

# ACTIVITY REPORT UGANDA

## Civil and Political Rights Cluster Action Strategy Validation workshop

10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> August, 2017

### Timeline for UPR engagement in the current cycle



UPR  
INFO

## 1. Introduction

On 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> August, 2017, 30 participants including 4 officials from relevant Government agencies in Uganda including the UPDF, Uganda Prisons and Uganda Police, and CSO representatives participated in Uganda Civil and Political Rights Cluster Action Strategy Development Workshop that was co-organised by *Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI)*, with support from *CIVICUS* and *UPR Info*. The purpose of the meeting was to validate and adopt an Action Strategy for the Implementation of the civil and political rights recommendations that were made to Uganda's during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The meeting built up on previous UPR activities that have been undertaken in Uganda. The Government was represented by Ms Harriet Nabuduwa, Uganda Police Force, Directorate of Human Rights and Legal Services; Mr Victor Aioka: Assistant Commissioner of Prisons, Uganda Prison Services; and Colonel James Wacha, Director of Human Rights, Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF)

## 2. Activity

### 2.1. Overview

The objectives of the meeting were to discuss and validate simplified version of the action strategy; to hold a dialogue between CSOs and government; to allocate responsibilities to the different members of the cluster; and to agree on actions to be taken during the fourth quarter of 2017. Mr. Nkuubi of HURINET-Uganda presented a simplified action strategy to be adopted by CSOs, UHRC and MDAs with the following goals

1. Ratification of international instruments: Between 6-8 recommendations called for the ratification of international instruments. It was agreed that advocacy efforts should target the relevant Line Ministry.
2. Strengthening and increasing the capacity and funding of UHRC

Ms. Harriet Nabuduwa, Uganda Police Force, Directorate of Human Rights and Legal Services at the Uganda Police Force (UPF) stated in her presentation that there are 3 Assistant Commissioners of Police (ACP), namely Legal Advisor, Legal Drafts and Human Rights. The Directorate of Human Rights and Legal Services undertakes inspection of police stations for human rights compliance; and conducting training on human rights for police officers. CSOs and the UHRC have supported the Directorate in delivering on its mandate. Such support ranges from the development of training manuals, police inspections to support in documentation of violations in police. Nonetheless, the Directorate still faces a number of challenges including the application and implementation of international human rights

standards instruments by the police; the knowledge gap on human rights particularly the right to freedom from torture, cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment; the challenges associated with investigating human rights abuses perpetrated by police officers; and promoting accountability for violations committed by police officers.

The UPF committed to

- Continue to consider written requests to the UPF from CSOs, to inspect/monitor the conditions of police cells and/or detention centers and the state of human rights of detainees;
- Continue to consider proposals from CSOs for training on specialised human rights themes to enhance the skills, knowledge and general capacity building of police officers in promoting, respecting and protecting human rights;
- Work with the CSOs particularly the civil and political rights cluster, to improve accountability within the UPF;
- Offer necessary guidance and support to CSOs particularly the civil and political rights cluster, for effective advocacy for the improvement of the welfare of police officers - as a central pillar, in improving on the rights and working conditions of the police officers.
- Establish a clear disciplinary code of conduct for the police with respect to human rights ;
- Allocate individual officers the responsibility of overseeing implementation of recommendations so as to ease the follow-up.

Mr Victor Aioka, Assistant Commissioner of Prisons, Uganda Prison Services stated that the Human Rights Division in the Uganda Prison Services (UPS) was established with the aim of promoting observance of human rights and monitoring compliance to human rights standards on the treatment of inmates. The Division generates periodic reports on the human rights status in prisons and has supported the establishment of human rights committees in various prisons (comprising of staff and prisoners) since 2010.

The UPS committed to

- Continue to considering written requests to the UPS from CSOs, to provide technical support to prison officers and inmates on various aspects of human rights;
- Providing CSOs, particularly the civil and political rights cluster, with the necessary access to facilitate documentation on the human rights issues around prison labour ;
- Advocate for a budgetary increment in order to cater to improve on the dietary requirements in prisons.

Colonel James Wacha, Director of Human Rights represented the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF). He said that in 2006, Uganda was the first African country to establish a full Directorate of Human Rights in the army. The Directorate, he explained, conducts human rights research and documentation; investigates human rights complaints made against army officers, and conducts human rights training for new army recruits. The Directorate has also

partnered with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to enhance knowledge and motivate practice changes in as far as torture is concerned.

The UPDF committed to

- Share information/provide the necessary information to facilitate advocacy and accountability ;
- Broker meetings/dialogue between CSOs and the top leadership of UPDF ;
- Inculcate the issues of welfare officers/assistants for UPDF in different parts of the country towards what end?

The Civil and Political Rights clusters consequently identified the following areas as priority for action between September to December 2017

1. Ratification & domestication
2. Torture (instruments)
3. Death penalty
4. ILO domestic work
5. Human Rights Defenders
6. POMA & NGOA
7. Legislative reform - The National Legal Aid Policy
8. Strengthening human rights institutions
9. State reporting/ National reports/Shadow reporting
10. National Action Plan (NAP)
11. Electoral & Constitutional Reforms
12. State Cooperation with UN

## 2.2. Achievements

The workshop provided an opportunity for CSOs and officials from the Government of Uganda to deliberate on the draft action strategy to implement the recommendations received by the State of Uganda around civil and political rights

The workshop succeeded in;

- ❖ A detailed, finalized outcome charter for follow-up and implementation of UPR recommendations relating to civil and political rights for the next 5 years.
- ❖ Relevant government stakeholders are aware of the action strategy and possibilities for collaboration with CSOs for implementation of the UPR recommendations relating to civil and political rights.



- ❖ An established timeline during which CSOs will meet to check in and discuss their progress in implementing their respective action items set under the finalized UPR outcome charter
- ❖ An agreement amongst CSOs to submit a UPR mid-term report

### **2.3. Lessons learnt**

There were concerns raised by the government agencies present that there is need to push for the reform for staff welfare. This should also be taken up by CSOs with equal vigour, to foster a better relationship between the CSOs and government agencies. Secondly, conducting regular cluster-wide meetings are highly important, as they help in providing a platform to discuss issues faced in the implementation of recommendations, as well as tracking progress.

## **3. Way forward**

With an eye on the Mid-Term Review, scheduled in March 2018, CSOs resolved to ensure that at least 70% of the recommendations are implemented. Secondly, a peer-review system will be established where CSOs will meet quarterly in the year 2018 so as to track the progress of implementing the recommendations.



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