

**50th Session of the Human Rights Council
Item 6: UPR Outcomes of Uganda**

30 June 2022

Delivered by Mr. Mickaël Repellin

Thank you, Mr. President,

Franciscans International remains concerned about the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in the country. The government has failed to fully respect, promote, and guarantee these rights especially in the context of the 2021 elections. We regret that Uganda has only noted most of the recommendations in that regard. Meanwhile, violations of this right continue, as evidenced by the numerous arrests and detentions of demonstrators during recent protests about the economic situation in Kampala in May 2022.

We urge the Ugandan government to take concrete measures to end police brutality as well as to stop arresting and detaining citizens, political and civil society leaders for exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in accordance with its constitutional provisions and international obligations.

On the issue of female genital mutilation, Franciscans International welcomes the Ugandan government's commitments to addressing this harmful traditional practice that is still a reality for many girls in eastern Uganda. According to testimonies collected in 2021 by our partners, the practice as a custom and a "rite of passage" into adulthood still prevails despite the prohibition of FGM in domestic law, and despite the clear international human rights law obligation of Uganda to abolish such practices.

We thus strongly encourage the government to ensure the systematic prosecution of persons committing or aiding FGM as well as to carry out awareness-raising campaigns to combat the socio-economic and cultural factors underlying the prevalence of the practice.

I thank you.