



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

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COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE - COMUNICADO DE PRENSA

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Uganda: ICJ Alarmed at Blanket Prohibition on Lawyers' Freedom of Expression

In a letter addressed today to President Museveni of Uganda, the Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers (CIJL) of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) expressed its concern at the statement issued last Friday by the Law Council expressing its intention to enforce a regulation dating from 1977 that essentially aims to abrogate freedom of expression for lawyers.

The ICJ/CIJL learned that the Law Council of Uganda issued a statement according to which lawyers will now be required to seek authorisation from the said body before making any public comment through any means on any legal or constitutional matter, as required under Regulation 22 of the Advocates Regulations.

The ICJ/CIJL conveyed its worry to the Ugandan President for what is, under any light, a blanket prohibition on lawyers to express their opinions. This prohibition runs contrary to several international instruments and standards, among them the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the UN Principles on the Role of Lawyers.

The essential role of lawyers includes public discussion of legal issues as much as furthering their clients' interests" said Ian Seiderman, Legal Advisor of the ICJ. "Placing a muzzle order on lawyers harms not only their rights, but is also detrimental to the rights of the wider public to seek and receive information".

The ICJ/CIJL requested the Ugandan Government to repeal or desist from enforcing Regulation 22.

For more information, please contact Ian Seiderman, Legal Advisor, at +41 22 979 3823 or José Zeitune, Assistant Lawyer, at +41 22 979 3812.

The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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