condemn the killings of the police and other forces by the community or anybody behind this in the region.

We further condemn in strongest terms possible the manner in which security forces responded to these killings. The manner in which the forces reacted does not reflect professionalism of our forces Uganda has been proud of.

In regard to the above, HURINET-U calls for;

- I. An urgent cessation of hostilities and return to provide an environment conducive to peaceful negotiation that is sensitive to the dignity of the bakonzo community while preserving the integrity of the republic of Uganda.
- II. That any operations carried by UPDF or indeed any allied security agencies in the context of combat is undertaken is accomplished without breach of international law (The human terrain law, the Rome statute, as domesticated in the international crimes act 2010) to avoid the commission of crimes against humanity and war crimes.
- III. Police and other security agencies restrain from using excessive force against civilians.
- IV. Ensure that crimes against humanity are not committed in pursuit to curb violence in the region;
- V. Investigate the cause of violence and its architects so that culprits are brought to justice.
- VI. The state should constitute a commission of inquiry to investigate the violence in Kasese and the entire Rwenzori sub-region and ensure accountability for the human rights violations witnessed since 2014.
- VII. UPF and UPDF should work towards restoring confidence among the local population by build trust through community policing and acting professionally.



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