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PRESS RELEASE

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“No one can disturb the peace enjoyed by Ugandans”

President eulogies Kony war peace emissary

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President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has said that the peace enjoyed by Ugandans cannot be disturbed by anyone following the great sacrifices made by the people of Uganda.

The President was today speaking at the memorial mass of the late Prince Bernard Richard Olanya Lagony and other members of his family in Bunga Raa village, Koch Goma Sub-county, Nwoya District.

“We are here to remember the sacrifice of a teacher who was killed in a cowardly way when he was working for peace. When negotiating peace, it is in bad faith for any of the two parties to eliminate envoys of either group,” he said.

The President was eulogizing Prince Bernard Richard Olanya Lagony and Okot Ogoni the two peace emissaries abducted and killed on June 10, 1996 in Pagik village, Cwero Sub-county in Nwoya district by Kony rebels who they had gone to discuss peace with.

Kony allegedly ordered for the killing of the two elders, who were

part of the Council of Elders Peace Committee on suspicion that they were making money out of the peace process.

During the LRA insurgency, government formed a peace team led by the then Minister for Northern Uganda Pacification, Betty Bigombe with Prince Lagony and Ogony as part of the team. Prince Lagony, a primary school teacher was also a brother to one of the top rebel commanders Brigadier Otti Lagony.

The late Olanya Lagony is the father of President Museveni's Aide-de-Camp (ADC) Major Koch Mugabe.

The President revealed that while in the bush in 1984, the Uganda People's Congress party that was in power at the time sent Sam Katararwa, a National Resistance Army contact in Nairobi to tell him that the government wanted to have peace talks. He said that after thinking about the peace talks offer, he wondered why they must be held in Kampala and not a neutral place but Katararwa reassured him that the government would not kill them. He said when Katararwa went back to deliver the message from the NRA he was killed by the UPC government.

The President said that no sensible person should kill peace envoys because they leave behind their colleagues who avenge the death. He said that the government would offer assistance to families of other liberators that were killed for their efforts to ensure peace in the area.

On the issue of development, the President said that the country was moving on well. "When we restored peace, government

promised to work on a number of roads in the area and many have since been worked on,” he said.

He said the government has repaired the Kampala-Karuma road which had got old, finished the Gulu-Nimule road and was only remaining with the Rwenkunyu-Masindi port-Apac road. He said that government was working hard to extend electricity to the district because electricity is crucial for development and that Nwoya is one of the 112 districts that didn't have power up to the district head quarters.

He added that government has a contract with the Chinese to supply power to the 287 sub counties that have no electricity. President Museveni also called upon the people of Nwoya to adapt commercial farming so as to create wealth and improve their livelihoods and ensure food security. During the same function, President Museveni met Omara Twala, a man who saved him during the Koch Goma ambush when he rode him to safety on his bicycle.

Gulu Diocese Archbishop John Baptist Odama who led the memorial mass thanked the family for their sacrifice for peace to be restored in northern Uganda. He said Lagony and Ogoni died for peace and that others should emulate them. He urged the congregation to pray for peace in our homes, country and in the world.

The Deputy Speaker of Parliament Jacob Oulanyah said that the late Prince Olanya Lagony was a unique leader who overlooked identity of tribes and only promoted unity.

The Deputy Chief Justice Dollo Owiny, NRM Deputy Secretary General Richard Todwong, Rwot of Acholi and the Minister for Disaster Preparedness Hillary Onek attended the function.

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