

PRESS STATEMENT

1st December 2016

RWENZORI REGION WOMEN'S PEACE FORUM (RWPF) STATEMENT ON THE CURRENT CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE SITUATION IN THE RWENZORI SUB REGION

Preamble

We members of Rwenzori Region Women's Peace Forum (RWPF) from the Districts of Bundibugyo, Kabarole, Kasese, and Ntoroko are saddened by the recent events of late November 2016 that led to loss of lives and destruction of property. Our heartfelt condolences to all the bereaved.

This unfortunate situation has affected all members of society especially women and children; mothers have lost their children; women have been left as widows, children as orphans and others helpless with their husbands/brothers in prison. Schools have been closed and tension remains very high.

We wish to pronounce ourselves on the state of affairs as follows:-

- We call upon the people of the Rwenzori sub region to remain calm and desist from any form of revenge or violent acts and practice tolerance.
- We strongly condemn the attacks on Government security agencies and installations and urge all leaders to prevent any further attacks.
- We call upon our leaders and other stakeholders to desist from making conflict insensitive statements in print and social media that may escalate the violence and tension.
- We strongly condemn the alleged act of stripping women naked during the attack on the Omusinga's palace. Seeing photos of naked women go viral on media was a shame to the women fraternity of Uganda. We request the relevant authorities to investigate this incident.
- We call upon the Government of Uganda (GOU) to engage in dialogue with the conflicting parties and quickly review and implement recommendations from various reports to find a lasting peaceful means of resolving the conflicts in the Rwenzori sub region.
- Now that the Omusinga has been formally charged in the Courts of Law, we call upon the relevant authorities to accord him a speedy and transparent trial. The same should be to all people arrested during the operation.

- We call upon the women fraternity of the Rwenzori region and Uganda as a whole to continue pursuing peace building at household level so as to convince their men, fellow women and children from being lured into subversive acts of conflict and violence.
- We call upon the political leadership in the Rwenzori region and nationally to allocate resources for women and youth who are mostly affected by conflicts to deal with their psychosocial support and economic development during and after conflict. Lack of economic opportunity has repeatedly been identified as a key driver of political and social unrest.
- We call upon the President of the Republic of Uganda to resume dialogue with the leadership in Kasese and the wider Rwenzori region to find a permanent solution to the conflicts in the area
- It is our humble appeal that the bodies of all those killed are released to their families in order to enable them have a decent burial.
- We call upon Government and other development partners to join us as we champion peace building processes in the Rwenzori Region and re assert our roles as peace makers.



Signed:

For Rwenzori Region Women's Peace Forum (RWPF)

- Hon. Florence Kintu (Chairperson)
- Hon. Loice Bwambale (Vice Chairperson)
- Betty Thembe (General Secretary)
- Deborah Baguma (Publicity Secretary)
- Catherine Mbambu (Treasurer),
- Maria Mugambwa (Committee Member)
- Medius Bihunirwa (Committee Member)

About the Rwenzori Region Women's Peace Forum (RWPF)

The forum was created in November 2016 to strengthen and increase the role of women in conflict Resolution and Peace building in the Rwenzori sub region. It comprises of eminent women from Kasese, Bundibugyo, Ntoroko and Kabarole districts who are committed to building sustainable peace in the region.