



August 21st 2022
New Vision

Uganda Urgently needs a National Transitional Justice Law



Uganda has had numerous conflicts since attaining independence in 1962. These conflicts include the 1980 – 1985 Uganda National Rescue Front 1 (UNLRF I) war; the Uganda People's Army (UPA) insurgency in 1987; the 1986-1997 Holy Spirit Movement of Alice Lakwena; the 1980's National Resistance Army (NRA) war; the 1986-2006 Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebellion; the 1990s UNLRF I & II and West Nile Bank Front war; the 1986 - 1994 National Army for Liberation of Uganda (NALU) war and; insurgencies orchestrated by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) starting in the 1990s. As a result of these and several other violent conflicts in the country, thousands of Ugandans lost their lives, property and livelihood. Some sustained permanent physical injuries while others continue to bear the trauma associated with unspeakable human rights violations and abuses, they suffered during conflicts. Past conflicts shattered social and family networks resulting into an insurmountable number of orphans, widows, widowers and homeless children.

We acknowledge the Government of Uganda's efforts in addressing the violent past through administrative, policy and institutional mechanisms, notable of which include the 1971-1974 Commission of Inquiry into the disappearances of persons in Uganda; The 1986-1994 Commission of Inquiry into violation of human rights that occurred between December 1962 – January 1986; The

Amnesty Act of 2000 aimed at ending rebelinsurgencies in the country and; The Juba Peace Process from 2006- 2008 aimed at ending the 20 year conflict in Northern Uganda between the Government of Uganda and the LRA. Further, we acknowledge the establishment of the International Crimes Division (ICD) of the High Court in 2008 and the passing of the International Criminal Court Act in 2010 to further prosecution of international crimes as an aspect of transitional justice (TJ).

We appreciate the Cabinet's passing of the National Transitional Justice Policy (NTJP) in 2019 to address widespread human rights violations, enhance legal and political accountability, promote reconciliation, foster social reintegration, and contribute to peace and security. Further, we applaud efforts of the 9th, 10th and now the 11th Parliament for attempting to rally the country towards the enactment of the TJ law.

We are however concerned that the process of enacting this law is taking longer and thus, not making it possible for TJ to be justiciable in the country as a foundation for true national healing, reconciliation and propagation of long-term peace.

Concerned that a delay in enacting a TJ law is bound to slow down past and current progress in constructively dealing

with the aftermath of past conflicts and by extension, undermine the country's pursuit of long term peace and stability, we implore, the Parliament of Uganda and all other stakeholders in the country and Government to expedite all necessary processes and actions aimed at having the TJ Bill presented, discussed and passed by the 11th Parliament into law.

Further, we implore that the TJ law among others, invests in promoting accountability for past crimes; furthering individual and communal reparations and rehabilitation of victims of conflicts; enabling and empowering informal mechanisms for justice and reconciliation; fostering national dialogue and reconciliation and; strengthening formal and informal institutions and processes that will guarantee and sustain national cohesion, a culture of respect for human rights and sustainable peace.

This statement is published under a joint initiative by Rwenzori Forum for Peace and Justice (RRPJ) and Foundation for Justice and Development Initiatives (FDI). RFPJ is a Civil Society Organization established in 2002 to act as a convergence of synergies to foster sustainable peace, nonviolence, and respect for human rights in the Rwenzori Region of Uganda and beyond. FDI works to promote sustainable peace, justice, development, and economic recovery in Uganda.