



Ensure that Justice needs are met; HURINET-U and the UCICC welcome the arrest of Caesar Accellam

Human Rights Network-Uganda (HURINET-U) and the Uganda Coalition on the International Criminal Court (UCICC) applaud the work of the Uganda government and its success in arresting one of the former LRA commanders-Caesar Accellam. This is a great step in an effort to consolidate the return to normalcy in Northern Uganda. This is great progress considering the efforts that have been invested in the process. This also goes to show the importance and leverage that regional armies can have when they cooperate in the process.

Although Caesar Accellam is not one of the individuals that are wanted by the International Criminal Court, it is important that the Directorate of Public Prosecutions in Uganda makes an effort and initiates an investigation into any crimes that could have been committed by Caesar Accellam considering that he was one of the commanders of the Lord's Resistance Army whose leaders Joseph Kony, Vincent Otti, Dominic Ongwen and Okot Odhiambo according to the International Criminal Court are wanted for alleged war crimes in the form of murder, cruel treatment of civilians, intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population, pillaging, inducing rape, and forced enlistment of children and war crimes in the form of murder, enslavement, sexual enslavement and inflicting serious bodily injury. These are crimes that can be tried in Uganda both under the Penal Code Act of Uganda and the Geneva Conventions Act of Uganda especially under the newly established International Crimes Division of the High Court.

It is important that although blanket amnesties are granted under Uganda's Amnesty Act, the Amnesty Commission should consider invoking some of the provisions that require one to renounce rebellion before being granted amnesty especially for individuals who are captured in combat. This will allow for clear investigation and prevent legal dilemmas that have occurred in the recent past where there have been conflicts between the Amnesty Act and ability to have trials at the International Crimes Division.



It is noteworthy that although there are a range of measures that have been proposed to handle the after effects of the war, most of the measures have not been implemented coherently. These have included amnesties, trials, proposals for a truth telling commission, and the use of traditional justice measures, most of which have not been implemented coherently. It is important that the government prioritizes the passing and implementation of the Transitional Justice policy through the Justice, Law and Order Sector-(JLOS) where effective justice, healing and reconciliation can occur.

It is also important that the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) and the regional armies continue to pursue the other leaders of the LRA until they are brought to justice. Executing outstanding arrest warrants is the obligation of states and is important for victim communities who have waited for justice for years.

While Caesar Accellam is in custody of the UPDF, there is a need to ensure that his rights are protected especially the right to freedom from torture and other inhuman degrading treatment, and other rights that are enshrined in the constitution.

This is a great step towards peace and we hope that this development will be able to avail justice to the affected communities in Uganda.

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