



STATEMENT ON THE BREAK-IN OF LASPNET PREMISES

2ND FEBRUARY 2017

On the morning of 2nd February 2017, the Premises of Legal Aid Service Providers Network (LASPNET), off Balintuma road in Mengo were broken into. Two laptops, one belonging to the Executive Director and four camcorders were stolen. A safe was also broken and money taken. The prime suspect, Simon Osire who was the security guard on duty abandoned the gun and his whereabouts remain unknown. This adds LASPNET to the list of over 28 CSOs broken into between 2013 and 2016.

LASPNET regrets and condemns this incident in the strongest terms possible. We appreciate the police at Namirembe and Old Kampala along with the Security Company-Don World Security Limited, who after being notified came immediately to commence investigations. While we commend the police for always coming in time to initiate investigations, we are saddened that their investigations often end at the time of the incident and many times remain inconclusive with no report on the findings shared or even apprehension of the suspects. We hope this incident at LASPNET will not only add to numbers of break-ins but will be followed through to its logical conclusion. We therefore call on government to step up measures to ensure the safety of NGOs to ease their operations which are supportive of government efforts in various areas. We request that reports on previous office break-ins are shared with NGOs to prevent us from falling victim to the same vices by unscrupulous individuals.

We also call upon other security agencies, especially those that are privately driven to enhance the vetting procedures and supervision of their guards on duty to minimize risks of their clients who are mainly civil society and private sector. Human rights organizations just like all institutions need protection and freedom to carry out their mandate and this can only be granted by security agencies. We therefore call upon police to strengthen enforcement of laws regarding licensing of private security companies to enhance their vigilance in execution of their duties.

LASPNET recognizes the support received from its members, partners and stakeholders who have stood with the network during this critical moment. We remain strong and will not be cowed by any attempts to destabilize our operations. We are still committed to serving and remaining the voice for the poor and vulnerable to ensure a free and just society.

Board of Directors
LASPNET