

## A Statement from Concerned Organizations

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# There is Still Hope: Patience & Persistence Needed to Salvage Northern Uganda's Peace Process

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The decision by Joseph Kony, the rebel Lord's Resistance Army's (LRA) leader, to postpone the signing of the Final Peace Agreement (FPA) and officially end northern Uganda's 22-year war was deeply disheartening for war-affected communities who long for peace. Over one million displaced northern Ugandans continue to face the difficult task of trying to create a life in the absence of peace and in fear of a return to violence. Recent developments have made it clear that all efforts must now be aimed at salvaging the FPA.

### **There is still hope for a better future in northern Uganda.**

After 22 years of war, the Juba negotiations have brought northern Uganda to the brink of peace. The dramatic improvements seen in the lives of war-affected communities should be consolidated and sustained regardless of how the negotiations process concludes. Return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and redevelopment of the region must continue to move forward.

A failure to secure the peace and resort to a "military solution" would trigger renewed fears of insecurity and threaten the considerable progress made on the ground in northern Uganda. Additionally, it would impede efforts to implement important aspects of the agreements already approved by the Government of Uganda and the LRA that are not contingent upon the signing of the FPA.

The Juba peace process has been a catalyst for security and humanitarian improvements in the region. Patient and persistent engagement from all stakeholders is needed to guarantee that this opportunity succeeds and that the progress achieved thus far is sustained.

### **Recommendations:**

- *All local and international stakeholders* to the process should exercise patience and support the work of the mediator and local leaders to dialogue directly with rebel leaders so that a final deal can be concluded and implemented immediately.
- *The Lord's Resistance Army* should immediately halt attacks on civilians and release women and children.
- *The Government of Uganda*—with the support of the international community and local civil society—should uphold its commitments made during the negotiations process to address historical grievances, help redevelop war-affected areas through the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) and establish a process of accountability for crimes committed during the war.
- *The Government of Uganda* should ensure a safe and voluntary environment for the return of IDPs, by providing security guarantees for returnees and by seeking other durable solutions, including training community police, shifting UPDF presence to border patrol and strengthening local judicial structures.
- *The international community* should work to ensure the protection of civilians in northern Uganda, Southern Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic.

***The statement is supported by the following organizations:***

Africa Faith & Justice Network (AFJN)  
Africa Leadership Institute (AFLI)  
American Refugee Committee  
Association of Volunteers in International Service (AVSI)  
CARE  
Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU)  
Concern Worldwide  
Concerned Parents Association  
Conciliation Resources  
Gulu District NGO Forum  
GuluWalk  
Human Rights Focus – Gulu  
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre  
Invisible Children  
Justice & Reconciliation Project  
KIIDA – Uganda  
Liu Institute for Global Issues  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Mennonite Central Committee  
The Name Campaign  
Norwegian Refugee Council  
Oxfam  
Pader NGO Forum  
Pax Christi International  
The Populace Foundation – Uganda  
Quakers Peace & Social Witness  
Quaker United Nations Office  
Refugee Law Project  
Refugees International  
Resolve Uganda  
Save the Children  
U.S. Fund for UNICEF  
Wheaton Franciscans Office for Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation  
World Vision