

ANNEX B

Public

Statement of Mr Denis Godwin Okello

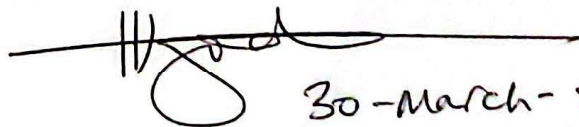
My name is Godwin Okello, and I proudly serve as the Traditional Prime Minister of Ker Kwaro Puranga, a role through which I preserve the Acholi cultural heritage and spearhead social and economic development initiatives. Since 2016, I have also acted as an advisor to the Ker Kwaro Acholi, extending my commitment to leadership and community welfare.

I was born in Gulu on October 10, 1980, as one of 12 siblings in a family rooted in service and resilience. My father, the Honorable Sebastian Willy Okello, transitioned from a career as a civil servant to a political role and now as Committee Member (Public Accounts Committee) at the district level, while my grandfather, Corporal William Otti(RIP), served as a World War II veteran—a legacy of courage that profoundly shapes my values. I hail from Odek, neighboring the birthplace of Joseph Kony, and belong to the Lamola clan under the Puranga chiefdom, which spans Kitgum and Gulu districts.

From an early age, I understood the importance of education and resilience. Amid the chaos of war in northern Uganda, I moved to Soroti to escape the threat of abduction, later returning to Gulu High School. After completing my Uganda Certificate of Education and Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education, I pursued a Bachelor's degree in Information and Communication Technology at Gulu University. I further expanded my expertise with a Master's in Public Health (specializing in Behavior Change Communication) and am currently completing a Ph.D. in International Relations and Diplomacy.

The war ages deeply influenced my path. In the early 2000s, when rescued children were returning from the bush in dire conditions, I began volunteering at World Vision International. I was often the first point of contact for these children—helping them with clothing, hygiene supplies, and care—and later supporting their integration into schools. This pivotal experience inspired me to establish the organization “Children/Youth as Peace Builders (CAP Uganda).”

During my time with Children/Youth as Peace Builders, I advocated for peaceful means to resolve the Northern Uganda crisis, which contributed to the partial signing of the Juba Peace Agreement. This landmark agreement

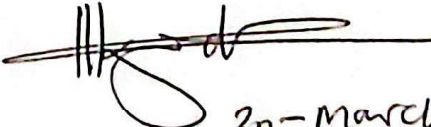

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was a significant step toward peace and reconciliation in the region. Building on this, I continue to advocate for the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, especially in areas related to accountability. My efforts include demanding for the enactment of Uganda's National Transitional Justice Law, which is critical for addressing victims' needs and ensuring justice and reparations through a robust domestic framework.

In 2016, I joined the International Criminal Court (ICC) as a Field Outreach Assistant, where I played a crucial role in representing the Court to northern Ugandan communities during the Dominic Ongwen's case. I formulated strategies like live-streaming judicial proceedings deep in villages, ensuring transparency and accessibility to justice. Witnessing gaps in education and healthcare systems, I founded the "Science Institute of Technology-Gulu" with two schools; the "School for Allied Health Sciences," and "School of Management and Technology," which now train and graduated over 180 students in preventative healthcare and medicine, alleviating the burden on northern Uganda's doctors.

In 2021, I took on the role of Visiting Lecturer at the Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies (IPSS), Gulu University. Drawing from my extensive experience in peacebuilding, transitional justice, and cultural leadership, I educated and mentored students on topics such as conflict resolution, international relations, and community reconciliation strategies. This position allowed me to bridge academic insights with real-world practices, equipping a new generation of leaders to address pressing challenges within their communities.

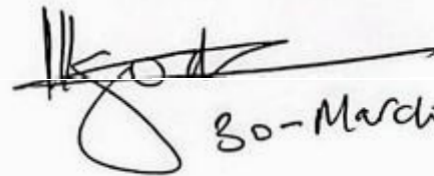
As Traditional Prime Minister, my threefold mandate involves safeguarding the welfare of the Acholi people, preserving land and resources, and utilizing available tools to improve community livelihoods. My dedication to children's welfare remains steadfast, especially in supporting reintegration of those returning from Joseph Kony's LRA camps. I ensure these children undergo traditional cleansing rituals, reintegration efforts, and access to training and employment opportunities, while advocating against societal stigma.



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Recent community dialogues have highlighted the need for domestic solutions to justice and reparations over reliance on international frameworks. While the ICC provided a platform for the Ongwen trial, unmet expectations regarding reparations revealed gaps in delivering justice. I actively promote the passage of Uganda's Transitional Justice Law as a foundational step to addressing victims' needs within a structured legal and policy framework.

The ICC's involvement in the Joseph Kony case, while significant, introduces complexities that risk disrupting peacebuilding efforts. Learning from the past, I advocate for renewed and unbiased dialogue to facilitate peaceful resolutions. The Acholi community is ready for reconciliation, healing, and sustainable development—a future we must work towards together.



30-March-2025.