

AFRICAN UNION		UNION AFRICAINE
الاتحاد الأفريقي African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights		UNIÃO AFRICANA <i>Commission Africaine des Droits de l'Homme & des Peuples</i>
<i>31 Bijilo Annex Layout, Kombo North District, Western Region, P. O. Box 673, Banjul, The Gambia Tel: (220) 4410505 / 4410506; Fax: (220) 4410504 E-mail: achpr@achpr.org; Web www.achpr.org</i>		

PRESS RELEASE

The African Union Special Summit on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, held on 22 and 23 October 2009, in Entebbe, Uganda, adopted the African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, also known as the Kampala Convention.

The Kampala Convention is a legally binding instrument, which commits African States to prevent displacement, protect and assist internally displaced persons on the continent. There are currently about 13 million IDPs in Africa, which is more than half the world total.

It is a landmark legal instrument in international human rights and humanitarian law. It regulates the conduct of African states during displacement, in particular during armed conflict. It prohibits arbitrary displacement, caused by various man made causes, such as conflicts or development projects, and makes provision for the assistance of IDPs in the event of displacement. It prohibits armed groups and their members from engaging in arbitrary displacement, or such other violations of the basic human rights of internally displaced persons, and reiterates the individual responsibility of members armed groups, (any other persons in authority) under national and international criminal law, for violations committed against IDPs.

The Kampala Convention places the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and its Special Rapporteur on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, IDPs and Migrants, at the centre of monitoring its compliance and the protection of the rights of IDPs.

17 African Union member states signed the agreement, namely, Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The Convention shall enter into force upon the ratification of 15 states. In spite of the euphoria of its adoption, the Kampala Convention, one of an impressive body of African Human Rights Instruments, was adopted under the backdrop of a rather unsatisfactory

record of ratifications, and implementation of obligations under such instruments, by African States.

The Special Rapporteur on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, IDPs and Migrants in Africa, thus while congratulating the African Union and the member states for adopting the Kampala Convention, calls on those states which have not yet sign the Kampala Convention, to sign it at the earliest moment possible, and urges its early ratification so that 13 million IDPs in Africa can enjoy the rights enshrined therein.

Commissioner Bahame Tom Nyanduga
Special Rapporteur / Acting Chairperson.