

The
“Torturous Peace Process”
in Northern Uganda

An Analysis of Peace Initiatives
and Prospects for a Settlement



Arthur Bainomugisha
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Cover Photos:

Children in a Protected People's Camp in Kitgum district. The other photograph shows Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) soldiers guarding a Protected Camp.

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FOREWORD

The rebellion of the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda led by Joseph Kony is one of the worst tragedies of Africa that will keep Ugandans under very bitter memories for a long time. Children and mothers have been abducted, raped, murdered, dehumanized and a whole culture of mainly Acholi people has been disrupted. It is acknowledged that many people have contributed in different ways in an attempt to end the war, but the problem has remained. Our gratification is that even though the rebellion has been very destructive, it has not destroyed the hopes that one day it will end and our peoples' lives reconstructed again.

The 'Torturous Peace Process' in Northern Uganda: An Analysis of Peace Initiatives and Prospects for a Settlement is a deliberate systematic documentation and analysis of the peace processes and efforts that have been undertaken at various stages of the war, by various actors. The study makes recommendations that are a result of field work and numerous interviews and library sources. It is easy to read by both general readers and researchers. It is my considered opinion that the public will find this publication highly informative and educative.

The MACOMBA Link, is a Universities and Non-governmental organization partnership that brings together Makerere University, Mbarara University, the University of Bradford (UK) and ACODE to promote the teaching of peace studies and human rights in Universities and supports practical peace research and activities in the Great Lakes Region. It therefore gives me much pleasure to witness the publication of this volume that will, hopefully, offer more understanding of the LRA conflict and new suggestions of ending it, even though we know that solutions are neither easy nor painless.

We trust readers will share our admiration for the tireless efforts, and carriage of men and women who have committed their lives to working for peace in the troubled region of Northern Uganda. MACOMBA Link seeks to make a humble contribution to these efforts to make peace a reality.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

MACOMBA Link is a partnership between Makerere University, ACODE, and Mbarara University of Science and Technology whose major objective is to promote peace, human rights and justice in Uganda and the Great Lakes Region through research, teaching and training.

The MACOMBA Link Partnership is very grateful to the British Council for the financial support, which made this study possible. The study could not have come out at any better time than now when there are signs that the rebellion in northern Uganda could be coming to an end. Furthermore, it is important to note that a window of opportunity is slowly opening for a possible break through in the peace process between government and the rebels of the Lords Resistance Army (LRA). After 18 years of a torturous conflict, the government of Uganda and the LRA seem to have realized the futility and the socio-economic and political cost of an armed struggle and are now seeking a peaceful option to end the rebellion. It is our hope that this study will contribute to the ongoing peace processes and extend the frontiers of knowledge in the understanding of the complex LRA conflict for policy makers, peacemakers and students of peace studies.

Special thanks go to Sarah Lubulwa at British Council, who worked tirelessly with the three partner institutions during the development and approval of the project, and continued to provide technical oversight and coordination during its implementation. Finally, Sophie Kutegeka, an ACODE Programme Assistant, Clare Karooma and Annet Nuwagaba, both ACODE Research Associates are acknowledged for providing research and logistical support for the study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Northern Uganda and the Acholiland in particular has been a scene of a bloody and protracted rebellion since 1986, when the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government came into power. The LRA rebellion led by Joseph Kony has been characterized by wanton and indiscriminate killings, abduction of children, sex slavery and rape. Hundreds of people have been killed and maimed while others are currently internally displaced. Currently, it is estimated that over 1.5 million people, that is, about 80 per cent of the entire Acholi population lives in internally displaced peoples camps (IDPs) appalling conditions where they risk a cholera outbreak and other hygiene related diseases. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) figures show that over 20,400 children have been abducted since 1990 and forcefully conscripted into the rebel ranks where the girls among them are turned into sex slaves for rebel commanders.

The LRA rebellion has been complicated by its regional dimension where Uganda and Sudan have through this conflict fought a proxy war. The regional context has made attempts at conflict resolution and peace building extremely difficult. The LRA rebellion is also linked to other regional conflicts in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region. For example, this conflict is known to provide a conduit for gun trafficking to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi, which are also experiencing civil wars.

The grievances of the LRA/M have never been very clearly articulated. What is known though, is that the LRA has been advocating for Uganda to be ruled according to the Biblical Ten Commandments. Ironically, the rebels have committed gross human rights violations including indiscriminate killings, rape, and abductions of children who are forced to kill their own relatives to alienate and prevent them from deserting the rebel ranks. Kony has also claimed to be fighting for the restoration of political pluralism in Uganda and against the economic marginalization of the Acholi people by the current government. The conflict has made it almost impossible for the government and development agencies to implement any meaningful development programs in the region. This rebellion has had far reaching consequences on the people of northern Uganda and the entire country. These consequences include: massive human displacement,

abject poverty, insecurity and economic stagnation and is likely to constrain the democratization process. The Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) (August 2004) put the cost of the conflict in northern Uganda at 3 per cent of GDP, although the figures could be much higher if the computation took into consideration loss of human lives.

Way Forward and Policy Recommendations: Enhancing the Role of National, Regional and International Actors

United Nations (UN)

The UN enjoys credibility, trust and legitimacy among the key actors involved in the conflict. The UN is already doing a lot in terms of humanitarian relief and raising the international profile of the conflict. The UN effort could be scaled up towards finding a peaceful settlement by using its leverage and resources, and credibility to support civil society peace initiatives such as ACODE and United Nations Association of Uganda (UNAU) to implement the planned international peace and post-conflict reconstruction conference. The UN could also play a critical role in the post conference phase follow-up activities, such as coordinating post-conflict reconstruction, facilitating negotiations and supporting reconciliation processes at national and community levels.

Harmonize the Amnesty Law, Terrorist Act and International Criminal Court

The LRA is classified by both the Uganda and the US Governments as a terrorist organization and accordingly its combatant members are likely to face tough penalties if convicted under the Terrorist Act in Uganda and in the United States. On the other hand, the Amnesty Law in Uganda pardons all those people who have been involved in rebellion upon surrender. The Terrorist Act and the Amnesty Law are at conflict with each other and both send unclear messages to the rebels. The LRA leaders need to be sure that they will not be handed over to the US if the Uganda government pardons them. As such, there is a need for government and the Amnesty Commission to come out clearly and clarify the relationship between the Amnesty Law and Terrorist Act, on the one hand and now the investigations by the International Criminal Court (ICC) into crimes against humanity committed by the LRA. In the course of this research, it was established that majority of

the LRA fighters have been denied information about the Amnesty Law by their top commanders. There is a need, therefore, to carry out awareness campaigns in northern Uganda about the existence of the Amnesty Law so that the rebels can understand and take advantage of it.

US Government

The US government is able to keep Sudan under pressure to keep its commitment to deny support of any kind to the LRA. It can also engage the Sudan government, which has direct contact with Kony, to prevail over him to seek a peaceful end to the conflict. Besides supporting the government of Uganda, the US could redirect its Northern Uganda Peace Initiative to work with civil society peace efforts as well as cooperating with other partners.

The Government of Uganda

The government is the main actor in the conflict. Most people in Acholiland mistrust government's commitment to a peaceful settlement. There is need for an international peace conference. Through this peace conference and other political and economic policies government can begin to build confidence and trust about its desire to end the war and rebuild the shuttered community. Besides, supporting the peace conference, Government could reactivate the Presidential Peace Team and create a single authoritative team to talk peace with the LRA. Confidence building measures would provide a conducive environment for negotiations, post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation.

Civil Society and Donors

There are currently numerous peace initiatives being implemented by development agencies and civil society organizations some humanitarian, others peace building. Unfortunately, most of these peace initiatives are competing, duplicative and uncoordinated. This may significantly constrain peacemaking. Attempts should be made to galvanize donors and civil society work and to support each other rather than compete and duplicate activities. This will create synergy for the peacemakers whose main motivation is to build a peaceful society.

1

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.0 Introduction

Northern Uganda and the Acholiland in particular has been a scene of a bloody and protracted rebellion since 1986, when the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government came into power. The LRA rebellion led by Joseph Kony has been characterized by wanton and indiscriminate killings, abduction of children, sex slavery and rape. Hundreds of people have been killed and maimed while others are currently internally displaced. Currently, it is estimated that over 1.5 million people, that is, about 80 per cent of the entire Acholi population lives in internally displaced peoples camps (IDPs) in appalling conditions where they risk a cholera outbreak and other hygiene related diseases¹. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) figures show that over 20,400 children have been abducted since 1990² and forcefully conscripted into the rebel ranks where girls among them turned into sex slaves for rebel commanders.

An Amnesty International Report on the plight of children in northern Uganda revealed how the abducted children are subjected to brutal methods imaginable, to convert them into rebels and slave labourers by the LRA. In order to keep the children in the bush, the rebels subject them to cruel punishments including forcing some of them to kill their friends who attempt to escape. The girls are distributed to the commanders who turn them into concubines and effectively keep them as sex slaves³. What makes the rebellion even more complex is its regional dimension where Uganda and Sudan have fought a proxy war through it⁴. The regional context poses both a national, regional and international threat to peace and security and has made peace building and conflict resolution extremely difficult. The LRA rebellion is also linked to other regional conflicts in the Horn of Africa

¹ See, "Humanitarian challenges on the northern crisis", available at: http://www.irnnews.org/webspecials/uga_crisis/challenges.asp 11/6/2003

² Badru D. Mulumba, "Britain gives Shs 3.2bn to northern Uganda", available at: <http://www.monitor.co.ug/news/news5.php> 9/2/2003.

³ Okello Lucima (ed.), "Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda", 2002, p.13.

⁴ International Crisis Group, Africa Report No 42, 3 April 2002, "Capturing the Moment: Suda's Peace Process in the Balance," International Crisis Group Africa Report No 42, 3 April 2002.

and the Great Lakes region. For example, this conflict is known to provide a conduit for gun trafficking to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi, which are also experiencing civil wars. The dimension makes this rebellion a danger to peace and security in the region.

The grievances for the LRA/M rebellion have never been very clearly articulated. What is known though, is that the LRA has been advocating for Uganda to be ruled according to the Biblical Ten Commandments.⁵ Ironically, the rebels have committed gross human rights violations including indiscriminate killings, rape, and abductions of children who are forced to kill their own relatives to alienate and prevent them from desertions. Kony has also claimed to be fighting for the restoration of political pluralism in Uganda and against the economic marginalization of the Acholi people by the current government.⁶ The conflict has made it almost impossible for the government and development agencies to implement any meaningful development programs in the region. This rebellion has had far reaching consequences on the people of northern Uganda and the entire country. These consequences include: massive human displacement, abject poverty, insecurity and economic stagnation and is likely to constrain the democratization process. The complex nature of this civil conflict, means that those involved and other pertinent attempts at conflict resolution should be informed by serious analysis about its root causes, those that fuel it and what ultimately sustains it.

This study examines the various peace processes and initiatives that have been attempted and discusses the reasons why these initiatives have failed to deliver peace to the region. The study contends that the various peace initiatives have largely failed due to inadequate analysis and lack of a deep understanding of the problem. As such, this study sought to deepen the analysis and understanding of the LRA rebellion for policy makers and peacemakers. The study also proposes policy options and recommendations for conflict resolution and peace building.

⁵ Okello Lucima (ed.), "Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the violence in Northern Uganda", 2002, p.18.

⁶ Interview with Bishop Onon Onweng of Northern Uganda Diocese on 2 January, 2004 in Gulu District.

This report is divided into four broad sections. The first section is the background of the LRA/M conflict, which traces the history of the organization and its sources of support. The second section documents the various peace processes that have been attempted. The third section is an analysis of the reasons the peace processes failed. The fourth section discusses policy options and recommendations for conflict resolution and peace building, followed by a conclusion.

1.1 Research Methodology

The researchers used the qualitative methodology. The decision to use this methodology was based on the fact that researchers were aware of the existence of considerable amount of data collected over time by humanitarian and media agencies. They however noted that not much analytical, academic and policy research has been conducted to inform policy making. The objective was to collect as much information and facts as possible from various actors involved in the conflict at all levels and subject it to analysis. The rationale was that the study would be able to provide a voice to all stakeholders. Researchers would then come up with an informed and well-balanced analysis. This required the use of research approaches as articulated below.

1.2 Literature Review

The researchers reviewed documents that have been written about the war in northern Uganda. These included: books, newspaper articles, magazines, reports, and Parliamentary Hansards on the LRA/M rebellion. The researchers also read earlier works, which provided an overview of the political history of Uganda and how it relates to the current violent conflict in the north. This was necessitated by the analyses of some scholars and peace workers who have argued that the current conflict in Acholiland is a continuation of earlier conflicts that have haunted all Uganda's post-independence governments in Uganda. This was also useful in providing the historical context for all to understand how the past influences the present and informs the future.

Reports produced by field workers in the zone of conflict were very useful since they provided on spot accounts of the war situation. Internet sources provided useful current information to the researchers especially reports by international humanitarian agencies, policy research think tanks and media organizations.

1.3 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews with key selected people were conducted. This involved deeper discussions with key stakeholders such as religious leaders, civil society activists, government officials and area politicians, and army officers who have been involved in the conflict. The rationale for this method was to get different and privileged information, opinions and also to clarify some issues raised by different people on different sides of the conflict. This made it possible for researchers to get more balanced and truthful viewpoints of the conflict.

1.4 Focused Group Discussions

This method involved bringing together a selected group of 25 people with different backgrounds and varying competencies to discuss the LRA/M conflict. This approach proved to be very useful in a sense that it generated free, truthful and frank discussions on the conflict and provided insights and new ideas on conflict resolution and peace building.

1.5 Questionnaires

A questionnaire was designed to find out the causes, genesis, of the LRM/A rebellion, the various peace initiatives that have been attempted to end the war, reasons for their failure and what should be done. This questionnaire generated useful information.

2

BACKGROUND

Background

The rebellion in Northern Uganda has raged on for about 17 years. The complex, protracted civil war, which has been changing in nature, scope, intensity and leadership, started in 1986 after the NRM/A captured power from the short lived military government of General Tito Okello Lutwa. The military had also overthrown the Obote II government (1980-85), which was widely accused of gross violation of human rights in Uganda.⁷

The rebellion has resulted into a humanitarian crisis with over 1,500,000 people living in internally displaced peoples camps in appalling unhygienic conditions without clean water, food and proper education for children. The conflict has defied numerous mediation efforts by religious leaders, Acholi political and traditional leaders and international peace organizations. While the government has always sought to use military means to end this conflict, its efforts have not yielded any tangible results leading to perpetual suffering of civilians especially women and children. The rebel's method of recruitment has been through abduction, mostly of young children who are exposed to harsh induction processes. The government army has also been accused of gross violation of human rights of civilians through arbitrary arrests, detention without trial and sometimes rape and gun trafficking. However, the government is known to impose harsh punishments on soldiers who commit human rights abuses against civilians including execution of those accused of rape, extra judicial killings or looting.⁸

The rebellion in northern Uganda is closely linked to the civil war in southern Sudan. The two civil wars have been mutually reinforcing through small arms trafficking and the proxy war between Uganda and Sudan. The Sudanese and Uganda governments have been accused of supporting rebel groups on either side of the border. The Sudan

⁷ See, G.W. Kanyeihamba, "Constitutional and Political History of Uganda: From 1894 to the Present", Centenary Publishing House Ltd, P.202, 2002.

⁸ See, "UPDF Cited in Arms Trade", *The Monitor Newspaper*, February 10, 2003.

government has armed and trained the rebels of the Lords Resistance Army/Movement (LRA/M), in retaliation to Uganda's purported support for the Southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement/ Army (SPLM/A) led by Col. John Garang.⁹ The proxy war between Uganda and Sudan gives both civil wars, a regional and international dimension, which complicates efforts for conflict resolution and peace building. The failure by the Uganda government to militarily defeat the rebels has forced it to recruit and arm local defense militias in the north and eastern parts of Uganda to reinforce the army against the LRA. The net effect of this has been the militarization of the civilian populations in both countries and flooding the region with unregulated and a large numbers of small arms which are difficult to account for and have complicated the security situation in the sub-region.¹⁰ Because of the spillover effect and mutual reinforcing nature of the two conflicts and increased gun trafficking across the porous border, it is important that attempts at conflict resolution and peace building adopt regional and international approaches.

The war in northern Uganda has created opportunities for rebels and some errant army officers to pursue economic agendas. The LRA rebels are notoriously known for looting civilian property and ambushing and robbing vehicles and wanton killing with impunity. The government soldiers have also been accused of deliberately prolonging the war for economic gain. Cases of importation of junk military helicopters, under size uniforms and expired food rations for the army investigated by the Ssebutinde Commission¹¹ serve as examples of economic agendas by army officials and provide part of the explanation for the failure of the army to defeat the rebels in northern Uganda.

A study conducted by MS Uganda, a Danish non-governmental organization, indicated that the war in northern Uganda has already cost the country \$ 26 million or 10 per cent of the country's economic out put (GDP).¹² The study observes that the conflict has caused major

⁹ Ogen Kevin Aliro, "Priests trace Kony's deadly flow of arms", available at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/socpol/socpol3.php6/24/2003>

¹⁰ Ssemujju Ibrahim Nganda, "Parliament: Militias can stir trouble", (Available at: <http://www.monitor.co.ug/news/new7.php8/26/2003>)

¹¹ Zie Gariyo, "The Role and Experience of Civil Society in the Struggle Against Corruption Uganda", (at available http://www.udn.or.ug/CG_Statement_on_corruption.doc 22 October 2003)

¹² Crespo Sebunya, "Catholics, NGOs Rally to end War in Northern Uganda", available at: <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/peace/2002/1108uganda.htm> November 8, 2002.

economic disruption and human suffering. The country's draft Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) (August 2004) has put the cost of the conflict in northern Uganda at 3 per cent of GDP,¹³ although the figures could be much higher if one computed the human losses. This conflict has diverted government spending from social services such as health and education, and other economic sectors to military spending.

¹³ Draft Poverty Eradication Action Plan, August 2004, p. 131.

3

**THE GENESIS OF THE NORTHERN UGANDA
CONFLICT**

**3.0 The Genesis of the Conflict: Tracing the Roots of the
LRA/M Rebellion**

The origin of the LRA rebellion can be traced to 1986 when the National Resistance Army took control of Kampala city and the subsequent defeat of the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) when it was dislodged from Karuma Bridge. The first armed opposition to the Museveni Government in northern Uganda was led by the Uganda Peoples Democratic Movement/ Army (UPDM/ A) led by Otema Alimadi, the former Prime Minister in the Obote II (1980- 1985) government that had been earlier deposed by General Okello.

3.1 Uganda Peoples Democratic Movement/Army (UPDM/A)

After the fall of Kampala, former government soldiers, majority of whom hailed from the Acholi sub-region, fled north-wards. These soldiers re-grouped in Gulu where then Army Commander, together with military leader Gen. Tito Okello Lutwa set up his headquarters. They attempted to fight at Karuma Bridge by putting up a front line to stop the NRA from advancing north-wards but were defeated. Defeated, tired and demoralized, most combatants decided to surrender to the advancing NRA. However, hundreds of the former government army, who feared reprisals from the victorious NRA, fled to Sudan with their weapons. These were later attacked and routed by the SPLA/M, in collaboration with NRA, forcing most of them to flee back to Uganda. This group formed the core of the UPDM/A together with some civilians who decided to resist the NRA/M. The UPDA launched its first attack on the NRA on 20 August 1986 in Gulu under the command of Brigadier Odong Latek. The UPDM/A's main grievances were articulated as the violation of the 1985 Nairobi Peace Accord by the NRM/A, human rights abuses by the NRA, NRM's communist dictatorship and Rwandans involvement in NRA/M.

The political wing of UPDM/A coordinated the war from London and Nairobi. Initially the UPDA posed a serious challenge to NRA. However, without adequate resources, supplies and reinforcements,

it was eventually decisively defeated at Corner Kilak in August 1987 where several of its senior commanders were killed. Analysts have observed that ideologically, UPDM suffered from factionalism, petty squabbling, lack of communication, opportunism and failure to mobilize resources for its armed wing, leading to its loss of control of the combatants.¹⁴ Faced with mounting military pressure from the NRA and the Acholi elders advocating for peace, the UPDA entered negotiations with the government in 1988 and concluded a peace agreement without its political wing: the UPDM. The UPDM central executive also followed later and signed a peace agreement with the government in 1990 in Addis Ababa, which was later on disputed by some UPDM/A faction leaders claiming the signatories had been removed from their positions in the movement. Most of the UPDA combatants were integrated into the NRA, although there were unresolved grievances that culminated into a coup attempt, as the NRA/M was later to claim. The claim of a coup attempt prompted the government to arrest ex-UPDA officers, which resulted in several of them fleeing into exile and many others went back to the bush.

3.2 Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement

The Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), rebellion was led by Alice Auma Lakwena, a peasant woman who claimed to have been possessed by the Holy Spirit and destined to deliver the people from the evil: NRM rule.¹⁵ Lakwena was able to mobilize the defeated fighters of UPDA and peasants whom she indoctrinated and promised protection from the bullets of the army by sprinkling "holy" water on them and smearing their bodies with shear butter. In addition, the group targeted suspected sorcerers and witches who were tortured and killed as a way of purifying their land. Interestingly as the HSM progressed, it also attracted some well educated people into their ranks including Professor Isaac Newton Ojok, a former Minister of Education in Obote II Government.

The HSM rebellion took the government by surprise and initially achieved a number of significant military victories over the government army through psychological panic in the early days of its

¹⁴ See, Caroline Lamwaka, "The Peace process in northern Uganda 1986-1990", in, Okello Lucima (ed.), *Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda*, 2002, p.30.

¹⁵ See, Gina L. Bramucci, "Children March in northern Uganda", Available at: <http://www.alertnet.org/thefacts/reliefrecources/bramuccieye.htm10/23/2003>

formation. However, the HSM could not survive on its propaganda for too long. As HSM fighters soon discovered their vulnerability before an organized government army. In 1987 the HSM rebellion was routed as it reached hostile territories in Eastern Uganda especially Busoga region. Alice Lakwena, with a few of her commanders and aides, fled to Kenya where she still lives in a refugee camp. The defeated fighters who survived, scattered and fled back to the north where they continued to operate under the leadership of Lakwena's father, Severino Lukoya, who was later captured by the government army. With the defeat of Lakwena and the capture of Lukoya, the leadership of the remnant rebels passed on to Joseph Kony, a cousin of Lakwena and himself a self styled prophet.¹⁶

3.3 Who is Joseph Kony?

The leader of the LRA/M rebellion, Joseph Kony was born in 1961 in Odek, a small trading center in Omoro County, Gulu District, about 40 kilometers east of Gulu town. He was raised as a Roman Catholic and served as a catechist after dropping out of primary school.¹⁷ Very little is known about his early childhood. However, as indicated above, he is known to be a cousin of "Prophetess" Alice Auma Lakwena, the founder of the Holy Spirit Movement. Kony is described as a reclusive, enigmatic figure within his movement who claims supernatural powers.¹⁸

The primary motivation of the LRA is their conviction that their struggle against the Museveni government is a divine call sanctioned by God through his "prophet" Joseph Kony. This ideology is systematically implanted into the minds of the young abducted fighters who eventually go into the battle with a belief that God is on their side and will ensure total defeat of their enemies. Kony's fighters are known to go into battle shouting and without taking cover, singing religious songs in praise of God.

Joseph Kony first joined the rebellion of the Uganda Peoples Democratic Movement/Army (UPDM/A), in 1987 as a spiritual mobilizer in Major Benjamin Apia's black battalion. He later broke

¹⁶ Okello Lucima (ed.), "Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda", 2002, p.16.

¹⁷ Balam Nyeko and Okello Lucima, "Profile of Parties to Conflict", in Okello Lucima (ed.), *Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda*, 2002, p. 16.

¹⁸ Finbarr O'Reilly, "Lords Resistance Army: Uganda's Lords Army Tightens Grip on North", Available at: http://www.religionnewsblog.com/4173-Uganda_s_Lords_Tightens_Grip_on_Nor...10/22/2003.

away in 1988 and began to operate independently with a small group of followers including remnants of the defeated Holy Spirit Movement of priestess Alice Lakwena. He frequently clashed with UPDA after its main faction signed a peace agreement with the Government. For quite sometime, Kony operated under the name "United Holy Salvation Army" and later changed to LRM/A as it is called today.¹⁹ Kony is known to exercise absolute control over the LRA fighters. Kony has devised induction rituals intended to bind his recruits and followers to strict rules of obedience and conduct. His soldiers are for instance not allowed to take certain drinks or eat some types of food. Apart from recorded messages, Kony rarely issues public statements. Because of this, he is scantily understood and remains a mysterious individual whose political agenda is least known.

3.4 Sources of Support

The most critical support to LRA has come from the Sudan Government, which has trained, armed and provided other logistics for the war effort. Sudan's support to LRA started in 1994 and this support has been critical in turning LRA into a deadly organization and helped to sustain its operations. Sudan has argued that its support to the LRA is in retaliation for Uganda's support for the SPLA/M. When the LRA was declared a terrorist organization by the US State Department in late 2001, Sudan stated that it will no longer support the LRA. Sudan however quietly resumed its supplies when the LRA helped its forces recapture the Sudanese garrison town of Torit from the SPLM/A in October 2002.²⁰ This marked the resumption of the flow of arms and ammunitions, including anti-tank landmines from the Sudan Government to the LRA. The Sudan President General Bashir recently admitted his government supported the LRA and promised to stop it. He said:

On the previous relationship, we used to support the LRA. We used to provide them with logistics, ammunition and everything. That was a response to the support Uganda used to give SPLA. But now the situation is different because both parties are committed to peace.²¹

¹⁹ Okello Lucima, *op. cit.* p.16.

²⁰ See, Northern Uganda: Understanding and Resolving the Conflict, a report of the International Crisis Group, 14 April 2004, p. 7.

²¹ See, "Sudan Stops Support to Ugandan Rebels: President", available at: http://fpeng.peopledaily.com.cn/200108/21eng20010821_77927.html10/23/2003.

Despite the promise made by President Bashir, to stop supporting the LRA rebels, Sudan has clandestinely continued to supply them with arms and other logistics. A report recently released by the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) revealed that senior officers of the LRA have been receiving a constant supply of arms, ammunitions and other items from military officers of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) since the last months of 2002 which accounts to the escalation of rebel attacks and atrocities.²²

More support has come from the Acholi sympathizers based on the diaspora especially Britain and the US in form of cash donations. The diaspora support dwindled after the terrorist attack on the US in September 2001 because the LRA was blacklisted as a terrorist organization²³ and therefore any body closely linked to it risked being called a terrorist. Moreover these donations are said to have been too small to sustain the rebellion. As such, the LRA has largely survived on looting and raiding to meet its operational needs.

In Acholiland itself, the base of the rebellion, the LRA is also said to enjoy considerable sympathy and support from the population who ironically suffer the brunt of the rebel's brutality most. The Minister of State for Security Betty Akech, who also hails from Acholiland, recently said that some Acholi support the rebellion and this has hampered efforts to resolve it. She observed:

There are people who are benefiting from this war. The shopkeepers, the drug dealers and so on. We know also that there are children giving up rebellion and coming back home, but there are instances where their families send them back. There was a girl who came back with shillings 3 million and said she was tired of the war. But her mother asked her how she could come back when she could get so much money from the bush.²⁴

It is noted that about 95 per cent of Kony's fighters are Acholi while the remaining 5 per cent come from Lango and Teso regions who may have been abducted and forcefully conscripted. It is noted however, that Kony's support among the Acholi has been steadily reducing, which angered him to resort to killing and torturing his victims whom

²² Ogen Kevin Aliro, "Priests trace Kony's deadly flow of arms", available at: <http://www.monitor.co.ug/socpol3.php6/24/2003>.

²³ See, Patrick Oguru Otto, "Implementing the 1999 Nairobi Agreement", available at: <http://www.c-rorg/accord/ugandaaccord11/implementating.shtml> 11/5/2003.

²⁴ John Erum, "Acholi support Kony-Akech", available at: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/detail.php?mainNewsCategory1d=8&newsCategory1d=12&ne...> 9/5/2003

he accuses of betrayal. Billie O’Kadameri has observed that LRA has complained about being betrayed by former Uganda Peoples Democratic Army (UPDA) combatants and Acholi elders whom Kony blames for blessing them initially and encouraging them to join the rebellion, but later abandoning them. Because of reduced popular support, the LRA resorted to forced recruitment through abduction of young people while those who resist are brutally punished or killed.²⁵

3.5 Root Causes of the LRA/M Rebellion

Several root causes of the conflict in northern Uganda have been advanced. In 1985, the Acholi military officers led by Gen. Tito Okello overthrew the Obote II government and established a short-lived military government that was in turn overthrown by Museveni’s National Resistance Army (NRA) in 1986. When President Museveni took power in 1986, some errant NRA officers who were bent on revenge mistreated the surrendering ex-soldiers. George Kanyeihamba has observed:

...the NRA High Command was to make an error by entrusting one of these joining groups (FEDEMU), with responsibility of mopping up the remnants of the UNLA in the northern region of Uganda where that group inflicted so much havoc and terror on the population there that the consequences would alienate the majority of the population in that region from the NRM for decades.²⁶

Another cause of the LRA conflict is also traced to the colonial distortions. The conflict in northern Uganda is deeply rooted in the inter-ethnic competition for power in both government and military between the north and south. These distortions have never been corrected but instead have been continuously manipulated by post-independence governments. Before the Second World War, Ugandans were equally recruited into the colonial army, the King’s African Rifles (KAR). However, this policy changed radically after 1945 because the majority of the anti-colonial struggle came from the South, which had the greatest concentration of the country’s economic and educational elites. Sensing danger from the South, the British began recruiting for army mainly in the North, which resulted into the Acholi and West Nilers dominating the KAR.

²⁵See, Billie O’Kadameri, “LRA/Government negotiations 1993-94”, in Okello Lucima (ed.), *Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the end violence in northern Uganda*, 2002, p.40.

²⁶See G.W. Kanyeihamba, “Constitutional and Political History of Uganda: From 1894 to the Present”, 2002, p. 237.

The British, thought that they had created a balance of power between the largely Southern civilian elite and Northern military elites. However, the British reserved the introduction of industry and cash crop production to the South, leaving the North to become a reservoir for cheap labour. The British also, in pursuit of their colonial objectives, told the Acholi people that they were born warriors and therefore the most suited for the military, which effectively pampered and transformed them into a military ethnocracy.²⁷ These colonial policies created an intractable challenge to building a unified nation-state, in the post-colonial Uganda, since they had institutionalised tribalism, and entrenched the role of the military in Uganda's political order. This led to uneven development between the North and South with the latter relatively better developed than the former. This made the people from the north very bitter and the LRA has not hidden this grievance as a reason for the rebellion. Moses Ali, the 1st Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees who also hails from northern Uganda has also observed:

The colonial history of Uganda has a lot to do with the current conflict in Northern Uganda in the following ways: the North became a labour reserve meant to till the land in the South that grew cash crops such as coffee and sugarcane; the North was left to grow an annual crop – cotton – whose returns were over a long period of time and at low prices. This marked the beginning of a disparity between the North and South as far as economic development is concerned.²⁸

Until the advent of the National Resistance Movement government in 1986, the army in Uganda was dominated by people from northern Uganda especially the Acholi, Langi and West Nilers. The Acholi formed the bulk of the national army.²⁹ Majority of the people from the North solely depended on the army for employment and livelihoods. This situation changed when the National Resistance Army (NRA) led by Museveni seized power in 1986. This meant that for the first time the socio-economic, political and military power were concentrated and controlled by the South. This led to frustration of the people in the northern region who had been thrown out of their traditional jobs; the army to resort to war.

²⁷ See, "Northern Uganda: Understanding and Solving the Conflict", a report of the International Crisis Group, 14 April 2004, p.2. (Available at <http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=258&1=1>) 23/8/2004.

²⁸ See, Moses Ali, "Northern Uganda: Causes of Conflict", available at: http://www.updfironfist.co.ug/ali_story.htm 10/22/2003.

²⁹ Okello Lucima, "Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end violence in northern Uganda", 2002,12.

Another reason is the Sudan factor. The Sudan government supports Kony in reiteration to Uganda's support to SPLA/M. Linked to this is, the fact that Sudan has always harboured designs of spreading Islam southwards. Rebel groups like the LRA/M and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) became handy in the implementation of this grand agenda.

Poverty has also been advanced as a cause of the war, with an assumption that the NRM government has deliberately marginalized the region economically. There is a general feeling among the people of northern Uganda that the current government is deliberately developing other regions at the expense of the North. The economic problems were aggravated by the Karamajong cattle rustling, which deprived the region of cattle, one of the main source of economic livelihoods. Cattle raids left the region very poor dislocated and a disaffected population.

Another factor is the political history of a contested state in Uganda, which is closely linked to colonialism. The British colonists while curving out the present day Uganda did not consider the national aspirations of the various ethnic groups that make up the country. Different nationalities at different stages of development were forcefully brought together. Some of the kingdoms like Buganda, Ankole and Toro, which collaborated with colonists, were given a special federal status in Uganda as a reward for collaboration and also for them to accept to be part of Uganda. The special status was challenged immediately after independence leading to a constitutional crisis and abrogation of the Independence Constitution in 1966, the abolition of kingdoms and the introduction of the 1967 Republican Constitution. An analysis of these political trends shows that the legitimacy of the state in Uganda remains contested and armed rebellions have become an institutionalized means of accessing political power. Uganda remains trapped in a vicious cycle of armed contestation of state power and therefore the LRA rebellion should be seen in this historical context.

4

THE PEACE PROCESS IN NORTHERN UGANDA

4.0 The Peace Road Map: Tracing the Peace Process in Northern Uganda

Following the military coup of 27 July 1985 that overthrew the government of Milton Obote, then Army Commander, General Tito Okello was installed as the Chairman of the Military Council and head of state. The Military Council was a coalition of semi-autonomous armed groups, with the Uganda National Liberation Army as the main player. On assuming state power, General Tito Okello Lutwa publicly invited the National Resistance Army (NRA) led by Yoweri Museveni among others to join hands and form a united government in the spirit of reconciliation and nation building. Most fighting factions responded positively to this call except the NRA/M, which became the most formidable challenge to the military junta. Failing to convince the NRA/M, General Okello's government sought a negotiated political settlement with the NRM.



Peace Makers: From Right; Lead Peace mediator, Betty Bigombe with Chief Government Negotiator Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda Min. of Internal Affairs and Hon. Henry Oryem Min. of State for Foreign Affairs

At first the Okello government sought the mediation efforts of Julius Mwalimu Nyerere, then President of Tanzania, who was not acceptable to NRM/A. Okello's government had zeroed on Nyerere because he was an elder statesman and was popularly seen as Uganda's benefactor having provided refuge to Ugandans and his role in overthrowing the brutal dictatorship of Idi Amin. Nyerere was an African elder statesman, internationally billed as an honest and the most influential leader in the region. The reasons for Museveni's refusal of Nyerere's mediation role are not at all clear but one explanation could have been because of his close friendship with Obote, whom he had imposed on Ugandans through a rigged election in 1980. The search for a mediator finally zeroed on President Arap Moi of Kenya and the venue for the talks would be Nairobi.

It looks clear that Museveni was determined to gain full control of state power so as to be able to introduce his reforms with a free hand, which the Nairobi Accord could not grant. This analysis is based on his swearing in speech as a president in 1986. He declared that, “..no one should think that what is happening today is a mere change of guard, it is a fundamental change in the politics of our country”³⁰. Interestingly, Nyerere became Museveni’s frequent visitor on important national occasions including addressing the Constituent Assembly that was making the 1995 Uganda Constitution.

4.1 The 1985 Nairobi Peace Talks

The peace talks between the military government of General Okello and the NRM/A culminated into the 1985 Nairobi Peace Agreement. The peace talks were mediated by then President of Kenya Daniel Arap Moi. The peace talks focused on the power sharing arrangement and the composition of the military council. The parties at conflict first agreed to declare a general cease fire that was to be observed by all the field commanders within forty-eight hours of the signing of the agreement. It was agreed to they would form a national coalition government, with General Okello Lutwa as the Chairman of the Military Council and Museveni as his Vice Chairman. The military council was to comprise of representatives of all the fighting groups. The composition was agreed as follows: UNLA (Uganda National Liberation Army) eight, NRA/M seven, FEDEMU (Federal Democratic Movement of Uganda) three; two FUNA (Former Uganda National Army) and another two from UFM (Uganda Freedom Movement).

The Nairobi Peace Talks were characterized by anger, insults, bad, and dismissive language and deliberate absenteeism especially on the part of the rebel NRA/M Bethuel Kiplagat a former Permanent Secretary in the Kenya Ministry of Foreign Affairs who played a key role in the negotiations has observed that:

Museveni denounced previous regimes in Uganda as ‘primitive’ and backward. He initially refused to negotiate with the military council delegation dismissing them as ‘criminals’. He in turn, was accused by the military council of delaying the negotiation process unnecessarily. He then failed to show up for three consecutive days, having left for Europe through Dar-es-Salaam. On his return, Museveni and the NRM/A raised new demands for the agenda. Once the agreement was reached on an agenda item, Museveni would change his position the following day, or put forward

³⁰ Yoweri K. Museveni, *What is Africa's Problem?* 2000, p.3.

new demands on the same matter. For instance, at one point he insisted that, as he was the head of the NRM/A, Tito Okello was merely the commander of another factional army, not head of state...³¹

4.2. Reasons for the Failure of the Nairobi Peace Accord

The Nairobi Peace Talks unfortunately did not deliver the anticipated peace dividends to Uganda. The peace agreement was quickly blushed aside by the NRM/A and by 25 January 1986, the NRM/A had taken over Kampala, the capital city. A new government headed by President Yoweri Museveni which was sworn in on 26 January 1986 would soon find itself faced with fresh insurgencies; one in the east and another in the north where majority of former defeated armies hailed from.

Several reasons have been advanced for the failure of the Nairobi Peace Talks. Political commentators have observed that the preparations for peace talks and the conflict analysis by the mediators was lacking in several aspects, hence affecting the outcome of the negotiations. The Kenya government was the sole mediator yet the Kenyan team did not have a deep understanding of the complex conflict. Consequently, the Kenya mediation team became pre-occupied with the outcome of the peace process; the peace agreement, rather than the peace process. They aimed at a quick fix of the peace agreement. It is not surprising therefore that the 1995 Nairobi agreement collapsed so easily. In fact, throughout the negotiations, there were accusations and counter accusations by the parties at conflict and sometimes by the mediators.

Third, throughout the negotiations, it was apparent that there was lack of clear understanding of the primary parties at conflict. This can be partly explained by the fact that there wasn't enough time on the part of mediators to interact with key actors both in Nairobi and in the trenches to understand the feelings of such actors and how much leverage they had on negotiators. This reality dawned on the mediators when at the invitation of Yoweri Museveni they visited the NRA High Command in Kabale, who assured them that they could never share power with the criminal generals they did not respect.³²

³¹ Bethuel Kiplagat, "The peace process in northern Uganda 1986-1990, in Okello Lucima (ed.), *Protracted Conflict, Elusive Peace: Initiatives to End the violence*

³² See, Bethuel Kiplagat, "Reaching the 1985 Nairobi Agreement", in Okello Lucima (Ed.), *Protracted conflict, elusive peace: initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda*, p.24.

Fourth, the Kenya government sought to mediate the conflict alone instead of seeking the assistance of other external actors who could have had leverage on some parties at conflict. The multiparty mediation would have brought synergies to the peace process. For instance, it was apparent that Libya, Rwanda, Burundi and Sweden were secondary players backing some of the parties at conflict whose participation should have been sought.

Fifth, for mediation to bear fruit, the third party must exploit proper timing. The point being advanced is that mediation is likely to succeed if the third party intervenes at the ripe moment in the conflict. The ripe moment is that time when the parties at conflict have reached a hurting stalemate. This is when both parties are exhausted and tired of fighting with none of them able to inflict a decisive military victory.³³ In the case of the Nairobi Peace Talks, the NRA still thought they had an upper hand morally and militarily and negotiations would rob them of their prize; military victory. As such the NRA/M exploited the peace talks to replenish and launch a final push to defeat the UNLA. The timing of the third party intervention was therefore wrong in this respect.

Sixth, the peace process lacked civil society's involvement, which would have increased its legitimacy and relevancy. The involvement of international and local organizations could have added moral and political weight to the agreement and ensure the commitment of the parties at conflict. Civil society's involvement would have made them guarantors of the peace process, increase resources and credibility to the entire process. Their expertise, resources and credibility could have resulted into better crafting of an agreement that addressed interests and aspirations of majority of Ugandans, which is a pre-condition for peace agreements that stand the test of time. This did not happen and the agreement collapsed with far reaching consequences, even before the ink that signed it had dried, such as the increased cycles of violence, mistrust and re-enforced the culture of political violence that has been part of Uganda's political experience since the 1960s.

³³ Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, "Contemporary Conflict Resolution", 1999, p.162.

4.2.1 The 1988 UPDA /Government Peace Process

The Uganda Peoples Democratic Army was the first armed opposition to the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government. UPDA/M launched its armed struggle in July 1986 against the NRA and soon after another rebellion. The Holy Spirit Mobile Forces/Movement led by Alice Auma Lakwena was also launched. The UPDA/M initially posed a considerable challenge to the government forces. However, their successes could not be sustainable without constant supplies and in the face of NRA reinforcements. The UPDA/M soon developed internal problems including political intrigue, factionalism and failure by the political wing to raise funds and arms. The final blow was the defeat the UPDA suffered at Corner Kilak in August 1987 where many of its seasoned fighters were killed. Faced with mounting pressure from government forces, the UPDA decided to negotiate a peaceful settlement.

4.2.2 The UPDA / Government Peace Negotiations

The peace negotiations between UPDA and the government were initiated by the elders who realized that the war was spreading and was bound to destroy the entire Acholi society. Their timing was correct. The UPDA/M was tired and demoralized, the government also wanted a negotiated settlement. On 31 October 1986 a five-man delegation led by Tiberio Okeny Atwoma, an Acholi elder and politician having secured a blessing from President Museveni went to meet the UPDA/M commanders in the bush. They told the rebels that the conflict was causing much bloodshed and a humanitarian crisis. After 145 days of trekking into the jungles of southern Sudan, the elders prepared a report for President Museveni recommending peace talks between UPDM/A leaders and the government. Apart from Col. Omoya, the report recommended that the talks should not include the UPDM/A political leaders based abroad since the military wing felt betrayed by them. This exclusionist tendency continues to constrain peacemaking in the region and explains why the war has persisted. The report also recommended an amnesty for the fighters. The 1987 Parliament of Uganda (National Resistance Council) passed a General Amnesty Act which provided that ex-soldiers and intelligence officers who served under the former regimes would not be prosecuted for such crimes as treason, theft or torture. However, people who committed murder, kidnap with intent to murder, or rape would stand

trial.³⁴ Some UPDA/M fighters saw this partial amnesty as a trick rather than a gesture of good will before the peace talks.

Pre-negotiation consultations started in November 1987 when Major General Salim Saleh, the NRA's Chief Combat and Operations Officer, made contacts with the UPDA/M. Salim Saleh reached the UPDA through a civilian contact. The main feature of this peace process is that it was driven and managed by fighters. In the course of the peace process, Lt. Steven Obote, a UPDA fighter coordinating the peace effort was accidentally killed by the government army. This incident constrained the progress of the peace process. However, the issue was quickly resolved and the process continued.

Actual peace talks between the UPDA/M and the government started on 17 March 1988 at Acholi Inn in Gulu, with the joint declaration of a ceasefire. An Acholi elder known as Vincent Oloya chaired the talks while another elder Eliya Obita acted as secretary. The government team was led by Salim Saleh while the UPDA/M was led by Lt. John Angelo Okello, who was commander of UPDA's Division One in Gulu. The other members of the UPDA team included Major Mike Kilama and Charles Alai. The over all UPDA commander, Brigadier Justine Odong Latek did not attend these negotiations in person although his team claimed that he was supportive of the peace process.

As part of confidence building, and cultivating trust, the teams discussed the causes of the war. For instance, the UPDA side maintained that they were forced to take up arms because of human rights abuses committed by the NRA soldiers. They also argued that they were forced to join the rebellion because government collaborators fed it with false reports alleging that the UNLA had concealed caches of arms and ammunitions and were planning subversive activities against the NRM government. On their part the NRA commanders Col Pecos Kutesa and Lt. Col. Julius Aine regretted that certain human rights violations may have occurred but were never sanctioned by the government. Saleh observed that there were some bad elements within NRA whose acts were tarnishing the name of a disciplined army.

³⁴ Caroline Lamwaka, "The Peace Processes in Northern Uganda 1986-1990", (available at <http://www.c-r.org/accord/uganda/accord11/peaceprocess.shtml> (14/7/04)).

The first session of negotiations focused mainly on the jobs for the ex-combatants, and the integration and promotion of UPDA soldiers in NRA. The second round of talks took place from 20- 21 March 1988 in a closed environment. This round of talks was attended by the UPDA and NRA officers excluding the elders who were accused by rebels of associating with old politicians bent on confusing them. Commenting on the UPDA peace process, Caroline Lamwaka has observed:

The UPDA/M and some sections of Acholi civil society were divided on their views on the insurgency and how to achieve peace. Those closely allied to the government through the Local Resistance Council structure had campaigned for surrender whereas the UPDM/A wanted to stop fighting under a peace agreement.³⁵

At one time these talks were about to collapse due to an announcement on Uganda Television by the then Information Minister, Abubakar Mayanja, that rebels should run for their life as the amnesty was expiring on 31 March 1988.

On 21 March 1988, after the end of the negotiations at Acholi Inn, Kilima and Salim Saleh announced that the former enemies were united and would not allow politicians to confuse them. Saleh also revealed that the two sides had agreed that the army should stay out of politics. The talks had resulted into an agreement on several issues. These included an immediate ceasefire that the UPDA troops would receive cash ration allowances to mark the beginning of integration; recruitment into NRA would be open to all UPDA soldiers without any form of victimization so as to create a national army; appointments to military rank made by any Ugandan head of state would be retained-subject to confirmation by President Museveni and after scrutiny of the individual soldier. It was also agreed that both forces would tackle the Holy Spirit Movement alliance fighters.

These peace talks were confronted by a number of challenges. For instance the outcomes of the peace talks did not go down well with the politicians, those that supported UPDA and those on the government side. This was because they had been excluded. Many of them doubted whether President Museveni and other government leaders had approved the peace talks. There was an allegation that some people in

³⁵ Caroline Lamwaka, "The Peace Process in Northern Uganda 1986-1990", in Lucima, *Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the violence in Northern Uganda*

government would have loved to see UPDA surrender unconditionally. Some UPDA combatants wanted to continue the struggle for a military victory based on the experience of the failure of Nairobi Peace Talks. To the UPDA the Nairobi talks demonstrated how President Museveni could not be trusted. The UPDA over all commander Odong Latek later denied to have ever authorized the negotiations and reaffirmed the military campaign even when some of his combatants and civilians were warming up for peace.

4.2.3 Museveni's Role in UPDA Negotiations

Despite the differing interests, talks resulted into both parties declaring a ceasefire. The two forces started to cooperate on security in the region especially tackling cattle rustling which became a confidence building measure. This was followed by a visit to President Museveni by a delegation comprising of two UPDA representatives and six elders from Gulu, who met him in Entebbe on April 1988. In addition, another delegation comprising of eight UPDM/A representatives was brought to Kampala to tour the developments that had taken place since 1986. The meeting with President Museveni resulted into a presidential pardon to all surrendering combatants since the amnesty had already expired. The UPDM/A demanded release of their prisoners of war in government custody and tax exemption for Gulu and Kitgum districts for two years, which the president accepted.

Museveni then wrote to the UPDM/A high command urging them to join the reconstruction and development of the country assuring them that continued NRA deployment was not against them. Most people asked him to contact the external political wing of UPDM/A to support the peace process. In order to increase trust and build confidence between NRA and UPDA, Salim Saleh and Lt. Col. Aine visited the UPDA headquarters and met Brig. Latek, the over all UPDA commander on 25 April 1988 despite the fear that the two could be killed. On his return Saleh gave a good report and spoke positively about the meeting with the rebels. It is said that Latek assured Saleh of his support for the peace process and dissociated himself from the statement issued earlier to the effect that he had rejected the peace process.

4.3 The 1988 Pece Peace Agreement

On 3 June 1988, the NRA and UPDA concluded a peace agreement at Pece in Gulu, which provided for the integration, the latter, into the national army. The peace agreement, which was witnessed by over 5,000 people, among others called for the cessation of hostilities between the NRM and UPDM/A, the integration of UPDM/A into the national army, and release all prisoners of war. It also called for resettlement of displaced people and rehabilitation of the infrastructure destroyed by the war.

With the signing of the Pece agreement, both the government and the UPDA started implementing it immediately. For instance, the government released prisoners of war and started the integration of UPDA combatants into the NRA. This agreement as earlier noted excluded the political wing of UPDM/A exiled in Nairobi and London, who had lost control and fallen out with the armed wing. Some UPDA fighters who rejected the Pece Peace Agreement were later on integrated into the Holy Spirit Movement of Alice Lakwena.

4.3.1 Critical Challenges to Pece Peace Agreement

One of the major challenges to Pece Peace Accord was the absence of hardliners among the ranks of UPDA who were opposed to the peaceful settlement. In fact, after the signing of the Pece Accord, most of the hard liners left UPDA to join the Holy Spirit Movement. The peace process was also undermined by the killing of Mike Kilama, an ex-UPDA combatant by the government army in February 1990. Kilama is said to have been highly regarded throughout Acholiland. His death was followed by the arrests of several former UPDA combatants on suspicion that they were plotting a military coup against the government. There is lack of sufficient evidence to show that Kilama could have been involved in the alleged coup plot as people close to him deny his involvement. What is clear though is that he was killed as he attempted to flee the country. These arrests scared many former rebels resulting into their desertion of the government army to join Kony's Lords Resistance Army (LRA/M). Other UPDA officers like Captain Majid Atiku, a battalion commander based in Moroto fled to Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) and so was Major Walter Odoch. With the break down of the Pece peace process, Kony's group took advantage to recruit former fighters and to attack government

positions. This prompted the government to launch a counter offensive.

Political analysts have also pointed out that the Pece Peace Agreement lacked third party mediators and guarantors. The UPDA/NRA peace talks were driven and managed by the commanders of fighting forces. While this presents an opportune and ripe moment for conflict resolution, the situation required a third party to manage the negotiation process to craft a realistic and comprehensive peace agreement that would be acceptable to all the parties. The parties at conflict lacked concrete support and participation of key actors in the conflict such as the over all commander of UPDA who later rejected the agreement. It must be noted that because of Latek's opposition to the peace process and internal tensions within UPDM/A, a conference held on 8 May 1988 decided to vote him out as the over all commander and replaced him with Lt. Col. Okello. They also voted out the UPDM chairman Eric Otema Allimadi and dissociated themselves from the UPDM political wing that had denounced the peace talks.

The divisions and power struggle within UPDM and its military wing, the UPDA weakened its potential and undermined the possibility of a united strong agenda for peace negotiations. This could have led the government feel that it was negotiating with weak and divided organisation on whom it could impose its will, which ultimately back fired. In addition to divisions within the rebel ranks, the UPDA had already suffered a major military defeat at the hands of the NRA, which made them negotiate from a militarily weak position. In such circumstances, unless there is involvement of a third party to mediate and ensure that a just agreement is reached, the party that feels cheated will sign only to buy time to rearm and recruit for another round of fighting.

4.4 The 1990 Addis Ababa Peace Agreement

The Addis Ababa Peace Agreement was signed between the NRM government and the UPDM/A political wing in 1990. The peace process involved secret contacts between the UPDM leaders in London, Lusaka and Nairobi government representative Ateker Ejalu. The UPDM side was led by Otema Alimadi, former Prime Minister of the ousted Obote II government. During this time, the Government was highly engaged in frantic efforts to negotiate with several

dissidents their return home so they can participate in the reconstruction of the country. For instance, the government's point man in these talks, Ateker Ejalu, had been involved in the concluded peace settlement that ended the Uganda Peoples Army rebellion (UPA) in Teso. The government promised a general amnesty to all combatants who would give up fighting and returned home. On their part, the UPDM complained of general suffering of the people in northern Uganda, the dismissal of their people from the civil service and general underdevelopment of the region.

After protracted negotiations that lasted several months, an agreement was reached and signed on 14 July 1990 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The agreement provided for full amnesty to UPDA combatants and leaders. Under this agreement, former combatants were invited back to participate in nation building. The agreement also provided that all UPDM soldiers and officers should leave their operational bases under their respective commanders. At the signing of the Addis Ababa agreement, the UPDM leadership hoped to prevail over the Holy Spirit Movement faction under Joseph Kony. Otema Allimadi, the chairman of UPDM returned to Uganda in 1990 to assess the situation before he finally came back to settle in 1992.

In an interview in 1999, Allimadi admitted that all the government's commitments made during the 1990 agreement were fulfilled. Allimadi's disappointment was that despite his pleas, the rebellion in northern Uganda had continued. The Addis Ababa Peace Agreement like the rest of the earlier agreements signed between the government and the insurgents in northern Uganda, failed to deliver lasting peace.

4.5 LRA/M Government Negotiations 1993-94

By the 1990s the government had succeeded in negotiating the end of the rebellion in Teso sub-region in eastern Uganda and had tested the dividends of negotiated settlements. Despite this achievement in Teso, the war in Acholiland persisted causing a humanitarian crisis. Since the government had not been able to put down the rebellion militarily, there was an urgency that something needed to be done to end this conflict. Motivated by the Teso experience, and increased pressure from the donors and the opposition, government initiated talks with the LRA in November 1993.

Part of the government's initiative to end this rebellion was the creation of a new ministerial post specifically to resolve this conflict. A Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, resident in northern Uganda was created in 1988. Betty Bigombe, an Acholi and a close confidant of President Museveni, was appointed Minister. Among Bigombe's tasks was to persuade the LRA to stop fighting and end the misery in northern Uganda. The minister spent five years mobilizing the local population to convince their sons to give up rebellion. During this time, Bigombe became an effective grassroots mobilizer and was determined to bring peace in the region despite the cultural biases and prejudices against her as "a woman venturing in men's affairs of war". Several Acholi elders remained skeptical of Bigombe's role and the designs of government by appointing a woman for such a job. Nonetheless, she was able to win the hearts of many rural people and riding on this popularity she was able to initiate talks with the rebels.

By the time Bigombe initiated talks with the LRA, the government army had recorded military victories over Kony's forces. The military operation code named "Operation North", commanded by Col. Samuel Wasswa, the 4th Division Commander which began on 31 March 1991 was under the over all direction of Maj. Gen. Tinyefuza. The operation was determined to decisively defeat the rebels. This operation was criticized for its brutality and gross-violation of human rights, which further alienated the population from government and affected Bigombe's confidence building efforts. The public outcry made President Museveni to recall Tinyefuza from the operation.



Night Commuters: Children trek to Gulu town every night to avoid abduction by the LRA rebels.

Despite the major military blow inflicted on the LRA, the hard-core leadership survived and continued causing havoc in northern Uganda by mainly attacking civilian targets including the abduction of 44 girls of Sacred Heart Secondary School and St. Mary's Girls School. The message by the rebels to government was loud and clear, weakened

but not defeated. This could have convinced Bigombe to resume her peace efforts as a means to end the brutal war.

4.5.1 The Bigombe Peace Initiative

Bigombe's peace initiative started clandestinely. She had obtained the documents captured from the rebels from Col. Wasswa, which had names of rebel collaborators. Among the rebel collaborators was Yusuf Okwonga Adek who was based in Kitgum. Adek had been detained in Luzira prison on treason charges and later released for failure to adduce incriminating evidence. On his release from prison he returned to his home village near Gulu town. Bigombe organized a secret meeting with Adek where they discussed the causes of the war, why it had persisted for so long and how it could be brought to an end to stop bloodshed. The two held several meetings during which Bigombe was able to learn more about who Kony was, his motivation, and his support thus breaking through into what was hitherto unknown to the government about the man it sought to destroy militarily.

At first, Adek did not trust Betty Bigombe. However, as time went by he began to gain confidence and cooperated. Bigombe assured him that the government wanted to talk peace with Kony and that the NRA would not hurt him if he accepted to work as a go-between. This would involve traveling into the bush to meet Kony. Bigombe wrote a letter to Kony, which Adek delivered to him. He also returned with a reply from Kony acknowledging receipt of her letter and indicating that he needed guidance from the Holy Spirit and that he would reply after three weeks. Adek's contact became more credible than the earlier contacts where people claimed to have contacts with Kony pocketed goods and money only to return with fraud letters purportedly written by rebel commanders. It is said that Adek's letters from the bush were found to be genuine which made Bigombe trust *him as an honest man* who would never ask for facilitation that was more than needed for the job.

It is noted that Bigombe initiated these contacts with the rebels before informing the president. Having established firm contacts with the rebels, Bigombe informed the president who blessed her efforts. The army leadership perceived Bigombe's peace initiative differently. Most of them wanted the rebels to negotiate their surrender, while she preferred a peace settlement where every body was a winner. Col.

Wasswa who supported Bigombe to the end briefed Brigadier Joram Mugume, the NRA Chief of Combat Operations and Lt. Col. Fred Toolit, the Director of Military Intelligence. These two are known to have opted for a two prolonged approach to end the conflict the military option and peace negotiations. It is said that they advised Bigombe to go ahead with the peace initiative without compromising army operations, which would continue to be launched to further weaken the rebels.

Despite the hard army position, banking on the president's backing, Bigombe continued with her contact with the rebels hoping that eventually the army officers would be brought on board. Bigombe assured the people that the president was supportive of the peace process.

4.5.2 Confidence Building Measures for Negotiations

Pre-negotiation arrangements started in October 1993 with the two sides discussing security requirements before the face-to-face meetings could begin. Security modalities at first proved to be a stumbling block to negotiations. As a strategy for confidence building Bigombe decided to comply with most of Kony's unrealistic demands. The risk that Bigombe could be killed by rebels was always a constant worry to the army. The fear for Bigombe's life was not far fetched. The army had not forgotten the Teso experience when three ministers who were mediating the end of the Teso rebellion were abducted by rebels resulting into the death of one of them during the rescue mission by the army. With this hindsight the army was not ready to risk Bigombe's life especially going to meet the rebels unarmed. After some delays, the rebels agreed that Bigombe's escorts keep security but would hold her responsible if anything to endanger them happened.

4.5.3 Bigombe's First Scheduled Meeting with Kony

The first face to face meeting took place at Pagik on 25 November, 1993, in Gulu District. Besides her army escorts, Bigombe was accompanied by elders as suggested by the rebels and Adek who recorded the proceedings. Bigombe was also accompanied by Senior NRA officers; Cols Wasswa, Toolit and their escorts. Because of the army's insistence to attend the meeting, the rebels had decided to send middle-ranking officers with a tape recorded message from Kony. Bigombe told the meeting that she had initiated peace talks to end the

suffering of the people in Acholi due to the war and insecurity. She noted that social economic development could not be achieved with insecurity. On their part the LRA noted that if this first face-to-face meeting went on well then, modalities for peace talks would follow. They also pointed out that in order for the peace process to succeed, there was a need not to open old wounds and that LRA should not be blamed for the past deeds but rather to focus on a new beginning. They noted that they had come in good faith and would not present any conditions but would make a number of requests to the government.

The LRA asked for a general amnesty for all its fighters. They said that the LRA should not be perceived as a defeated force but one that has responded positively to the peace initiative since they wanted peace. They observed that they were simply returning home and not surrendering and that they should not be referred to as rebels but as people. They explained that they were fighting those who had rejected God, that is, the NRA and UPDA forces. They alleged that the UPDA surrendered to NRA in 1988 in order to return to war from a point of strength to avenge their earlier defeat. For this reason, the LRA insisted that former UPDA officials should be excluded from these negotiations. They demanded that the NRA should cease hostilities in order to allow the LRA organize their men to return home. They wanted government to formalize the cease-fire. They also wanted an arrangement by which to bring in their fighters who were in Europe and Kenya. They observed that if they were not allowed to bring in all their men, fighting would resume in future citing the UDPA demobilization experience. They demanded that government treats the sick and the wounded in government hospitals under the supervision of government and LRA officers.

The LRA on their part, promised to set up clinics to treat HIV/Aids since they had its "cure". They also called for a formal traditional ritual to be performed by selected Acholi elders. This ritual, they claimed, would formally re-unite brothers who had become enemies. They promised that Kony would attend the second round of the talks.

The government told the rebels that the existing general amnesty and presidential pardon would cover them. Bigombe also assured the LRA that Government was sincere in the peace process and wanted them to come home and that they would be forgiven for their past deeds.

Bigombe told the LRA to establish the exact numbers that were sick and wounded who needed treatment, which could be arranged. Bigombe emphasized to the LRA the urgency of the process to end the rebellion. Col. Wasswa promised that the government army would not attack the LRA in an area, which would be designated for them to regroup and operate.

At the end of the first meeting both sides were able to put on the table their case. The meeting agreed on the second big meeting, which would include the LRA leader Joseph Kony. Confidence between both sides was enhanced to the point that the LRA was later able to send their representatives to Gulu barracks to meet Bigombe over the progress of the talks.

4.5.4 The Second Pagik Meeting

Before the second meeting at Pagik, between Bigombe and LRA top commanders, a meeting was organized and attended by senior Acholi politicians and elders including General Tito Okello the former head of state. The meeting was also attended by the former Prime Minister and UPDM chairman Otema Allimadi and two LRA commanders who were severely criticized by General Okello, the deposed military leader for their atrocities against civilians. Since the LRA had wished to have the meetings attended by religious leaders, they were subsequently invited to attend the negotiations. The Anglican Church was represented by Rev. Baker Ochola, the Muslims by Sheik Ochaya while the Catholic church did not send a representative. The Catholic Church was accused by government of having links with the rebellion during the UPDA rebellion and a senior Italian priest was as a result deported. Another priest known as Fr Paul Donohue was also almost deported during the military operation code named "Operation North".

The Pagik meeting, which took place in January 1994, was dramatic and complicated by security issues. The LRA insisted that it would provide security at the venue, a position that was not acceptable to the government army. When Bigombe arrived at the venue with her group, which included the religious leaders, elders and women's leaders they were met by about 100 LRA combatants who did not want the NRA to police the venue. The stand off was negotiated by Adek and Caroline Lamwaka who became intermediaries; shuttering between the government side and the LRA several times. The LRA argued that since

the government army had policed the venue during the first meeting, it was its turn to police the venue at the second meeting and therefore were acting in good faith. Bigombe fearing that a great opportunity for peace was about to be lost, made a radio call to Kony who insisted that talks be suspended until the government side came to the venue without armed escorts. In order to save the talks from collapse, Bigombe risked her life and went without military escort to meet Kony. Cols Wasswa and Toolit could not accompany Bigombe since permission to risk their lives had been denied by their boss, Brigadier Mugume.

When Bigombe's team arrived at the venue of Kony's choice they were subjected to an intensive search by the LRA guards and sprayed with holy water to cleanse them of any evil before entering the venue. They were entertained by a choir, which sang the Holy Spirit songs. As darkness approached, the commanders welcomed Bigombe's delegation. They expressed disappointment over the army officer's presence. Since it was at night the LRA decided to postpone the talks until the following day and proposed that the night would be spent at the venue. Bigombe thanked the LRA but politely complained that people had been mistreated at the venue and said she could not spend a night out as the president was expecting to hear from her. She told them that her failure to return that night might be misunderstood. As a sign of confidence building the LRA provided Bigombe 30 escorts led by the LRA field commander George Omona who accompanied her up to Gulu town. Curiously on the way back to Gulu, Bigombe's delegation found strange people who lined the road and sang as they passed.³⁶

4.5.5 Bigombe and Kony Meet Face-to-Face

The following day Bigombe's team and that of LRA met again at Pagik. This time the LRA did not impose stringent conditions and the environment was calm. Kony took the opportunity to inform the government and the Acholi people why they were fighting. In a long speech Kony is said to have provided the history of the rebellion, where he blamed the Acholi elders who encouraged them to go to the bush and later abandoned them. To Kony, the Acholi community was largely responsible for what was happening, which had backfired with terrible consequences that were being blamed on the LRA. Lamwaka has observed:

³⁶ Billie O'Kadameri, "LRA/Government negotiations 1993-94", in *Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda*, 2002, 40.

It also became clear why the LRA had insisted that Acholi elders participate in the talks. He claimed that Acholi elders sent them out and then abandoned them, forcing the LRA to turn their guns on their own people. Kony blamed them for Acholi's suffering and said that there were only three elders whom he could trust; others were bloodthirsty people who had failed to guide the people in Acholi in its most serious hour of need.³⁷

At this meeting, Kony is known to have told Bigombe that the LRA would like to end the rebellion and come out of the bush. The LRA did not set any conditions but asked the government to facilitate the peace process and enable it to work. Kony also requested government to welcome the children from the bush and educate them. He asked the government to give LRA six months to regroup its fighters as part of the peace process. This was later interpreted by government as a trick for Kony to rearm, retrain and replenish his forces that were at a verge of total annihilation from government forces.

4.5.6 The Breakdown of the Government and LRA Relations

The Bigombe peace process had resulted into a return of security in Acholiland long forgotten since the rebellion broke out in 1987. The peace talks had enabled the rebels to mix freely with the government army to the extent of sharing meals. The rebels started moving freely in the villages and even visited army detachments without harassment. However, as time went by without a firm conclusion of the peace agreement, relations between top government military officers and the LRA commanders began to sour. It was reported that at one meeting between senior commanders of the LRA and government forces, which took place at Bigombe's residence, Brigadier Mugume told an LRA commander, Otti-Lagony, that he thought the latter had come to negotiate his surrender. This remark did not go down well with the LRA rebels who felt humiliated. Bigombe who had to rely on the senior army commanders for advice failed to control their utterances, which seriously endangered the peace process.

It was again reported that at a crucial meeting held at Tegot-Otto on 2 February, 1994 where a draft a cease-fire agreement was being discussed, Col. Tolit, a government officer almost exchanged blows with LRA commanders; Sunday Arop and George Omona. Despite the tensions between the combatants, a ceasefire agreement was reached

³⁷ See, Billie O' Kadameri, "LRA/Government negotiations 1993-94", in, Okello Lucima (ed.), *Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda*, 2002, p.40.

and signed. The weakness with this agreement is that it lacked a strong guarantor and skilled facilitation as well as lack of clear support from the government.

It is also worth noting that after the meeting at Tegot-Atto, the LRA decided not to send their commanders to Gulu alleging that there was a plot to arrest them. The LRA also demanded that the government army clarifies these allegations that such a plot did not exist. They pointed out that the army was behaving in a strange manner, confirming their perception and threat. Subsequent meetings between the LRA and government flopped with the LRA failing to show up at the appointed venues. Before long the government army revealed that it had information to the effect that LRA had made contacts with the Sudan Government for military supplies and other logistics, which was reason it was hesitating to pursue the peace option.

The peace process finally collapsed on 6 February, 1994 when President Museveni told a rally that Betty Bigombe had initiated peace talks with the LRA which the latter took advantage of to perpetuate savage banditry of killing innocent people and abduction of children. Museveni then issued a seven days ultimatum to the rebels to surrender or risk death. The rebels who had now established bases in Sudan resumed their attacks although this time with sophisticated weapons, which tended to confirm the government's allegations of the Sudan factor.

The government reshuffled its northern army command by removing Col. Wasswa who had worked with Bigombe to make the peace process possible. He was replaced with Brigadier Chefe Ali one of the most professional and disciplined officers hailed for ending the Teso conflict. Another top NRA officer Major General Salim Saleh, a Senior Presidential Advisor on Military Affairs was also sent to Gulu to make sure the rebellion was brought to an end.

While the government re-organized its forces for a final assault to crush the rebellion, Bigombe and some elders still hopeful that the peace process could be salvaged were busy trying to convince the LRA back to the negotiation table. One of the Acholi leaders, Rwot Achana, in March 1996 led a delegation of twenty traditional chiefs and twenty elders to meet President Museveni in Rwakitura, his rural home. The

elders and chiefs sought to convince the president to keep the peace talks going and also to bless their involvement. The meeting paved the way for one of the LRA commanders Lt. Col. Vincent Bebabeba Oola, alias Otingting to return from the bush and started addressing civilians in Aswa and Kilak counties claiming the LRA wanted to establish good relations with them. Consequently, two elders Okot-Ogoni and Rwot Olanya-Lagony brother to LRA commander Otti-Lagony who had met Bebabeba sought consent from Salim Saleh to re-start the peace process. They promised the LRA would support the peace initiative. The elders wanted Ug. Shs 8 million to facilitate the peace process. Since this was very little money, the government encouraged them to request for US \$ 150,000. This information was leaked to the press, which reported about it negatively. Nevertheless, a group of ten elders were able to meet Bebabeba in June 1996.

The attempt by elders to salvage the peace process like the past efforts was also hampered by mistrust. A week after the elders had met Bebabeba, the army captured his signaler who revealed his boss had received information from



UPDF Soldiers guarding a Protected Peoples Camp in Kitgum district (cover photo)

Otti-Lagony in Sudan to the effect that the elders were a decoy by the government and should be killed. The elders were warned not to travel to the bush meeting since the rebels had threatened to harm them. The elders misinterpreted this as an attempt by the failed Bigombe's efforts to sabotage theirs since she had failed where they were about to succeed. Both Mzee Okot-Ogoni and Olanya-Lagony sneaked away with Bebabeba to meet the LRA in the bush where they were summarily executed. Bebabeba was also later killed by government forces. The killing of the two elderly peace emissaries marked the total collapse of the peace process that Bigombe had initiated in 1993.

4.6 Kacoke Madit: A Diaspora Peace Initiative

Most political commentators have argued that the failure to resolve the 17-year conflict in northern Uganda is partly because it has largely remained a localized and is viewed as an Acholi conflict yet it has national, regional and international dimensions. Kacoke Madit an Acholi word for big meeting, which took place in London in October and November 1996, was an international attempt at peacemaking and peace building by internationalizing the conflict in northern Uganda. This Kacoke Madit brought together the Acholi elites living in the diaspora, the Government of Uganda and the LRA/M to discuss ways of ending the conflict. The government was represented by Dr. Martin Alier, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, who made it known that he had been given permission to negotiate with the LRA/M. The LRA/M was represented by James Alfred Obita, the groups Secretary for External Relations and Mobilization.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the Acholi people from Uganda and those living in the diaspora to meet and share the experiences on how to help end the bloody conflict, which at the time had displaced over 500,000 people and made development of the area near to impossible. One of the outcomes of Kacoke Madit was the contact with the Community of Sant' Egidio, a Rome based lay Catholic Organization with vast experience in conflict resolution and mediation in several countries of Africa especially Algeria and Mozambique. Sant' Egidio got in touch with the organizers of Kacoke Madit and the two began discussing the possibility of the organization's mediation to end the LRA/M conflict. The starting point was how Sant'Egidio would help negotiate the release of Aboke girls, abducted by the LRA and held in captivity in the Sudan.

In May 1997, James Alfred Obita an LRA official based in London traveled to Rome where he met officials from Sant'Egidio and discussed the modalities of the planned meeting with government officials. After the Rome meeting Obita went to Sudan to brief the LRA High Command about the meeting and how negotiations would proceed. The Sudan meeting was attended by Powel Onen Ojwang, a London based Acholi businessman, who because of financial support to the LRA/M, was pressing to be appointed to the post of Vice-Chairman of

the Movement. Obita observes that the entrance of Ojwang on the political scene constrained his peace efforts and was to alter the course of events and balance of power within the LRA/M's external political wing because of the power struggle that ensued.³⁸

In June 1997, following the meeting in Sudan, Sant'Egidio which had established contacts with the Government of Uganda got a note that they were ready to meet the LRA/M. This meeting took place on 12 December, 1997, in Rome and was mediated by the President of Sant'Egidio Andrea Riccard and Father Matteo Zuppi. The government was represented by State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Amama Mbabazi and David Pulkol the Director of External Security Organization, while the LRA/M was represented by Charles Laroker and James Alfred Obita. At this meeting the LRA/M delegation presented a list of grievances and signed minutes to the Government delegation. At the close of the two-day meeting, both sides agreed on a follow-up meeting to take place on 18 January 1998, which was also to be attended by the LRA field officers from Sudan.

Obita claims that Powell Onen who did not attend the Rome meeting was kept in constant touch about the progress by telephone, which even enabled him to contribute to the discussions. The reasons why Onen did not participate directly remain unclear but it seems he was excluded by Obita and hence the reason he later disowned the peace process and influenced the LRA/M to shun the outcomes. It later transpired that Onen who according to Obita had promised to keep the LRA/M High Command informed had instead kept them in darkness. Nevertheless, Kacoke Madit Peace Initiative is viewed as a positive development in the search for peace in Northern Uganda since it has enlisted support and involvement of the Acholi elites in the diaspora whose influence, energy and resources could be invaluable in facilitating the peace process.³⁹

4.6.1 Equatorial Civic Fund Peace Initiative

Dr. Leonzio Onek, a Sudanese Acholi based in Kenya, initiated the Equatorial Civic Fund (ECF) peace process. ECF was supported by Comic Relief, a charity organization based in the United Kingdom to

³⁸ Okello Lucima (ed.), "Protracted Conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda", 2002, p.13.

³⁹ Andy Carl, "Kacoke Madit Peace Initiative for Acholiland", available at <http://www.c-r.org/prog/uganda.shtml> 8/27/2003.

promote peace negotiations between the Uganda Government and the LRA/M. Dr Onok contacted Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda who was then minister in charge of the Presidency and suggested the possibility of his organization facilitating a peace process. On 18 October, 1997, a meeting was organized in United Kingdom attended by the Uganda Minister for the North, Owiny Dollo, the LRA/M representative, Alfred Obita and Professor Hizkias Assefa, a conflict resolution specialist with close links with ECF.

Owiny Dollo briefed the meeting that an amnesty law was soon coming into force. He asked the LRA/M to commit its interest in peace talks in concrete terms in writing. On the part of LRA, they demanded that the government should stop verbal insults on the rebels. Obita was asked to inform Kony, the rebel leader and seek his approval for further deliberations as Owiny Dollo also secures the president's approval. Interestingly, Obita during this time was running two parallel peace initiatives without the two facilitators knowing each other. Perhaps this is one of the mistakes that can partly account for the failure of both initiatives.

After the meeting facilitated by the Equatorial Civic Fund, Obita returned to Sudan to brief the LRA/M High Command. Obita notes that during this time his rival Powell Onen had swayed the LRA towards a military approach and had decided to take a hardline position towards negotiations. Obita says that on realizing that the LRA had changed and fearing for his life decided not to disclose the facts from the Rome meeting and the mediation by ECF to the Khartoum based LRA/M officials until he had met the over all leader Joseph Kony, whom he still thought, was supportive of the peace process. In the meantime Obita was losing touch with both Sant'Egidio and ECF as he had kept them in the dark about the existence of each other and both were also becoming impatient and losing confidence in him.

Obita said that before he could meet Kony in southern Sudan, Onen had telephoned him and reported how the former had sold out the Movement and had pocketed a lot of money that was meant for the war effort. On arrival at the LRA camps in southern Sudan, Obita was arrested and sentenced to death. Fortunately for Obita he was not killed. After spending several months in jail he was released and stripped of all responsibilities. The Sant'Egidio led negotiations planned for 18

January 1998 hit a snag with Alfred Obita the initiator now in LRA jail. The power struggle within the LRM external wing between Powell Onen and Alfred Obita, lack of transparency, and full disclosure to the third parties mediating the peace process resulted into the collapse of the peace process that had picked momentum. In May 1998, Sant'Egidio attempted albeit unsuccessfully, to secure release of Aboke girls. On release from prison, Obita was a defeated man having been disowned by the LRA/M and having lost the trust of Sant'Egidio and ECF. Subsequently, Onen was also arrested in July 1998 on fraud charges and imprisoned. He is still serving his jail sentence in England. With the two LRA/M external leaders out of the parallel peace processes collapsed completely.

4.7 The Jongomoi Okidi-Olal Peace Initiative

The Jongomoi Okidi-Olal Peace Initiative was part of the Ugandan Diaspora Acholi peace efforts aimed at ending the rebellion in Northern Uganda. Jongomoi Okidi-Olal an America based Ugandan sponsored by the Acholi diaspora peace network, Kacoke Madit, was able to meet the presidents of Sudan and Uganda and SPLA/M and LRA senior commanders and interested them in talking peace. During these meetings Okidi discussed with all the parties substantive and procedural issues for negotiation. He also realized that for the peace process to move forward, it needed a third party with leverage and respect on all the parties to mediate the conflict. His conclusion zeroed on the Carter Center and he consequently approached Jimmy Carter who agreed to mediate.

4.8 Uganda and Sudan Peace Dialogue: The Role of the Carter Center

The role of Sudan or what political commentators have called the Sudan factor in the civil war in northern Uganda has been central to the protracted nature of the LRA conflict.⁴⁰ Both the governments of Uganda and Sudan have always accused each other of supporting rebels fighting either government. The Sudan government has armed and trained the rebels of the LRA, led by Joseph Kony in retaliation of Uganda's support to the southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement led by Col. John Garang.⁴¹ The proxy war between Uganda

⁴⁰ See, Northern Uganda: Understanding and Resolving the Conflict. A report of the International Crisis Group (ICG) 14 April 2004) (Available at <http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=258&1=1>) 23/8/2004

⁴¹ See, "Sudan Stops to Ugandan Rebels: President", Available at: http://fpeng.peopledaily.com.cn/20010821_html/10/23/2003.

and Sudan gives both civil wars, a regional dimension and complicates efforts towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The Uganda government has also accused Sudan of fomenting another rebellion of the Allied Democratic Forces, which operated in western Uganda before its eventual defeat in 2001. Because of these proxy wars relations between the two countries deteriorated considerably resulting into Uganda severing diplomatic ties in 1995. However, in 1999 both the Uganda and Sudan governments approached Jimmy Carter, the former US President and requested him to mediate the normalization of diplomatic relations,⁴² which was achieved through the 1999 Nairobi Peace Agreement signed by presidents Museveni and Bashir.

Several reasons have been advanced as to why Sudan and Uganda decided to renew diplomatic relations at the time. These include the desire by the Sudan government to exploit the Jimmy Carter connection to improve its international image as a country. The US government under President Clinton had blacklisted the Sudanese government as a terrorist state. Sudan has been identified to have links with terrorists and to have harboured Osama bin Laden, the master mind of the attempted assassination of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and responsible for the bombing of US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and the World Trade Center in New York. By exploiting Carter relations, Sudan is thought to have hoped to help warm up relations with the US. On the other hand, the Uganda government has been under international pressure to end the rebellion and suffering of the people in northern Uganda. Had it not been for Sudan's support, the LRA would have been easily defeated. At the same time the government army was over stretched since it was fighting on many fronts: in northern Uganda, western Uganda and in the DRC. Matters worsened when Uganda's alliance with Rwanda in the DRC collapsed and the two armies fought three bloody battles in Kisangani.⁴³

Although Kony had also requested Carter to mediate in the LRA conflict, the Carter Center focused on the concerns of president

⁴² See, "Neu reports on Sudan-Uganda peace process" Available at: [www.http://www.emory.edu/EMORY_REPORT/erarchive/2000/February/erfebruary.14/2_14_10/27/2003](http://www.emory.edu/EMORY_REPORT/erarchive/2000/February/erfebruary.14/2_14_10/27/2003)

⁴³ See, "Rwanda/ Uganda: A Dangerous War of Nerves" A report by International Crisis Group 21 December 2001, p.7 (Available at: <http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=2708&I=117/8/04>)

Museveni and al-Bashir since he did not receive a parallel invitation from Garang. The Carter Center hoped that the improvement in diplomatic relations between Sudan and Uganda would ultimately catalyze both the Sudan and Uganda peace processes.

4.9 Carter Center's Negotiation Strategy

The Carter Center knew that the success of the peace process would require the involvement of all the parties to the conflict including key stakeholders. However to do this would require caution and systematic planning to build confidence among all the parties, which was necessary for the peace process to move forward. It is noted that even if Jimmy Carter had met John Garang, the leader of the SPLA/M, their relationship was not strong. More so, information on Joseph Kony the rebel leader of the LRA was scanty and it was believed that securing his participation was going to be a big challenge to mediators. Jimmy Carter wrote to both Kony and Garang and informed them that he had been asked by the governments of Uganda and Sudan to mediate in normalization of their relations.

A delegation from the Carter Center traveled to the region in June 1999 and met a Sudan government team led by the Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Nafie ali Nafie. Sudan's concerns were basically security issues of not using each others territory for military incursions by rebels, removing logistical centers for rebels in each country, moving refugee camps out of border areas, stopping forced recruitment of refugees into rebellion by the SPLA. Other concerns included stopping Uganda's negative propaganda against Sudan, and establishing bilateral and multilateral monitoring teams and re-establishing diplomatic relations. The Carter team also explored the possibility of facilitating the parents of Kony to visit him in the Sudan to urge him to stop fighting. The Sudan Government promised to secure Kony's consent although they pointed out that it was not going to be easy.

The Carter Center delegation met the Uganda team that was led by Dr Ruhakana Rugunda at a meeting that was attended by President Museveni on 30 June 1999. Narrating the proceedings of the meeting, Joyce Neu who was part of the Carter Center delegation said:

Museveni said there were two problems between Sudan and Uganda: the LRA and the Sudanese civil war. The first, he said, could be resolved; the second was much more difficult because Uganda could not stand by while the government of Sudan tried to 'make Africans into Arabs'. Museveni made it clear that the SPLA and the LRA were not comparable, one was fighting for its 'identity' and the other was a 'terrorist' group. He said that Uganda was supporting the SPLA and that if any one could 'pressurize' Garang, he could; but he would do so only for a 'principled agreement'. Museveni indicated that although he had previously refused direct negotiations with Kony, he would not reject them now. He also agreed to enable Kony to meet his parents in Sudan; the Ugandan Government would pay their travel costs for one week.⁴⁴

The preliminary talks between Sudan and the Uganda contact groups took place in London in August 1999. Top on the agenda was the issue of Aboke girls abducted by the LRA and believed to be in the camps in Sudan. The Uganda team made it clear that restoration of diplomatic relations was to be contingent upon the return of the abducted Aboke girls. The Sudan team rejected Uganda's demand arguing that the abducted children issue was being advanced to draw negative international publicity against their country since the issue had become very explosive. The two teams exchanged documents detailing grievances and positions for re-establishing diplomatic relations. The London negotiations concluded with each side agreeing to stop support for each other's rebel movements, and agreed to meet again before the heads of state summit, but failed to agree on the Aboke girls issue.

4.10 The Heads of State Summit in Nairobi (6-9 December 1999)

Preparations for the heads of state summit involved Carter convincing presidents Museveni and Bashir to commit themselves to the dates of the summit. Sudan insisted that it could not guarantee Kony's participation while at the same time demanding an assurance that Garang should attend. The Carter Center team accompanied by Betty Bigombe, former Uganda Minister for northern Uganda, traveled to Khartoum where they tried without success to meet Kony but managed to meet one of his deputies. The team was told that Kony had received Carter's invitation but it arrived too late for him to prepare and attend the talks. The same team traveled to Uganda where President Museveni assured them of his commitment to meet the LRA leader Joseph Kony.

⁴⁴ Joyce Neu, "Restoring relations between Uganda and Sudan: The Carter Center process" in Okello Lucima, *Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda*, 2002, p.48.

Both the Sudan and Uganda teams arrived in Nairobi for the face-to-face talks two days before the arrival of presidents Bashir, Museveni and Jimmy Carter. After two days of negotiations the mediators and the contact groups came up with the text of the agreement that was acceptable to both parties. Carter and Bashir arrived on 7 December, 1999. Ambassador Mahdi Ibrahim, a key member of the Sudanese contact group and former Sudan Ambassador to the US, accompanied Bashir. Observers say that President Carter first met with Bashir and their meeting centered around US policy on Sudan, Sudan's relationship with Kony and slavery reports in Sudan, issues which Carter noted were indefensible. After this meeting the Carter team went to meet the Uganda contact group without Museveni. The Uganda team insisted on the release of Aboke girls as a pre-condition for the normalization of state relations and Carter assured them that his center would facilitate efforts to have the children freed.

4.11 The 1999 Nairobi Peace Agreement

Presidents Museveni of Uganda and Omar al-Bashir of Sudan signed the Nairobi Peace Agreement⁴⁵ on 8 December, 1999. Before the face-to-face meeting between the two leaders, Carter shuttled back and forth between them several times. Carter first briefed Museveni about the eleven-point draft agreement point by point. Museveni is said to have agreed to release Sudanese prisoners of war. Carter convinced Museveni that the issue of Aboke girls should not stand in the way of the crucial agreement and promised he would ensure their release. Museveni demanded that restoration of diplomatic relations should be hinged on the implementation of the agreement. Through Carter's shuttling diplomacy technique, from one head of state to another, a consensus emerged and it became clear that an agreement could be signed that day. By mid afternoon of 8 December, 1999, President Arap Moi was informed and a signing ceremony was held at State House, Nairobi, and for the first time since 1995 Bashir and Museveni shook hands.

Despite this Peace Agreement, the security situation in northern Uganda continued to deteriorate and the optimism that the agreement had created quickly vanished. Patrick Oguru Otto has observed that:

⁴⁵ See, "Agreement Between the Governments of Sudan and Uganda 8 December, 1999", available at: http://www.usip.org/library/pa/sudan_uganda/sudan_uganda_12081999.html 14/2/2000.

When the Nairobi Agreement was signed by presidents Yoweri Museveni and Omar al-Bashir in Nairobi, Kenya, on 8th December 1999, there was real expectation that the accord would provide the critical impetus for resolving the Northern Uganda conflict. Significantly, Uganda's Parliament passed the Amnesty Bill, which offered immunity from prosecution to those who had engaged in 'armed rebellion' against the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government, a day before Museveni traveled to Nairobi. From a Northern Ugandan perspective, the optimism that greeted the signing of the agreement was however, short-lived.⁴⁶

The first ministerial committee met in Nairobi as contained in the agreement to review the progress. The meeting is said to have been very tense, as a result of little progress on the ground and the renewed LRA incursions in northern Uganda. Significantly, some achievements had been recorded, such as the release of 72 Sudan prisoners of war⁴⁷ and the return of some of the LRA escapees from Sudan to Uganda. The Uganda side felt that Sudan had not done much on disarming and disbanding the LRA and release of Aboke girls. The Sudanese side argued that the restoration of diplomatic relations would hasten the implementation of the agreement and therefore the need to quickly restore the severed ties between the two countries. The two delegations set 1 March 2000 as a date for the next meeting.

As the LRA renewed attacks in northern Uganda escalated, the Carter Center realized the agreement was in jeopardy. Dr Joyce Neu, head of the conflict resolution program rushed to the region and with the assistance from the Sudan government was able to secure an agreement to meet the LRA leadership. In February 2000, Neu and her colleague Craig Withers met Joseph Kony and some senior LRA officers at their camp at Nsitu located south of Juba. Kony is said to have expressed his anger and suspicion about the role of the American Government, he mistook the Carter Center for the US government. The meeting did not discuss a specific peace agenda from LRA for inclusion in the peace process. According to Neu, Kony said he was fighting to establish democracy in Uganda, and indicated that many people in northern Uganda are bad and would only talk peace with the government. Kony was also angry with UNICEF for taking away "their" children.

⁴⁶ See, Patrick Oguru Otto, "Implementing the 1999 Nairobi Agreement", in *Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiative to end the violence in northern Uganda*, 2002, p. 52.

⁴⁷ See, "Uganda releases some 72 Sudanese prisoners", available at: <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/000111/2000011117.html> 11/5/2003.

The second ministerial meeting, which took place in March 2000, was also a very difficult one. The agreed timetable was lagging behind schedule of implementation. Both sides accused each other of lack of seriousness and commitment to the agreement. The Ugandan side insisted on the interpretation of point 11 of the agreement, which made normalization of relations' contingent upon honoring all the other terms of the agreement. The meeting ended on the second day without agreeing on the next date for the meeting. The two delegations decided to go back and seek more guidance and mandate from their respective governments. In a statement issued jointly, the delegations re-affirmed their commitment to the Nairobi peace agreement and the need to restore relations.

The new head of the Conflict Resolution Program at the Carter Center Dr Ben Hoffman worked hard to keep the peace process on track by visiting Sudan and Uganda. With the assistance of the Sudanese Government, a meeting was organized for him to meet Kony and his commanders at Nsitu. During the meeting Kony is said to have expressed anger and disappointment with the Nairobi peace process although he promised to continue engaged with the peace process. Kony also promised to confirm the Carter Center's mediation role after consultation with other leaders of the movement.

4.12 Egyptian and Libyan Mediation Roles

The Nairobi peace process generated a lot of optimism among local, regional and international actors. Key among the new actors were Libya and Egypt both with long standing interests in improving diplomatic relations and regional influence. During the Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in Lome Togo, Libya and Egypt seized the opportunity to organize a side meeting for Uganda and Sudan with a view of catalyzing the momentum to improve diplomatic relations between the two countries based on the Nairobi peace process. This meeting sought to resolve the northern Uganda conflict and the war in southern Sudan in a wider context of regional security. The net result of this meeting was a recommitment of Sudan and Uganda to establishing diplomatic ties, and the release of Aboke girls as priorities. The contact groups agreed to meet again in Kampala in late September 2000.

The Lome meeting was followed by a meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee in Atlanta, Georgia (USA) organized by the Carter Center, which took place from 18-19, July 2000. This meeting basically focused at confidence building and speeding up the momentum of the implementation of the Nairobi Peace Agreement and also to commit both the Uganda and Sudan governments to meet in Nairobi in November 2000. The Atlanta meeting was followed by another one in New York, which was organized ahead of the international conference on war affected children in Winnipeg, Canada. The meeting was convened by the Canadian government, which involved the Carter Center, the UN agencies and representatives of governments of United Kingdom, Ghana, The Netherlands, USA and Norway to discuss the plight of children abducted by the LRA. The meeting resolved to devise means of releasing children and also established a coalition known as "Partners in Support of the Abducted Children" to work towards the release of children.

4.13 The Winnipeg Conference

The International Ministerial Conference on War Affected Children was convened by the Canadian Minister for International Development supported by the Egyptian Ambassador to Canada. The conference was intended to bring together experts to discuss the plight of children in armed conflicts around the world such as those abducted by the LRA.⁴⁸ Key among the invitees were the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunu, UNICEF, the Concerned Parents Association, Women's Coalition on Refugee Women and Children, Kacoke Madit. Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief, World Vision and representatives of governments that had attended the New York meeting.

Unfortunately, the meeting started on a bad note. It was snubbed by the Carter Center, which felt that the Winnipeg meeting would jeopardize the Nairobi peace efforts. The Carter Center representative who was expected to attend the meeting had surprisingly left Winnipeg the previous day before the meeting. The absence of the Carter Center made it hard for the meeting to realize most of its objectives. Determined not to lose the opportunity generated by publicity, the Canadian and the Egyptian governments seized the

⁴⁸ See, Kathy Vandergrift, "Winnipeg Conference on War Affected Children", available at: <http://www.peacemagazine.org/0101/vander.htm> 11/5/2003.

opportunity to invite the Uganda and Sudan governments to a special meeting on 17 September 2000 which resulted in the two countries signing the Winnipeg 'Joint Communiqué on Immediate Action on Abducted Children'. One important outcome of the Winnipeg Communiqué was Uganda's commitment to engage the LRA into a peace dialogue.

On 27 September, 2000, a follow up meeting was organized in Kampala between the Sudan and Uganda governments, facilitated by Libya and Egypt. This meeting was also attended by a representative from the Carter Center. The Carter Center was now worried that the numerous and uncoordinated peace initiatives might scatter the Nairobi agreement. It therefore sought the possibility to ensure that these peace initiatives were complimentary rather than divergent or competitive. The Carter Center convened a ministerial meeting, which took place from 6-7 October 2000. The governments of Libya, Egypt, and Canada were invited as well as the Concerned Parents Association (CPA) and UNICEF. The Carter Center was able to convince the participants to bring all the initiatives under one umbrella of the Nairobi Agreement with a unified work plan. The roles of Libya, Canada and Egyptian governments were also discussed. A detailed work plan was drawn and three technical committees established. The three technical committees were to over see the re-allocation, disarmament and disbandment of the LRA/M, establishment of the SPLM/A observation team, to search and repatriate the Aboke girls and other abducted children.

Political observers have described the outcomes of this meeting as ambitious and inherently difficult to implement. The Libya and Egyptian governments committed funds to build new camps for the LRA, while the Ugandan government promised to cover the flight costs for their relocation. Other agencies came up with proposals to manage demobilization, decommissioning and resettlement of the LRA with financial support pledged by several European donors and governments. These plans alarmed the LRA, which abandoned its camp at Nsitu and moved closer to the Uganda border. The shift of the LRA camp gave an opportunity to the Sudan government to claim credit that the LRA was no longer on their territory and had stopped all links with it.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ See, "Sudan Stops Support to Ugandan Rebels: President", available at: http://fpeng.peopledaily.com.cn/200108/21eng20010821_77927.html 10/23/2003.

The Carter Center organized a follow up meeting between Sudan and Uganda in November 2000 in Nairobi, which was attended by representatives from Egypt, Canada, Libya and UNICEF. The meeting is said to have drafted a letter to Kony asking for a meeting to discuss the implementation of the Nairobi agreement. This letter was to be delivered by the Sudan government. On 24 November, 2000, a conference was held in Nairobi, which brought together the Acholi from the diaspora, civil society from northern Uganda, the governments of Uganda, Sudan and Canada, the Carter Center and UNICEF. The Carter Center in particular wanted support of the Acholi to facilitate the peace process. Several other implementation meetings were subsequently held in Nairobi. Significant among these was the one held on 2 June 2001 that was convened for the delegates from the governments of Canada, Libya and Egypt. In attendance were UNICEF, Save the Children - Denmark and the International Organization for Migration. Among the outcomes of this meeting was the decision to deploy an Observation Team from Libya and Egypt along the Sudan-Uganda border, which was never done.⁵⁰ Following this meeting Uganda and Sudan resumed diplomatic relations in August 2001 at the level of Charges de' affaires which has to date been upgraded to Ambassador level.

4.14 Presidential Peace Team

Towards the end of 2002, both the government and the LRA/M showed interest in a negotiated settlement, partly due to a hurting stalemate both on the side of the rebels and the government with neither side having been able to defeat the other militarily. But most importantly, the Acholi Religious Leader Peace Initiative (ARLPI) had presented to the president a written communication from Joseph Kony, the rebel leader, asking for peace talks.⁵¹ The president accepted Kony's offer, but warned that such efforts could only bear fruit if the rebels ceased committing atrocities, and got serious with peace talks than in the past. The government was also increasingly coming under intense pressure from the international community to end the suffering of the people in northern Uganda. President Museveni named a Presidential Peace Team (PPT) headed by Eriya Kategaya, the then First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Internal Affairs to carry on the negotiations.

⁵⁰ See, Patrick Oguru Otto, *op. cit.*, p.8.

⁵¹ See, report of the Inter-Agency Brainstorming Session on the Political Economy of Armed Conflict, p.121, 8 January 2004.

The Presidential Peace Team also included Gilbert Bukenya, then Minister for the Presidency; Lt. Gen. Salim Saleh, the Presidential Adviser on political and military affairs in northern Uganda; Betty Akech (then Minister for Higher Education); Norbert Mao, Member of Parliament (MP) for Gulu Municipality; and Reagan Okumu, MP for Aswa County. The team was later expanded to include Okello Oryem, Minister of State for Education and Sports; and Santa Okot, MP (Woman) for Pader District. In 2003 the rebels and Government declared a limited ceasefire designed to pave way for the face-to-face talks. The ceasefire lasted for a few days. In April 2003, Museveni retracted the limited ceasefire offer to the rebels and ordered resumption of a military offensive citing LRA's obstinate refusal to positively respond.⁵²

The appointment of the Presidential Peace Team was not helpful in negotiating a peaceful end to the LRA rebellion. A number of reasons were advanced as to why the PPT was not effective and useful to the peace process. First, the team seems to have been appointed to politically satisfy and deflect the international pressure on the Government without serious commitment. Members of the peace team that the researchers talked to, indicated that they lacked an operational budget and other logistical support.⁵³ Secondly, the chairperson of the peace team has since been sacked in a reshuffle seen by political observers as a punishment for his strong views against the government's desire to amend the constitution to allow President Museveni run for a third presidential term.⁵⁴ This further crippled the PPT since the government has never openly replaced Eriya Kategaya as the head of the peace team. On the other hand, the rebels have not helped the situation either. They have refused to name their own peace team, which leaves the government team with no negotiating partner. The failure by the LRA to name its team confirms the government's suspicion that the former is not interested in peace talks. Despite these positive signs, the LRA continued its vicious attacks on innocent civilians and military targets in Kitgum, Gulu, and Pader and recently in Lira and Soroti districts.

⁵² See, "Peace efforts", available at: http://www.irinnews.org/webspecials/uga_crisis/peace.asp 11/6/2003.

⁵³ Interview with a member of the Presidential Peace Team in Gulu, January, 2003.

⁵⁴ See, Monitor Story, "Spy boss backs 3rd term", available at: <http://www.monitor.co.ug/news/news1.php>

4.15 The Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative

The Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) is a recent initiative borne out of the frustrations and the devastating effect of the LRA/M war. In 1997, the religious leaders formalized their cooperation by setting up the ARLPI to facilitate peace efforts by linking rebels to government. They have since then embarked on a series of advocacy campaigns for a peaceful resolution of this conflict. They have also advocated vigorously for a comprehensive amnesty law intended to promote reconciliation, forgiveness and healing in the community. The ARLPI is credited to have opened up links with the rebels convincing them to consider negotiations with government.

The chairman of ARLPI Archbishop Baptist Odama is known to have held several daring meeting with Kony's second in command, Vincent Otti, to convince him to opt for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.⁵⁵ As a strategy to create synergies, ARLPI has established links with other peace organizations such as Kacoke Madit, and Human Rights Focus, Gulu. ARLPI has also offered to work with the Presidential Peace Team in search of a peaceful resolution of this conflict. Together with the Presidential Peace Team, they convinced the government to create a safe haven for the LRA forces to assemble while negotiations were in progress. The rebels rejected the government designated area since it would amount to surrender and they also feared that without security guarantees they could be attacked. ARLPI has also been able to raise international awareness about the effects of the war through their reports, media campaigns and participating in international meetings, and conferences.

Despite the impressive work that the ARLPI is doing, it faces a number of constraints. First, there is still mistrust of its intentions and government views its contact with rebels with suspicion.⁵⁶ On the other hand, the rebels also view ARLPI peace efforts with suspicion, thinking they are proxies of the government aimed at exposing them for attack. In fact, the rebels have singled out the Catholic Church, whose workers have been attacked on several occasions. In addition, the ARLPI has not brought on board other religious leaders from other parts of the country so as to build a national constituency and

⁵⁵ Focused Group Discussion held in Gulu, January 3, 2004.

⁵⁶ See, " Report of the Inter-Agency Brainstorming Session on the Political Economy of Armed Conflicts", p. 117, 8 January 2004.

momentum to bear on parties to conflict. In fact the ARLPI has established more external contacts and support than from within. There is a need for both internal and external pressure to bear on the government and the LRM/A rebels.

4.16 The District Peace Teams

District Peace Teams (DPT) were established soon after the government enacted the amnesty law of 2000, to support conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. The formation of the Joint Forum for Peace (JFP) was one of the first attempts by the District Peace Teams to engage in the search for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. JFP brought together civil society groups, traditional and religious leaders, and local government officials. This was followed by the formation of the District Reconciliation Peace Team (DRPT) in Gulu District, which included a multiplicity of actors such as civil society, religious and traditional leaders, politicians and government officials as well as sub-county and Gulu municipality division representatives. The DRPT's activities have involved coordinating district peace initiatives, receiving back former combatants who surrender under the amnesty law and re-integrating them into the community. The DRPT has also tried to create awareness about the amnesty law in the community by use of radio programmes such that the rebels may understand it and take advantage of it. The socialization of the amnesty law has involved translating it into Luo and printing it for distribution in the community.

While the work of the District Reconciliation Peace Teams has been useful, its effectiveness has been hindered by politicization of their work. Most people in the war-affected districts have viewed the work of the DRPT as that of people trying to gain political capital for themselves,⁵⁷ which has undermined its effectiveness. Most political observers have wondered why the LRA/M has persisted for such a long time (17 years) without either facing a military defeat like its predecessors or induced into a negotiated settlement. The next section discusses why the conflict in northern Uganda has deepened and defied attempts at conflict resolution. It examines the reasons why the various peace initiatives failed to deliver peace to northern Uganda.

⁵⁷ Focused Group Discussion meeting, January 3, 2004.

5

THE UNENDING LRA REBELLION

5.0 Reasons for the continuation of the LRA rebellion

This section critically assesses the reasons that have protracted and prolonged the rebellion in Northern Uganda defying both the military and peaceful means of conflict resolution. Political analysts have put forward a number of reasons that explain why the LRA/M rebellion has defied all means aimed at resolving it.

5.1 Sudan Factor

The war in Northern Uganda is closely linked to the war in southern Sudan between the Sudan government and SPLA/M, which has been raging since 1983. Sudan accuses Uganda government of supporting SPLA/M and in retaliation chose to train and arm the LRA/M rebels⁵⁸ as well as propping up the Allied Democratic Forces another rebel force that was active in the southwestern Uganda. Sudan has also used the LRA to fight against the SPLA in return for a base, arms and other logistics. For instance the LRA helped Sudan to re-capture the Sudanese garrison town of Torit from SPLM/A in October 2002.⁵⁹ Commenting on the support of Sudan to the LRA, The International Crisis Group in its April 2004 report noted:

Sudan has been central to the LRA's survival. When it is under serious pressure it has been able to retreat safely to Southern Sudanese rear bases to recuperate and rearm. The LRA has stockpiled weapons it has received from Sudan against the contingency of a cut-off. Sudan has also provided medicine and food. Despite the agreement with Uganda, Sudan continues to support the LRA from bases near Torit and Juba, which it claims are refugee camps.⁶⁰

In the case of Uganda, President Museveni has not hidden his feelings for the cause of liberation of the people of southern Sudan against Arabization and imposition of Sharia law by the Islamic government in Khartoum. Because of the spillover effect and mutual reinforcing nature of the two conflicts and increased gun trafficking across the porous borders, it becomes hard to end the LRA conflict without

⁵⁸ See, "Sudanese army rearming Ugandan rebels, religious leaders claim", available at: <http://www.sudan.net/news/posted/6841.html> 8/21/2003.

⁵⁹ See, "Northern Uganda: Understanding and Solving the Conflict", International Crisis Group, 14 April 2004, p.7.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

addressing the regional dimensions, which have to do with the war in southern Sudan. The LRA's military survival has been dependent on the support from Sudan. If Sudan stopped its support, it is most likely, that the LRA would be forced to talk peace rather than risk military defeat.

5.1.1 Lack of Political Leadership

One of the obstacles to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in northern Uganda is the LRA's lack of political leadership to negotiate with⁶¹ which could commit the military wing to a negotiated settlement. Mediators like the Carter Center and the Community of Sant'Egidio have found it difficult to proceed with the peace process without leaders to talk to. While there have been occasions where mediators have met Kony to discuss ways of ending the conflict, he has largely been illusive and they never got him to commit himself to anything. This can be explained in terms of lack of negotiation skills and proper articulation of the causes of the conflict. In the past, some Acholi politicians in the diaspora came up to claim political leadership, speaking and acting on behalf of the LRA/M only to be denounced as impostors by the armed wing. A case in point is Dr James Alfred Obita, who became a spokesman for the LRA and even initiated peace talks with government mediated by Sant'Egidio, which took place in Rome in May 1997 as we have shown above. He was subsequently arrested and sentenced to death on the allegation that he had overstepped his mandate although he was later released.⁶² It is also believed that because of the brutality and gross violation of human rights, most Acholi elites who initially sympathized with the LRA cause, chose to distance themselves from it. What made matters worse is that after the 11 September, 2001, terrorist attacks on the US, the LRA was listed as a terrorist organization. This declaration and isolation angered the LRA, who feel betrayed by the Acholi community, especially the elders who earlier encouraged and supported the war only to later turn against it.

5.1.2 Acholi Ethnic Identity Question

Most political observers have come to agree that the LRA rebellion has survived longer because it enjoys widespread support of the

⁶¹ See, Mary Okurut Karoro, "Konyism will go the way nazism went", available at Website: <http://www.monitor.co.ug/oped/oped2.php>

⁶² James Obita, "First international peace efforts 1996-1998", in Okello Lucima (ed.), *Protracted conflict, elusive peace: initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda*, 2002, p.42.

Acholi. This is corroborated by the interviews with the LRA/M leader Kony who accuses the elders of betrayal and collaboration with government when it is they that had initially encouraged and blessed the rebellion. The State Minister for Security Betty Akech, an Acholi herself revealed that some Acholi support the rebels to the extent of urging their surrendering children to go back to the bush.⁶³ One also needs to understand the warrior tradition of the Acholi as created by the colonial history of Uganda and how these two factors relate to and have influenced the 17-year-old war. At the heart of the LRA rebellion lies the struggle for the survival of Acholi identity and pride.

The Acholi have a military tradition of no surrender and if surrender was the last option, it should never be done on their territory. The Acholi dominated the Uganda military terrain since colonial times to the time this conflict broke out, a history that gave them a sense of pride and importance as a people. Most political observers have pointed out that Kony is to the majority section of the Acholi people, a symbol of Acholi pride and bravery.⁶⁴ That is even why most the Acholi politicians, religious and cultural leaders have found it difficult to condemn Kony and his atrocities. The Acholi war tradition and ethnic pride argument seem to hold water if one considers the fact that the LRA has indicated that they favor peace negotiations rather than coming out under the amnesty law, which to them amounts to defeat and surrender.

5.1.3 The National Resistance Movement Political Ideology

On the other hand, one needs to understand why the NRM Government has not invested a lot of time and resources in talking peace with the LRA. To a large extent, the government views the LRA/M as a continuation of the old political order, that it overthrew in 1986. Because of this, the government's approach has been to militarily defeat the LRA. This approach seems to influence President Museveni's attitude to the negotiated settlement with the rebels. To Museveni, the NRM/A revolution is supposed to be a total victory over the old order and therefore bent on defeating Kony militarily. This can be confirmed by Museveni's speech at his swearing in ceremony in 1986.

⁶³ John Eremu, "Acholi support Kony-Akech", available at Web site: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/detail.php?mainNewsCategoryId=12&ne>.

⁶⁴ Joe Nam, "Help Acholi rediscover themselves", available at Website: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/detail.php?mainNewsCategoryId=9&newsCategoryId=39&ne>

He said: “No one should think that what is happening today is a mere change of guard: it is a fundamental change in the politics of our country”.⁶⁵ Hence the government has always used the carrot and stick approach; negotiations and military. The military option, which unfortunately has failed to defeat the rebels coupled with lack of commitment to a negotiated settlement on both parties has prolonged the LRA rebellion.

5.1.4 UPDF’s Operational and Professional Weaknesses

The longevity of the LRA rebellion has a lot to do with the army’s operational and professional problems. These weaknesses are part of the reasons the army has not been able to deliver a decisive military defeat to the LRA. The president himself has come out to blame the failure to end the rebellion on the weaknesses within the army. These weaknesses stem from lack of a clear and counter-insurgency military strategy⁶⁶ and logistical support for the zonal forces. During the presidential campaigns in 2001, President Museveni promised to among other things professionalize the army in his last term of office. Corruption within the army has been the most shocking phenomenon, which has largely hampered its effectiveness. It is said that corruption and mismanagement alone consume approximately a quarter of the defence budget. The types of corruption vary widely and include: low level theft, creation of ghost or none existent soldiers whose pay is pocketed by paymasters and commanders, acquisition of faulty military equipment including helicopters and tanks. The recent reorganization of the command structure and improved management and funding of military operations in northern Uganda have led to major victories against the LRA. The recent military successes by UPDF against the rebels have raised hopes that the LRA may soon be routed.

5.1.5 An Acholi War

To most Ugandans, the LRA rebellion is an Acholi war, localized and therefore an Acholi affair. It is largely seen as a tribal war aimed at advancing narrow ethnic interests of the Acholi. And as long as it remained contained in the Acholi sub-region, the rest of the country may not bother. The failure of the LRA/M leaders to present the causes of the conflict as national issues coupled with its high level of brutality against innocent people has alienated the rebellion from the

⁶⁵ Yoweri K. Museveni, “What is Africa’s Problem 2000?” p. 3.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 14.

rest of the country. If the rebellion had a national appeal or was not limited to Acholi land, it would have generated political pressure to force both the rebels and government to the negotiating table. Besides, the LRA's evolution from the former defeated national army, blamed by most people in the South for their ruthlessness and brutality especially in the Luwero Triangle as they battled the NRA rebels makes it hard to gain national sympathy. As such ending the LRA rebellion has not been a serious election issue in other parts of the country to compel the government to invest in a peaceful settlement. In fact, the fear of the LRA brutality spreading southwards has always aided the NRM Government to win elections in southern Uganda. The memories of past brutal actions committed by the former government forces who are associated with LRA rebels still send shocks waves through the civilian population. The recent incursions into Lira and Soroti districts is largely interpreted as an attempt by the LRA to make their war a national issue so that the population either resent the government or pressurize it to negotiate with them.

5.1.6 Economic Agendas

Some security analysts have argued that the LRA rebellion has become prolonged and sustained because of the economic agendas designed by the rebels and some errant government soldiers. Scholars and security analysts are increasingly challenging the economic agendas argument in civil wars, contending that the argument does not provide a complete explanation why violent civil wars break out and become protracted. This analysis is convincing in a sense that rebellions cannot simply break out in order for the rebel leaders to capture lootable resources and maximize economic benefit. In most cases, there exist serious grievances that motivate rebel leaders to engage in civil wars at a risk of losing their lives. In spite of the arguments raised above, the economic agendas dimension in civil wars remains a valid and relevant argument and possible explanation in the analysis of most contemporary civil wars going on in the third world countries and in particularly in respect to the LRA rebellion. Scholars such as Berdal and Malone have argued convincingly that:

Conflict can create war economies, often in the regions controlled by rebels or warlords and linked to the international trading networks; members of the armed gangs can benefit from looting; and regimes can use violence to deflect opposition.... Under these circumstances, ending civil wars becomes difficult.

Winning may not be desirable: the point of war may be precisely the legitimacy, which it confers on actions that in peacetime would be punishable as crimes.⁶⁷

The LRA rebellion has become a lucrative business including looting and plunder by both the rebels and some errant government military officers to accumulate wealth.⁶⁸ This argument is supported by Walter Ochora; Chairman, Gulu District who observed that Kony has gone too far to negotiate or surrender. Ochora observes that: "Kony as a person, unless he is cornered will never accept to talk. Some of his commanders may come out, but what he is doing now has become a way of life. If he comes out he knows he will not wield the kind of power he has now".⁶⁹ As such the willingness to defeat the rebels on the part of the army has been lacking to the extent that some of the soldiers have been known to be involved in the embezzlement of operation funds and gun trafficking. The need to prolong the civil wars and enjoy the war economies by both the rebels and some army officers can explain why all the peace initiatives have failed to deliver peace to northern Uganda.⁷⁰

5.1.7 LRA Mistrust of Museveni

The LRA mistrusts President Museveni's commitment to any peace agreement. This mistrust is based on the failed 1985 Nairobi Peace Accord between the Okello military junta and the NRM/A brokered by Daniel arap Moi, then Kenya's president. Despite the agreement, the NRA/M went ahead to overthrow the Okello government, which to most Acholi was a slap in the face and termination of their rise to national leadership. For this matter, Museveni is seen as a person who cannot be trusted. The rebels argue that Museveni understands one language; the gun.

In order for meaningful peace negotiations to take place, parties at conflict must be facilitated to develop a reasonable level of trust.⁷¹ Because of mistrust, it is pertinent that any future negotiations with the LRA should bring in a trusted third party with the necessary

⁶⁷ Mats Berdal and David M. Malone, "Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars", 2000, p.6.

⁶⁸ John Eremu, " Acholi support Kony- Akech", available at: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/detail.php?mainNewsCategory1d=8&newsCategory1d=12&ne...> 9/5/2003.

⁶⁹ See, " Crisis in northern Uganda", available at: http://www.irinnews.org/webspecials/uga_crisis/peace.asp 11/6/2003.

⁷⁰ See, " Northern Uganda: Understanding and Solving the Conflict", International Crisis Group, 14 April 2004, p. 17.

⁷¹ Peter Harris and Ben Reilly (eds.), "Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators", 1998, p 63-64.

leverage over the rebels and government capable of enticing and exerting sanctions on either party in case of breaches.

5.1.8 LRA's Spirituality and Coerciveness

In attempting to understand why the LRA rebellion has lasted for such a long time, one needs to underpin the role of spirituality and its coercive techniques. The LRA's abductees are subjected to spiritual indoctrination as part of the military training including threats of death should one be caught trying to escape. Most LRA combatants believe that their leader Joseph Kony has super natural powers and would even know their thoughts. This maintains cohesion and loyalty among the rank and file of the LRA. Spirituality has therefore played a big role in prolonging and sustaining the LRA rebellion for 17 years now.

6

RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Policy Options and Recommendations

The people of northern Uganda have suffered for far too long. There is an urgent need for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The next section discusses policy options and recommendations for conflict transformation. A bottom up approach or peace building from below is recommended. For quite some time efforts to end this rebellion have been dominated by combatants and sidelined the main victims: women, youth and children. This approach seeks to mainstream the main victims in conflict resolution and peace building processes. This would ensure that their needs, values and interests are mainstreamed in the final peace settlement. Besides increased stake of women, youths and children in the peace settlement reduces the power of the warlords and creates conditions for an enduring peace.

6.1 Implementation of the 1999 Nairobi Agreement

There is a need to revisit and speed up the implementation of the 1999 Nairobi agreement signed between Uganda and Sudan, which was largely comprehensive. This agreement could be further renegotiated to bring on board the LRA/M since the major weakness of this agreement was that it excluded the LRA. The implementation of this agreement especially with Sudan severing its relationship with Kony or using its leverage to bring the LRA to the negotiating table would greatly increase the opportunities for a peaceful settlement or military defeat of the LRA.

6.2 The Need to make LRA Rebellion a National and International Problem

The LRA rebellion has largely been wrongly perceived by majority Ugandans as an Acholi war and has therefore not actively worked as one political community to end it. This conflict has had far reaching socio-economic and political implications for the entire country. A study done by Ms Uganda, a Danish non-governmental organization, the war in northern Uganda cost the country \$ 26 million or 10 per cent of the country's economic out put (GDP).⁷² There is a need for all Ugandans

⁷² See, Crespo Sebunya, "Catholics, NGOs Rally to end War in Northern Uganda", available at: <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/peace/2002/1108uganda.htm>, November 8, 2002.

to recognize that this conflict is not an Acholi affair but rather a Uganda affair that requires the participation of every body to resolve it, rather than leaving it to the Acholi and the rebels. Deliberate efforts should be made to make the LRA rebellion a national issue so as galvanize a national and international momentum, and resources to resolve the conflict. There is a need to create national and international awareness and consciousness to foster and support peace efforts in northern Uganda.

6.3 Coordinate, Harmonize and Scale up Peace Initiatives

There is a need to coordinate all the on-going peace initiatives to avoid overlap, duplication and the possibility of competition, among mediators, which could undermine their energies. This argument is supported by Crocker and others who observe: “international response to conflict often entails multiple mediators as well as third-party actors... Such a profusion of actors has often made peacemaking efforts messy, difficult, and even chaotic.”⁷³ In the past there have been parallel peace processes such as the one that was being mediated by the Community of Sant’Egidio and by the Equatorial Civic Fund based in Kenya without the knowledge of the existence of each other. This leads to confusion, duplication and collapse of the entire peace processes. The multiplicity of several actors, sometimes with conflicting agendas adversely constrain peace making and ultimately prolong the conflicts such as has been the case with the LRA.

6.4 Build the Capacity of LRA to Negotiate

One of the reasons identified for prolonging the conflict in northern Uganda is lack of political leadership by the LRA/M, which can articulate its grievances and engage with government in frank negotiations. It is important to note that LRA/M has a leadership that fears to be associated with a blacklisted “terrorist organization”. There is a need to decriminalize and humanize the LRA/M and assist it to transform leadership. The assistance could include provision of funds and basic needs like was the case with the Renamo in Mozambique so that its leaders can be free to come out openly and negotiate a peaceful settlement.⁷⁴ On several occasions, the government has indicated that

⁷³ Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson and Pamela Aall (eds.), *Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World*, 1999, p.4.

⁷⁴ See, Aldo Ajello, “Mozambique: Implementation of the 1992 Peace Agreement”, in *Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World*, 1999, p.637.

it has a list of names of LRA collaborators, which it never publishes. It is high time collaborators are named, if such an act, can make them free to reveal the LRA grievances and also engage in useful negotiations.

6.5 Harmonize the Amnesty Law, Terrorist Act and International Criminal Court

The LRA is classified by both the Uganda and the US governments as a terrorist organization and accordingly its members are likely to face tougher penalties if convicted under the Terrorist Act in Uganda or in the United States. On the other hand, the amnesty law in Uganda pardons all those people who have been involved in treasonable activities



*Ugandan Paliament in Session:- The Parliament needs to scale up its role in the search for Peace in Northern Uganda
Photo: Curtesy of the Public Relations Office*

upon surrender. The Terrorist Act and the Amnesty Law are at conflict in Uganda and send unclear messages to the rebels. The LRA leaders need to be sure that they will not be handed over to the US if the Uganda government pardons them. As such, there is a need for government and the Amnesty Commission to come out clearly and clarify the relationship between the amnesty law, Terrorist Act and now the investigations by the International Criminal Court (ICC) into human right crimes committed by the LRA. During this research, it was established that the majority of the LRA fighters have been denied information about the amnesty law by their top commanders. To this end, there is a need to carry out awareness campaigns in northern Uganda about this law so that the rebels can understand it and take advantage of it.

6.6 Isolate Warlords who Profit from the War and Create Disincentives for Violence and Incentives for Peace

War creates warlords and clientele relationships, which always work against conflict resolution. In this particular war, there is a need to punish army officers who have profited from the war. At the same time deliberate efforts should be made to isolate warlords among the LRA and empower those commanders who want peace to negotiate for a peaceful end of the conflict. Efforts could be made to increase incentives for peace and create disincentives for violence by reducing benefits of violence through freezing LRA's bank accounts, proxy businesses and provision of development and jobs for the rebels that reach out for peace.⁷⁵ Deliberate attempts could also be made to create divisions within the LRA military leadership to undermine Kony's control over his commanders. Creating new parallel leadership structures and new opportunities for the top LRA commanders including guaranteeing their security once they decide to defect, could lead to Kony's removal from power and pave way for serious peace negotiations with government or surrender.

6.7 Initiate a Marshall Plan for Northern Uganda

There is a need to urgently address the conditions that breed war in northern Uganda. These include poverty, unemployment for youths, and lack of education. A Marshall plan to reconstruct the region should be developed with the participation of the people aimed at poverty reduction, reconciliation, rehabilitation, Universal Primary Education, technical education for older children, disarmament and re-integration of former combatants. This post-conflict reconstruction and development assistance should be targeted giving specific attention to the victims of the war; women, youths and children. A quick recovery among children and youths would reduce conditions for a resumption of the rebellion denying it voluntary recruits. This does not suggest discrimination of former combatants from other categories.

6.8 Support the Sudan Peace Process and Commit Sudan's New Position on LRA

The war in northern Uganda is closely linked to the war in southern Sudan since Sudan arms and trains the LRA in order for it to fight the

⁷⁵ See, David Keen, Incentives and Disincentives for Violence, in Mats Berdal and David M. Malone, *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, 2000, p.37.

SPLA. The successful completion of the Sudan peace process would ultimately lead to the end of the LRA rebellion since it would end their supplies and deny them rear bases and thus force it to talk peace. For that matter there is a need for the international community to support the Sudan peace process to succeed. Sudan should be pressured to cease all support to the LRA and to prevail over Kony to take advantage of the government's offer for negotiations.

6.9 Build Confidence Between the Acholi Community and Government

The Acholi community should deliberately work to improve its relationship with government. This can be done by creating a single authoritative body to present a unified Acholi view on the conflict and should also be ready to condemn the LRA atrocities the same way some sections have criticized the government. At the same time the government should work on confidence building among the local populations and the Acholi political elites. Confidence building measures apart from public dialogues should be accompanied by tangible development work in the region. All antagonistic military and political leaders should be transferred from the region. The government also needs to revamp the Presidential Peace Team and give them the necessary authority and facilitation to do a good job.

6.10 United States Support

The US government should keep up the pressure on the Sudanese Government to stop all the support it gives the LRA. The US also needs to maintain its leverage on Uganda government to keep the door for negotiations with the LRA open. Further, the US through its Northern Uganda Peace Initiative (NUPI) should support the work of local civil society organizations working on issues of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

6.11 Make the Peace Processes more Inclusive and Comprehensive

One of the shortcomings of the peace initiatives is lack of inclusiveness. The negotiations have tended to live out important actors who disown the agreements and continue fighting. A case in point is the Nairobi Peace Agreement signed between the Uganda and Sudan governments without involving the LRA but demanding its compliance. The LRA does not respect this agreement and has worked to frustrate it. The future peace initiatives should try as much as possible to bring all the

actors on board while avoiding rushing the process for a quick agreement in order to make it comprehensive necessary for it to stand a test of time.

6.12 Government of Uganda should Open Political Space and Deepen Democracy

It ought to be understood that part of the explanation for the LRA rebellion is found in Uganda's history of political exclusion or the principle of the winner takes it all. This perpetually makes the state in Uganda contestable and has trapped the country in political violence. This cycle needs to be broken by government opening up the political space for democratic political competition. This should be complemented by a government led national reconciliation.

6.13 Conclusion

The war in northern Uganda has had far reaching consequences on the socio-economic and political development of Uganda. This conflict has killed hundreds and internally displaced over 1.5 million people in Kitgum, Pader, and Gulu and most recently in Lira and Soroti districts. After seventeen years of fighting, it has become apparent that neither the Government nor the LRA can claim outright military victory. Its regional dimension of a proxy war between Uganda and Sudan makes it hard to resolve and is a threat to national and regional peace and security. This study has documented all the peace processes that have been attempted to resolve the conflict, giving reasons for their failure and has provided recommendations and policy options. It is hoped that this study will form a strong foundation for actors in finding a peaceful resolution to the LRA rebellion.

List of Acronyms

ACODE	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ARLPI	Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative
CPA	Concerned Parent's Association
DPT	District Peace Teams
DRPT	District Reconciliation Peace Team
ECF	Equatorial Civic Fund
FEDEMU	Federal Democratic Movement of Uganda
FUNA	Former Uganda National Army
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
ICC	International Criminal Court
JFP	Joint Forum for Peace
KAR	King's African Rifles
LRA/M	Lords Resistance Army/Movement
MACOMBA	Makerere University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, ACODE and the University of Bradford (UK) Partnership for peace
MP	Member of Parliament
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRM	National Resistance Movement
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PPT	Presidential Peace Team
SAF	Sudan Armed Forces
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
UFM	Uganda Freedom Movement
UNAU	United Nations Association of Uganda
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UPDF	Uganda People's Defense Forces
UPDM/A	Uganda People's Democratic Movement/Army

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"This impressive publication provides a comprehensive, panoramic view of the failed peace processes in the Northern Uganda Conflict and offers interesting and useful perspectives on the root causes of the conflict. It also provides an insightful assessment of the reasons for the protractedness of the conflict and offers some plausible solutions for a possible break through in the peace process. A must read for peace studies students, NGO practitioners, and policy makers." . . . Dr. Pamela Mbabazi, Dean of Faculty of Development Studies, Mbarara University of Science & Technology.



A peaceful resolution of the LRA rebellion could restore hope to the children

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