



Website: www.rfpjuganda.org

Email: rfpj@rfpjuganda.org

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RWENZORI FORUM FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE (RFPJ) STATEMENT ON ALLIED DEMOCRATIC FORCES (ADF) REBELS ATTACK ON MPONDWE LUBIRIHA SECONDARY SCHOOL ON JUNE 16TH, 2023

On the night of June 16th, 2023, the ADF, labeled in March 2021 by the US Department of State as a terrorist group, attacked Mpondwe Lubiriha Secondary School in Kasese District, located closer to the Uganda-Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) borderline. According Uganda's Ministry of Defense and Veteran Affairs, the rebels killed 37, injured 8 and abducted 6 students. The rebels are also said to have killed 1 school guard and 3 members of the local community during the attack.

The ADF attack on innocent and unarmed students and civilians on June 16th, 2023 underscores the ADF's sustained disregard for human life and common decency. For decades, the ADF, currently based in the complex conflict landscape in the Eastern DRC, has relied on conscripting civilians, looting property, raping women and killing civilians as weapons of war within the DRC while occasionally making incursions into Uganda.

RFPJ condemns the ADF attack on Mpondwe Lubiriha Secondary School and extends her heartfelt condolences to families of victims, the Government and People of Uganda. United in pain, this attack should enhance our resolve to collaborate as Ugandans in fighting these terrorist acts and building a safe, secure and peaceful country.

Lastly, we believe, the ADF fighters on their own, do not have the capacity to sustain their local and other extraterritorial terrorist activities. As such, we appeal to the DRC Government, the African Union and the greater International Community to act in concert in ending this ADF perpetuated terrorism. In this acting, the world needs to frankly confront questions of; Who funds the ADF? Who facilitates the ADF to mastermind its criminal enterprise? Who trains the ADF? Whose guns does the ADF use? What are the objectives of those who facilitate the ADF? What is the masterplan for stabilizing the DRC that has for decades remained fragile and housed over 100 militia groups? The world has an answer to all these questions, and we believe, it is still possible to end recurrent indignity imposed on victims of ADF criminal activities.

Tuhaise Francis

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tuhaise Francis', is placed over a light purple rectangular background.

Executive Director/RFPJ