

UA 288/02

Fear for safety/Fear of torture or
ill-treatment/possible extrajudicial
execution

20 September 2002

UGANDA

Stephen Otim (m)
David Penytoo (m)
Alex Otim (m)
Pidu Lukwiya (m)
Tony Kitara (m)
Aida Lagulu (m)
George Obita (m)
Francis Onen (m)
Martin Ojara (m)
Alex Okwerowat (m)
Charles Picha (m)
Justo Ojwiya (m)
Michael Lakony (m)
Jekeph Odong (m)
Paul Akuch Okot (m)
Federiko Ocan (m)
Bosco Oti (m)
Moses Atuku Akena (m)
George Abedo (m)
Dead: Peter Oloya (m)

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of 19 prisoners held by the Ugandan army, the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) in Gulu Municipality, northern Uganda. On 16 September, Peter Oloya was killed by the UPDF in a suspected extrajudicial execution within the prison grounds, as they tried to illegally remove all 20 prisoners from Gulu Central Prison.

The 20 men were arrested in March. Peter Oloya and Stephen Otim were arrested and charged with the murder of the Pabbo District Chairman (a local government official) whilst canvassing for the opposition during the local government elections in Gulu. They were both key campaigners for the opposition multipartyist candidate, and it seems that their arrest may be due to their political activities during the campaign. The rest of the men were arrested on murder and treason charges related to the ongoing conflict between the Ugandan government and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The men were all held on remand in Gulu Central Prison.

On 16 September, the UPDF raided the prison, and rounded up the 20 men. The UPDF have stated that they were moving the prisoners as they had learnt that the LRA were to "rescue them". The UPDF also stated that Peter Oloya was shot whilst trying to disarm one of the soldiers and escape.

Following the raid by the UPDF all 20 prisoners, including the body of Peter Oloya, were illegally moved to military detention at the UPDF's 4th Barracks in Gulu, where they remain. The 19 surviving prisoners are at increased risk of torture or ill-treatment whilst they remain in UPDF custody.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The north of Uganda has experienced over 16 years of internal armed conflict with the LRA, who are trying to overthrow the present government

and instill one that is based on the Bible's Ten Commandments. The LRA is noted for its atrocities carried out on the civilian population, through looting, abductions, maimings and the use of children as sexual slaves and soldiers.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of the 19 surviving prisoners currently held at the UPDF's 4th Barracks in Gulu, where they are at greater risk of torture or ill-treatment;
- calling for the immediate return of the 19 prisoners to a civilian prison;
- expressing your concern at the forced removal of the 20 prisoners from Gulu Central Prison by the UPDF and their continued detention in the barracks;
- calling for an inquest into the death of Peter Oloya, including a post-mortem to be conducted immediately by independent pathologists;
- calling for the outcome of the inquest to be made public and those found guilty to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

President Museveni
President of the Republic of Uganda
Office of the President
Parliament Buildings
PO Box 7168
Kampala
Uganda

Telegram: President Museveni, Kampala, Uganda
Fax: + 256 41 235459/ 346102
Email: info@gouexecutive.net
Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Francis Ayume
Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
and Constitutional Affairs
PO Box 7183
Kampala
Uganda

Telegram: Attorney General, Kampala, Uganda
Fax: + 256 41 254828/9
Email: mojca@africaonline.co.ug
Salutation: Dear Sir

Major-General Jeje Odongo
Army Commander
Armed Forces Headquarters
PO Box 3798
Kampala
Uganda

Telegram: Army Commander, Kampala, Uganda
Salutation: Dear Major-General

Mr Amama Mbabazi
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence

PO Box 3789

Kampala

Uganda

Telegram: Minister of Defence, Kampala, Uganda

Fax: + 256 41 245911

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Uganda accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 November 2002.