



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2006/NGO/102  
28 February 2006

ENGLISH ONLY

---

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
Sixty-second session  
Item 9 of the provisional agenda

**QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL  
FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD**

**Written statement\* submitted by Franciscans International, a non-governmental  
organisation in general consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is  
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[13 February 2006]

\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the  
submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.06-11258

## **Thirst for Justice and Truth: Sudan, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo**

### **CONTEXT AND ISSUES OF CONCERN**

More than 300,000 innocent civilians have lost their lives in Darfur, Sudan where injustice and impunity have supplanted the rule of law and the rights of people to security, peace and respect for their fundamental human rights. Those who have been forced to flee their homes and communities, which number more than 2 million, remain in camps for the internally displaced and refugees and are the subject of further atrocities and deprivations. Despite efforts by the African Union and other international players to help bring an end to the violence and provide protection, the government of Sudan, its Janjaweed surrogates and the rebel groups continue to pursue military options that lead to further human suffering and dehumanization.

The situation in Sudan is further complicated by the presence of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) operating in southern Sudan and northern Uganda. Credible reports indicate that the LRA continues to receive material and other support from the government in Khartoum, that it operates freely in and around the southern town of Juba and poses a serious security threat to the local populations. In northern Uganda, the majority of the population has been displaced by violence, abductions, rape and other atrocities. 'Night commuters', children who number more than 35,000, are forced to leave their homes each night in search of security and to avoid abduction by the LRA. The Ugandan government and its military, present in the zones where the LRA are most active, have failed to provide adequate protection for innocent civilians and halt the abduction of children. Many people of the north are concerned that the Ugandan government lacks the political will to find a solution that will bring an end to the violence, neutralize the LRA and provide the necessary conditions of security so that the people might once again return to their homes and resume their economic activities.

The LRA has extended its field of operations to the northeastern corridor of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), attacking, pillaging, raping and killing local populations. This presence poses a clear and present danger to the people of eastern DRC, namely the children, and to regional security. There are signs of increased tensions between the government of the DRC and its eastern neighbor, Uganda.

The people of the eastern corridor of the DRC have suffered the consequences of a long war that officially ended with the signing of a series of protocols in 2002. However, the presence of a number of armed militias, some of whom have been backed by the Rwandan Patriotic Front and by the government in Uganda, and armed opposition groups and former Interahamwe responsible for genocide in Rwanda, continue to destabilize the region. According to recent reports by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), more than 1,000 innocent people die each day in eastern DRC as a result of violence, instability and lack of access to appropriate medical care and a proper diet. More than 20,000 people were displaced because of incursions by the LRA in January 2006; hundreds of thousands of other people live in constant fear of attacks and reprisals by numerous armed groups; the UN Mission to the DRC (MONUC), working in close collaboration with the Congolese Army (Forces Armées Congolaises, FAC), has not been able to protect the lives of men, women and children from further atrocities, including rapes, killings and destruction of

property. Efforts by the transitional government and the international community to integrate the various armed groups and to restructure the FAC have proven to be more difficult than anticipated. In addition, new threats to peace and security have erupted in northern and eastern Katanga province and are exacting a heavy toll on civilian populations.

### **Recommendations**

Franciscans International calls upon the Commission on Human Rights to take the following immediate steps:

Sudan, Darfur:

- Urge the International Criminal Court to accelerate the investigation of atrocities and potential crimes against humanity and against international law by the government in Khartoum and its proxy militias and the rebel groups;
- Bring additional pressure to bear upon the government in Khartoum and the rebel groups in Darfur to negotiate in good faith in Abuja and to respect existing ceasefire agreements;
- Support a strengthening of the international presence in Darfur, including the engagement of UN peacekeepers, and an expansion of the mandate to provide full protection to innocent civilians and national and international humanitarian workers;
- Call upon the acceleration of the deployment of UNMIS in southern Sudan to help bring additional pressure on the LRA and provide increased protection to innocent civilians in zones where the LRA currently operate;
- Adopt a resolution condemning killings, forced evictions, property destructions, rapes and other grave human rights violations occurring in Darfur.

Uganda:

- Call upon the UN Secretary General to appoint a Special UN Envoy for Northern Uganda who will work collaboratively with all local, regional, and international stakeholders to help mediate between all parties to end the conflict.
- Invite the UN Secretary General to establish a panel of experts to investigate and monitor the activities of the LRA, as well as the networks supporting the LRA, and its impact on regional peace and security;
- Call on all parties to declare an immediate ceasefire; encourage greater international diplomatic and financial support for on-going mediation efforts, while ensuring a coordinated response to LRA activity in the area;

- Call on the government of Uganda, in accordance with its national IDP policy, to adopt a security strategy that focuses on protection rather than confrontation, prioritises civilian and aid convoy protection, and holds protection personnel accountable for crimes they commit.

DRC:

- Remind all players of the obligations they bear to ending all violence and human rights abuses during the transition period, to work towards the integration of security forces, promote, and support efforts toward full demobilization and reintegration of armed actors in compliance with agreements and protocols signed by the belligerents;
- Call for free, fair, just and transparent presidential elections according to the agreed timeline and with the full support of the international community;
- Support the establishment of the rule of law, an end to impunity, and the promotion of a plan for reconstruction, which incorporates international standards for the respect and promotion of human rights and full participation by civil society in the conduct of all affairs by the new government;
- Recall the obligations of the government and the neighbouring States of Rwanda and Uganda to support and assist the work of the ICC regarding crimes against humanity and other human rights violations in the DRC;
- Urge the creation of mechanisms that will ensure greater collaboration between the government of the DRC and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), with particular attention to the role of the country Special Rapporteur and other thematic special procedures and the level of implementation of their respective recommendations by the government.

In conclusion, Franciscans International recommends that the Commission on Human Rights encourages the OHCHR and concerned special procedures to develop a regional vision, multi-pronged strategies and processes for evaluating the human rights situations in each of the three countries, and the protection of human rights between actors operating across the respective borders.

- - - - -