

PRESS STATEMENT: JULY 13TH, 2022

COMMEMORATING 20 YEARS OF EXISTENCE AND SERVICE IN THE RWENZORI REGION

Introduction: In 2002, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) involved in peace building and in human rights and good governance promotion in the Rwenzori region, established RFPJ. This establishment was in response to unique fragilities of the Rwenzori region, built on its pre- and post-colonial legacies of conflicts and the need for harnessing positive relations between communities and in turn, augment a culture of peace and nonviolence.

On May 27th, 2022, RFPJ conducted '**Fort Portal City public clean-up campaign**' to kickstart a process of commemorating 20 years of her existence and service under the theme, '**Harnessing Social Cohesion for Sustainable Peace.**' This process will end on September 21st, 2022 with the celebration of the International Day of Peace in Kasese District.

Objectives of commemorating 20 years: In commemorating 20 years, RFPJ seeks to;

- Appreciate her milestones since 2002 and the work yet to be done in furthering the culture of peace, nonviolence and respect for human rights.
- Rally leaders and the public to reflect on the state of peace, nonviolence and respect for human rights in the Rwenzori region.
- Provide a platform for people of the Rwenzori region to explore best ways of furthering the culture of peace, nonviolence and respect for human rights.

Planned activities to commemorate 20 years:

1. Popularise the culture of peace, nonviolence and respect for human rights using radio media spaces and other social media platforms.
2. Produce a magazine to showcase RFPJ work since 2002.
3. Hold the Uganda Technical College, Kichwamba Massacre Memorial Event on July 22nd, 2022. This event will provide space for the Rwenzori region to reflect on the subject of violent extremism. The Chief Guest will be Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda and in attendance will be Members of Parliament and other political leaders, representatives of security agencies, the media and survivors of the massacre. Religious leaders will conduct an ecumenical prayer as part of commemorating the massacre.
4. Conduct District-based women peace conventions in each of the Districts of Kyenjojo, Kabarole and Bundibugyo. A cross section of 40 women leaders will congregate in their respective Districts to reflect on and discuss about peacebuilding, and issue a communique to the media and other stakeholders.

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5. Prepare and present different petitions to local, regional and national leaders on areas of peace, nonviolence and respect for human rights.
6. Hold International Day of Peace celebrations on September 21st, 2022 as the climax of the commemoration. In the event will be over 400 members of the public from across the Rwenzori region.

Targeted stakeholders during the commemoration activities: Commemoration activities will target a wide range of stakeholders including;

- a) Cultural institutions of Tooro Kingdom, Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu, Obudhingiya Bwa Bwamba, Basongora and Banyabindi;
- b) Stakeholders from Fort Portal City and Local Governments of Kasese, Kyenjojo, Kamwenge, Kitagwenda, Kyegegwa, Ntoroko, Bundibugyo, Kabarole and Bunyangabu;
- c) The media, women and youth leaders;
- d) Different elders' fora; peace actors; judicial institutions; RFPJ member organisations and; local, national and international peace building organisations;
- e) Donor agencies;
- f) Security agencies;
- g) Religious leaders;
- h) The Amnesty Commission and;
- i) The Human Rights Commission.

Appreciation and appeal: We, the RFPJ Board, Management and Staff profoundly appreciate leaders and members of the public from the Rwenzori region and beyond for working with and supporting RFPJ in the last 20 years. We appreciate everyone we have worked with, including our partners, donors, Local Governments, the Central Government, the media, religious leaders, cultural institutions, elders, security agencies as well as youth and women peace activists to expand frontiers of peace, justice, nonviolence and respect for human rights.

We implore you to abhor all forms of divisionism based on social, political, religious and other differences. Let us harness the power of our collective humanness and invest in mutual enhancement.

RFPJ BOARD AND MANAGEMENT

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