



**PUBLIC STATEMENT BY RWENZORI FORUM FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE ON EMERGING CASES
OF TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR
PUNISHMENT IN UGANDA**

FEBRUARY 3RD, 2022

Under Article 5 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), acts of torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment are unequivocally prohibited. Further, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 10th, 1984 and ratified by the Republic of Uganda on June 26th, 1987 echoes the spirit of the UDHR in preventing torture and other acts of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment around the world.

Uganda has domesticated the international law on torture. Notably, Article 24 of the 1995 Uganda Constitution as amended prohibits acts of torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. This prohibition, as per Article 44 (a) of the same Constitution, is absolute and non-derogable. Further, to support the cause of preventing torture and related acts, Uganda enacted the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act in 2012.

The UNCAT, the 1995 Uganda Constitution and the Uganda's Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act of 2012 indisputably prohibit and criminalize torture and related acts; comprehensively define torture to include intentional physical and non-physical infliction of pain or suffering on a person and; make an individual culpable for acts of torture, whether done directly and indirectly.

In a televised address to the Nation on August 14th, 2021, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni condemned acts of torture, which he characterized as a deviation from the ideals of the National Resistance Movement Government. The President re-underlined his personal and Government's long-standing position against torture and the need for security agencies to stay away from reactionary tendencies and observe rights of all persons. Further, the President observed that torture is an illegitimate and illegal act and by far, serves to undermine the cause of justice in Uganda

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since information obtained through torture remains inadmissible in court and innocent persons may easily admit what is not true once subjected to torture, giving room for real criminals to elude justice.

The progressive legal framework prohibiting torture and the President's August 2021 warning against infliction of torture on citizens notwithstanding, Uganda has continued to register torture incidents, mainly against detained persons. These incidents risk triggering mistrust between civilians and law enforcement agencies, undermining the cause of justice, raising political tensions in the country and undoing the democratic gains Uganda has made overtime. Thus, Rwenzori Forum for Peace and Justice Fraternity calls upon;

1. Security agencies and/or individuals within security agencies to refrain from acts of torture at all times and in all circumstances.
2. The Government to respect and protect citizens' freedom from torture at all times and in all circumstances and also, put in place conditions that harness this freedom.
3. The government to investigate and bring to justice all individuals and groups that carry out acts of torture, whether directly or indirectly.
4. All citizens to desist from provoking agents of law enforcement and instead, cooperate with them to further the cause of justice at all times.
5. The Government to extend medical, psychosocial and other necessary support to victims of torture as one way of fostering healing, reconciliation and demonstrating solidarity with victims of torture.
6. Civil Society, the media and religious actors to speak out against torture and support victims of torture to access justice and undergo integral healing.
7. Courts of law to expedite trial proceedings for victims of torture.

ABOUT RFPJ: RFPJ is a Rwenzori-Region based Civil Society Organization. Operating as a Forum of peacebuilding and human rights organizations, RFPJ is by constitution, a convergence of synergies for fostering sustainable peace, nonviolence and human rights observance.

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For and on behalf of Rwenzori Forum for Peace and Justice.