



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Ministry of ICT and National Guidance
UGANDA MEDIA CENTRE

September 17, 2018

STATEMENT TO THE MEDIA ON THE EUROPEAN UNION PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION ON UGANDA

The Government of Uganda has seen resolution number 2018/2840 titled “arrest of parliamentarians in opposition in Uganda”, passed on September 13, 2018 in the EU parliament which has been circulated. Although the government of Uganda has not formally been served, we would like to imagine, that this resolution was passed at the instigation of what we generally believe are several NGOs operating in Europe and funding some of their entities in Uganda which petitioned these MPs.

We also believe that the traditional lobbyists opposed to Uganda’s choice of values against the sexual orientation taken by some groups in the West along with some new lawyers recruited recently in London and Washington DC, is partly the source of this resolution.

Both the nature of the debate that transpired, and the final resolution by the MPs on the floor of their parliament, showed all signs of active coaching including prepared short texts for each of the MPs to read. First, we believe that the EU parliament like the ICC and EU Court on Human Rights are among institutions that have been highly discredited even by their own allies like the US whose national Security Advisor John Bolton poured scorn on last week. In addition to Brexit, the UK has been unpretentious about the credibility of the European Court of human Rights. Therefore, it would be wrong, if we too, questioned the credibility of some of these institutions or their decisions.

As we are wait, that hopefully, the EU parliament and its Delegation here, will have the decency and provide the government of Uganda, with an authentic copy of their concerns, for now we would like to make this statement to the media:

1. We are a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human rights, the International Covenant on civil and political rights, the UN Convention against torture and the African charter on democracy, elections and governance. In 1995, we enshrined in our Constitution (Article 29) the defense of human rights and in 2012, we passed a specific law to define and prevent torture in any form.



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Please note that the current government of Uganda is well aware of the past history of violence orchestrated by past governments that left hundreds of thousands dead. In fact, it is this government that ended chronic instability in Uganda and parts of the African region, restored the rule of law and put the country on the wheels of progress. The people of Uganda and their government, therefore, would do well with respectful partnerships to promote the work done over very many years than the current sanctimonious lectures on rights most of which had been trampled upon even when the current pretenders at their defense were either looking on sheepishly or they were active participants in their violation. This is especially so given their greedy search for Africa's resources for well over 100 years.

2. We would like to note that there have been 35 new or by-elections across Uganda since the beginning of 2017. These elections have all been witnessed by the media, local and foreign observers. It is only in four of these, where the opposition has won. But, there has been a marked pattern of pre-planned and well executed violence, quite often with active financial and technical support from foreign groups operating in Uganda under the very guise of freedom of expression and association guaranteed by our constitution. The question is: Why does violence not occur in other parts of the country? Why have the massive just concluded local government council one elections conducted countrywide by queuing behind candidates, not generated any incidents of violence? The answer is: where the opposition feels they have no support, they aggressively stoke violence, intimidate voters so as not turn up to vote and they cause violence so it can be blamed on authorities. The backers of this misguided wing of the opposition would do well to convince them to use democratic means to secure victory because Uganda state institutions will not tolerate violence of any form and manner. In fact, if some elements of this opposition were not emboldened by this external financial, political and technical meddling, they would apply saner means to convince their electorate. The Ugandan state and government has exercised maximum restraint under intense provocation on so many occasions in the hope that the leaders of these groups would reform.

Uganda will continue to protect the right of the majority to exercise their freedoms as well as the minority that want to express their views in a civil manner against this radical and extreme element that derives its legitimacy from foreign backers. The mere fact that we have an extremely vocal minority that can reach EU Parliament, doesn't mean that the silent majority in their shambas, market stalls, dukas, workshops, schools, and health centres shouldn't be protected against hooliganism.

3. Uganda takes objection to the tacit approval of undisciplined behaviour by EU and some of its institutions of some of the politicians in the country. We also object to the condescending



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tone contained in the language of this resolution. The matters referred to in this resolution such as the threat to the security of the president while in Arua on August 13, the 33 people arrested in connection with this incident including the MPs and the regrettable loss of life of some of the people, are all under investigation by credible and competent arms of the state and overseen by an independent judicial system in Uganda. Could the EU parliament and those who actively promote impunity in other people's nations have some humility in this area especially given the fact that matters under investigation are sub-judice? To give context to Uganda's actions to protect the lives and property of her people, on January 20, 2017, the US security forces rounded up 234 demonstrators in Washington DC and charged them with criminal intention to destroy lives and property. The last of this group of about 38 people was released in July 2018 and some of the charges dropped. Does the lives and property of the people in the West matter more than those of the people on the streets of Kampala, Mityana or Arua where violent demonstrators seeking to harm other people, find redress and are paid homage to by foreign backers?

4. Uganda further strongly objects to the lectures on press freedom. Our country is the most open in the world both in terms of infrastructure and news coverage latitude given to reporters. Uganda has well over 300 media houses and even actively promotes citizen journalism. However, some reporters paid and embedded with the violent elements simply to project their country as a hot bed of violence, will not be tolerated. We all need a stable Uganda even if some are opposed to its current government. Fortunately, the state institutions established by Uganda in her constitution such as the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC), perform independently and will verify these claims made by journalists. If any of the Ugandan security elements is found guilty for wrongly apprehending any of the reporters on duty or taking other actions intended to harm any of the reporters, Uganda will deal with the culprits according to our laws.

5. Uganda witnessed with consternation during the debate on this resolution from some of the members on the floor of the EU parliament that the quarrel with our country is about the choice of values our citizens have elected to uphold. Couched in their usual terms, some of the MPs debating the motion indicated 'Uganda does not promote sexual rights', a reference to the people of Uganda's stand against the active promotion of homosexuality especially among our youth made with financial support from some of the civil society groups that lobbied for this resolution. Uganda would like to reaffirm its commitment to individual and human rights and protection of its society, especially the youth and children from the massive liberal invasive negative behaviour of some of the elements from our friends and allies in the West. We prefer



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to keep these values as a definition of who we are as a people and would very much like to be accepted as that by our allies.

6. Finally, Uganda would like to assume that the EU parliamentarians either acted out of their naturally limited knowledge of our country or, therefore, picked rumours and unverified conversations on social media or the Honorable EU MPs are removing any veil of pretense about where they stand when it comes to judging the various players in the Ugandan political space. To formally and unashamedly warn the Ugandan people and their government that budget support funds given to the country for development should be used as leverage to monitor whether "opposition MPs are being hindered", is to clearly reduce the relationship with Uganda that has held strong over in security, trade and cultural exchange to simply, MONEY. Could we ask humbly as a nation that the EU MPs would do better to kindly reserve the role of an umpire of our politics and social change for the people of Uganda and their institutions? Uganda saw its darkest period in the 1970/1980s. It was restored by the people of Uganda and only they can and will determine their destiny and the future of their country.

This response is circulated to the people of Uganda, our media houses, the EAC Partner states and the African union, who the government has an obligation to protect from lies spread by groups opposed to Uganda's growth and transformation over the last 30 years.

Thank you

Ofwono Opondo
Executive Director