

**STATEMENT BY HON. FREDERICK RUHINDI, DEPUTY ATTORNEY
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AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA AT THE 48TH ORDINARY SESSION
OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS.**

10 NOVEMBER 2010, BANJUL – THE GAMBIA

Honourable Ministers present, Her Excellence, Madame Julia Joiner, The AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, The Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, distinguished Commissioners, representatives of states, intergovernmental organisations, representatives of non-governmental organisation, ladies and gentlemen, all protocol observed.

It is with great pleasure that I, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Uganda, and on my own behalf, take the floor to address this the 48th ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. First, allow me to, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, to thank the Government and the people of The Gambia for the warm reception we have been accorded since our arrival in this nice country.

Allow me, also, to join others in congratulating Mrs. Lucy Asu upon her assuming office after being sworn in this morning as a Commissioner on the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. We pledge our total support as she embarks on this noble assignment.

Madam Chairperson,

Distinguished Commissioners,

Ladies and gentlemen

The Government and people of Uganda appreciate the commitment that the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights continues to exhibit in protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms on the continent. Uganda unreservedly pledges its continued support in the realisation of this noble and shared goal.

Distinguished commissioners and delegates

The Government of Uganda continues to make the observance and protection of human rights a cornerstone of its policies in accordance with the aspirations of its people, its Constitution and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. I wish to report that pursuant to this commitment, Uganda has, for instance, ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and several Protocols under the Charter.

I, with utmost humility, also wish to observe that it been due to the recognition of the importance that Uganda attaches to the observance of human rights and good governance that we have just been elected to represent the African continent on the United Nations Council on Human Rights. We have also had the distinct privilege and honour to represent Africa on the UN Security Council for the last two years. Further, we are grateful for the unprecedented honour of hosting the first ever Review Conference of the International Criminal Court, an institution that seeks to promote and protect the rights of ordinary citizens from the most heinous crimes. The decisions made at that Conference will go a long way in the advancement of human rights in Africa and universally.

Madam Chairperson,

Distinguished commissioners,

Ladies and gentlemen

Allow me to observe that, Ugandans all over the country now uniformly enjoy human rights following the routing of the infamous Joseph Kony and his terrorist organisation, the so-called Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) from northern Uganda. Unfortunately, this terror outfit has shifted its criminal activities to other sister African states of Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Central African Republic where they continue to sow mayhem and commit heinous human rights violations. I use this opportunity to call upon the international community to join the Government of Uganda in its

efforts to definitively and permanently eliminate this menace that has assumed catastrophic trans-boundary dimensions. I also extend our sincere condolences and profound sympathy for the lives lost in the said sister countries and for the wanton destruction of property by this group.

Distinguished commissioners, ladies and gentlemen

The Government of Uganda continues to make great strides in implementing the provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. These strides are amply highlighted in our periodic report for the period 2008-2010 which is undergoing consultative validation and adoption and will be submitted to the Commission before the end of the year for discussion at the 49th session.

Madam Chairperson

Allow me, on a sad note, to inform the session that on 11th July 2010 the people of Uganda suffered one of the worst terrorist acts of this decade in which over 80 innocent Ugandans lost their lives, many of them in the prime of their youth while watching a football game in a communal place on television. Many more suffered grievous injuries and their lives were altered forever. We appreciate the moral and other support extended to us by the African continent and the international community during that trying period. My Government is doing all within its power to ensure that the victims of this unprovoked and heinous act receive justice. A number

of suspects are already in custody and have been charged before our courts of law. Investigations continue and, perhaps, more will be apprehended. The Government pledges to observe all the rights of the suspects under the relevant Ugandan laws and international instruments. We call upon all of you to support us in this endeavour as we strive to enforce the rights of the victims and the society at large.

Madam Chairperson,

Distinguished commissioners,

Ladies and gentlemen

I wish to end my statement by wishing all of us a fruitful session.

Thank you.