



# Foundation People for Peace and Defense of Human Rights

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**Canceling all activities we have earlier planned for the World Peace Day in protest of the arrest of Mr. Kulihoshi Musikami Pecos, the Executive Director of the Foundation PPDHR by the Police Officer attached to the Office of the Prime Minister Department of Refugees yesterday Wednesday September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

## Background information

The situation of refugees here in Uganda has deteriorated and is alarming, in settlements refugees are given a ration food of 3kg of maize per month and **1 Kg is just 800 Ug Sh**, in settlements human rights have been sacrificed completely, here in Kampala we have observed movements of refugees from the camps looking for where they can stay running away all those difficult situations. No one seems to know where does the humanitarian aid donated by all the development partners to help refugees end from, at the community levels refugees are talking about going either to Kenya or to Ethiopia.

Beside that Uganda has been globally praised for its welcoming approach of refugees, less efforts have been made to find out the roles Uganda has done to displace all these people from their countries especially the Congolese and the South Sudanese either directly or indirectly. And on top of that almost there are no visible efforts on ground to question the Human Rights approach to refugees once they are already here in Uganda.

## Refugee Leaders in Uganda

All these and so many other problems affecting refugees at the community levels have pushed other refugees to take the lead in order to address some among these problems. They are Refugee Human Rights Defenders, Refugee Community Leaders, Refugee Cultural Leaders, Refugee Religious Leaders, Leaders of Refugee Led Organizations, and Refugee Opinion Leaders among others, who are standing together with refugees in their communities.

## Circumstances before the arrest of Mr. Kulihoshi M Pecos

In August 2017, Mr. Apollo Kazungu the Commissioner for refugees issued a decree banning the registration of Congolese Asylum seekers in Kampala based on allegations which are not yet proved to be true. The organization Foundation People for Peace and Defense of Human Rights which is a refugee led organization has taken the lead to challenge the decision of Mr. Kazungu.

And on that move, Yesterday September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Mr. Kulihoshi Musikami Pecos delivered letters to the two Ministers in charge of refugees calling upon them to nullify the Commissioner's decree.

In the afternoon at around 2:40 pm Kulihoshi M. Pecos reached to the OPM Department of Refugees where he was to deliver the copy of the letter to the Commissioner. When Pecos reached the gate, he found other refugees who started talking to him, and then 5 minutes later, the Police Commandant in charge of the security of OPM offices came out and called Pecos and took him to his office, where he claimed that he received instructions to arrest immediately Mr. Pecos. In process Mr. Pecos was detained there up to 4:20 pm when he was told to make a statement and then go, he made the statement and then was released; he delivered the letter and moved out.

### **Harassment against Refugee Human Rights Defenders in Uganda,**

This incident has just come in adding on the list of other incidents which are faced by Refugee Human Rights Defenders in Uganda for the last three months alone; our statistics show us the following:

The total number of 9 refugee human rights defenders who have been attacked since May 2017 up to now, among them 3 are being harassed by the security agencies from their countries of origin and despite the fact that OPM and UNHCR have the whole information they have opted to do nothing for their protection, 3 have been attacked by unknown people and there has been no investigation by the Police yet, 2 have been threatened and arrested by the Office of the Prime Minister Department of Refugees agents, and 1 has been arrested by the Police on allegations which are not proven true.

Due that prevailing situation, in our meeting at the office this morning September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017, we have realized that space for Refugee Human Rights Defenders to do there is highly restricted in Uganda as per now and therefore we have resolved the following:

1. **To cancel all activities we had planned for the World Peace Day** in protest against the harassment of Refugee Human Rights Defenders and these activities include: The Dialogue with CSOs on refugees here in Uganda which was to take place tomorrow **Friday September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017**, the meeting with the Diplomatic Mission to Uganda and all development partners in Uganda which was to take place on **Monday September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017** and the Prayers by the Archbishop of Kampala Dr. Cyprian Kiziito Lwanga which were to take place **on Friday September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017**.
2. We have resolved that from today Thursday September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017 up to Friday September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 we shall meditate on the situation of refugees and the situation of Refugee Human Rights Defenders in Uganda, we shall visit all those who have been harassed in sign of solidarity with them, and then make prayer request for them in different churches for God to comfort them during their difficult moments.

3. But also call upon the government of Uganda, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Development partners and the Civil Society engaged in the protection of Human Rights Defenders to get involved in the issues affecting Refugee Human Rights Defenders in Uganda, and remind each other the commitment the Government of Uganda made in Geneva in November 2016 of the situation of Human Rights Defenders during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

Thanks

Kulihoshi Musikami Pecos

**Executive Director**