**AFRICAN CENTRE FOR TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION OF TORTURE VICTIMS (ACTV)**

**HAPPY INTERNATIONAL PEACE DAY 2016**

**Background**

**The African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims** is a key stake holder in the fight against torture in Uganda. ACTV has decided to come out together with the **Coalition against Torture (CAT)** adding to the voices of other human rights defenders in the commemoration of Peace world over, especially in Uganda.

The International Day of Peace was first established on 30th November 1981 by the General Assembly resolution A/RES/36/67.

On 28th September 2001 the General Assembly, in resolution A/RES/55/282, decided that, beginning in 2002, the International Day of Peace should be observed on 21th September each year.

The Assembly declared that the Day be observed as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities during the Day. It invited all Member States, organisations of the United Nations system, regional and non-governmental organisations and individuals to commemorate the Day in an appropriate manner, including through education and public awareness, and to cooperate with the United Nations in establishing a global ceasefire.

On this note, ACTV and the CAT consider acts such as torture and cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment or punishment as violent and a danger to the realisation of peace in Uganda and world over. These acts are a violation of the human right to freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment guaranteed to any person **under Article 24 of the 1995 constitution of Uganda.** The latter further makes this right absolute in **Article 44(a)** as a non-derogable right.

These acts are criminalised by the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act, No.3 of 2012 for the case of Uganda and the world over in the various international treaties or conventions Uganda has signed and ratified.

**Therefore acts that are said to be;**

* Causing great physical or mental pain or suffering to a person done directly by person or indirectly by ignoring to do something to stop or prevent such violence
* Under orders from another person.
* Done to get information by force, to punish or to threaten a person to do something.

Acts of violence still rank high among human rights violations as reported in Uganda Human Rights Commission and ACTV reports and those published by other human rights organisations despite having an Anti-Torture Law in place. Key among these acts is torture and cruel, inhumane, degrading treatment or punishment.

Some acts of violence qualified as torture under **section 4** and **7** respectively are a gross abuse of peace and human rights which cannot be realised fully without the presence of a conducive environment of peace.

Therefore, in order to realise peace especially in Uganda, ACTV and CAT urge the Member States, organisations of the United Nations system, regional, organisations of the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights and non-governmental organisations and individuals;

1. Adopt the recommendations from the proceedings of a meeting of African experts held in **Naivasha, Kenya** from **10th to 12th May 2012**.
2. Civil society Organisations to redouble their efforts to promote peace through effective implementation of the relevant laws through advocacy and strategic litigation.
3. The parliament of Uganda should support the implementation of the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act 2012 amongst members of the legislature and executive arms of government and other stakeholders.
4. The parliament of Uganda should enact the witness Protection Bill 2014 into law.
5. The Minister for Justice and constitutional affairs should sign the regulations to the Prevention and Prohibition of Torture Act 2012.

**“For total peace to be realised in Uganda, we must fight torture together and report it to relevant authorities, both as a crime and a human rights violation.”**

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