

UA 287/07

Torture

UGANDA	Geoffrey Oyuru (m) Denis Coto (m) Patrick Opono (m) Joshua Ocen (m) Tom Ekwang (m) Alfred Ebong (m) Geoffrey Ebong (m) Emmanuel Abak (m) At least 14 others
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Police arrested about 30 people on 29 October and tortured at least 22 of them, including the eight named above, in Apac District in the north-east of the country. The detainees had allegedly stolen and killed 80 cattle, and shot and wounded one man, the previous day. They are now in danger of further torture. They have no legal counsel, and have not received adequate medical care, though at least four of them have serious injuries.

According to eyewitness accounts, police arrested about 30 men and beat them repeatedly with sticks from 2-4 pm on 29 October, while questioning them about the cattle theft and who had been involved. Up to 20 police officers took it in turn to beat the detainees and interrogate them.

At least four of the men suffered serious injury during the beating, one of whom was beaten until his trousers were torn and soaked with blood, and he lost control of his bowels. Local police have acknowledged arresting 22 men and interrogating them at the scene, but claimed no knowledge of the beatings, despite three police officers being clearly visible using sticks to beat 16 detainees lying face-down at the side of the road, in a photo published in the newspaper *New Vision* on 30 October.

At least 22 of these men appeared in Apac District court on 1 November, where they were charged with aggravated robbery of the cattle. They are reported to have been remanded to Atopi government prison until 5 November.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In a similar case in the town of Mbale in the past few months, a detainee was alleged to have been seriously beaten on the buttocks by officers of the police Rapid Response Unit. He was given no medical treatment while he was in custody, and his wounds have gone septic and require hospital treatment.

Article 24 of the Ugandan Constitution specifies that no person shall be subjected to any form of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Uganda is also a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, both of which oblige the authorities not to torture anyone or subject them to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Both also oblige the authorities to ensure detainees receive all necessary medical treatment.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern that the Uganda Police Force tortured at least 22 men on 29 October, immediately after arresting them;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that the 22 are not further tortured or ill-treated, and receive immediate medical attention, as well as access to legal counsel of their own choosing;
- demanding that the authorities order an independent and impartial investigation into the torture immediately, publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice;
- urging them to suspend all police officers involved in the arrests until the investigation has been completed.

APPEALS TO:Inspector General of Police

Maj. Gen. Kale Kayihura

Inspector General of Police

Uganda Police Force

PO Box 7055, Kampala, Uganda

Fax: +256 414 342985**Salutation:** Dear Major General

COPIES TO:

President

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and to diplomatic representatives of Uganda accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 December 2007.*****