



## Open Letter to the Uganda Police Force on Peace During and After the 2016 General Elections

17th, February 2016

**Dear Inspector General of Uganda Police Force,**

Attached please find a copy of an *Open Letter* I sent to the Presidential candidates and the Electoral Commission of Uganda.

As you can see, in the letter I express my deep concern about the violence surrounding this year's election campaign. But I also stressed that the election offers unique opportunities.

As you might be aware that, the 2016 general elections look different from many previous ones. Expectation, excitement, hope and fear are high across all political boards; it is evident that citizens have become more aware about their political rights, while increase in access to media accelerates access to information and participation.

Amidst all this, I am concerned about actions and language of violence which have been exercised and incited by some candidates, institutions and individuals. All this calls for preparedness by the forces to manage the society with care and tolerance, especially in the event of street excitements, anger and protest; in a way that will not inflame situations, which applies the word of law equally and that enhances the trust Ugandans have in security institutions.

You bear a crucial role in showing to our own people and to the rest of the world that we are a nation that honors the rule of law. With your commitment to impartial policing, service and protection we can build much needed trust. This should help prevent and keep violence in check. I understand how difficult it can get, at the same time, I humbly appeal to you to lead with humility and passion towards de-escalating tensions, eliminating fear. In this way, this elections has the potential to help you strengthen the vital trust between the police and the people.

We hope that we can count on you, our brothers and sisters serving in the police force, to help us turn this election into a national experience of which we can all be proud.

Together, we can get Uganda out of the fatigue of violent elections, promote political tolerance and give space for civic participation where all citizens will feel treated equally and fairly.

Thank you very much

**Victor Ochen**

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*Victor Ochen is a Ugandan born and raised in Lira, (Abia - Internally Displaced Peoples) camp in northern Uganda. He is the founder and director of African Youth Initiative Network (AYINET), he became the first Ugandan and youngest African Nobel Peace Prize nominee, and has been named the United Nations Ambassador for Peace and Justice (representing SDG Goal 16), he is the recipient of African regional and Pan-Commonwealth Youth Worker's awards, and also recipient of Mundo Negro Fraternity award by the Daniel Comboni Missionaries of Spain, and still among other recognition, Victor has just been appointed as a Global Advisor to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) on Gender, Forced Displacement and Protection.*