



ULS PRESS STATEMENT ON THE UNLAWFUL DETENTION, BRUTALITY AND USE OF EXCESSIVE FORCE BY THE UGANDA POLICE AND ARMY IN ARUA

Uganda Law Society is gravely concerned about media reports and footage which showed the Uganda Police Force and the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (“the Security Forces”) using excessive force against supporters of Opposition candidates as well as journalists in the hotly contested Arua Municipality by-elections.

The reports and footage that have been broadcast on national television, radio as well as print media showed the Security Forces beating up journalists, confiscating their equipment and carrying out arrests without lawful cause. It has also been reported that supporters of some opposition candidates were equally beaten up, arrested and have since been unlawfully detained in various unknown locations. Of particular concern is the reported death of one Yasin Kawooya, a driver to the Kyadondo East MP Robert Kyagulanyi who succumbed to bullet wounds following scuffles between Opposition supporters and the Security Forces.

The Uganda Law Society considers such conduct by the Security Forces whose mandate is to serve, defend and protect all Ugandans regardless of political affiliation to be unlawful, unprofessional, unfortunate and unacceptable. Such behavior goes against the dictates of our Constitution particularly Articles 24 and 29(1) of the Republic of Uganda which guarantee the freedom of every Ugandan citizen from torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and provide for the freedom of speech and expression which includes freedom of press and other media.

In line with our mandate of protecting and assisting members of the public in all matters touching, ancillary or incidental to the rule of law and administration of justice in Uganda, we demand that;

- i. Full investigations into the incidents are conducted and a report issued in this respect;
- ii. The Security Forces curtail on the excessive use of force;
- iii. The officers who perpetrated the use of excessive force and acts of brutality be held accountable;
- iv. The whereabouts of those detained be made known to the public and those held in ungazetted places be released and or produced before the courts of law.

While we condemn the acts of violence against the Opposition supports, we in the same measure advise the public to refrain from participating in acts of aggression against the Person of the President. In particular, we condemn the recent stoning of the presidential motorcade in Arua.

The Uganda Law Society will continue to be at the forefront of the protection of the rights and freedoms of all to ensure that constitutionalism and the rule of law are respected. Therefore, we shall not hesitate to seek redress from the courts of law to defend the rights and freedoms of Ugandans from those who act with impunity and reckless abandon.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

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PRESIDENT- UGANDA LAW SOCIETY.**