



Date: November 24th, 2017

Press Statement: We strongly condemn the barbaric attack against refugees in Kyaka II Camp in Uganda yesterday November 23rd, 2017 by a group on unidentified armed people led by Mr. Mubisi one among the camp Commandants.

This attack is the second in a refugee camp in a distance of only three weeks after the other one in Nakavile, it happened when refugees for the last two weeks have alleged saw unidentified armed people in Nakivale camp, it happens when in three weeks back Nakavile was attacked and the government claimed it could not know who the attackers were, it has happened when Rwandan Refugees in different camps are living in fear of possible deportation back to Rwanda, it happens when there are allegations of embezzlement of Refugee Aid Relief, of misappropriation of the land which should be owned by refugees, and in the situation of generalized complaints among refugees over the poor conditions in which they are living.

Kyaka II Refugee Camp is located in Kyenjojo District towards Fort-Port and hosts many refugees among them the majority are Congolese both the new ones and those who came to Uganda since 1964.

Like other refugees in different camps and in urban, refugees in Kyaka II have been complaining of so many things like the lack of basic needs and wonder where does the money contributed by the international community end from, the high level of bribe in order to access service, the authoritative ways in which all those who can try to speak are quickly handled, the access to plots of land and destruction of the houses of refugees who have not managed to bribe.

It is on this ground that yesterday November 23rd, 2017 at around 13h: 30 pm that the Camp authorities under the leadership of Commandant Mubisi of Bukere and Itambabiniga Zones came to destroy houses of refugees in Bukere zone and its surroundings but then a group of refugees resisted because among the houses there were churches. The camp authorities resorted to use of force which spark violence in the camp as refugees gathered and responded with stones and blocking of roads. The situation cooled down after the intervention of the Police from Kyegegwa who managed to interact with refugees. We strongly salute the work done by the Kyegegwa Police Station in that situation yesterday.

Three refugees where seriously injured either with live bullets or with other kind of objects used as ammunition and they were rushed to the existing Health Center. As per we note with regret that the armed people who attacked Kyaka II camp yesterday remain unidentified up to now as they were paying on civilians clothes,

Basing on the reactions from different OPM Department of Refugees in the Refugee Leaders in Uganda Whatsup Group, we have noticed with so much concern the un coordinated statements and often not accurate. From the Kyaka II Refugee Camp Commandant, the OPM Principal Senior Protection Officer and the OPM Commissioner for Refugees none of them has condemned this attack, but rather they are more of mitigating it to refugees. This alone has been perceived as a planned attack at the higher level,

The attack of yesterday only adding the proof on ground showing that Uganda has failed to ensure the protection of refugees, unfortunately the government of Uganda has not yet come up publicly to recognize this,

Recommendations

Basing on the situation in Kyaka II refugees camp we state the following:

We send our sympathy to all those refugees who were injured yesterday and wish them quick recovery but also ask UNHCR to ensure that logistic is put in place for the family members to visit them because the Health Center is far from the place of the attack,

We salute the level of civility of refugees to claim for their rights and we continue encouraging them to remain strong but also at the same time never giving in to all forms of provocations which may lead to what may be wrongly interpreted as violence,

We state that some source of information like what was published by Daily Monitor today November 24th, 2017 is not accurate, we call upon the Media to publish true information, both refugees and Uganda Nationals among the host communities were victims,

We strongly condemn the use of excessive forces and bullets against poor refugees who were only chanting and making noise, we also condemn all attacks, beating, threats and all other forms of violence against refugee religious leaders and all other refugee leaders in the refugee communities in Kyaka II,

We call upon the Office of the Prime Department of Refugees and the UNHCR to immediately and without delay evacuate the injured refugees to places where they can get adequate treatment and those in critical conditions should be moved outside Uganda,

We call upon OPM Department of Refugees and the Uganda Security Services to immediately stop and abandon all forms of threats, hunting, intimidations, all other forms of abuses against refugee leaders in Kyaka II who are perceived as the mobilizers of the other refugees during yesterday's demonstration, and we call upon their relocation to another place where they will live in peace,

We call upon the OPM Department of Refugees and the Police to urgently investigate the actions on Mr. Mubisi and other Camp Commandants, who have been involved in abusing refugees and ensure that they are brought to account for their actions without delay,

We call upon OPM Department of Refugees and the UNHCR to ensure that all refugees who have been victims of these attacks yesterday in all forms are rehabilitated the damage they have occurred in all aspects, physical, emotional, psychological, and economical,

We call upon the OPM Department of Refugees, the UNHCR and other humanitarian Agencies to ensure that they do not get advantage of this situation for a fundraise drive, but rather utilize this situation as a reflexion and an opportunity to ensure that refugees are served in dignity,

We call upon donors and the international community to first carry serious investigations on what happened to the aid they donate to refugees before more aid is given, and we also call upon the UNHCR to send international investigators to look into the situation of refugee rights violations in Uganda since the year 2000 up to now,

We call upon refugees to remain united and in solidarity with their fellow refugees in Uganda and do not surrender quickly to fear and intimidations but resist against the oppression,

We call upon all people of good will, all actors in the refugee issues here in Uganda and all refugees to strongly condemn this attack against refugees and at the same organize actions or events in solidarity with our fellow refugees in Kyaka II, it may be a petition, an Open Letter, and Press Statement, a report, a Community Meeting, and Prayer,.....from Monday up to the end of next week,

Thanks

Kulihoshi Musikami Pecos

Executive Director