



PRESS STATEMENT

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UGANDA SHOULD EMBRANCE THE CALL FOR GLOBAL CEASEFIRE AND MAINSTREAM IT IN ITS NATIONAL PLANS TO COUNTER COVID 19 SPREAD

The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres recently called for a Global Ceasefire to enable the world face its common pandemic COVID-19.

He has asserted that: *“it is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus together on the true fight of our lives”*. He has urged warring parties to pull back from hostilities, put aside mistrust and animosity, silence the guns to help create corridors for life-saving aid, to open precious windows for diplomacy and to bring hope to places among the most vulnerable to COVID-19.

This he said was urgent especially for women and children, people with disabilities, the marginalized and displaced who pay the highest price in the situation of violent conflict. Such measures

would undoubtedly avert a greater catastrophe and save countless lives.

To date 53 countries have fully endorsed the call for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world in light of the Global COVID-19 pandemic.

Uganda is one of the countries where cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed and government has unveiled a raft of measures to counter the spread of and contracting of the virus in the country. Official statistics have posited the number of confirmed cases as standing at 55 and a lockdown and curfew imposed to enforce social distancing or restrict interactions likely to exacerbate the COVID19 situation in the country.

It is against this background concerning the resurgence of armed insurgence in the Rwenzori region has emerged during this time of national vulnerability and pandemic.

Media reports indicate that security forces have arrested 14 members of Kirumira Mutima, a local militia group that operates in Kasese and Bundibugyo region. The militiamen were allegedly arrested with machetes as they plotted to carry out attacks against police posts and army detachments.

In view of the above, the undersigned organizations agree and commit to the Global ceasefire call; and as such:

1. Call upon the Government of Uganda to endorse and sign up to the commitment to the Global ceasefire per the call of UN Secretary General;

2. Urge the Rwenzori region not to cooperate with any belligerent elements that are bent on or formenting violence in the region
3. There is need to reinforce security in the Rwenzori region to avert a return to civil strife and the disorder redolent of the 2016 violent clashes in the region.
4. Government should work with the regional early warning mechanisms for prevention of conflict in the Rwenzori Region.
5. During the lock down, the National Task Force (NTF) on COVID19 should target the conflict prone regions including Rwenzori for supply of food items and logistics to prevent starving out of work youth being lured into rebel activities.

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