

Uganda: Ongwen's war crimes conviction by ICC represents long overdue justice



PUBLISHED FEB 4, 2021
BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
UK

Lord's Resistance Army rebel group commander Dominic Ongwen today convicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity

'We hope this decision provides... redress for the 4,000 victims who participated in the case and who can now receive reparations for their suffering' - Seif Magango

Following today's International Criminal Court (ICC) conviction of Dominic Ongwen, a former commander of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in northern Uganda, Seif Magango, Amnesty International's Deputy Director for East Africa, said:

"We hope this decision provides a measure of redress for the 4,000 victims who participated in the case and who can now receive reparations for their suffering. "While this case is important, redress must extend to the thousands of victims of the LRA's abductions, killings and mutilations, who still have not seen justice for the harms they have suffered."

In delivering its decision, the ICC took the unprecedented step of reading out the names of a number of victims of the LRA's attacks, highlighting the individual harms suffered by thousands of victims, and recognising the importance of victim participation in trials at the ICC.

Dominic Ongwen was the former commander of the Sinia Brigade, one of several LRA brigades. As one of the highest

commanders of the LRA, Dominic Ongwen was responsible for devising and implementing the rebel group's military strategy.

The ICC opened its investigation into war crimes in Uganda in July 2004. An arrest warrant for war crimes and crimes against humanity was issued against Ongwen the following year. He was transferred into the custody of the ICC on 21 January 2015.

Ongwen has now been convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity including attacks against a civilian population; murder and attempted murder; rape; sexual slavery; forced marriage; torture; enslavement; outrage upon personal dignity; conscription and use of children under the age of 15 to participate actively in hostilities; pillaging; destruction of property and persecution. Despite his conviction, Ongwen has an automatic right to appeal today's decision.

Arrest warrants for LRA commanders Joseph Kony and Vincent Otti are outstanding, as the two suspects remain at large.

Press release distributed by Media Pigeon on behalf of Amnesty International UK, on Feb 4, 2021. For more information subscribe and [follow us](#).

Press Contacts

1. Press Office

press@amnesty.org

+44 (0) 20 7413 5566

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