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Uganda: International organization must not help fugitive evade justice

Amnesty International today severely criticized the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for agreeing to facilitate the transfer of a senior leader of the Lord's Resistance Army to Uganda, instead of to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Okot Odhiambo has reportedly told Ugandan authorities that he would surrender himself in return for an amnesty. The IOM agreed to facilitate this transfer.

"We are extremely surprised that an organization like the IOM would consider assisting a suspected war criminal to evade justice," said Christopher Keith Hall, Senior Legal Adviser for Amnesty International.

"Should the IOM proceed with this transfer, it would constitute an obstruction of justice."

The ICC issued an arrest warrant for Okot Odhiambo on 8 July 2005, listing ten counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including murder, enslavement and use of child soldiers.

Amnesty International urged the IOM to help effect a transfer of Okot Odhiambo to the ICC as soon as possible.

Members of the Lord's Resistance Army are responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during a 20-year conflict with the Ugandan government.