

Statement : 18/03/2013

ICC Prosecutor's message to the LRA

The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Fatou Bensouda, today issued a message to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) on ICC warrants and processes.

"Information reaching the Office of the Prosecutor indicates that members of the LRA are being misled that they will be killed or tortured by the ICC if they try to escape. Let me set the record straight.

ICC has investigated and issued pending arrest warrants against only LRA top commanders Joseph KONY, Okot ODHIAMBO and Dominic ONGWEN. If these commanders surrender to ICC, they will not be tortured or killed. All their human rights will be protected and the case against them will be in accordance with accepted international human rights standards. They will face a fair, impartial and public justice that respects all their rights, including the right to be represented by a lawyer

of their choice, and to present evidence in their defence. If convicted they will not be sentenced to death: The ICC does not impose the death penalty.

The choices for the three commanders are clear: they should hand themselves over and face a fair justice process at the ICC or remain fugitives in full knowledge that military forces from many countries are looking for them, and they may be cornered, captured, and possibly wounded in the process.

To all others that still remain within LRA ranks: abandon violence, stop committing crimes and follow the bold steps of others before you who have returned home."

The message, which has also been translated into French, Acholi, Sango, Swahili and Lingala will be transmitted in Uganda, and in areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic and Southern Sudan where the LRA remains active.

In 2005, ICC judges issued warrants of arrest for Joseph Kony and other

senior LRA commanders Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen, for crimes against humanity and war crimes allegedly committed in northern Uganda: murder, enslavement, sexual enslavement, rape attack against civilian population, pillage, forced enlistment of children, other inhumane acts. These warrants remain outstanding.