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ICC Chief Prosecutor challenged to account for 'partisan' refusal to take action against Museveni regime

The refusal of the International Criminal Court chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo to open an investigation against President Yoweri Museveni and other government officials in relation to alleged atrocities committed by Ugandan government forces demonstrates the court's complete lack of impartiality, *ICCwatch* contends.

ICCwatch director, Marc Glendening, has written to Mr Ocampo to challenge him to account for why he has failed to initiate any investigation into alleged human rights abuses carried out by the Ugandan president and government (see below).

The fact that the ICC's Review Conference has been taking place in Kampala has focused local public attention on the court and its partisan, politically motivated attitude towards Ugandan affairs. In 2007 Mr Ocampo caused huge controversy by staging a joint press conference with President Museveni to outline how the case against Joseph Kony and four other Lord's Resistance Army commanders was progressing. The chief prosecutor was strongly urged by his deputy, Serge Brammertz, among other ICC officials not to proceed with the event as it would totally undermine the court's claim to be an impartial force for universal justice. The notoriously arrogant Ocampo brushed aside these protestations and proceeded with the event. Mr Brammertz resigned his office.

In his speech to the Review conference on May 31st, Mr Ocampo referred to the crimes committed by the Lords Resistance Army, but conveniently made no mention of the allegations of Ugandan government sponsored brutality in northern Uganda and within the DRC. This is all the more surprising since in 2008 the United Nation's Court of International Justice found Uganda guilty of having carried out massive human rights abuses in the DRC, including the burning alive of villagers, mass rape and the theft of precious minerals. President Musevini's government was ordered to pay \$10million in compensation and so far has refused to do so.

Olara Otunnu, head of Uganda's Popular Congress party, presented Mr Ocampo with a dossier earlier this week outlining allegations concerning violations of mass murder and other human rights abuses. he commented: *"There is a long trail of bloodshed and massacres wherever Mr Museveni has been. Last September, in the streets of Kampala, he ordered the shooting of*

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unarmed demonstrators. More than 40 people were killed and hundreds were rounded up, tortured and jailed without trials. To this day, there has been no investigation or accountability".

Marc Glendening in his letter to Mr Ocampo says:

"Your failure to take action against President Museveni and his regime despite the findings of the UN International Court of Justice is further proof that you and the ICC operate according to a partisan political agenda determined in Brussels and other western capitals. Your court claims to be an impartial, independent force for World justice but in reality the ICC is a force for the pursuit of European interests in Africa. You and the organisation you work for do not serve some abstract conception of 'justice'. You are partisan political players and your refusal to hold the government of Uganda to account is proof of this, as has been the ICC's failure to pursue the regime in the DRC or the so-called Justice and Equality Movement in Darfur. I await with interest your explanation as to whether you will now act upon the serious allegations made by Olara Otunnu and many others in Uganda".

For more information concerning ICCwatch's critique of the International Criminal Court, please refer to www.iccwatch.org

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