



# HURINET - UGANDA

Human Rights Network - Uganda

P.O. Box 21265  
Kampala  
Uganda

Tel: 256-41-286923 / 285362  
Fax: 256-41-286923  
E-Mail: [info@hurinet.or.ug](mailto:info@hurinet.or.ug)  
Website: [www.hurinet.or.ug](http://www.hurinet.or.ug)

## RESOLUTIONS REACHED UPON BY 30 NGOs AT A NATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR CSOs ON POLICING IN UGANDA

**August 17<sup>th</sup> 2007**

### **Concluding statement on the role of CSOs on Policing in Uganda**

The state of policing in Uganda evokes serious concern. Uganda is at a critical stage in its democratization process, with an increasingly heated political atmosphere and various events showing that the police force is still engaged in regime policing.

Uganda's democracy requires democratic policing.

From August 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> 2007, 30 Ugandan organizations and institutions working on issues of human rights, good governance and democracy, along with the African Police Civilian Oversight Forum and the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, converged at the Imperial Resort Beach Hotel in Entebbe for a National Training Workshop for Civil Society Organisations on Policing in Uganda organized by Human Rights Network Uganda (HURINET-U), together with the Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), and Uganda Prisoner's Aid Foundation (UPAF).

### **Participants noted:**

- ✚ **Human rights abuse:** Acts of brutality and impunity committed by some police officers have blighted the image of the police force. The police force has been charged with committing acts of torture and excessive use of force.
- ✚ **Regime policing:** Uganda's police is a legacy of the British colonial period. There are examples of policing that are brutal, partisan and regime focused, as well as examples of exemplary policing. The police force has been used by the government to clamp down on opposition, dissent and the media. There is little space for the police to be held accountable to the community.
- ✚ **Illegitimate political interference:** Police have been used as a political tool under successive regimes. Police must be given operational autonomy if Uganda is committed to a transition to true democracy.
- ✚ **Lack of resources:** The police work under difficult circumstances. Officers are poorly equipped and the organisation is seriously under-

NATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR CSOs ON POLICING IN UGANDA

August 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 2007

Concluding statement

resourced. However, this does not justify underperformance or the use of illegal and brutal methods.

✚ **Police challenges:** The police face huge internal challenges that prevent them from fulfilling their mandate. Among many challenges, some examples include poor housing, inadequate pay and a lack of training.

✚ **Militarization:** The police and the army are separate bodies, with separate mandates, cultures and institutions. The trend in Uganda to militarize the police and conduct joint police/military operations has undermined police jurisdiction, effectiveness and morale, resulted in brutal and partisan policing and has enabled misconduct to go encountered by police accountability mechanisms.

✚ **Corruption:** The police force has not been spared from the corruption challenges that Uganda is facing.

✚ **Political will:** Government rhetoric supports democratic reform for Uganda and its agencies. Government action has not adequately reflected this rhetoric.

✚ **Democratic policing:** Legislative and institutional frameworks need to be reviewed to build an accountable, transparent and community focused police service that abides by the Ugandan Constitution and accepted international human rights and democratic principles.

✚ **Civilian oversight:** Independent civilian oversight of the police is a critical component of an effective, democratic police force. Current civilian oversight structures are not able to effectively demonstrate oversight over the police.

✚ **Civil society role:** Civil society organisations play a key role in supporting and developing community focused police reform and police accountability. Civil society must be aware of, involved in, and engaged with, police review and reform processes.

✚ **Upcoming police review:** The police force has commenced a major review of its policies and functions in order to meet the demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century policing.

**The participating organisations committed to actively engage in the upcoming police review and contribute towards police reform and a more accountable, democratic and community focused police service.**

**Participants called on:**

**The Ugandan Government to:**

1. Recognize the critical role that civil society organisations play in the police reform process.
2. Provide the police force with adequate resources and additional, professional and continuous training to enable it to perform its functions.
3. Provide prompt and adequate compensation to and rehabilitation for victims of police torture and brutality.
4. Criminalize torture and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.

NATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR CSOs ON POLICING IN UGANDA

August 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 2007

Concluding statement

5. Confirm its commitment to undertaking a police review process and to demonstrate political will by implementing any and all recommendations of the police review.
6. Take note of the resolution on Police Reforms, Accountability and Civilian Oversight in Africa by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights at its 40<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session held in Banjul, The Gambia, from 15 – 29 November 2006.

**The Ugandan Police Force to:**

7. Cease violations of basic human rights under the Ugandan Constitution and international standards and adopt a human rights based approach to policing.
8. Design a review and reform process that includes a focus on assisting the development of a democratic policing model for Uganda.
9. Consider the police reform lessons of international and African jurisdictions, particularly on issues of accountability mechanisms and civilian oversight models, in the review and reform process.
10. Ensure that the upcoming Police review and reform process is time-led, transparent, participatory and consultative.
11. Engage with Uganda Human Rights commission, IGG and the judiciary to ensure their participation in the police review and reform process.

**Ugandan civil society organisations to:**

12. Participate fully in the upcoming police review and reform process.
13. Form a coalition on police accountability and democratic policing as a forum for civil society organisation input into the police review process, discussions around police reform and accountability and advocacy on policing issues in Uganda.
14. Engage with regional and international mechanisms including the African Union and the East African Community, as well as regional international organisations working on police accountability and oversight issues, including the African Police Civilian Oversight Forum, Amnesty International and the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative.

**Development partners to:**

15. Build capacity within and support civil society organisations to engage with police review and reform.
16. Assist government efforts to conduct police review and reform.

**The East African Community to:**

17. Draft a set of minimum standards of policing in the region.

**The African Union to:**

18. Prioritize issues related to policing and human rights under the African Peer Review Mechanism.



Mohammed Ndifuna  
National Coordinator HURINET-U

NATIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR CSOs ON POLICING IN UGANDA

August 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 2007

Concluding statement