



Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'Homme

ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE NON GOUVERNEMENTALE AYANT STATUT CONSULTATIF AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES, DE L'UNESCO,
DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE ET D'OBSERVATEUR AUPRES DE LA COMMISSION AFRICAINE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET DES PEUPLES

International Federation
for Human Rights

Federación Internacional
de los Derechos Humanos

الغدرالية الدولية لحقوق الانسان

The International Criminal Court issues its first arrest warrants

UGANDA / ICC

14 October 2005

The International Federation for Human Rights and the Foundation for Human Rights Initiatives welcome the first arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court and urge States to cooperate with the Court.

Today, the International Criminal Court (ICC) unsealed its first arrest warrants against five top leaders of Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The arrest warrants target Joseph Kony, the LRA Chief, and four of its top commanders Vincent Otti, Okot Odhiambo, Raska Lukwiya and Dominic Ongwen (deceased), who are accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the Foundation for Human Rights Initiatives (FHRI) welcome the arrest warrants and the innovative decision of the ICC to prosecute crimes newly recognized under its Statute, such as crimes of sexual violence and the war crime of forced enlistment of children in hostilities. « The International Criminal Court respects its promise to provide justice to victims, and in particular to women and children who are very often in the front line », said Sidiki Kaba, President of the FIDH.

The FIDH and the FHRI urge all States to cooperate with the Court. In accordance with their obligations under the Rome Statute, States should ensure the arrest of suspects, their transfer to the Court in The Hague and the protection of victims and witnesses. The Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and other states where the indicted persons have fled should immediately send them to the ICC, in conformity with their obligation under the Rome Statute.

The FIDH and the FHRI recall the International Criminal Court and all States and institutions cooperating with the Court that ensuring the protection of victims and witnesses should be their highest priority.

Late September, Vincent Otti with many other LRA rebels had crossed into the Democratic Republic of Congo. LRA was originally armed by Sudan where LRA have still some military camps.

Over the 19 years of this ongoing conflict in Northern Uganda, the LRA has abducted more than 30 000 children, forcing them to become fighters or sexual slavers, killed thousands of civilians and forced more than 1.6 million of people to flee their homes.

Created by the 1998 Rome Statute, the ICC started its work in 2002 having jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed since 1st of July 2002. The Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo opened an investigation on the situation in Uganda on July 29, 2004, after the State referred the situation to him in December 2003.¹ The ICC is also currently investigating the situations in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan.