



January 29, 2004
IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UGANDAN PRESIDENT REFERS CASE TO INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

ICC Member States Use Court to Help End Ongoing Atrocities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, and the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Luis Moreno-Ocampo, announced the referral of the situation concerning the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda to the ICC for further investigation.

This is the first case referred to the Court by one of its member states. If the ICC conducts an investigation and decides to proceed to trial, the Ugandan rebel leaders could very well be the first to be prosecuted by the world's only permanent international tribunal.

"Contrary to the fears expressed by the opponents of the court, this is further proof that in reality the ICC will operate as intended," declared Heather Hamilton, Vice President at Citizens for Global Solutions. "In Uganda children as young as 11 are being kidnapped, beaten, raped, and forced to commit blood-curdling atrocities. The Ugandan government, a member country of the ICC, has chosen to seek assistance in prosecuting the ringleaders, the people abusing these children, because its own judicial system has not yet been able to stop these crimes."

Prosecutor Moreno-Ocampo stressed the need for the international community to assist with this case and provide intelligence to arrest and bring to justice the leaders of the LRA. The LRA has been fighting a 17-year insurgency in northern Uganda with a bid to replace Museveni's government. The conflict is reported to have killed 23,000 people over the 17 years.

The Court reported that alleged LRA human rights abuses include torture and mutilation, summary executions, abduction of some 20,000 children forced to fight as rebels or serve as sex slaves for LRA commanders, and the destruction of civilian property. Also, the Prosecutor has stated that children account for roughly 85 percent of the LRA forces.

Maggie Gardner, ICC Program Manager said: "In situations such as Uganda, when national courts are unable to stop atrocities and bring the leaders to justice, the ICC can act as a global safety net. The ICC is a court of last resort - a court that works with the international community and traumatized countries to ensure that those who commit the worst crimes cannot just walk away."

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Notes to Editors:

For Court press releases see: <http://www.icc-cpi.int/php/news/details.php?id=29>

The UN news service IRINnews.org has published a report today on the northern Ugandan conflict called "When the Sun Sets, We Start to Worry..." click here to view: <http://www.irinnews.org/webspecials/northernuganda/default.asp>

Citizens for Global Solutions coordinates the *Washington Working Group on the International Criminal Court*, composed of legislative and governmental affairs offices of nearly forty American non-governmental organizations committed to the cause of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The WICC supports and provides materials and information for education and advocacy about the Court. For more information, visit <http://www.wfa.org/wicc.html>