

June 15, 2011

H.E. Yoweri Museveni
President of the Republic of Uganda
State House
Kampala, Uganda

Subject: Joint letter from civil society on the importance of conducting an independent investigation into killings during the recent protests

Your Excellency,

We, 105 Ugandan and international non-governmental organizations and unions, write to urge the Ugandan government to promptly set up an impartial, independent, and transparent process to investigate human rights abuses during the recent “Walk to Work” protests and hold accountable anyone found responsible for criminal acts particularly incidents in which people were killed or wounded. As Uganda actively participates in various international mechanisms and is committed to rule of law, we also encourage the government to draw on international expertise and invite relevant United Nations special rapporteurs to visit Uganda.

We welcome that in your statement to the nation on May 17, 2011, you referred to the death of two-year-old Julian Nalwanga in Masaka as a result of shooting by police as a “criminal killing.” There is ample evidence that at least 8 other killings in April warrant timely and transparent criminal investigations.

Police have put significant resources into investigations of alleged acts of looting, arson and destruction of property by protestors and arrested hundreds of people for unlawful assembly. We ask that government work to ensure that equal efforts are extended to investigations and appropriate criminal prosecutions of security forces who used live ammunition and killed Ugandan citizens without legal justification. Little effort has gone into an examination of the decision by the security forces to resort to live ammunition in Masaka, Gulu and various areas of Kampala in April. We applaud the arrest of the policeman in Masaka and hope he will be given a fair trial before civilian courts, but we remain concerned that no meaningful actions are being taken in several other incidents, particularly those allegedly involving military and military police.

Alleged misuses of lethal force are incompatible with Uganda’s duty to respect the right to life, the responsibility to protect and violate international standards. The Ugandan government has international obligations, including those under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to investigate all police and military actions that allegedly violate basic rights and hold perpetrators of violations to account. International law to which Uganda is a party provides that exceptional circumstances such as internal political instability or any other public emergency may not be invoked to justify any derogation from the right to life and security of the person.

In September 2009, at least 40 people were killed when government forces responded with live ammunition to protests and demonstrations regarding the movements of the Kabaka. Hundreds of people were arrested and charged with a range of crimes for participation in those demonstrations. Despite multiple commitments from parliament and police to investigate the killings, no action has taken place. This uneven

implementation of the rule of law undermines Uganda's commitment to justice and perpetuates a sense that criminal accountability is political rather than based on equal respect for all.

Uganda is a current member of the United Nations Human Rights Council. In this connection, we urge the Ugandan government to engage with the council's reporting systems, particularly to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression. The Ugandan government should immediately extend an invitation to these experts so that they may investigate any abuses that may have occurred that are covered by their mandate. This would not be unprecedented. Shortly after you took power in 1986, your government extended an invitation and hosted the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.

Beyond inviting these experts now, Uganda should issue a standing invitation to all the special rapporteurs and the UN working groups to visit Uganda. Some 80 countries have now extended such a standing invitation including Ghana, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Guinea Bissau.

In summary, we urge you to act quickly to:

- Establish an impartial, independent, and transparent process to investigate human rights abuses, particularly incidents in which people were killed, during the recent unrest in April and May and hold accountable those found responsible for criminal acts.
- Invite the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression to come to Uganda and issue standing invitations to all rapporteurs.

The Ugandan government should show its commitment to justice by using all legal mechanisms at its disposal to investigate these killings by security forces and ensure accountability.

We look forward to your attention and prompt response to these matters of concern.

Sincerely,

The Ugandan NGO, Individual, and Union Sign Ons:

1. Human Rights Network (HURINET-U), Kampala
2. National NGO Forum, Kampala
3. Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), Kampala
4. MAYANK Anti-Corruption Coalition, Moyo, Adjumani, Yumbe, Arua, Nebbi and Koboko
5. Human Rights Focus (HURIFO), Gulu
6. Uganda Youth Network, Kampala
7. African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), Kampala
8. Stella Mukasa, Kampala
9. Pallisa Civil Society Organizations' Network (PACONET), Pallisa
10. East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, Kampala
11. Livelihoods Improvement Programme (LIPRO) Uganda
12. Rushenyi Youths Peace for Nature, Ntungamo

13. Advocates for Public International Law in Uganda (APILU), Kampala
14. Community Development Resource Network (CDRN), Kampala
15. Western Ankole Civil Society Forum (WACSOF), Ankole
16. Coalition of Private Schools Teachers Association (COUPSTA), Kampala
17. Recreation and Development Programme (RDP), Masindi
18. Uganda Governance Monitoring Platform, Kampala
19. Peter Wandera, Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations (DENIVA), Kampala
20. Ahmed Wetaka, Mbale
21. Aggrey Mugisha, Chairman, Uganda National Civic Education Consortium (UNACO), Kampala
22. Katushabe Edrine, Kabale
23. Mugamba Ronald Kakembo, Human Rights Centre Uganda, Kampala
24. Flavia Zalwango, Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum Uganda (HRAPF), Nakulabye, Kampala
25. Angel Valeria, Member, Citizen Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU), Kampala
26. Sydey Etima-Ojara, Programme Officer, Democratic Accountability, Democratic Governance and Accountability Programme (DGAP), Kampala
27. Human Rights Target (HRT), Luwero
28. Youth Revival Association (YRA), Kampala
29. Kasubi Community Development Association (KAKODA), Wakiso
30. Kalangala Human Rights Defenders (KHRD), Kalangala
31. Bukoggolwa Widows and Orphans Care Centre (BWOC), Mpigi
32. Pastoral Women Alliance to Break Cultural Chains (PWABC), Kiboga
33. Action for Human Rights and Civic Awareness (AHURICA), Kayunga
34. Lira Women Peace Initiative (LIWEPI), Lira
35. Human Rights and Paralegal Services (HUPAS), Busia
36. Rashid Bunya, Member, Citizen Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU), Kibuli, Kampala
37. The Uganda Parliamentary Press Association, Kampala
38. The Human Rights Network for Journalists, Kampala
39. Northern Uganda Journalist Press Association, Gulu
40. Eastern Uganda Journalists Press Association, Busia
41. Kabale Journalists Press Association, Kabale
42. Action for Human Rights and Civic Awareness, Kayunga, Mukono
43. Rwenzori Peace Bridge for Reconciliation, Kasese
44. Gomba Paralegals Association, Gomba, Butambala
45. National Human Rights Association of Uganda, Mbale
46. Crispy Kaheru, National Coordinator, Citizen Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU), Kampala
47. Janet Tuhirwe, Bushenyi
48. Jenga Afrika, Kampala
49. International Anti Corruption Theatre Movement (IATM), Kampala
50. Nakaweesi Solome Kimbugwe- Independent Consultant and Feminist Activist, Kampala
51. Hope after Rape, Kampala
52. Platform for Labor Action, Kampala
53. Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence (RECESVID), Kampala
54. Enid Wamani, Kampala
55. Uganda Health & Science Press Association (UHSPA), Kampala
56. Western Ankole Civil Society Forum - WACSOF (Bushenyi, Sheema, Buhweju, Rubirizi and Mitooma Districts)

57. Twerwaneho Listeners Club, Fort Portal
58. Human Rights Network for Journalists, Kampala
59. Global Rights Alert, Kampala
60. Soroti Development Association & NGOs Network (SODANN), Soroti
61. Support Initiative for People with atypical sex Development (SIPD), Kampala
62. Justice and Reconciliation Project, Gulu
63. Mathias Mangeni, Coordinator, Human Rights Paralegal Advisory Services, Kampala
64. Public Affairs Centre of Uganda (PAC Uganda), Soroti
65. 'Kapchorwa Civil Society Organizations' Alliance (KACSOA), Kapchorwa
66. Coalition of Private Schools Teachers' Association (COUPSTA), Kampala
67. Community Development and Welfare Initiatives (CODI), Luwero
68. Facilitation for Peace and Development, Lira
69. Mid-Western Uganda Region Anti Corruption Coalition (MIRAC), Bunyoro
70. Tororo Civil Society Organizations Network (TOCINET), Tororo
71. Bugiri District NGO Forum, Bugiri
72. Africa Leadership Institute (AFLI), Kampala
73. Kisoro NGO Forum, Kisoro
74. Gulu NGO Forum, Gulu
75. Masindi District NGO Forum, Masindi
76. Bugisu Civil Society Network, Bugisu
77. Iganga District NGO Forum, Iganga
78. The Apac Anti corruption Coalition, Apac
79. Apac NGO Link Forum, Apac
80. Rwenzori Anti Corruption Coalition, Rwenzori
81. Kamwenge District Development Organization, Kamwenge
82. Kabarole Research and Resource Center, Kabarole
83. Action for Development (ACFODE), Kampala
84. Uganda National Farmers' Federation, Kampala
85. Uganda National Teachers' Union, Kampala
86. National Debate Council, Kampala
87. Dora K. Musinguzi, Executive Director, Uganda Network on Law, Ethics and HIV/AIDS (UGANET), Kampala
88. Refugee Law Project, Kampala
89. Eastern Africa Media Institute, Kampala
90. Uganda Muslims Youth Assembly (UMYA), Kampala
91. Uganda Media Development Foundation (UMDF), Kampala
92. Platform for Citizens Participation and Accountability, Kampala
93. Busoga Media Network, Jinja
94. Rwenzori Press Club, Kasese
95. Kitara Union of Media Practitioners, Hoima

International Sign Ons:

96. Human Rights Watch (HRW), Kampala, London, UK and New York, USA
97. Tchérina Jerolon, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Paris, France
98. ENOUGH Project, Washington, DC, USA
99. East African School of Human Rights, Nairobi, Kenya
100. Human Rights First, New York, USA

101. RESOLVE, Washington, DC, USA
102. Foreign Policy In Focus, Washington, DC, USA
103. Africa Action, Washington, DC, USA
104. Africa Faith and Justice Network, Washington, DC, USA
105. Health GAP, Global Access Project, New York, USA