



## Stop Torture ! It is your immediate role. We are Human



Human Rights Focus(HURIFO) notes with grave concern the continuing wave of insecurity that has so far claimed lives and left score of people with serious injuries in and around big farms such as in Karatye, obira west, Alingiri and Lii in Nwoya district and Apaa again in Amuru district. The insecurity manifest in continuous arrests, torture, arsons, and sometimes killing by some UPDF soldiers, individual wealthier people guarded by police or army.

A case in point involved a 66year old Jathim, Pyrino Akwanga of Obira East Village, Latoro parish, Got Apwoyo Sub county Nwoya district who has lived in the area since 1970s. He was on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018 at about 3:00 am woken up 2 UPDF soldiers armed with AK 47 rifles demanding him to open the door. The soldiers who were established to have come from General Otema's farm and led by 2 unidentified civilians accused Mzee Jathim of criminal trespass.

When Mr. Jathim refused to open the door because the soldier did not identify themselves and why they wanted him out at such a time, the soldiers allegedly fired live bullets into the house but no one came out of the house. Next, the brutal soldiers then set the house ablaze (probably to burn Jathim's body that was shot). But Mr. Jathim was alive and only opened the door after his mosquito net caught fire and started to burn his head.

The soldiers then arrested, tortured Mr. Jathim and took him to their detach at Gen. Otem's farm from there they allegedly tortured him and later rushed him to die in Nwoya district Central Police Station (CPS). The police later took the victim to Anaka Referral Hospital from where Human Rights Focus got the victim.

In Nwoya CPS they (assailants) charged Mr. Jathim with criminal trespass. After treatment, Mr. Jathim, also reported cases of malicious damage, torture, unlawful arrest



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by the 2 UPDF soldiers and land, but despite these life threatening and attempt to murder Mr. Jathim, the soldiers have not been arrested.

Much earlier, under similar circumstances, quite a number of youth and poor people from Nwoya and Amuru districts been intimidated, arrested, detained and tortured variably and bore horrific torture marks by the very institution "Peoples Defense Force" that should protect them as can be seen in the below pictures.

Whereas the laws of Uganda provide for arrest by an individual which individuals also include government soldiers guarding private farms, the arrest must be within the laws and torture is NOT a precursor to it (Article 44(a)). Torture is further prohibited under Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act 2013. Besides Uganda is a signatory to Convention Against Torture (1986).

In the face of these recurring rights violations I appeal to:

1. To army officers and Very Important Individuals (VII) in Amuru and Nwoya districts who are using UPDF soldiers and other paramilitaries to guard their farms, prevail over your guards to respect the rights of people of Uganda. In this case, we demand that Mr. Ramadhan Alli Jago, Komakech, Ocaka and Ochowun who are prime suspects in the torture of Mr. Jatim be surrendered for investigations, prosecution and punishment if they are found guilty.
2. The Inspector General of Police. Similarly, we appeal to the IGP to cause the police leadership in Nwoya and Amuru districts to investigate and prosecute all cases of human rights violations reported to them regardless of the status or ranks of the complainant or the person complained about (Article 21 of the constitution). And also to investigate police complacency and connivance with wealthier individual or army officers to sit on complaints from poor people especially in land relation complaints.
3. The President of the Republic of Uganda, the gains Uganda has since made in the area of human rights protection and promotion are being negated by the callous illegal acts of some UPDF soldiers torturing and terrorizing the poor as in the case of Mr. Jathim. HURIFO supports the recommendation made by the Judicial Commission of Inquiries in to Land Matters to withdraw the government soldiers used in protecting private farms that in turn are used to fuel land conflicts.

Signed  
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Executive Director

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