



STATEMENT ON ILLEGAL DETENTION, TORTURE, AND VIOLENCE TOWARDS CITIZENS

We are deeply saddened by recent reports of escalating cases of illegal detention, kidnap, and torture of citizens, especially targeting human rights defenders and activists.

The most recent cases of Mr. Kakwenza Rwakirabashaija, a Novelist, and Mr. Samuel Masereka, the Coordinator of the National Unity Platform in Kasese are some of the publicly discussed indicators of a very worrying trend. The evidence in the public domain reveals that the two were arbitrarily arrested, tortured, and denied access to their families and lawyers at various points while in detention. These are a violation of fundamental human rights enshrined in the 1995 Constitution of Uganda and the International Human Rights Statutes.

It should be noted that Uganda has ratified and is a signatory to several international and regional human rights instruments including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. Specifically, Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states; **No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.** These have been domesticated in Chapter four of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and the Human Rights [Enforcement] Act, 2019.

Recent media reports, however, indicate that the security agencies have continued to violate the rights to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

We call upon the government to expeditiously investigate and prosecute individuals involved and implicated in these heinous and degrading acts – in line with Section 10 (1) of the Human Rights [Enforcement] Act, 2019 which provides for personal liability for public officers who, individually or in association with others, violates or participates in the violation of a person's rights or freedoms.

We also call upon the security forces and other institutions of government, including Parliament and the Judiciary, to take actions that will ensure the preservation of the rule of law and protection of fundamental human rights.