

## **Women's Initiatives and Partners Deeply Saddened by Murder of Ugandan Prosecutor Joan Kagezi**

31 March 2015

The Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice and our partners in Uganda are greatly saddened by the tragic news of the death of Joan Kagezi, Senior Principal State Attorney in Uganda, who headed the Directorate of Public Prosecution's war crimes and anti-terrorism division. The Ugandan government has confirmed that Joan Kagezi was killed yesterday evening in Kampala by unidentified assailants, who opened fire on her while she was driving home from work. It has been reported that Joan stopped at a fruit stall on her way home and it was at that time that she was shot twice by gunmen on a motorcycle. It appears that some of her children and possibly other family members were also in the car with Joan at the time of the attack.

News reports suggest that her murder may be linked to her role as lead prosecutor in a high profile terrorism case, involving suspects in the 2010 terrorist bombings in Kampala.

Joan Kagezi was a long-time friend of the Women's Initiatives. We maintained regular contact with Joan in our monitoring and advocacy regarding prosecutions associated with the LRA-related conflict before the International Crimes Division (ICD) of the High Court of Uganda – Uganda's domestic war crimes court. Joan's relentless efforts to ensure accountability for war crimes perpetrated during the conflict in northern Uganda, along with other serious crimes, despite significant legal, institutional and security-related hurdles, served as an inspiration to us and the international justice community at large.

WI partners in Uganda are particularly mourning Joan's death and the brutal way in which her life ended.

Joan Kagezi was a dedicated advocate for gender justice, who collaborated closely with the Women's Initiatives to this end on numerous occasions. She often spoke about the obstacles in combating impunity for sexual and gender-based crimes before the ICD in Uganda and also spoke with pride about some of the progress made by her office in this area.

The Women's Initiatives, our partners, associates and allies honour the extraordinary bravery and commitment Joan demonstrated in her role as prosecutor of the ICD and we extend our deepest sympathies to her family, friends, and colleagues in the justice community in Uganda.

**Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice**

