



PRESS STATEMENT

Kampala, Wednesday 10th December 2025

Commemoration of Human Rights Day 2025

HRAPF calls for urgent legal reforms to safeguard human rights in Uganda

Today, Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum joins the world in commemorating the International Human Rights Day. This year's theme, 'Human Rights: Our Everyday Essentials', seeks to reconnect people with human rights by highlighting the powerful ways in which human rights influence our daily lives. Although human rights concerns are often dismissed as abstract or academic, they are in fact the fundamental pillars that enable every person to live in dignity and pursue a fulfilling life.

This year's commemoration offers a critical moment for reflection. Uganda continues to experience growing restrictions on fundamental rights, the systematic targeting of human rights defenders and political dissidents, and increasing vulnerability of marginalised communities. The 2025 theme is therefore deeply significant because it is a reminder that bridging the gap between human rights principles and everyday experiences builds awareness, inspires confidence in demanding accountability for violations and encourages collective action to protect human rights, especially for the most marginalised. It also underscores the fragility of human rights and the urgent need to protect them against evolving threats, including violence and the proliferation of anti-rights and anti-gender narratives that target women, sexual and gender minorities and other marginalised groups. Equality, freedom, and dignity are not privileges, they are inalienable rights of every human being.

Over the past two years, HRAPF has observed with concern a rising trend in violations of the rights of marginalised communities, particularly key populations. This situation has been worsened by recent legislative developments that have negatively affected the lived realities of key populations, most notably the enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2023. In addition, legal developments through both the courts of law and the legislature have negatively impacted on civil society organising, further shrinking operating space for civil society organisations working on issues of social, economic, civil and political rights. These developments undermine the spirit of Uganda's Constitution and run counter to several international human rights obligations for Uganda.

As we commemorate this day, we are reminded of one simple truth, that human rights are interwoven into every aspect of human existence. Protecting the human rights of all, especially the most vulnerable and most marginalised in our societies, is a sacred imperative. As the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights rightly recognises, disregard for human rights has resulted in barbarous acts that have outraged the conscience of mankind, and recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. These moral imperatives underpin our highest aspirations as a society, yet they can only be attained if we recognise human rights as an essential element of the day to day existence of every person.

At HRAPF, the International Human Rights Day is an opportunity to take stock of the gains made during the year towards protection of the rights of the most marginalised communities, to recognise the challenges that prevent full realisation of the rights of all Ugandans and to reaffirm our commitment to take human rights to all.

HRAPF therefore joins the world today to call for deliberate action to protect the rights of marginalised persons and develop the necessary infrastructure to ensure that all individuals can enjoy their rights as part of everyday life. We call upon the government of Uganda to take steps to promote the constitutionally guaranteed rights of marginalised persons without discrimination through urgent legal reforms such as decriminalisation of sex work, repealing of repressive laws like the Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2023 and the decriminalisation and declassification of petty offences such as 'common nuisance'. We further call for stronger efforts to hold perpetrators of human rights violations accountable and to ensure meaningful redress for victims of human rights violations.

Taking human rights to all!

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