

# COMMUNIQUE'

Of Traditional and Religious Leaders, Civil Society and other Organisations

Concerning

**The decision of the Minister of Internal Affairs of Uganda to declare, on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2012, the lapse of the amnesty provisions of the Amnesty Act of Uganda (The Amnesty Act (Declaration of Lapse of the Operation of Part II) Instrument, 2012)**

We, the Traditional and Religious leaders, and Civil Society Organisations gathering at Fairway Hotel-Kampala on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012 to deliberate on the decision of the Hon. Minister of Internal Affairs to declare the lapse of the operation of Part II of the Amnesty Act by Statutory Instrument 34/2012, and to extend the rest of the Act without Part II;

Guided by our desire to;

- obtain a deeper understanding of the Ugandan Amnesty Act; its provisions and its origins;
- assess the peace-building contributions and implications of Amnesty Act;
- evaluate our roles as actors in peace building in context of the Amnesty Act;
- promote greater understanding and appreciation of the continuing need for the Amnesty processes;

- adopt strategies for promoting the continuing role of the Amnesty within the overall transitional justice policies and practice in Uganda;

Have agreed as follows;

- That there is an urgent need to reinstate Part II of the Amnesty Act, and to adopt additional procedures to promote greater accountability and reconciliation in accordance with the provisions of the Act.
- That the decision to remove Part II of the Amnesty law failed to take into account several relevant factors including Uganda's moral obligation towards the many innocent children who were enlisted into the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), in particular, against their will, through abduction.
- That the LRA conflict remains unresolved, and has now extended into other countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan, bringing heinous suffering to the communities in those countries.
- That the Amnesty Act therefore continues to be relevant in order to encourage Ugandan combatants to lay down their arms and to facilitate their safe return and reintegration in Uganda, thereby enhancing the prospects of peace for those communities outside Uganda.
- That in line with the Juba Peace Agreements on reconciliation and accountability (Agenda Item III), as well as the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, the Government of Uganda is obligated to maintain and put in place the

necessary legislation to promote reconciliation within Uganda. The Amnesty Act serves the needs of reconciliation.

- To call for broader consultation on transitional justice.
- To engage Government, Parliament and all Stakeholders in dialogue in order to improve the implementation of the entire Amnesty Act and thereby fulfil the goals of attaining peace with genuine reconciliation.

The following participated in the Fairway meeting, or subsequently endorsed the above Communiqué:

- a) Ker Kwaro Acholi (KKA)
- b) Acholi Religious Leader's Peace Initiative (ARLPI)
- c) Amnesty Commission (AC)
- d) Gulu District Reconciliation & Peace Team (DRPT)
- e) Invisible Children
- f) Justice and Peace Commission – Gulu (JPC)
- g) Gulu District NGO Forum
- h) Human Rights Focus
- i) Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP)
- j) Enough Project
- k) Conciliation Resources
- l) Concerned Parents Association (CPA)
- m) Uganda Historical Memory and Reconciliation Council
- n) Refugee Law Project
- o) Lugbara Kari
- p) Iteso Cultural Union
- q) Lango Cultural Union
- r) JUPEDDEC (Jeunesse Uni pour la Protection de l'Environnement et le developpement Communautaire) – Central Africa Republic
- s) Toto Chan – South Sudan

- t) The Interchurch Commission – for Western Equatoria State, South Sudan.
- u) SAIPD – Solidarite Assistance Integrale aux Personnes Demunies, DRC
- v) CDJPR – ARU, Commission Diocesaine de Justice Paix et Reconciliation, DRC

**This Communiqué is for the attention, among others, of:**

His Excellency, The President of the Republic of Uganda

The Rt. Hon Prime Minister of Uganda and the Hon. Deputy Prime Ministers

The Hon. Speaker of Parliament of Uganda and the Hon. Deputy Speaker

The Hon. Minister of Internal Affairs

The Hon. Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs

The Attorney General of Uganda

The District Leaders

The Press

(with all Protocol observed)