

Accord

Protracted conflict, elusive peace

**Initiatives to end the
violence in northern Uganda**

Issue Editor: Okello Lucima

Conciliation Resources in collaboration with Kacoke Madit

London 2002

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Introduction

Catherine Barnes and Okello Lucima

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Since 1986, violent conflict has gripped the sub-region of northern Uganda, referred to locally as Acholi or Acholiland. The war has resulted in countless deaths, the abduction of almost 10,000 children, widespread human rights violations, the destruction of social and economic infrastructure, and displacement of over half the population – many of whom live in life-threatening conditions in 'protected villages'.

While most Ugandans south of the Nile have enjoyed greater levels of security and prosperity as a result of relative peace since the National Resistance Movement / Army (NRM/A) came to power in 1986, the war in Acholiland defies this trend. To bring peace and development to Acholiland it will be necessary to understand why the war has been so persistent and why efforts to end it through both peaceful and military means have not yet been successful. Drawing on authors with first-hand knowledge, this edition of *Accord*, which largely reflects an Acholi-centred perspective, explores the history of the conflict, provides insight into the main parties involved, documents key peace initiatives, analyses some of the cross-cutting issues and puts into the public arena various key agreements and texts. These should serve as a resource for reflection and learning to those currently seeking to promote peace in Acholiland and elsewhere in Uganda, as well as for those working on conflicts with comparable dynamics elsewhere in the world.

Understanding the conflict in the north

Those seeking to understand the sources and dynamics of the conflict in Acholiland need to examine: (a) its local, national and international arenas; (b) the perspectives and motivations of key protagonists; and (c) how these factors have changed over time. The articles by Ogenga Otunnu and Balam Nyeko provide insight into these issues.



At the national level, the war in Acholiland is rooted in Uganda's challenge of developing a legitimate system of governance that promotes the collective aspirations of its plural society. Political conflict – historically organised along ethnic, regional, and religious lines – has repeatedly undermined Uganda's 'nation building' project. From the beginning of Idi Amin's rule in 1971 onwards, control of the government was gained and maintained through the use of violence against opponents. The conflict in Acholiland began soon after Uganda's last regime change in January 1986, when the NRM/A took power after five years of insurgency by overthrowing a military government led by Tito Okello Lutwa, a general from Acholi. It was triggered by the NRM's methods for consolidating control over the northern parts of the country.

Within Acholiland, there were divergent response to the new NRM government. The newly victorious army was comprised of poorly integrated units, some disciplined and others bent on revenge. While there was an initial period of relative peace, some army units were responsible for instances of excessive force, extra-judicial killings and other gross human rights violations. As violence against civilians escalated, many turned toward armed struggle. This resistance eventually developed into two distinct though overlapping movements. The first was the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDM/A). Led by former soldiers and politicians, it proclaimed the goal of restoring multiparty democracy in Uganda. The second was the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) and the Holy Spirit Mobile Force (HSMF) led by the charismatic figure of Alice Auma 'Lakwená', who claimed to possess supernatural powers and aimed to spiritually 'cleanse' the

Acholi people. The Holy Spirit Movement attracted tens of thousands. After a number of victories, it suffered a major defeat in late 1987. The next year the NRM concluded a settlement with the mainstream of the UPDM/A, ending one phase of the war. Yet factions of the HSM continued their struggle and were joined by the disaffected remnants of UPDA soldiers. They eventually became the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) under Joseph Kony's leadership. This movement has proved remarkably durable and resistant to military defeat. Their operations have been directed as much against the civilian population as against government targets. Under this intense pressure, Acholi society has fractured. Reuniting the community has therefore been an essential component of peacebuilding efforts.

A third dimension of the conflict is its intersection with other conflicts in the region. Although the causes of the wars in northern Uganda and southern Sudan are distinct and unrelated, they have become interlinked over time. From 1994 until recently, the Sudanese government backed the LRA, at least in part in retaliation for Uganda's support of the southern Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA). Key diplomatic initiatives in recent years, including those led by The Carter Center, focused on intergovernmental relations with mixed results. In November 2001 the LRA was proscribed as an international terrorist organisation by the US State Department, thus adding another geopolitical dimension to the war.

Negotiation initiatives

Bethuel Kiplagat describes the Kenyan efforts in 1985 to mediate an accommodation between the armed factions that resulted in the first Nairobi Agreement. This agreement could have marked a historical turning point for a political settlement based on power-sharing but the process was unable to forge a binding commitment to its implementation. In less than a month, Museveni's forces had seized the capital. For some, this gave rise to a profound mistrust of Museveni and his commitment to his agreements - a persistent theme of his opponents ever since.

Caroline Lamwaka describes the government negotiations with the UPDM/A that led to the partially successful 1988 Peace Agreement, signed in Gulu - which involved the integration of fighters into the NRA - and later talks with the external opposition UPDM politicians that resulted in the 1990 Addis Accord. Initial attempts at that time to negotiate with Kony's group were quickly abandoned. By negotiating a 'separate peace' with representatives of one faction of one armed group at a time, the NRM successfully incorporated different

elements of its opposition - a strategy it deployed in much of the country. Yet despite the subsequent concerted counter-insurgency tactics employed by the Ugandan army - with horrific human costs - the LRA's resistance persevered. In late 1993 and early 1994, the Minister for Northern Uganda Betty Bigombe made contact and initiated direct talks with the LRA. Billie O'Kadameri describes how close they came to reaching a settlement and how efforts ended abruptly when Museveni issued an ultimatum to surrender to the LRA. While the reasons for the breakdown of negotiations remain disputed, it is clear that shortly after Museveni's ultimatum - if not before - the LRA obtained Sudanese military backing, and the war resumed with renewed intensity amidst deepened mistrust.

A number of unofficial peacemaking efforts emerged in 1997 to draw the government and the LRA into peace talks. First were the efforts of Acholi in the diaspora, who converged in London at the first Kacoke Madit (a 'big meeting' of Acholi). They convened representatives of civil society, the government and the LRA to discuss the conflict and its human costs. Following the conference there was increased international interest in the humanitarian situation. James Obita describes two parallel initiatives launched by the Community Sant'Egidio and the Equatoria Civic Fund to facilitate dialogue involving the LRA and its external political wing with government representatives. Although these talks initially appeared promising, LRA infighting led to the closure of these avenues of contact and yet more attempts at a negotiated settlement ended in failure.

In 1998 The Carter Center embarked on an initiative to normalise relations between the governments of Uganda and Sudan and, by extension, to address the cross-border conflicts. Joyce Neu describes the talks between the governments that resulted in the December 1999 Nairobi Agreement and their unsuccessful efforts to involve Kony and the SPLA's John Garang in the process. Patrick Otto discusses efforts to implement the agreement and some of its paradoxical consequences. Provisions in the agreement to 'disarm and disband' the LRA - coupled with delays in communicating the agreement to Kony - apparently sparked renewed LRA attacks. The Carter Center made subsequent efforts to facilitate the implementation of the agreement amidst a proliferation of separate initiatives by other governments eager to contribute to the peace efforts. Yet the process thus far has demonstrated that reaching a bilateral agreement between the governments is only one aspect of the greater challenge of developing a process which incorporates the concerns of all those affected by the conflict.



Rosalba Oywa meeting with a self-help women's group in Gulu

Source: Robert Maletta

Civil society peacebuilding

The war has tended to be marginalised by some as an 'Acholi problem'. The sixteen years of unresolved conflict are testament to the fact that insufficient political will and resources have been devoted to the situation. Not surprisingly, some of the most persistent voices for peace have been heard from those most affected by the violence. A number of authors describe Ugandan civil society initiatives to resolve the conflict and ameliorate its consequences. Father Carlos Rodriguez describes the role of religious leaders in promoting peace and reconciliation. Rosalba Oywa explores the roles played by women and women's groups both in the war and in the search for peace. Caesar Poblacks describes the diaspora's efforts to build a consensus for peace through the ongoing Kacoke Madit - an effort that runs counter to the general observation that diaspora communities tend to side with combatant anti-government groups and adopt extreme positions. Over time all these initiatives and others have helped to consolidate a 'constituency for peace' in the north.

Humanitarianism, justice and reconciliation

The war in Acholiland is perhaps most notorious for the LRA's abduction of thousands of children. While concern about this problem has attracted additional resources to address the humanitarian situation, it has also generated new dilemmas. Chris Dolan questions whether the humanitarian agencies have prioritised concern for LRA abductees over concern for the well-being of all the children and war-affected population who have suffered the excesses of all parties to the conflict. He also wonders whether these humanitarian responses have supplanted the need to settle the conflict itself.

Though Acholi civilians have been the principle targets of violence, the awareness that many LRA fighters were abducted forcibly from the community has given aspirations for justice and reconciliation a special poignancy. Barney Afako explores some of the dilemmas of community-led reconciliation vis-à-vis retributive justice. The government responded to calls from Acholi civil society to offer a comprehensive amnesty to encourage fighters to return home, underpinned by faith in the capacity of the community to manage effective reconciliation.



Part of the 128 LRA rebel captives rescued by the SPLA after they overran Kony's camp at Palotaka on 26 October 1995

Source: Otim Lucina

Dilemmas and challenges for peacemaking in northern Uganda

A number of cross-cutting issues emerge from the study of the various initiatives to end the war through a negotiated settlement:

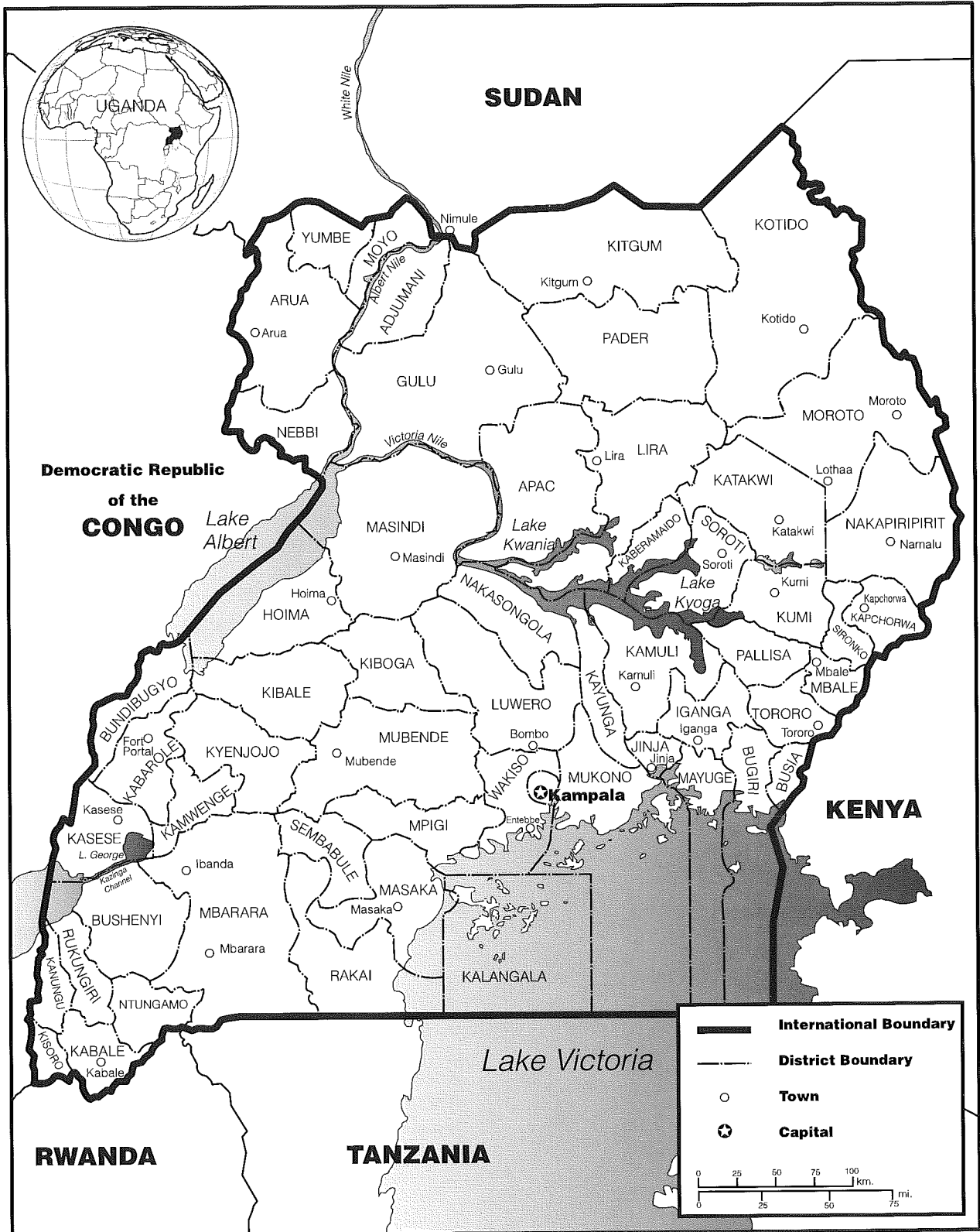
Lack of engagement between the government and the LRA: One theme that emerges consistently is the perceived reluctance of both the government of Uganda and the LRA to engage with one another in political dialogue. The often-articulated government view is that the LRA lack comprehensive political objectives and therefore are 'common criminals'. While his external sympathisers in the LRM have periodically issued political manifestos, Kony and his commanders have consistently focused on describing the spiritual ideology of their movement and what they see as the historical causes of the conflict. Exacerbating this situation are barriers caused both by limited channels for communication between the senior leaders and the difficulties in developing enough empathy and common language to bridge the worldviews of the protagonists. Unless some way can be found to cross these divides, the conflict is likely to resist a negotiated settlement.

Trust and confidence: Breakdowns in earlier negotiation processes and the failure to fully implement agreements appear to have contributed to the conflict and made subsequent initiatives more difficult. Furthermore, the

consequent mistrust has impaired wider relations between the Acholi political community and Museveni's government. Acholi across the political spectrum may be united in their desire for the war to end, yet judging by parliamentary electoral results, the majority continue to mistrust Museveni and support the political opposition. While there are substantive issues that need to be addressed to transform this climate of mistrust – including dealing with the legacies of the past – it may also be necessary to explore perceptions and acknowledge the consequences of breakdowns in earlier peace initiatives.

Addressing the causes and consequences of conflict: Acholi are intimately aware of the destruction and suffering caused by both parties to the conflict. They believe that the government has pursued a military strategy that has neither defeated the LRA nor ultimately brought security to the civilian population. Mutual belligerence in rejecting the option for peace is a source of great frustration and resentment. Have the government and the LRA, or factions within them both, separately developed a vested interest in the war continuing? Do they have the political will to end the violence? Whatever the answers, these speculations reveal how this protracted war has generated a wider conflict that is likely to be transformed only once the fighting has stopped and the structural violence suffered by so many in the north is addressed.

Political Map of Uganda



Causes and consequences of the war in Acholiland

Ogenga Otunnu

Dr Otunnu is Assistant Professor of African History, Refugee Studies and Contemporary Global Issues at DePaul University (Chicago). He has also taught African History and Refugee Studies at York University (Toronto). Dr Otunnu has published on refugee crises, conflict resolution and genocide in Africa. Research for this work was partly done by Jane Laloyo.

The roots of the current war between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Acholiland are entwined with the history of conflicts in Uganda and the rise to power of the National Resistance Movement/National Resistance Army (NRM/A). The conflict has persisted because of fragmented and divisive national politics, strategies and tactics adopted by the armed protagonists, and regional and international interests. The harrowing war has claimed many innocent civilian lives, forcefully displaced over 400,000 people and destroyed schools and health centres. In addition, the war has been characterized by widespread and systematic violations of human rights, including rapes, abductions of men, women and children, torture, increased economic decay, and national and regional insecurity.

Uganda: land and people

Uganda lies along the Equator, between the great East African Rift Valleys. It is a landlocked country, bordered by Sudan in the north, Kenya in the east, Tanzania in the south, Rwanda in the southwest and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west. With a landmass of 241,139 square kilometres, its population is about 20 million. Its territory includes Lake Victoria, Lake Albert, Lake Edward and Lake Kyoga. These lakes, together with several elaborate networks of river drainage, constitute the headwaters of the River Nile. The country's economy is primarily agrarian, comprised mostly of smallholdings though pastoralism is dominant in Karamoja and Ankole.

Lake Kyoga forms both a physical and linguistic marker. South of Kyoga is the so-called Bantu region, with the centralized pre-colonial states of Buganda, Toro, Ankole (Nkore) and Bunyoro the dominant territories. North and east of Kyoga are the non-Bantu territories of the Acholi, Alur, Langi, Iteso and Karamojong. The Acholi inhabit present-day northern Uganda and southern Sudan, where, in the pre-colonial era, they constructed decentralized states. In the 1970s, the Acholi district



of northern Uganda was divided into Gulu and Kitgum districts. In 2001, Kitgum was subdivided to create a third district of Pader. The three districts constitute an area commonly referred to as Acholiland.

Conflicts and fragmentation in colonial Uganda

Contemporary violent conflicts in the country are directly related to the profound crisis of legitimacy of the state, its institutions and their political incumbents. This crisis, in part, reflects the way the state was constructed through European expansionist violence, manipulation of pre-existing differences, administrative policies of divide and rule and economic policies that further fractured the colonial entity. These policies did not only undermine the faltering legitimacy of the state, but also impeded the emergence of a Ugandan nationalism and generated ethnic, religious and regional divisions that were to contribute in later years to instability and political violence.

One significant divide was along the lines of religious affiliation, which can be traced back to the arrival of Islam, Protestantism and Catholicism in Buganda. These religious groups engaged in a ferocious conflict for dominance, and the Protestant faction emerged victorious after the Imperial British East Africa Company intervened in their favour. Anglicans were to later dominate the top positions in the civil service, and this structural inequality was maintained after the colonial era. Consequently, religious beliefs and political party affiliations were to become entangled.

Conflicts in the colonial state were exacerbated by the partition of the country into economic zones. For example, while a large portion of the territory south of Lake Kyoga was designated as cash crop growing and industrial zones, the territory north of Lake Kyoga was designated as a labour reserve. This partition, which was not dictated by development potentials, led to economic disparities between the south and the north. The fragmentation of the society was compounded by the

economic-cum-administrative policy that left the civil service largely in the hands of Baganda and the army largely in the hands of the Acholi and other northern ethnic groups. These policies also widened the gulf between the socio-political south and the socio-political north. This was further sustained by the administrative policy that relied on the Baganda as colonial agents in other parts of the country. The policy of divide and rule, which rested on so-called 'indirect rule' led to widespread anti-Buganda sentiment.

Conflicts and fragmentation in post-independent Uganda

The post-colonial regime inherited a fractured state. Milton Obote responded to this crisis of legitimacy by forming an alliance between his political party, the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) and the Buganda monarchy party (Kabaka Yekka). With this marriage of convenience, Obote became the Executive Prime Minister and Kabaka Mutesa II became the President and Head of State. However, the alliance collapsed over a conflict over land (the 'lost counties') between Bunyoro and Buganda. The 'divorce' led to widespread violence in Buganda. Obote responded by detaining five government ministers from the Bantu region, dismissing the President and Vice President and forcing President Mutesa into exile and suspending the 1962 constitution. The government also imposed a state of emergency in Buganda, occupied Buganda's palace, following the flight of the Kabaka to England, and introduced a republican constitution. Some Bantu-speaking groups perceived this struggle for legitimacy and power as a conflict between the Bantu south and the non-Bantu (Nilotic) north.

These difficulties overlapped with the instability generated in the region by the superpowers' quest for hegemony during the Cold War. These crises were compounded by a conflict between Obote and his army commander, General Idi Amin. In 1971, Amin seized power. Immediately after he came to power, Amin ordered Acholi and Langi soldiers, who constituted the backbone of the army, to surrender their arms. The overwhelming majority of them did so. However, many were subsequently killed. The government extended its conflict with the Acholi and Langi by arresting, detaining and killing highly educated and influential members of the ethnic groups. Over time, Amin began to target people he perceived as disloyal from other parts of the county. To protect the regime which lacked political legitimacy in the country, Amin recruited new soldiers into the national army from West Nile. In addition, he appointed prominent Bantu to important positions in his government. The regime however largely maintained the dominance of southerners in the civil service and commerce, while the northerners largely controlled the government and army.

In April 1979, the exiled rebels, who were overwhelmingly from Acholi and Langi, assisted by the Tanzanian army and Yoweri Museveni's Front for National Salvation (FRONASA), overthrew the Amin regime. Yusuf Lule assumed power. However, ideological and ethnic conflicts within the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) and the national army led to the collapse of the Lule administration within months. Godfrey Binaisa took over, but was himself deposed in May 1980 by Paulo Muwanga and his deputy Yoweri Museveni.

The new administration organized general elections in December 1980, which were won by Milton Obote and his Uganda People's Congress. But widespread irregularities and political violence undermined the legitimacy of the elections. The main challenger, the Democratic Party (DP), rejected Obote's victory. Museveni also rejected the results. Thereafter, a number of armed groups, including Lule's Uganda Freedom Fighters, Museveni's Popular Resistance Army (later they were to merge to form the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A), and Dr Andrew Kayira's Uganda Freedom Movement/Army (UFM/A), declared war against the Obote government. In West Nile, Brigadier Moses Ali's Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF) and General Lumago's Former Uganda National Army (FUNA) also engaged the army and the UPC in bitter armed opposition.

Fighting was particularly intense in the Luwero triangle, where the mostly Baganda population was targeted for their perceived support of rebel groups. Many innocent civilians were tortured and murdered by the UNLA. Although the UNLA was a national and multi-ethnic army, the NRM/A held the Acholi exclusively responsible for the atrocities committed, and this disputed perception was to shape subsequent attitudes toward the conflict.

In July 1985, conflict between some Langi and Acholi soldiers led to the overthrow of the Obote regime. The coup, which brought General Tito Okello to power, shattered the military alliance between the Acholi and Langi and escalated ethnic violence. The Okello regime invited all fighting groups and political parties to join the military government. Every armed group and political party, with the exception of the NRA, joined the administration. The NRA, however, engaged the regime in protracted peace negotiations held in Nairobi. In December 1985, the Nairobi Agreement was signed under the chairmanship of President Moi of Kenya. However, the Agreement was never implemented and Museveni seized power on the 25th January 1986.

The NRA's seizure of power effectively meant that for the first time, socio-economic, political and military powers were all concentrated in the south. The new administration, which absorbed political and military

groups from the south and Moses Ali's UNRF group, engaged in intensive anti-northern propaganda. The administration also discriminated against groups from eastern Uganda and West Nile. This severe alienation and marginalization led to armed conflicts in Teso and West Nile. After much destruction and displacement of the population in Teso, the government negotiated an end to the conflict in the east.

Emergence of the conflict in Acholiland

By April 1986, the Acholi had largely come to terms with the NRA victory. The majority of former UNLA soldiers also heeded the appeal made by the government to hand over their arms and demobilize. The response by the Acholi ended the armed engagement in the territory. However, after months of relative calm, anxieties escalated when the NRA began to commit human rights abuses in the name of crushing a nascent rebellion. Over time NRA soldiers plundered the area and committed atrocities, including rape, abductions, confiscation of livestock, killing of unarmed civilians, and the destruction of granaries, schools, hospitals and bore holes escalated. These atrocities in Acholiland were justified by some as revenge for the 'skulls of Luwero'.

Against this background of mistrust and violence, in May 1986 the government ordered all former UNLA soldiers to report to barracks. The order was met with deep suspicion, in part, because it was reminiscent of Amin's edict that led to the 1971 massacre of Acholi soldiers. Some ex-UNLA soldiers went into hiding; others fled to Sudan and some decided to take up arms. Soon, these ex-soldiers were joined by a stream of youths fleeing from NRA operations. During this period, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which was perceived by Acholi refugees as an ally of the Museveni government, attacked a refugee camp in southern Sudan. On August 20, 1986, some Acholi refugee combatants, led by Brigadier Odong Latek, attacked the NRA. This armed group, known as the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA), was later joined by the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces / Movement (HSMF/HSM), Severino Lukoya's Lord's Army, ultimately to be followed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Why the war has persisted

The war has lasted for nearly sixteen years because of a number of interrelated factors. To begin with, the war in Acholi has become an extension of regional and international power struggles. On the regional front, Uganda provided military hardware and sanctuary to the SPLA. In retaliation, the Sudan government provided sanctuary and military hardware to the LRA. On the international front, both the Uganda government and the SPLA received military and political support from the US, in part to curtail the influence of the Islamic government

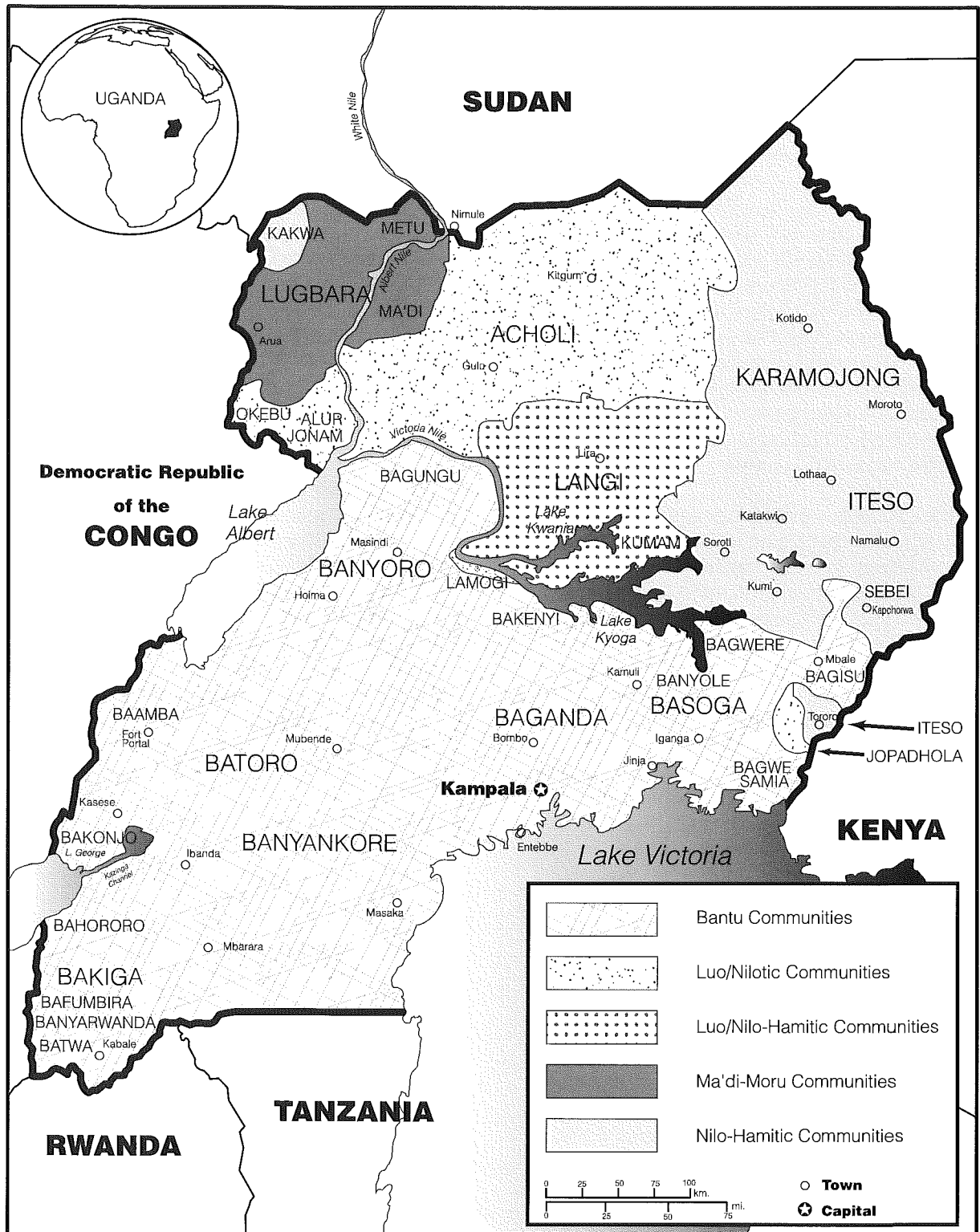
in Khartoum. Another factor perpetuating the conflict has been that the war has become a lucrative source and cover for clandestine income for high-ranking military and government officials and other profiteers. In addition, the unwillingness of the government and the LRA to genuinely pursue a negotiated settlement has sustained the war. Lastly, atrocities committed by the LRA against unarmed civilians and the unwillingness of the rebel group to accept alternative political views on the conflict have prolonged the war.

Consequences of the war

The horrific and prolonged consequences of this war have devastated the society – a society that has been reduced to 'displaced camps,' where people languish without assistance and protection. The war has also destroyed the culture and social fabric of the Acholi society. Large numbers of orphans, who fend for themselves, illustrate this tragedy. Furthermore, some children have been abducted by the LRA and forced to torture and kill. Thus, the Rt. Rev. Macleod Baker Ochola II summarized some of the effects the war on Acholiland as follows:

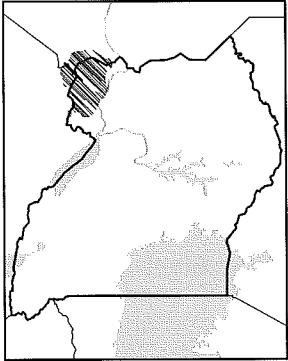
'Violent deaths of our people in the hands of various armed groups; arson perpetrated on mass scale in our land; rape and defilement of our women and girls; abduction of our young people; forced recruitment of our people into rebel ranks; the prevalence of a general atmosphere of fear and disenchantment amongst our people; mass displacement of our people; creation of protected villages which have become breeding grounds for malnutrition and deaths resulting from cholera, measles, and preventable diseases amongst our people; and destruction of our infrastructures and continuous decline in socio-economic growth.'(KM, 1997)

The war has also destabilized other parts of the country and contributed to other regional conflicts in the Great Lakes. The multi-faceted and interrelated causes and consequences of the war should not, therefore, be seen as exclusively an Acholi issue. Nor should the war be treated as merely a humanitarian crisis. It has many dimensions: political, social, economic and humanitarian. As such, durable solutions will need to respond to all of these challenges.

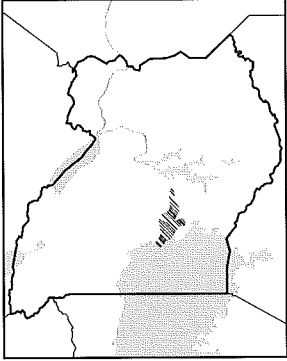


Based on Minority Rights Group International's 'Ethnic Groups and Tribes of Uganda', Uganda: The Marginalization of Minorities (2001). Boundaries are not definitive but are intended to show traditionally inhabited areas.

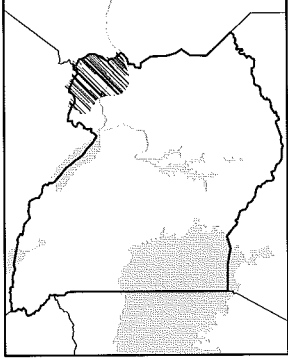
Uganda- A Conflict History



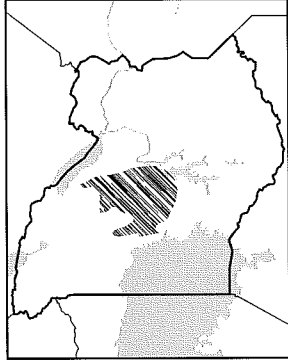
Former Uganda National Army (FUNA)
1980 - 1985



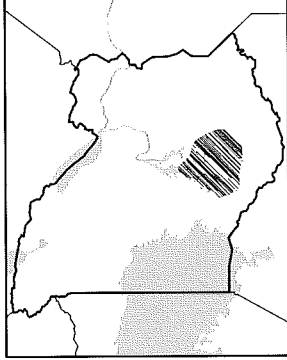
Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM)
1980 - 1985



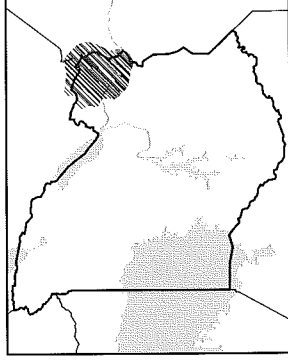
Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF)
1980 -



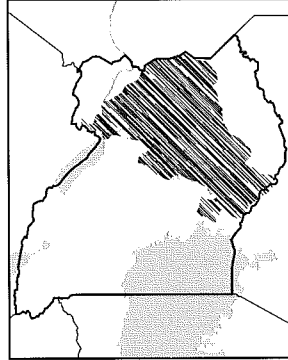
National Resistance Army (NRA)
1981 - 1986



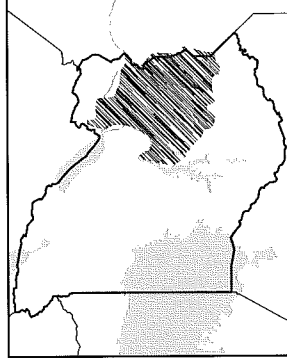
Uganda People's Army (UPA)
1986 -



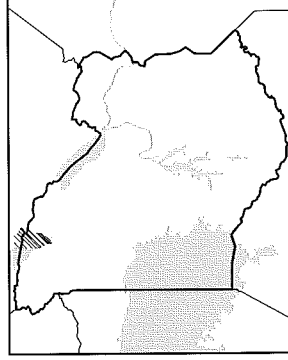
West Nile Bank Front (WNBFB)
1986 -



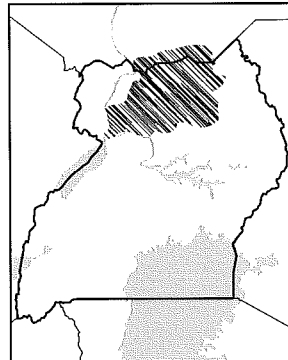
Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF)
1986 - 1987



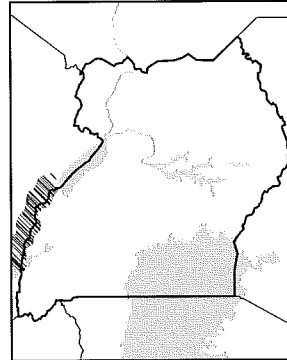
Uganda Peoples Democratic Army (UPDA)
1986 - 1988




National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) 1986 -



Lords Resistance Army (LRA)
1988 -



Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)
1995 -

 Shaded areas represent zones of insurgency and are not intended to denote definitive boundaries nor areas of control.

Profiles of the parties to the conflict

Balam Nyeko and Okello Lucima

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President Museveni addresses his troops on Army Day 1998

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

President of Uganda, Chairman of the NRM and Commander in Chief of the UPDF, Yoweri Museveni was born in 1944 in Kyamate, Ankole District in south-western Uganda. He studied economics and political science at the University College Dar es Salaam in Tanzania where he is said to have embraced Pan-African radicalism, socialist politics and African liberation causes. While at university, he toured FRELIMO (the Mozambican liberation organisation) controlled parts of Mozambique and underwent training in guerrilla warfare with the organisation. Then a supporter of the ruling UPC, he worked as a researcher in President Milton Obote's office from 1969 to 1971. After the 1971 coup, he joined the deposed President Obote and other exiles in Tanzania, and joined the forces that invaded Uganda and were subsequently repulsed by Amin's army. Museveni then broke away from the mainstream opposition and formed the Front for National Salvation (FRONASA)

When Amin invaded Tanzania in October 1978, FRONASA joined forces with Milton Obote's Kikosi Maalum, the Tanzanian Peoples Defence Forces (TPDF) and smaller opposition groups to drive Amin from Tanzania and subsequently out of power in April 1979. By the end of the war, Museveni had recruited thousands of fighters into FRONASA. They were incorporated into the new national army, the UNLA, but most maintained their loyalty to Museveni and were later to play crucial roles in Museveni's rebellion against the Obote government. Museveni was appointed Minister of Defence and later Minister for Regional Co-operation in the Ugandan National Liberation Front (UNLF) administrations of Yusuf Lule and Godfrey Binaisa respectively. He was also Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission, which in May 1980 toppled Binaisa. In June 1980, he founded the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) to contest the December 1980 elections but failed to win a seat in Parliament.

The following year Museveni formed the Popular Resistance Army (PRA) and launched a four and a half year guerrilla campaign against Obote's government. The PRA subsequently merged with the Uganda Freedom Forces (UFF) of ex-President Yusuf Lule to form the NRM/A.

When Obote was overthrown, Museveni was invited by the new Head of State Gen. Tito Okello Lutwa to join the Military Council (MC) in a government of national unity, with the promise of democratic elections within a year. He initially agreed to do so but later changed his mind, although he agreed to negotiate peace with the Military Council. An agreement was signed in December 1985. However, after the agreement, Museveni ordered his forces to advance on Kampala. In January 1986, the Military Council was toppled by the NRM/A and Museveni became President and Head of State. Since then, he has maintained a tight grip on political power in Uganda, which is dominated by the NRM, and barred political parties.

Yoweri Museveni is credited with establishing relative peace in the central region and south-western Uganda, and presiding over economic reforms, which have yielded annual growth rates of 6% since the mid 1990s. However, Western donor governments and financial institutions which previously gave him their unreserved support are increasingly concerned about high-level corruption, the involvement of his government in the Democratic Republic of Congo, high levels of military expenditure and his failure to resolve internal conflicts in the north and west of the country.

Museveni has been re-elected in successive Presidential elections in 1996 and 2001. The elections have been conducted under the 'no-party' system in which all candidates must contest under the Movement system. The main political parties, UPC and DP have complained about violence and intimidation during the polls and protest about being barred from organising and contesting elections. Museveni's second and – under the current constitution – final term of office will expire in 2006.



Source: Billie O'Kadameri

Joseph Kony

Joseph Kony was born in 1961 in Odek, a small trading centre in Omoro County of Gulu District, approximately 40 km east of Gulu town. He was raised as a Roman Catholic and served as a catechist after leaving primary school. Little is known about his early life. He is a cousin of Alice Auma 'Lakwena', former leader of the HSMF. Like Lakwena, Kony considers himself a medium of supernatural powers.

Kony joined the UPDA as a 'spiritual mobiliser' in Major Benjamin Apia's 'black battalion' at Awach in Gulu district in early 1987. By 1988, he had broken away and began to operate independently with a small group of followers, including remnants of the HSMF. They frequently clashed with the UPDA. After the main UPDA faction reached a peace agreement with the NRA/M government, Kony consolidated his forces by absorbing remnants of the UPDA who did not support the peace agreement. For a while they operated under the name United Holy Salvation Army but later changed this to UDCM/A, which subsequently became the LRM/A.

Kony exercises absolute control over the LRA 'High Command' and his fighters. According to him, 'God can confirm that I am an embodiment and the personification of the Holy Spirit.' He has devised induction rituals intended to bind recruits to strict rules of obedience and conduct. Kony's soldiers are not permitted to drink, or smoke or eat certain types of foods.

Apart from a few recorded messages, Kony rarely issues public statements. He remains a little understood and mysterious individual whose views on the conflict and the wider national politics are not widely known. Supporters and the LRM external wing have occasionally

issued statements purportedly on behalf of his organisation, but it is doubtful that they fully represent Kony's views.

Since the 1999 Nairobi agreement, Kony has been increasingly isolated as a result of the Uganda-Sudan détente. His organisation is short of supplies and is being decimated by defections. Kony has relocated his main bases from the vicinity of the southern Sudan city of Juba to less accessible territory from where he continues to wage his 'God-guided' insurgency against the government of Uganda.

The Lord's Resistance Movement/Army (LRM/A)

Joseph Kony formed the LRM/A, starting with a small group of followers who broke away from the UPDA. He took over leadership of the HSM after the arrest of Severino Lukoya and by 1988 had established military dominance by absorbing remnants of the UPDA and HSM and named the group the United Democratic Christian Movement / Army (UDCM/A). From its inception, the UDCM/A claimed 'the causes of our war' are:

- violations of human rights;
- ideological objections to Museveni's National Resistance Council system;
- the NRM's management of the economy; conscription into the NRA; lack of northerners in government;
- lack of confidence in the NRA; 'moral degeneration' including 'witchcraft'; and
- the NRM/A's failure to hold elections.

They also called for (a) an all-party 'National Conference' followed by general elections, (b) creation of a Religious Affairs Ministry to 'see an end to the use of witchcraft and sorcery by promotion of the Ten Commandments'; (c) rehabilitation of the economy and rehabilitation of the country's infrastructure; (d) national unity (through inter-tribal marriages and language instruction); (e) education for all; (f) policies encouraging foreign investments; (g) the independence of the judiciary; (h) the formation of an ethnically balanced national army; (i) improved diplomatic relations with neighbouring states; and (j) relocation of Uganda's administrative capital to Kigumba in Masindi District.

The UDCM/A was later renamed the Lord's Resistance Army/Movement (LRA/M). Some supporters claim that the reason for the name changes was because the combatants wished to make it clear that they had 'found faith in the Lord God as their main inspiration for continued resistance'.

The primary motivation of LRA fighters is their firm belief that their struggle against the NRM government is a divine cause that is being directed and guided by God

through his prophet Kony. This belief is inculcated into fighters by intense and systematic indoctrination. Thus an LRA fighter goes into battle in the firm belief that God is on his or her side and that God will ensure the defeat of the enemy. They are said to fight fearlessly, rarely taking cover, while shouting and singing religious songs in praise of God.

The LRA does not delegate significant powers to the external political wing, composed mainly but not exclusively of exiled Acholi in Kenya and the UK, which has virtually no influence over the fighters and is not authorised to talk on their behalf.

Support for the LRM/A among the populations of Gulu and Kitgum is significantly less than that previously enjoyed by the UPDM/A and the HSMF. The LRA has complained about being betrayed by former UPDA combatants and Acholi elders, who they blame for 'blessing' them initially and encouraging them to join the rebellion, but later abandoning them. Because of the lack of popular support, the LRA resorted to forced recruitment of young people. Those who resisted abduction were brutally punished or killed.

Between 1989 and 1991 the LRA killed hundreds of people and abducted thousands in villagers in Gulu and Kitgum as well as the neighbouring districts. They also subjected civilians to horrific mutilation and torture, cutting off their hands, ears or lips or gouging out their eyes. These atrocities were justified by Kony during talks with the government in 1994; 'If you picked up an arrow against us and we ended up cutting off the hand you used, who is to blame? You report us with your mouth, and we cut off your lips. Who is to blame? It is you! The Bible says that if your hand, eye or mouth is at fault, it should be cut off.'

After the collapse of the LRA's talks with government in 1994, Kony lost confidence in the government's peace overtures and again blamed the Acholi for not supporting him. The LRA withdrew to southern Sudan where they established bases, retrained and were equipped with modern weapons by the government of Sudan. In 1995 their base at Palutaka was overrun in a joint attack by the UPDF and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

Abductions

From around 1994 the LRA embarked on large-scale abductions of children from Uganda. It is believed that around ten thousand children have been abducted. Captives are force-marched to Sudan, with many dying of injuries, disease, exhaustion, or starvation during the arduous journey. Survivors receive rudimentary military training and are indoctrinated and desensitised to brutality. After training, the children are deployed in combat against the UPDF and the SPLA. By 1997, the LRA



LRA child soldiers during operations

was reportedly comprised of about 5,000 combatants – the majority of them (some claim 70%) abducted children below the age of fifteen. Many of the estimated 1,000 children born in LRA camps are also trained and deployed in combat.

Organisation

The LRA is organised like a regular infantry army. It has five brigades named Stocree, Sinia, Gilva, Shila and Control Altar. It is claimed that operational orders are issued directly by the ‘Spirit’ to ‘Laor’ (Holy Messenger) - Joseph Kony ‘the Prophet’ who passes the order to the ‘Holy Chief’ (army commander), who in turn passes the orders to the military high command. Once the order has reached the military high command, it is translated into operational orders, which are passed down to the divisions, brigades, and subordinate units.

LRA fighters operate in small groups of between ten and twenty. They carry mainly light arms, but in recent years, have used shoulder-fired surface to air missiles, portable support weapons like 80 and 60 mm mortar bombs, RPG launchers and bombs, land mines and anti-tank weaponry. The fighters are trained to deploy rapidly and walk extremely long distances to reach their targets and to avoid contact with the UPDF.

The LRA has between 400 and 500 active female combatants among its ranks. Virtually all were abducted or forcefully recruited. Abducted women and girls are distributed among senior commanders and forced marriage is used as a reward and incentive for male soldiers.

95% of LRA fighters are Acholi. The rest are from the surrounding districts of Lira, Apach, and Soroti. There are also senior officers who joined from the WNBF, UNRF and the UPA.

Sources of support

Between 1993 and 2000, the LRA enjoyed the support of the government of Sudan, through its army. The implementation of the Nairobi Agreement signalled a fundamental transformation of this relationship, with the Sudanese government making an undertaking to stop support for the LRM/A. Sudanese officials have publicly stated that they have ended all support to the LRA. This claim is corroborated by accounts from escapees who confirm that the organisation no longer receives food and military supplies from the government of Sudan.

The LRA has very limited alternative sources of support. In the past, some exiles living in the UK attempted to collect cash donations for the movement, but the exercise attracted limited support and was ultimately unsustainable. The LRA now relies predominantly on looting and raiding to meet its most basic needs.

The National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) / the government of Uganda

The NRM/A emerged in 1981 as Museveni’s PRA merged with the UFF. Their main reason for taking up arms against the newly elected government was their claim that the December 1980 elections that returned Obote to power had been rigged. The NRM used the widespread

disaffection in southern Uganda to recruit opposition to Milton Obote, and what they referred to as his 'government of northerners'. It attracted trained UNLA soldiers and officers who Museveni had recruited during the anti-Amin war and when he was Minister for Defence. Their first major attack was launched in February 1985. Successive attacks followed on military detachments and on both civilian and military traffic, intended to create panic and to disrupt the movement of the UNLA. The UNLA was ill prepared and ill equipped to deal with the NRA's hit and run tactics. The NRA also targeted perceived supporters of the ruling UPC. The NRA and UNLA operations led to a dramatic deterioration of the security situation in southern Uganda within a relatively short time.

Conscious that Acholi soldiers provided the back-bone of the UNLA, the NRA referred to the UNLA as 'Acholi soldiers' in a bid to deepen fear and distrust of the UNLA by civilians. They also exploited the popular disaffection in Buganda with Obote and the UPC for the abolition of the Buganda kingdom in 1966 to recruit among the Baganda.

Ideologically, the NRM/A initially had distinctly socialist leanings and fashioned itself on the Marxist liberation organisations. It developed a political programme referred to as the 'Ten-point Programme', covering: democracy, security, consolidation of national unity, defending national independence, building an independent, integrated and self-sustaining economy, improvement of social services, elimination of corruption and misuse of power, redressing inequality, cooperation with other African countries and a mixed economy. However, in time, political ideology and priorities shifted and the ten-point programme was quietly left to recede into obscurity.

Ex-President Yusuf Lule led the NRM, the political wing of the NRA until his death in 1985. The NRM coordinated its activities and mobilised support for the NRA from Nairobi, Kenya, London and other European capitals. They were successful in winning support for the NRM/A among Western governments who were largely opposed to the return of Obote to power. The NRM/A also secured financial support and arms from Libya through an alliance with the UNRF.

The NRA managed to take control of most of the countryside in the 'Luwero Triangle' within the first year. It took another two years of re-training, re-equipping and massive reinforcements for the UNLA to reverse the NRA's successes. By the time of the July 1985 military coup that toppled Obote's government, the NRA was in retreat. They were restricted to a small area of western Uganda at the foothills of the Ruwenzori Mountains. The NRA's fortunes turned abruptly, however, through a combination of 'war-fatigue' in the UNLA and a falling out

between Obote and his army chief General Tito Okello. In addition, Major Okwera, Commanding Officer of a key battalion in western Uganda, decided to turn over his garrison to the NRA in June 1985. They were handed large supplies of arms, a base and control over territory from which to re-launch its operations. Thus paradoxically sections of the UNLA suddenly shared a common opposition to the Obote government with the NRA. In early 1985, New Africa magazine reported that General Okello and VP Paulo Muwanga had initiated peace negotiations with the NRA – this may have been the cause of the subsequent tensions within the Obote government.

As UNLA soldiers under former UNLA Commander Bazilio Okello toppled Obote in July 1985, they repeatedly invited Museveni and the NRA and all anti-Obote opposition groups to join them in government. The NRA was the only group to decline. They subsequently participated in peace talks with Okello's Military Council and signed an agreement in December 1985, but rescinded on its commitments almost immediately. Having recruited heavily, re-armed, re-trained and controlling all of the western part of the country, the NRA launched a push for the capital.

Following its successful overthrow of the Tito Okello military government in early 1986, the NRM declared its intention to restore peace and political stability to Uganda. Among other things, the NRM government claimed that it would seek to guarantee the 'security of all persons in Uganda and their property' as well as the 'consolidation of national unity and elimination of all forms of sectarianism.' Although since coming to power the NRM has engaged in negotiations with opposition groups, it has been reluctant to engage in political dialogue. In most cases, opponents have been offered financial inducements, minor posts and a promise to protect their security.

Political system in Uganda

Contending that Uganda had suffered in the past because of 'bad government' brought about by party politics, sectarianism and other ills, the NRM banned political parties and imposed a novel system it described as 'no party' system. Critics including the old political parties counter that the NRM itself is acting increasingly like a political party. While acting as an armed group, the NRM formed local Resistance Councils (RC), which under the current constitutional arrangement have formed the basis for decentralised government through the Local District Councils at the District, County and sub-County levels. Each District Council has a directly elected Chair and a President-appointed Resident District Commissioner. These councils have a significant level of responsibility for local development and administration.



UPDA rebel troops await a peace settlement at their Agong Camp in Gulu in May 1998

Source: Otim Lucima

There is no gainsaying the fact that in its sixteen years in power the NRM/A has scored some noteworthy successes, especially in much of the southern and western Uganda including the development of the Local Council system. The people of southern Uganda (especially Ankole region) have enjoyed considerable peace, security and prosperity in the sixteen years of NRM/A rule. This contrasts quite sharply with the situation in the north, where persistent conflict has continued and poverty has grown. In July 2001, the President admitted that 'while the level of absolute poverty has been reduced from 56 to 35 percent in most parts of the country, in northern Uganda its has instead gone up from 60 to 66 in the last three years' (The Monitor, Kampala, 30 July 2001).

The Uganda People's Democratic Movement/Army UPDM/A

The UPDM/A was the first armed northern Uganda opposition group against Yoweri Museveni and the NRM/A.

When the NRA took control of Kampala, the remnants of the UNLA withdrew northwards. The abrupt departure of its leaders from Kampala had left it in disarray, and the

withdrawal was chaotic and without any clear plans to resist the advance of the NRA. Most of the ethnic Acholi soldiers later re-grouped in Gulu where the Army Commander had set up his headquarters. They unsuccessfully tried to stop the NRA from crossing the river Nile at Karuma. Defeated and demoralised, most of them decided to return to their villages or surrendered to the advancing NRA. Hundreds who feared reprisals from the NRA crossed into the Sudan with their arms. Museveni enlisted the SPLA who attacked the exiled soldiers, overrunning their settlements. Most of the survivors of the SPLA attacks decided to return to Uganda to resettle in their home villages.

The government then ordered all former soldiers to turn themselves in with their weapons. Ex-soldiers who responded to the order were severely mistreated, many were detained and some killed. Those who did not report were rounded up in operations. When the NRM government decided to transfer detainees to re-education camps in the south, numerous ex-UNLA soldiers fled into the bushes of northern Uganda with their arms, regrouped and organised under the leadership of former senior UNLA officers. Many civilians also joined the resistance to the NRM regime by enlisting

in the newly established Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA). From an initially defensive stance, the rebels decided to attack Gulu on 20th August 1986. This marked the formal beginning of the northern Uganda conflict, and established the UPDA as the main opposition to the NRA.

The UPDM/A was in fact a coalition of forces opposed to the NRM/A government. Its overall Military Commander was Brigadier Odong Latek. Although it generally operated as a single force, it contained a number of distinct groups within it, such as the United National Democratic Movement/Army (UNDM/A) led by Col. Owiny Omoya. In 1987, the UPDA outlined their grievances as: 'violation of the 1985 Nairobi Peace Accord, human rights abuses by the NRA in Acholi, NRM communist dictatorship and foreign elements of Rwandan refugees in the NRA and government'.

The UPDA was predominantly Acholi in composition, but eventually included other northern people from West Nile, Lango and Teso. It enjoyed popular support in the region at the height of the rebellion in 1987 and 1988.

The political wing of the UPDA, the Uganda People's Democratic Movement (UPDM) operated mostly from Kenya and the UK. It was led by Eric Otema Alimadi, a former Prime Minister in the Obote II government. In contrast to the cohesiveness of the UPDA, factionalism, petty squabbling and political intrigue were rife within the UPDM. They also failed to keep their promise to mobilise finances to purchase arms and other essential supplies for the UPDA, so their influence diminished considerably with time.

The UPDA achieved some early successes against the NRA. A shortage of supplies and massive reinforcements by the NRA, however, reversed the trend. The UPDA was also seriously weakened and demoralised by a heavy defeat at Corner Kilak in August 1987 where a number of its most experienced leaders were killed.

Under increasing military pressure from the NRA and on the urging of Acholi leaders who were advocating a peaceful settlement of the conflict, the UPDA entered into negotiations with the NRA. In 1988, the UPDA and the NRA/M concluded a peace agreement without its political wing, the UPDM. Most UPDA soldiers were integrated into the NRA, but fundamental political and governance issues and unmet UPDA demands led to discontent. In 1989, the NRM government claimed they had foiled a plot by the ex-UPDA to overthrow the government. Many of them were arrested, while others fled into exile or back to the bush. The remaining UPDA who had rejected the 1988 peace initiative were absorbed into the HSM and the UDCM/A.

In 1990, senior members of the UPDM Central Executive Committee entered into negotiations with the government of Uganda. They reached an understanding that cleared the way for their return to Uganda and supposedly signed an agreement in Addis Ababa. This was disputed by other UPDM/A faction leaders who claim that the CEC members had been removed from their positions prior to talks and had no authority to negotiate. Whatever the truth, it would seem that the NRM Government at that point was aware that the men no longer had control over the fighters, but the symbolism of their return had immediate political propaganda value.

The Holy Spirit Mobile Force (HSMF)

In late 1986, the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF) led by Alice Auma 'Lakwena' launched its anti-NRM campaign in the north. Alice Auma, a young Acholi woman, claimed to be possessed by the holy spirit 'Lakwena' (messenger) and to act as its spirit-medium. She led a rebellion, which became a potent threat to the NRM regime. The HSMF managed to mobilise desperate peasants and former soldiers to her cause, promising to cleanse society and purge the government of 'evil'. Alice Auma 'Lakwena' initially took control of a UPDA battalion and transformed it through ritual and indoctrination into the HSMF. The HSMF targeted witches and sorcerers, who were tortured or killed. The group justified violence against civilians and NRA soldiers as a necessary process of purification. The HSMF was a popular movement that many peasants, former soldiers and even the educated joined willingly.

The HSMF believed that shea butter ('moo yaa') would protect them from enemy bullets and that stones dipped in 'holy water' would turn into grenades against the enemy. Elaborate rules and codes of conduct called 'Safety Precaution Rules' prescribed moral, social and military conduct and practices. HSMF soldiers were forbidden to drink, smoke, steal, quarrel, have sex or take cover in the heat of battle. Abiding by these rules would ensure success in battle.

The HSMF scored some surprising military victories against the NRA in November and December 1986. The successes boosted HSMF arms supplies and their ranks swelled with willing recruits. In January 1987, the HSMF was itself routed in an NRA counter-attack. Undeterred, the movement changed tack and started to advance southwards, through the eastern regions of Uganda. They passed through Lango, Teso, Bugisu and Tororo, bypassing the main urban areas and recruiting along the way. They occasionally clashed with the NRA, but there were few sustained engagements. By the time the HSMF reached the outskirts of Jinja, about 80 miles from Kampala, they had over-extended themselves and were operating in increasingly hostile territory. The NRA launched a massive offensive against the HSMF, defeating

it and scattering the surviving fighters. While 'Lakwena' and a few close aides fled to Kenya, the depleted HSMF survivors of the battle made their way back north. Once back in the north, they continued to operate for a short period under the leadership of 'Lakwena's father Severino Lukoya. When the NRA captured him, control over the fighters passed to Joseph Kony.

The government of Sudan

The northern Uganda conflict has been compounded by Uganda's relationship with Sudan. Relations between these countries have been a factor in the internal politics and security of both for decades. Some tribes, like the Acholi, live on both sides of the border. During Sudan's first (1956-1972) and second (1983-2002) civil wars Sudanese have found refuge in Uganda. Likewise, during the Amin and Obote II regimes many Ugandans found refuge in Sudan. The UPDA, Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement and the LRA insurgencies have all had bases in southern Sudan. The government of Sudan has also supported the activities of the Allied Democratic Forces and the Western Nile Bank Front, and the arms trade in Karamoja is linked to the war in Sudan. Northern Uganda has also been a route for international humanitarian aid to war affected areas in southern Sudan.

Since the National Islamic Front (NIF – now National Congress) government took power in Sudan in 1989, diplomatic relations between the two countries have been characterised by suspicion and hostility. Support from the government of Sudan for the LRA began in the mid-1990s and was critical to their ability to continue fighting and abducting civilians in Uganda. It seems, however, that official support had diminished if not ceased by mid 2000.

The LRA is one of several groups that have fought with the Sudanese government against the SPLM/A in return for arms and training. For the Sudanese government the LRA represented a useful political card in international diplomacy, but the LRA has also been important to the military that have their own interests. The LRA seem to have played a particular role as part of the defence for the government-held town of Juba. There are also some reports that Sudanese military officers use the LRA abductees as labour.

For the Sudanese government, the close relationship between the Ugandan government and the SPLM/A represents a threat to their own security. The SPLM/A leader John Garang is a personal friend of Yoweri Museveni and has been a regular visitor to Kampala. Since Museveni took power in Uganda in 1986, the SPLM/A has received military support from the Ugandan government in the form of training, logistical support, military hardware and Ugandan combat troops (Human Rights

Watch/Africa, 1998 August). In the mid-1990s, Ugandan support was important in expanding the SPLM/A's territorial control in southern Sudan. The SPLM/A have also assisted the Ugandan government in its war with the LRA.

The war in northern Uganda is not only affected by the war in Sudan, but broader regional and international relations. In the early and mid-1990s, US policy in the region revolved around supporting an alliance of so-called 'frontline states' against the NIF government in Sudan, including Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Rwanda. It also involved supporting the SPLM/A. The NIF's radical Islamic agenda was perceived as a threat to regional security after NIF ideologue Hassan el Turabi famously spoke about spreading Islam to the Cape of Good Hope in 1993. In 1995 the UPDF and the SPLM/A conducted joint operations against LRA bases in Sudan. Some US\$20 million in 'non-lethal' military aid supplied to the frontline states by the US in 1996 is thought to have filtered through to the SPLM/A. In 1997 the US government unilaterally imposed sanctions against Sudan, and in 1998 a US missile hit Khartoum in retaliation for the terrorist bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

The government of Uganda considers the war with the LRA as a function of political developments in Sudan and has sought assurances that Sudan has ended its backing for the LRA. For its part the Sudanese government, under President Omar al-Bashir wishes to see Uganda stop its backing for the SPLM/A. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were restored in 2001 as a result of the implementation of The Carter Center mediated Nairobi agreement (December 1999). The change in strategy from confrontation to engagement comes as a result of international pressure, internal political changes and intense diplomatic initiatives by the government of Sudan to improve its image.

After the all time low in US-Sudanese relations, following the bombing of US embassies and subsequent US retaliations, a rapprochement in relations has been given new momentum. After the September 11th terrorist attacks in America, in a remarkable shift in US policy, Washington has made gaining the cooperation of countries such as Sudan a priority in the war against terrorism. Whereas only four years ago, it dropped a missile on Khartoum, it is now dispatching a new envoy to facilitate peace talks between Khartoum and southern rebels. On September 17th the Sudanese Chargé d'Affaires in Kampala reiterated his government's commitment to the 1999 agreement between Sudan and Uganda. Increasing international political engagement in Sudan since September points to increasing pressure on all parties to bring peace to the region.

Reaching the 1985 Nairobi Agreement

Bethuel Kiplagat

Ambassador Kiplagat is presently the Director of the Africa Peace Forum, Kenya. At the time of the 1985 Nairobi agreement he was Permanent Secretary in the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and played a key role in facilitating the negotiations. He has extensive peacemaking experience in Africa, including a prominent role in the Mozambican peace process.

The Nairobi peace talks, or the 'Nairobi peace jokes' (as they were later derided), culminated in the signing of an agreement between the military government of Uganda and the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) in December 1985. The process took four months of haggling and cajoling. President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya presided over the proceedings. The NRM/A was led by Yoweri Museveni and the government of Uganda was represented by the Military Council headed by General Tito Okello Lutwa. The Military Council was a coalition of semi-autonomous armed groups, the principal partner being the national army, the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA). The other council members were insurgent forces formerly arrayed against the second Milton Obote administration. They included the Federal Democratic Movement of Uganda (FEDEMU), the Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM), the Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF) and the Former Uganda National Army (FUNA). Talks began on 26 August 1985 and ended with the signing of an agreement on 17 December 1985.

Gen. Okello and Brigadier Bazilio Olara Okello had overthrown Obote on 27 July 1985, with the army installing Gen. Okello as Chair of the Military Council and head of state. When Gen. Okello announced the coup against Obote, he specifically and publicly invited Museveni and the NRM/A to cease hostilities and join in national reconciliation and nation-building. All fighting forces except the NRM/A responded positively to the call and joined the Military Council in Kampala. In an effort to end the awkward stand-off, Gen. Okello's government sought a political and negotiated settlement with Museveni's NRM to put an end to Uganda's political instability and cyclical fratricide.

Three days after the coup, Gen. Okello met President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere in Dar es Salaam to ask him to mediate in talks with the NRM/A. Dar es Salaam and Nyerere were obvious choices for three reasons. First, Nyerere was popularly seen as a benefactor to Uganda for his role in opposing and overthrowing the military



dictatorship of Idi Amin. Second, Gen. Okello was himself a former colonel who escaped Amin's purge against the Acholi and Langi and found refuge in Tanzania. He returned with the Tanzanian forces that overthrew Amin. Third, Nyerere was an African elder statesman whose honesty and influence were second to none in East Africa. However, for tactical and strategic reasons, Nyerere and Dar es Salaam were unacceptable to Museveni and the NRM, and their delegation failed to turn up in Dar es Salaam for the first scheduled round of talks. The Kenyan independent *Weekly Review* of 20 December 1985 suggested that Museveni rejected Dar es Salaam because the NRM was wary of Nyerere's friendship with Obote, and viewed the Military Council and the UNLA as a continuation of Obote's regime. As an alternative, President Arap Moi was approached and the venue for talks moved to Nairobi.

Negotiating agendas and agreements

The Nairobi talks centred on negotiating a new power-sharing formula that would adjust the composition of the Military Council controlling the Ugandan state. The parties agreed to an immediate ceasefire, to be implemented by their field commanders within forty-eight hours of the signing of the agreement. The parties agreed to form a coalition government under the Military Council with Tito Okello remaining as Chair of the council and head of state and Museveni as Vice Chair. Each fighting force nominated its representatives on the Military Council, with seats allotted as follows: seven for

the UNLA; seven for the NRA; three for FEDEMU; and two each for UFM and FUNA. Museveni's seat on the council would be one of the seven allotted to the NRA, but Gen. Okello's would be in addition to the UNLA's seven seats.

The course of the negotiations was, however, arduous and ultimately unsuccessful. The parties' uncompromising attitudes resulted in the talks extending over four months. They began the talks by hurling insults at each other and continued to do so throughout the proceedings. Museveni denounced previous regimes in Uganda as 'primitives' 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 agreement was reached on an agenda item, Museveni would change his position the following day, or put forward 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 a head of state, although Okello's status had been agreed earlier as a basis for the negotiations moving forward. President Moi considered this demand 'disrespectful' and overruled it. But Museveni's repeated reintroduction of supposedly resolved issues prolonged discussions considerably.

Similarly, both sides accused each other of maintaining links with former pro-Amin soldiers. In the push to oust Obote in 1985, Brig. Bazilio Okello and Gen. Okello had sought and received the collaboration of former pro-Amin soldiers operating from southern Sudan as insurgents. At the Nairobi talks, Museveni dismissed them and the Military Council again as 'criminals'. He was confronted by Olara Otunnu, then Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Military Council, who pointed to Museveni's own pact signed in Tripoli, Libya, with former pro-Amin soldier and minister, Brigadier Moses Ali. Also, a former senior minister under Amin, Abubakar Mayanja, ranked high in the NRM hierarchy. Museveni is reported to have retorted that Otunnu simply did not understand the 'art of revolution', and criticised Otunnu's defence of Obote's human rights record when he was Uganda's ambassador to the UN in the early 1980s.

Failure of the accord

The ceasefire broke down almost immediately. By 25 January 1986, the NRM/A had marched into Kampala. With the collapse of the Nairobi Agreement conflict and instability resumed. The new government soon found itself fighting fresh rebellions in the north and west.

In most insurgencies, the very nature of the state is contested. In such cases durable peace results from the development of a framework that accommodates the aspirations of the conflicting parties and facilitates a common vision for the country's future. The nature and vision of the Ugandan nation and the state continue to be contested. With hindsight, it is evident that the NRM/A had a clear political agenda of creating a new Uganda without the old political order. Since its ascendancy to power, the NRM has re-established the kingdoms with limited powers and without holding a referendum, and constituted the no-party 'movement' system of governance. Both initiatives have been controversial. Had the mediators been aware of the various and competing voices and visions in the Ugandan conflict, and had they sought to address these wider issues, the final agreement would perhaps have been more sustainable.

What went wrong?

The breakdown of the Nairobi Agreement raises questions about what went wrong and what could have been done differently. Some aspects of the process particularly stand out as ill-advised:

Conflict analysis and preparation of talks.

Neighbouring Kenya was the sole facilitator and mediator of the process. Yet the Kenyan team lacked in-depth understanding of the conflict, of the key personalities involved and the roles of other governments and external actors. Negotiators can change their positions and strategies, so mediators must remain attuned to the

political and psychological pulse of the key leaders. If the Kenyan team had better understood the Ugandan situation, they would not have hurried the signing of the agreement – or even rushed the parties to the negotiating table.

Relationship with the negotiators. The mediators' relationships with the main leaders of the parties in conflict can shape the outcomes of the negotiation process. Intensive contact and dialogue with key leaders is absolutely necessary to build this relationship. Meeting these figures in their own territory – even if this involves travel to the bush – can provide a better understanding of the personalities involved. Greater mutual understanding of each party's point of view and aspirations can emerge through unstructured and informal dialogue, unrestricted to any particular subject but covering a full range of issues. In addition to building relations between the parties to conflict and the mediators, it is vital to establish communication and understanding between representatives of the parties. Because it is often difficult for these leaders to communicate directly, 'back channel diplomacy' through the efforts of a third party can be helpful. In the Nairobi process these relationships were never forged.

Understanding of the primary parties. The mediators did not assess the internal power structure of the NRM/A. They did not know the key figures or their views on the talks. Nor did they know whether the leaders were in full control of their fighters and therefore capable of 'delivering' their constituencies to fulfil commitments made in any agreement. The perils became clear for the Nairobi mediators when, at Museveni's request, they met the NRA high command in Kabale. They shredded the Nairobi Agreement documents, demonstrating that they would never share power with the generals they did not respect.

Secondary parties. It is extremely difficult to sustain an insurgency without at least a degree of tacit support from external and internal sources. In this case, it appears that Burundi, Rwanda and Libya were involved as key secondary 'stakeholders' backing one or other of the primary parties. Yet the Kenyan team failed to assess the interests of other countries in the region and their support for the parties, and therefore could not ascertain whether they would support a negotiated settlement. If these countries had been supportive, the team could have used their leverage to induce commitment and to provide insurance for the agreement.

Motivation for negotiations. It would also have been helpful for the Kenyan team to ascertain at the very beginning whether the government and NRM/A genuinely wanted a negotiated settlement. There was no unequivocal commitment to a peaceful solution. The parties used the process to advance their own interests. It



A UPDF soldier rides atop a 'Buffalo' military vehicle

Source: ARLPI

appears that they wanted a ceasefire in order to reorganise and supply their forces. They also used the talks to present a positive image to the world. Facilitators need to be well aware of alternative agendas which can derail and damage the process if they are to avoid the collapse of dialogue.

Inter-governmental organisations. Kenya undertook the peace process on its own without other local or international observers to witness the process or give advice. The involvement of international organisations could have added moral and political weight to an agreement. It is difficult for the negotiating parties to ignore the opinion of third parties with international stature and influence. Their involvement can help ensure commitment to the agreements reached, particularly if the institutions lend their credibility and resources by becoming political and moral guarantors of the agreement.

If the Kenyan team had taken these issues into account, the outcome of the talks might have been different. Of course, given the relative distance between the positions of the parties, and the NRA's capacity to achieve an outright military victory, it might still have proved impossible to reach a settlement. Yet had it been possible to broaden the support base of the process to ensure wider legitimacy, and to craft an agreement that addressed the principal issues, needs and aspirations in the conflict, Uganda might have avoided the unending war of attrition that followed the collapse of the Nairobi Agreement. Instead, the failure to implement and honour the commitments made in Nairobi became a source of distrust and mutual suspicion between the parties that has lingered ever since.

The peace process in northern Uganda 1986-1990

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Growth of a rebellion

The Uganda People's Democratic Movement/Army (UPDM/A) was the first armed opposition to Yoweri Museveni's government. Its leadership was mainly drawn from former Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) soldiers from Gulu and Kitgum districts, where its operations were concentrated. Formed in July 1986, it launched its first attacks against the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) that August. Four months later, a second armed movement – Alice Auma Lakwenya's Holy Spirit Mobile Force (HSMF), precursor of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) – emerged in Acholiland.

Human rights abuses were important in the origins of the war in Acholiland. When the victorious NRA arrived in Gulu and Kitgum in March 1986, it called on former UNLA soldiers who had resettled in their villages to hand over their weapons. Some did so, reporting directly to the NRA. Others reported with their guns to members of the recently established Resistance Council (local administrative structures established by the NRM/A) or to church leaders, whom they trusted more.

At first, NRA soldiers in Gulu were well-disciplined and respectful. However, serious breakdowns in discipline occurred among troops supervising the surrender of firearms. Some former UNLA soldiers were arrested and mistreated, and torture was alleged to be widespread. Killings were reported, although the number of dead is not known. Some former soldiers were taken away for 'political re-education' and never seen again. Fears in Acholiland were further fuelled by the order on 10 May 1986 for all former UNLA soldiers to report to NRA military headquarters in Kampala. Few could forget a similar order during the Idi Amin era that led to the massacre of Acholi soldiers. Many began to believe that the NRM government was determined to victimise the Acholi people and some began to mobilise to fight the government. Many Acholis supported them.



NRA soldiers often justified their looting and harassment of civilians as revenge for the abuses allegedly committed by Acholi UNLA soldiers in the Luwero triangle during the previous five years. They would tell people, 'We are recovering our properties from Luwero.' This reinforced perceptions that the NRA/M viewed people from the north as its enemies. More than 40 people were murdered in August in Namokora, north-east of Kitgum, by an NRA battalion largely composed of former Federal Democratic Movement of Uganda (FEDEMU) soldiers who saw Namokora simply as the home of Tito Okello, commander of the army that had tortured them. A similar pattern of incidents and interpretations led to the outbreak of insurgency in Teso and Lango in February 1987. As the UPDA/NRA conflict flared, many unarmed civilians were arrested. Those arrested in battle areas were taken as 'prisoners of war'. Some of these were former UNLA soldiers, who claimed to have no association with the emerging rebel group. Nevertheless, with or without mistreatment by the NRA, some of the former UNLA soldiers might still have posed problems for the government and local population simply because they still had arms.

The move towards peace

The first sustained effort to negotiate an end to the violence began on 31 October 1986, when a civil society 'goodwill peace mission' went to meet the UPDM/A in the bush after receiving President Museveni's endorsement. Tiberio Okeny Atwoma, an Acholi elder and politician, led the five-man team. He said they initiated the peace move because the conflict was causing much bloodshed and a humanitarian crisis was looming.

The team members hoped the UPDM/A command, largely composed of Acholi fighters, would be willing to talk to fellow Acholis. After a 145-day trip through Kitgum district and up to Juba in southern Sudan and back again, they prepared a report for Museveni and the NRM. They recommended talks between the government and the UPDM/A military leaders. The report also recommended the exclusion of UPDM political leaders based abroad. The UPDM/A felt that the exiles – with the exception of the external coordinator, Colonel Wilson Owiny Omoya – had not effectively supported them. It is not clear whether the idea of excluding the exiled politicians (who were not yet effectively organised as a political wing) came from the UPDM/A or from the peace team. At a press conference in Kampala in March 1987 the peace

team said the UPDM/A recognised only Col Omoya. The peace team also recommended an amnesty for the fighters. The government eventually agreed to both recommendations. By May, Parliament passed a general Amnesty Act. Ex-soldiers and intelligence officers who served under the former regimes and opposition fighters would not be prosecuted for such crimes as treason, theft or torture; but people who committed murder, kidnap with intent to murder, or rape would stand trial. Many UPDA fighters saw this 'partial amnesty' as a trick rather than a gesture of goodwill before the peace talks.

NRA-UPDA peace talks

In November 1987, Museveni signalled to Maj. Gen. Salim Saleh, his younger brother and the NRA's Chief of Combat and Operations, to start talking to the UPDM/A. Saleh contacted the UPDA soldiers through civilian 'co-ordinators.'

It took four months, from November 1987 to March 1988, for the parties to consult and build enough mutual trust, through sporadic contacts and correspondence, to establish mechanisms for negotiations. However, this period was not without its mishaps. For instance, Lt Steven Obote, one of two UPDM/A officers co-ordinating the peace efforts with the NRA, was 'accidentally' killed by the NRA in March 1988, as he tried to organise a meeting between senior UPDM/A officers and NRA commanders. His relatives believe he was killed deliberately, and that if top UPDM/A commanders had been present they would all have been killed. Obote's death, however, did not ultimately impede the talks.

A notable feature of the process was that it was driven by army-to-army negotiations. NRM government officials and the external political wing of the UPDM were both left out, apparently because the soldiers believed that the politicians, known for their uncompromising attitudes, might obstruct the negotiations. The NRA and UPDM/A considered themselves field men who had seen the human suffering behind the conflict: disease, hunger, death and destruction. They were determined to end the bloodshed and the enormous human suffering.

Communication between the UPDM/A on the ground and its external wing was very limited. When Charles Alai, UPDM Chairman in Gulu, was asked at a conference of Acholis in Kampala on 16 April why the external wing of the UPDM was not involved, he declared that they had 'no room for opportunists'. For their part, the leadership in exile felt excluded from the negotiation process and therefore opposed it. These divisions created unfinished business for the peace process.

Part of the reason the UPDM/A had so little respect for their exiled political leadership was that the military wing directed the military campaign and controlled the organisation. The politicians were seen as only talking from abroad over the BBC from the comfort of their London homes. With some exceptions they gave little material support to the UPDM/A on the ground. The open split between the UPDA soldiers and the UPDM politicians in exile was an obvious weakness which the NRM exploited. Several times in March-April 1988, Museveni claimed that he was not a politician, but an intellectual. He also averted anger and impatience among the NRA by showing the public that he was in favour of peace talks.

Peace talks between the NRA and the UPDM/A opened on 17 March 1988, at the Acholi Inn in Gulu, with the joint declaration of a ceasefire. At the first meeting, elder Vincent Olanya chaired the talks, with elder Eliya Obita as secretary. The NRA team was led by Salim Saleh. The UPDM/A delegation was led by Lt Col John Angelo Okello, Commander of UPDA Division One in Gulu, accompanied by Maj. Mike Kilama and Charles Alai. Significantly, the UPDA's overall commander, Brigadier Justine Odong Latek, was absent, although the negotiators said that he backed the talks. The UPDM/A said they had been forced to take up arms against the government because of human rights abuses committed by NRA soldiers. Additionally, some fled and joined the insurrection because of false reports by local government collaborators who accused them of having concealed caches of arms and of being involved in anti-government activities.

NRA commanders Col Pecos Kuteesa and Lt Col Julius Aine conceded that violations may have occurred, but stressed that these were not government policy. Major Gen. Saleh observed that there were 'bad elements' within the NRA who committed atrocities and that 'this reflected badly on the NRA, which was a decent and disciplined army.'

The delegates produced what Saleh described as a 'draft agreement' that required ratification by both high commands. This first meeting focused on jobs for ex-combatants, and the promotion and integration of UPDA soldiers into the NRA. The second round of talks was held the next afternoon in a closed environment and further talks took place on 20–21 March 1988. In this round the elders were excluded because the UPDM/A and the NRA both believed they were too closely associated with the 'old politicians who would seek to confuse them'. The UPDM/A and some sections of Acholi civil society, represented by certain elders, were divided on their views on the insurgency and how to achieve peace. Those closely allied to the government through the local Resistance Council structures had campaigned for a

surrender, whereas the UPDM/A wanted to stop fighting under a peace agreement. Saleh later blamed the then information minister, Abubakar Mayanja, for sounding an alarm over Radio Uganda and Uganda Television that 'amnesty is expiring on 31 March. Run, run for your life'. Saleh said that this could have jeopardised the peace process.

At the end of the negotiations, on 21 March, Kilama and Saleh emerged from the Acholi Inn boardroom visibly pleased with developments at the negotiation table. 'The NRA and the former armies are united,' commented Saleh. 'We shall not allow politicians to confuse us. We agreed that the army should stay outside politics. We had been formerly misused and we had been the losers.' Saleh said later, however, that the two armies hoped that the politicians would join them at a later stage after the soldiers had resolved their differences.

These talks resulted in agreement on several principles. First, there would be an immediate ceasefire and UPDA troops would receive cash ration allowances – to signal the start of integration. Recruitment into the NRA would be open to all UPDA soldiers without any form of victimisation so as to create one national army. Appointments to military rank made by any Ugandan head of state would be retained – subject to confirmation by Museveni and after scrutiny of the individual soldiers. Together they would tackle the Holy Spirit Movement alliance (HSM) fighters of Joseph Kony and Severino Lukoya – who were by then fighting both the NRA and the UPDM/A – and the problem of Karamajong cattle rustling. According to Kilama, 'We are coming out fully to join government but not as those who have surrendered. We are coming to join hands with the NRA to work and rebuild our nation.'

As news of the negotiations spread, sharp – but mostly private – criticism was voiced by politicians who seemed to resent the army's move. Many doubted that Museveni and other NRM leaders had approved the talks. Some, in southern Uganda in particular, believed that the UPDA should surrender unconditionally. Some in the UPDM/A wanted to continue the struggle for a military victory, arguing that the failure of the 1985 Nairobi agreement showed that the NRM could not be trusted. UPDA overall commander Odong Latek reportedly denied authorising the negotiations and reaffirmed the military campaign. Despite this, many ordinary civilians and soldiers seemed encouraged at the prospect of peace in Acholiland.

Meeting with Museveni

The ceasefire agreed to at the Gulu talks held and the two forces began to cooperate on regional security, addressing cattle rustling in particular. Several weeks later,

a delegation of two UPDM/A representatives and six elders travelled from Gulu to meet Museveni in Entebbe on 9 April 1988. A separate delegation of about eight UPDM/A officers was flown to Kampala to tour the area and see the developments that had taken place in the south since 1986. The UPDM/A delegation advocated the immediate integration of soldiers from different parts of the country into the NRA to prevent further human rights violations. Their argument was that field commanders would hesitate to order abuses if their forces included people from the area concerned. They also asked for measures to help rehabilitate and develop Acholiland and for political and socio-economic reform in Uganda.

After a three-hour meeting between the UPDM/A representatives and Museveni, a presidential pardon was declared for troops who 'surrendered' – the amnesty had already expired. The UPDA soldiers demanded the release of prisoners of war and a waiver of taxes for Gulu and Kitgum districts for two years. The President accordingly suspended graduated taxation in Acholi. Several days later, Museveni wrote to the UPDM/A high command, calling on them to join in the reconstruction and development of the country and reassuring them that continued NRA deployment was not aimed at them. Museveni's support for the talks remained ambiguous and appeals were made to him at the time to talk to the UPDM external political wing to win their official support for the peace process.

First efforts at dialogue with Kony

While Museveni held talks with the elders and the UPDM/A delegation at Entebbe, NRA and HSM commanders met at the Acholi Inn, thanks in part to the efforts of the two elders who had helped to coordinate the NRA-UPDM/A talks. HSM Commander James Kidega said, 'our coming to town shows that peace cannot be achieved only through one way. The armed struggle should be a last resort. That is why we are trying to establish a ceasefire.' It was at this time the Holy Spirit groups of Joseph Kony, Severino Okoya and Philip Ojuk merged. In June, Kony wrote a letter to Col Kuteesa of the NRA requesting a meeting. Kuteesa observed that Kony did not want to be left out, that he wanted to talk peace and did not want to see more people dying. But owing to an alleged breakdown in communications, NRA mobile forces attacked Kony before the talks could begin. An Anglican priest, Abel Okumu, who attempted to broker dialogue at this time, was labelled a traitor by the HSM and killed shortly afterwards. Senior NRA commanders found it difficult to grasp the HSM's ideology. Saleh said that they 'should come back to reality first before they talk to us'. The failure of these initiatives was to have lasting consequences. Fighters loyal to Kony resumed their raids on civilian and NRA targets.

Fragmentation and consolidation

Although talks between the NRA and the HSM collapsed, negotiations between the UPDM and the NRA were accelerating. In a move intended to deepen trust between the NRA and UPDM, on 25 April Saleh flew to UPDM headquarters to meet Latek. Saleh was accompanied only by Lt Col Aine and UPDA commanders – despite Museveni's concern at the security risk. When Saleh returned, he spoke positively of the meeting. He was reassured that Latek supported the peace process and dissociated himself from the earlier statement rejecting it.

After this meeting, the UPDM/A and NRA continued to discuss implementation of the draft agreement. Yet the process remained controversial and the UPDM/A's internal tensions continued. On 8 May 1988, the UPDM/A called a press conference to announce that it had voted Odong Latek out of the overall command and replaced him with Lt Col Okello. They also voted out the UPDM/A chair, former Prime Minister Eric Otema Allimadi, and dissociated themselves from the political wing, the UPDM, which had denounced the talks. It seemed that Latek, who had remained distant from the trust-building process between the NRA and the UPDM/A, retained his distrust in the negotiations. The UPDM/A commented that while UPDM leaders had made disparaging comments about their peace initiative on foreign broadcasts, Museveni had cordially received their delegation. Moreover, Acholi in Uganda had warmly welcomed the talks. At the end of the press conference, Okello announced that they would sign the peace agreement as soon as most of the points agreed in principle were implemented. After this, the UPDA and the NRA formed a joint force, replacing the NRA mobile units, to address local security issues. This demonstrated that they could cooperate effectively, thus further consolidating trust.

The Pece Peace Accord

On 3 June 1988, the peace agreement was signed in Pece stadium Gulu before about 5,000 people. The agreement called for:

- cessation of hostilities between the NRM and the UPDM/A, integration of the UPDM/A into the NRA/NRM, and release of prisoners of war;
- resettlement of displaced people and rehabilitation of infrastructure destroyed by the war;
- establishment of a government endorsed by the people of Uganda, an expansion of Parliament, and a Constituent Assembly to discuss a new constitution.

Certain provisions of the agreement were implemented immediately, notably the release of prisoners of war and the integration of UPDM/A combatants into the NRA.

Despite the deployment of some ex-UPDA troops and their commanders in the northern districts, the peace process was beset by setbacks and some members of Acholi civil society and former UPDA commanders felt betrayed by it.

An event that undermined trust in the NRM throughout Acholiland was the killing of Mike Kilama (ex-UPDA), who was widely respected throughout the north, by NRA border troops in February 1990. The circumstances of his death remain mysterious. It occurred at a time when a number of soldiers, including former UPDA officers, were arrested on suspicion of plotting a coup. It is unclear whether Kilama was involved – people close to him deny it – but it seems he feared arrest and may have attempted to flee. The government never issued an official explanation for Kilama's death nor demonstrated regret.

Capt. Majid Atiku, a battalion commander based in Moroto, also fled the country during that period, as did Maj. Walter Odoch, who survived a grenade attack on his house. Atiku went to the former Zaire (now DRC). The government made the mistake of trying to make arrests at a time when goodwill and trust were at a premium. Perhaps confident of its position after reaching agreement with the UPDM/A and having deployed them under its command, the government felt strong enough to take any action it deemed appropriate.

Many of those arrested later died in prison. This severely eroded the popular trust in the government that had been generated by the peace process. Then former UPDA soldiers were re-deployed away from Gulu and Kitgum to stations in the south, leading to rumours that they had been arrested or even killed. Moreover, the government's failure fully to implement the development and rehabilitation projects envisioned in the agreement gave the impression that it lacked a firm commitment to development in the north, or even had a hidden agenda to 'under-develop' it.

The Pece Agreement did not end the war in Acholiland. The HSM continued its armed struggle supported by people who distrusted the NRM, as did a faction of the UPDA led by Latek with support from the exiled UPDM. Kony's HSM also abducted former fighters who sought to return home. Insecurity continued in the region.

The government's counter-insurgency campaign increasingly threatened the lives and livelihoods of people in Acholiland and allegations of atrocities resurfaced. The government's stated aim was to 'annihilate the rebels'. Part of the strategy was to deny them access to food – by destroying civilian food stocks and domestic animals – and other resources that could strengthen them politically, economically and militarily. In October 1988, the government began the mass evacuation of civilians from war zones without providing



UPDF official Dr. Akena Adoko addresses a public meeting in Gulu in September 1990 to explain the Addis Accord and peace initiative

Source: Ben Ochan

adequately for their basic care. Thus, in the months following the peace agreement, the war's impact on civilians became much more severe and widespread.

The UPDM and the Addis Accord

Nevertheless, in August 1989 the NRM leadership initiated secret contacts with UPDM leaders in London, Nairobi, Lusaka and elsewhere in an effort to negotiate a final agreement. The NRM's envoy, Ateker Ejalu, had been involved in the peace process between the Uganda People's Army (UPA) rebels and the NRM in Teso in 1986–1990. The UPDM delegation was led by Otema Allimadi. Ejalu started by informing them that the government was extending a full amnesty, and invited them to come home or at least feel free to return and participate in rebuilding the country. The UPDM identified its main grievances as harassment of the northern people, lack of development in the north, and dismissal of northerners from public service. After months of negotiation, a compromise was reached, and on 14 July 1990 the Addis Accord was agreed. It provided that all UPDM soldiers and officers should leave their operational bases under their respective commanders. The UPDM also agreed to participate in the constitution-making and political debates taking place in the country.

Interviewed at the time of the signing of the agreement Allimadi said 'he would have a persuasive influence on the Holy Spirit faction of Joseph Kony'. He first returned to Uganda in 1990 and then came back to settle in 1992. When interviewed in February 1999, he indicated that the government had fulfilled all provisions of the agreement. He said, 'The most important thing was that I would come and government would look after my security. This was fulfilled.' But he was disappointed that the rebels still fighting in northern Uganda did not heed his call. 'I thought my presence here and the calls I had been making to them to return home would be effective. And I must say I was disappointed.'

Conclusion

Despite peace efforts, war has continued in Acholi between the NRA, now known as the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), and Kony's LRA. Tens of thousands of people have been killed or maimed and more than 350,000 are still displaced. A whole generation of children has been denied access to basic education.

Since for the last fifteen years the military solution has not worked and is unlikely to work in the near future, there is a need for the government to actively promote dialogue and reconciliation with the rebels and with the local people in war-affected areas. It should declare its commitment to a peaceful resolution of the conflict at both national and regional levels. The process of dialogue and reconciliation should involve all the armed groups, government, local political leaders, elders, opinion leaders, religious leaders and others. If ending the war is a matter of urgency, there is a need for multi-faceted approaches.

LRA / Government negotiations 1993-94

Billie O'Kadameri

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By the early 1990s, insurgencies in Lango and in Teso had largely ended but the war in Acholiland continued to intensify as the armed movement led by Joseph Kony consolidated its military capacity, with ever growing humanitarian and military costs. It became increasingly clear to the government that something needed to be done to end the conflict. The talks between representatives of Museveni's government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) between November 1993 and February 1994 were perhaps the most significant initiative by the government to engage directly with the LRA in political negotiations to end the war. But negotiations collapsed abruptly before a final agreement could be reached. This article examines the period leading up to these talks, the course of the negotiations and the events around their collapse, as well as initiatives to resume talks later that year.

Military evolution of Kony's forces

Joseph Kony established his group as a formidable military force in 1988. The new group was named the United Holy Salvation Army (UHSA) in an apparent attempt to distance it from the defunct Holy Spirit Mobile Force (HSMF), which had disbanded after Alice 'Lakwena' was defeated in November 1987. The speed of Lakwena's downfall, and the outright military defeat of the HSMF, reinforced confidence in the Ugandan army that any 'replay of the Holy Spirit war' would meet the same fate as the Lakwena rebellion. The emergence of Kony's force therefore did not worry the army initially.

Contrary to expectations, however, Kony's forces were strengthened following a combination of forced recruitment of the remnants of the UPDA rebels and Lakwena's lost rear forces, and daring attacks against the government troops in Gulu district in 1988-89. In late 1988, the NRA suffered a series of minor but militarily significant setbacks in rebel attacks. With news of such apparent rebel heroics, the population in Acholiland, many of whom were anti-Museveni, slowly began to believe that Kony was capable of causing trouble for the regime in Kampala.



Government's response

As the armed conflict intensified in the north, the government responded by stepping up its military campaign to destroy the insurgency and by creating political infrastructure to coordinate a response to the crisis in the region. During a cabinet reshuffle in mid-1988, Museveni created a new ministerial post to address the rebellion in Acholi. He chose one of his Acholi confidantes, Betty Bigombe, as 'Minister of State for Pacification of Northern Uganda, Resident in Gulu'. But the controversial connotations of the term 'pacification' soon resulted in the revision of the title to 'Minister of State in Office of the Prime Minister, Resident in Northern Uganda'.

It seemed Bigombe was sent to Acholi not to negotiate peace, but to convince remnants of the insurgents to come out of the bush. For five years most of what she did was to encourage the locals to tell their sons to give up the rebellion. The decision to start talking peace was a personal one by Bigombe, not backed by any official policy to end the war through dialogue.

Bigombe developed a reputation as a grassroots mobiliser, determined to make her mark in the area in spite of the cultural prejudice she endured in her first years as Minister (a woman trying to end a war between men). By the time she began to plan for talks with the

LRA, she had established a reputation among ordinary Acholi as someone who could be trusted to handle the issue, although many Acholi remained sceptical about the overall intentions of the government.

Led by Col Peter Kerim, the NRA was meanwhile reshuffled to enable it to deal a decisive blow to the LRA. Although the military operations from mid-1989 weakened the LRA massively, Kerim was not able to secure the complete defeat desired by Museveni. Col Samuel Wasswa subsequently replaced Kerim as 4th Division Commander.

In 1990, Minister of State for Defence Maj. Gen. David Tinyefuza, who was the NRA's chief military combat strategist, was sent to northern Uganda to achieve a final military victory over Kony's forces. The military operations that began on 31 March 1991 later became known as 'Operation North'. During the operation there were reports of arbitrary arrests and detentions and blanket cordon and search operations intended to net the so-called 'rebel collaborators', which in the end generated resentment against the army and the government. Tinyefuza was recalled by President Museveni and subsequently dismissed in 1992.

By 1992 Kony's group had been renamed the United Democratic Christian Movement/Army (UDCM/A) – later to become the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The UDCA

had, in the NRA's words, been reduced 'to hundreds instead of thousands'. Nevertheless, a sizeable contingent and a core of the leadership survived and occasionally attacked both civilian and military targets, especially in Gulu, including the abductions of 44 girls from Sacred Heart Secondary School and St. Mary's Girls School, both near Gulu. It was evident that the government knew that although Kony's armed movement had been weakened, it was still capable of causing trouble

In response, in 1992 Bigombe initiated village-based self-defence vigilante outfits known as 'Arrow Groups', a loose assortment of male villagers without central command, through which locals were supposed to protect themselves against attacks by rebels. Bigombe and the local government functionaries argued that if the UDCA fighters were poorly armed, which was partly true, then local people should not allow themselves to be taken captive or killed. In response, rebels targeted villagers in brutal reprisals.

The rebels had killed civilians suspected of government cooperation in the past, but the targeted killings of a more brutal nature became increasingly prominent immediately after the end of 'Operation North'. The attacks on civilians, though a direct reaction to the creation of the 'Arrow Groups', were not intended merely to eliminate government supporters among the villagers. They also appear to have been a regimented attempt at winning support by instilling fear of revenge if people did not cooperate with the rebels.

Initiating contact

Bigombe was having tea with Col Wasswa one evening in June 1993 when discussion turned to the rebellion. She asked Wasswa for documents captured from the rebels indicating their collaborators in Gulu. The next day Wasswa sent her hundreds of exercise books obtained from Kony's fighters over a five-year period. Leafing through these documents, she identified a couple of key people mentioned repeatedly. One was based in Kitgum and the other, Yusuf Okwonga Adek, was based in Gulu. Bigombe sought more information on Adek and learned that he was one of Kony's most trusted friends and advisors. Adek had been detained previously at Luzira prison on charges of collaborating with rebels but was released and returned to his home near Gulu town.

At this initial stage, Bigombe did not tell the army that she intended to make contact with Kony's group. She invited Adek to a discreet meeting where they discussed the origins of the rebellion and the reasons why it continued. She asked Adek's view on how to bring it to an end without spilling more blood. Adek was enthusiastic and they held three more meetings that week. It gave Bigombe an opportunity to learn more about the enigmatic Joseph Kony – of whom little was known even to government officials detailed to fight and defeat him.

Bigombe assured Adek that the government wanted to talk to Kony and asked if he could act as the intermediary. Adek was told he could travel through the bush to reach Kony's camp without fear of being held or harmed by the NRA. Bigombe wrote a letter to Kony, for delivery by Adek. After a week, he returned with a letter from Kony acknowledging receipt of Bigombe's letter and indicating that he needed 'to receive guidance from the Holy Spirit' and would respond if Adek returned in three weeks.

Previous efforts by various leaders to initiate contact with the insurgents had generally ended in failure. Intermediaries claiming to have close contacts were usually frauds who demanded goods such as money, bicycles, or the return of cows, in return for letters purportedly written by rebel commanders – most of them fake. The letters that Adek brought from the bush therefore came under close scrutiny, but were found to be genuine. Bigombe believed that Adek was honest, and he never asked for more funds than he would need for the job and sometimes never asked for anything at all, arguing that nobody needed money to buy anything in the jungle.

Engaging the NRA in the process

By the time Bigombe initiated contact with Joseph Kony, she had not informed even the President that such a process was underway. It is not certain whether Division Commander Col Wasswa had informed the head of state either. Knowing she had found solid ground, Bigombe consulted with Museveni, who encouraged her to proceed but to liaise with the army to avoid uncoordinated movements. When she consulted key figures in the army, some were cautiously enthusiastic, while others wanted her to 'negotiate the surrender of the rebels'. She argued her case by promising that a negotiated peace was more cost-effective than a military one.

Col Wasswa, whose support remained constant throughout the process, in turn briefed Brigadier Joram Mugume, NRA Chief of Combat Operations and Lt Col Fred Toolit, Director of Military Intelligence. They told him that Bigombe could continue her initiative without compromising army operations, which would continue as though no contacts were being made and would, in fact, be intensified to further weaken the rebels.

Again, Bigombe did not seem discouraged and went on with the initiative convinced it would take a tangible result for some of the army chiefs to recognise the virtues of the initiative. She also knew the President would rein in the commanders when the hour of reckoning came. She did not, however, make these 'internal contradictions' known to the LRA, fearing the rebels might abandon the process if they got the slightest hint that the government side was not acting in unison. Contrary to popular belief, Bigombe believed, and said so, that the President

encouraged the initiative, although he did not openly support the initiative in order not to appear to have 'failed in defeating the rebels'.

It is clear that supporting the process would give the President two important advantages. If he allowed the initiative to continue, its limitations notwithstanding, and if it succeeded, he would quieten those who had always accused him of being militaristic and of never exploring peaceful solutions to conflicts. If the talks failed, he could still parade the initiative as an example of his government's attempts at ending the war peacefully 'which was derailed by the bandits who never knew what they wanted except to continue killing people'.

Pre-negotiations and confidence-building

By October 1993, the two sides were discussing the modalities and security arrangements for the first meeting. Courting the unknown, Bigombe was willing at this stage to comply with the demands made by Kony's group to begin face-to-face negotiations.

Security arrangements for the talks proved difficult, but were central to confidence-building. The army was extremely nervous about the risks. In 1987, while on a peace mission in Teso, three government ministers were abducted and held by Teso insurgents and one minister was killed in the crossfire when the army mounted a rescue operation. The army did not want Bigombe to meet a similar fate and refused to allow her to go unarmed. This issue delayed the setting of the meeting date for days. The LRA eventually yielded, indicating that they would trust Bigombe and 'her soldiers' to maintain security but that Bigombe would be held responsible if anything untoward happened. An intermediary further informed Bigombe that he was not sure whether Kony would attend the first meeting or even whether any of his senior commanders would attend. A meeting was set nonetheless.

During this period, Kony attended a funeral held close to the army barracks and spent the night nearby. Apparently, Kony had the impression the army knew of his presence but did not attack because talks were being organised. This contributed significantly to his confidence in the process.

The first Pagik meeting

The first face-to-face negotiations between the LRA and government representatives took place on 25 November 1993 at Pagik, in the Aswa region of Gulu. In addition to her army bodyguards, Bigombe was accompanied, at the LRA's suggestion, by several elders, including Yusuf Adek, as well as the author who was responsible for recording the proceedings. The NRA's Wasswa, Toolit and their aides also accompanied Bigombe. Upon arrival Bigombe

seemed taken aback that only middle-ranking officers of the LRA were sent for such a historic contact. The delegation was selected apparently as a snub to the army's insistence on guarding the event, but they brought with them a tape-recorded message from Kony.

The LRA opened the proceedings with prayers led by their 'Director of Religious Affairs' Jenaro Bongomin. He indicated that Kony sent their delegation in response to the letters exchanged with Bigombe. Bigombe said that she had initiated the peace talks because of the suffering and insecurity experienced by Acholi as a result of the war. She pointed out that economic and social development would be blocked unless the war ended. The LRA team noted that they saw this first get-together as a contact meeting; if it went well proper talks for discussing the modalities for peace would follow. An LRA Commander, Cirilo Jurukadri Odego, insisted that if the talks were to succeed, then 'old wounds should not be reopened' and that the LRA 'should not be publicly blamed for what occurred in the past because what is happening now marks a new beginning'. They declared they had come to the talks in good faith and would therefore not present any conditions to the government. They nevertheless had a number of requests.

They asked for the past to be forgotten and a general amnesty given to all the fighters. They insisted that the LRA should not be seen as a defeated force but as people who had responded positively to the peace initiative because the LRA itself wanted peace. They asserted that they were not 'surrendering' but 'returning home', and they did not want to be referred to as 'rebels' but as 'people'. The delegation described why they had begun their struggle, that they were fighting those who had rejected the way of God and therefore had to struggle against both the NRA and UPDA fighters. They further claimed the UPDA surrendered to the NRA in 1988 in order to return to battle against the LRA from a point of advantage and to avenge their earlier defeats. They insisted the negotiations should therefore exclude former UPDA officials.

Furthermore, they asked the NRA to cease hostilities in order to allow the LRA to organise their men for 'return'. They noted that the ceasefire they had requested the previous month by letter to Bigombe and Wasswa had been granted. They now wanted the government to formalise it. The LRA also wanted the opportunity to bring in their fighters from elsewhere, 'including from Kenya and Europe'. Referring to the earlier experience of UPDA demobilisation, they claimed that if these 'scattered' fighters were ignored then fighting would continue again at sometime in the future. 'If you don't allow us to bring out all our men, it means you want us to come and turn around fighting our own brothers in another war', said Jenaro Bongomin. They also demanded that the government treat their sick and wounded in

government hospitals under the supervision of government and LRA officers. In return, they indicated their desire to open clinics in Acholi to treat diseases like AIDS, for which they claimed to have a cure. Because of the blood shed between LRA and NRA fighters, they recommended a formal traditional ritual performed by selected Acholi elders. Such a ritual could then 'formally mark a reunion between brothers who were once enemies.' They issued assurances that Kony himself, without whom no binding decision could be made in the LRA, would attend the next meeting.

In response to these requests, Bigombe promised the LRA delegation that the existing general amnesty and presidential pardon would cover them. She assured the delegation that no one in this war could be categorised as either victor or vanquished. Emphasizing that 'the government is very sincere in its attempts to have you back home' she agreed that the past should be forgiven. She asked the LRA to establish the exact number of their sick and injured so treatment in government hospitals could be arranged. She also agreed not to bring former UPDA members to the talks.

Bigombe further indicated that although they understood that the LRA would need time to reorganise themselves for a formal return, the process should occur within a set time frame and as quickly as possible. Wasswa said the NRA on its part would order its troops to avoid operations against the LRA, who would be given an area in which to freely operate and regroup. Interestingly, both the LRA and NRA negotiators expressed their concern that a 'third force' might try to sabotage these arrangements in order to wreck the process, and they both agreed on the need to be vigilant to prevent this.

The day-long proceedings agreed on the arrangements for the next meeting and allowed LRA commanders to present their case and explain their cause. Bigombe did the majority of the talking, but Wasswa and Toolit also participated. Although intended as a confidence-building contact, the meeting turned into a negotiation session with the exchange of demands and offers. The tone was cordial and, by the end, all agreed they had gone far and paved the way for the next, bigger meeting that would include Kony. Confidence had been established to the point where the LRA was later able to send their representatives to the NRA's Gulu barracks, where Bigombe lived, to discuss the progress of the talks.

Bigombe's team initially felt that the absence of Kony and most of his senior commanders at the first talks was a snub. They were later told that 'the ear, the soul and one of the brains behind Kony's movement' was Jenaro Bongomin, who had led the prayers. He was the only person present when 'the Holy Spirit descended' upon Kony in 1987 and was among Kony's closest confidantes. Other participants were also key figures. Jackson Achama

served as a Kony's personal secretary, Yardin Tolbert Nyeko – later to become one of the highest-ranking LRA officers – his close aide, as was Cirilo Jurukadri Odego, a former UPDA officer from West Nile.

Government caution

In the weeks after the Pagik meeting the NRA became increasingly interested in the talks. It soon became apparent that Col Wasswa – who had gone out of his way to use his budget to fund the peace process and to buy clothes, food and medicine for the LRA – was under considerable pressure. Brigadier Mugume and Lt Col Toolit indicated their concern that Bigombe had 'caved in too much' to LRA demands. Bigombe was also under political pressure. Her immediate boss, Prime Minister George Cosmas Adyebo, refused to give her the logistical and even public political support necessary to conduct the peace process. This may have been due to political differences, exacerbated by concerns over who would receive recognition for resolving the conflict in northern Uganda and over who was the pre-eminent politician of the north.

Bigombe was also under pressure not to over-publicise the progress made in the talks. There seemed to be some apprehension in government circles that over-publicising the talks would generate too much public expectation, and that if anything went wrong the government would be held responsible. Nevertheless, expectations grew among local people. They could see a marked change in the behaviour of the LRA and therefore supported the talks.

It is imperative to note the ad hoc nature of this process. At no time were the top army leadership including the President, willing to tell Bigombe unambiguously that she was doing the right thing and had their full support. It was clear that the army believed the President supported the initiative as he had not come out against it, but he had not clearly directed the army on what to do, how to cooperate and to what level. The lack of substantive political directive and guidance from President Museveni at this point left open to speculation his own motives regarding the process.

Stand-off over security

Three days prior to the scheduled meeting between Bigombe and the LRA 'top' leadership, a meeting was held with senior Acholi politicians and elders, among them former Ugandan Head of State General Tito Okello Lutwa and former Prime Minister and UPDM leader Eric Otema-Allimadi. Two LRA commanders also participated but were verbally attacked by Tito Okello, who condemned their atrocities against Acholi. Allimadi did not say much at this meeting although he was quoted as having spoken elsewhere condemning the rebels.



LRA commanders and soldiers performing battle ritual

Source: Billie O'Kadameri

The LRA had expressed their wish to talk to the religious leaders in Acholiland, who were subsequently invited to attend the meeting between the government and the LRA. Anglican and Muslim leadership were willing to participate, with Rev. Macleod Baker Ochola and Sheikh Ochaya chosen to represent their respective faiths. Local Catholic authorities were, however, unwilling to send a representative. Why the Catholic Church took this stand remains unclear, but it was perhaps linked to the initial months of the UPDA rebellion when a senior Italian Catholic priest was accused by the security forces of aiding the rebels and was then deported. Another Catholic priest, the Canadian Fr Paul Donohue, based in Kitgum, was almost deported during 'Operation North' for similar reasons. On the other hand, the Catholic Church had also lost some of its priests at the hands of the LRA – including Fr Egidio Biscaro, who was killed at Pajule, and Cyril Obol, killed on the Gulu-Kitgum road – and therefore seemed hostile to the rebel group as well. Following this rejection the LRA became increasingly hostile to both the Gulu Catholic Church and the former political leaders.

On 10 January 1994, the negotiators met again in Pagik. But unresolved questions about security arrangements for the talks nearly caused them to collapse. The LRA had indicated that they wanted to be solely responsible for the maintenance of security at the second meeting; the NRA remained unwilling to accept this arrangement. When Bigombe's delegation of elders, religious and women's leaders, and army officials accompanied by soldiers arrived seven kilometres from the agreed venue, they were met by approximately one hundred members of the LRA. They refused to allow the NRA soldiers to

police the venue. Thus the first negotiation task was to find a solution to this stand-off. Yusuf Adek and the author became intermediaries, making almost a dozen journeys between the LRA and NRA commanders. The LRA maintained that they had acted in good faith during the first meeting and allowed the government to provide security for the venue. On this occasion they wanted to be responsible for the security so that only one side would be blamed if problems occurred. As night-time drew near, Bigombe began to fear a great opportunity would be missed. Bigombe made direct contact with Kony by field radio, who reiterated that the talks would be postponed unless the negotiators came to the venue without armed escorts. She decided to go unprotected and asked Wasswa and Toolit if they were willing to do the same. They in turn requested permission from Brigadier Mugume by radio and, when it was refused, declined to go but sent their aides to accompany her.

They left for the venue at about 1800 hours. The team was searched thoroughly by the LRA guards to see 'if they were carrying charms'. They were then sprayed with 'holy water' to cleanse them before entering the venue. Over the next hour, LRA commanders arrived one-by-one, while a choir entertained the delegates with 'Holy Spirit' songs. When it was almost dark, the commanders welcomed Bigombe's team and expressed disappointment over the army officers' absence. However, because night had arrived, the LRA said the talks could not begin and that everyone should spend the night at the venue and talks would start the next morning. Bigombe thanked the LRA delegation, although she complained that people had been mistreated on the way to the venue, and explained that the delegation

could not spend the night at the venue as the President was waiting to hear from her. If they did not return that night, it would be misunderstood.

After consulting Kony, who was in a house barely metres away, the LRA agreed for the entire team to go to Gulu and return the next morning. To prove their sincerity, they gave Bigombe thirty of their members as 'armed escorts' to take the minister back to Gulu. 'Let them guard you, because we do not want anything to happen to you and then we are blamed, because there are many people who are not pleased at what we are doing,' said LRA Field Commander George Omona. Returning to Gulu at night, the roads were lined with curious villagers, who sang and ululated as the delegation passed.

Bigombe and Kony meet

When the team returned to Pagik the next day, they found the LRA's stringent measures had been removed and the environment was friendlier. When Kony arrived, it was apparent that he wanted to use this first meeting to tell the government, and especially the Acholi people, why he 'went to the bush'. In a four-hour speech, he held the Acholi community largely 'responsible for the war that had backfired with terrible results that everyone now blamed Kony for'. 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; the others were bloodthirsty people who had failed to guide the people in Acholi in its most serious hour of need. The LRA wanted to be seen as serious partners in the peace process and had begun to punish their troops who had committed atrocities in the villages.

Bigombe and Kony entered a one-to-one meeting. Kony informed Bigombe that he wanted to come out of the bush with all his fighters. He appealed to the government to enable the process to work and said he would not issue conditions to the government 'because the children in the bush are not my children but Acholi children', and the Acholi community should appeal to the government for the future development of their children. Kony then restated his request for more time to regroup his troops. He claimed that if the government really wanted peace, it should be willing to wait for just six months.

LRA/NRA relations deteriorate

The period following the second Pagik meeting was the first time since 1986 that almost the entire district felt secure. LRA fighters moved freely in the villages, entered army detachments and sat and sometimes ate with government soldiers. A third meeting soon followed at

Lakwatimer Primary School on 24 January 1994. The meetings were cordial and were attended by all the senior LRA commanders except Kony, and by the NRA's Col Wasswa and Lt Col Toolit. The involvement of NRA officers was crucial because the focus was now on negotiating ceasefire arrangements as well as other aspects of the peace agreement in which the army would have to be directly involved. A follow-up meeting was held to work out the details. Bigombe participated in all these meetings.

Problems started to emerge as preparations got underway for a meeting between Kony, Bigombe and possibly President Museveni to reach a comprehensive settlement. The LRA delegation believed that the NRA was behaving arrogantly. On numerous occasions, the talks were almost abandoned because the LRA interpreted Col Toolit's remarks as belittling.

For their part, the NRA negotiators did not see the talks moving in the expected direction. At one of the meetings in Bigombe's house, Brigadier Mugume told LRA commander Otti-Lagony that he, 'thought you had come here to negotiate your surrender'. The LRA team felt humiliated by this and other remarks. Bigombe became increasingly uncomfortable with the way the NRA officers were handling the talks. Yet the LRA exacerbated the tensions by, for example, demanding uniforms 'since we are almost one now', which led to the question 'if you are negotiating a peace deal to come out of the bush, why do you need uniforms?'

Notwithstanding these misgivings, a larger meeting was organised at Tegot-Atto on 2 February 1994. At this meeting, Col Toolit almost went to blows with LRA Commanders Sunday Arop and George Omona. Arop was so furious that he threatened to harm elder Anania Akera, claiming that Akera was one of those who 'pointed his penis towards the bush and cursed us' – traditionally the ultimate curse that a father can perform against his offspring. Despite these tensions a ceasefire document was drafted and signed between Omona and Wasswa.

Bigombe was in a difficult position, trying both to facilitate a process and act as a representative of the government. Her position was further complicated by the fact that she could not make some of the crucial on-the-spot decisions without consulting the army. In private conversations Bigombe hinted that there were attempts at every stage to sabotage the talks from various quarters, including from her colleagues in the government.

The collapse

After the meeting, the LRA informed Bigombe that they would not send their officers to Gulu town again for meetings, as they believed there was a plot to arrest

them. Until the army clarified the situation, no meetings would occur. Even if no such plot existed, the behaviour of the government side had reinforced this perception and gave the LRA the perfect excuse to claim the threat was real. A follow-up meeting that was to take place on the Gulu-Kitgum border two weeks after the Tegot-Atto meeting was also postponed indefinitely. The army retorted by claiming the LRA had made contact with the Sudanese government and were now unwilling to continue with the talks. Curiously, the army officers did not inform Bigombe of this new development. She continued to send messages to the LRA, who explained they were willing to restart the talks but needed the army's reassurance they were up to no 'dirty tricks'.

On 6 February 1994, Museveni visited Gulu to attend the first anniversary of the visit by Pope John Paul II to the district. While addressing the crowd at Kaunda Ground, the President said that Bigombe had begun talks with the LRA to restore peace, but that the LRA had taken advantage of the talks to perpetuate 'banditry' and killing of the people. He announced that the LRA had seven days to surrender, otherwise the government would defeat them militarily.

The LRA did not take him up on this ultimatum. Two weeks later, it was reported the first group of LRA fighters had crossed the border and established bases in southern Sudan introducing a new dimension to the conflict. After a brief period of calm in Gulu and Kitgum, LRA troops returned with more sophisticated weapons including landmines. To some, their actions appeared to validate the army's earlier claims. Others blamed the President for scuttling the process. Either way, prospects for a peaceful settlement disappeared.

Elders' attempts at restarting talks

Bigombe did not give up. She continued to maintain contact with the LRA, hoping the process could be revived. While the LRA was willing to maintain contact with Bigombe, they were stronger after acquiring weapons from Sudan and refused to resume the talks in practice. Col Wasswa was removed from his Gulu post and Brigadier Chefe Ali, credited with ending the war in Teso, was brought to Gulu. Major General Salim Saleh was later sent to Gulu as Senior Presidential Advisor on Military Affairs in northern Uganda. The government's strategy was now to end the war as quickly as possible by military means. For two years there were no apparent attempts at talks between the LRA and the government.

On 10 March 1996, the Rwot Achana led a delegation of forty people, twenty *rwodi* (hereditary chiefs) and twenty elders to meet President Museveni at his home in western Uganda asking that he accept 'that we continue to talk to them (i.e. the LRA) for peace.' LRA Lt Col Vincent

Bebabeba Oola, alias Otingting, returned to Uganda in April 1996 and began addressing civilians throughout Aswa and Kilak counties, claiming the LRA wanted good relations with them. Two Gulu elders – Mzee Okot-Ogoni, whose niece Lucy Oringa was one of Kony's favourite 'wives', and Mzee Rwot Olanya-Lagony, brother to LRA Commander Otti-Lagony – arranged meetings with Bebabeba. They later contacted Salim Saleh indicating that they could restart peace talks with the LRA if Saleh was willing to support it. Their first estimates of costs were approximately eight million Uganda shillings (US\$8,000). The government encouraged them to submit an increased budget of 153 million shillings (US\$150,000). This was leaked to the national media with the headline 'Elders Demand UGshilling 153 Million'. The elders then made arrangements for ten of them to meet Bebabeba in June 1996.

Kony had previously indicated that Bebabeba could continue meeting the elders if he felt their efforts were serious, but warned that it might be a ruse by the government. A week after the elders' meeting with Saleh, the army captured Bebabeba's signaller. He revealed that Bebabeba had received orders from Otti-Lagony in Sudan that the elders were government decoys and should be killed. Saleh sent Brigadier Chefe Ali personally to the home of the Rwot Achana to tell the delegation not travel to the bush because the LRA planned to harm the elders. Achana informed the other elders, who claimed this information was a trick by Bigombe to sabotage their efforts because her own attempts had failed in 1994.

Okot-Ogoni and Olanya-Lagony travelled incognito for their rendezvous with Bebabeba. They were met at Ogoni's home by the same LRA troops that always came to collect them. They told the family they had come to take the elders to their commander. Barely metres away, the elders were shot dead. Escapees from Sudan later said Otti-Lagony had been furious that his brother was killed, but eventually accepted it as a freak order that backfired. Lagony apparently knew the orders were given but never knew his own brother would be among the elders travelling that day. Two and half months later, General Saleh's commandos killed Bebabeba at Koch-Goma.

Bigombe left Gulu in June 1996, after being defeated in the parliamentary elections where she claimed Saleh sponsored her opponent. Although there were a few subsequent attempts between Otti-Lagony and Saleh to maintain contacts between the LRA and the government, including an exchange of letters on possible peace talks, these initiatives did not progress. Thus the peace efforts started in 1993 died in 1994. It remains to be seen whether subsequent efforts will succeed.

First international peace efforts 1996 - 1998

James Alfred Obita

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Kacoke Madit: a stimulus for new initiatives

During October and November 1996, Acholi living in the diaspora decided to convene a 'Kacoke Madit' (a big meeting of the Acholi) in London, bringing together Acholi communities from Uganda, the diaspora, the government of Uganda and the LRM/A to discuss the conflict. The Ugandan Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Dr Martin Aliko, stated that he had been given permission by the government to talk to the LRA. The LRA, which was represented by a delegation led by the author, the Secretary for External Affairs and Mobilisation, made it clear that they too were willing to talk peace. During the course of the conference the two delegations initiated dialogue.

Contact with Community of Sant'Egidio

Afterwards, representatives of the Rome-based lay Catholic organisation Community of Sant'Egidio, which had been involved in conflict resolution and mediation in a number of African conflicts, contacted the Kacoke Madit organisers and began to explore possibilities of playing a third-party role in talks, with a particular focus on the issue of the release of the 'Aboke girls'. An initial meeting was held in London where it was agreed that LRM representatives would discuss the proposal and seek approval for it from the LRA's 'High Command'.

The LRM/A meets in Khartoum

LRM/A officials travelled to Rome in May 1997 to discuss with Sant'Egidio representatives the details of the planned meeting with the government. It was agreed that the delegation of the LRM/A should consist of two people from the military wing and two from the political wing. (Sant'Egidio were informed later in the year that they had changed their mind and would send only people from the political wing.) LRM representatives then travelled to Sudan, where Kony and members of the LRA High Command approved the initiative. However, before the end of the Khartoum meeting LRM/A officials were



joined by an unexpected visitor whose appearance was to profoundly influence the subsequent course of events and the balance of power within the LRM/A's external political representation. Powell Onen Ojwang, a London-based Acholi businessman who had recently and inexplicably acquired substantial wealth, had been trying for years to gain access to the LRA. Onen offered to finance the LRA's military campaign and persuaded the 'High Command' to prioritise an increase in military capacity. In return he insisted on being appointed the LRM/A Vice-Chairman, making him the de facto number two to Kony. Despite this, the LRA leadership did not withdraw authority for the author to continue talking to the Ugandan government through Sant'Egidio. In June, after the LRM/A meetings in Khartoum, Sant'Egidio received notice from the government of Uganda that they were ready to meet the LRA delegation. LRM/A officials returned to visit Rome on 22 August 1997 for further preparatory talks.

A parallel initiative emerges

The NGO Equatoria Civic Fund (ECF), headed by Dr Leonzio Onek, a Sudanese Acholi and Kenya-based University lecturer, secured funding from the UK charity, Comic Relief, to 'facilitate a peace process between the LRM/A and the Government of Uganda'. He made contact with the Minister for the Presidency, Dr Ruhakana Rugunda, and through him obtained agreement 'in principle' that the government would engage in talks with the LRM/A. On 18 October 1997, Onek arranged a

meeting at the Lancaster House Hotel in Lancaster, UK between Ugandan Minister for the North, Mr Owiny Dollo, and the author. Also present was Professor Hizkias Assefa, an independent conflict resolution specialist collaborating with ECF.

During the meeting, Owiny Dollo informed them that the President was ready to put in place an amnesty law. He asked the LRM/A to write a letter to the government to confirm its intentions and clear the way for peace talks. The author agreed and demanded in response that the government stop insulting the LRM/A. It was decided that the author should travel to Sudan to brief Kony and to obtain his approval for further engagement, while Owiny Dollo secured Museveni's approval. At this point the concurrent ECF and Sant'Egidio initiatives were running in parallel – with neither facilitating organisation aware of the other's initiative.

LRM/A and Museveni exchange letters

The author eventually wrote to President Museveni on 6th November 2001 (see Key Texts) and copied the letter to The Carter Center in the US, suggesting that the LRM/A might ask them to mediate and thereby introduce a third third-party. President Museveni responded to the author's letter on 22 November 1997, declaring, 'our delegation is ready to discuss with your representatives anywhere and we are ready to reach a peaceful settlement within the confines of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda' (see Key Texts).

The 1997 Rome talks

On receiving the President's letter, the author asked Sant'Egidio to proceed with organising a meeting. On 12 December 1997, Sant'Egidio hosted the most significant official meeting between the government of Uganda and the LRM/A since 1994. State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Amama Mbabazi, and David Pulkol, Director of the External Security Organisation (ESO) represented the government, while the author and Charles Laroker represented the LRM/A. Sant'Egidio's President Andrea Riccardi and Father Matteo Zuppi acted as mediators. The government delegation asked the LRM/A for a list of topics that the LRM/A would present for future talks. The author presented such a list the next day and in the signed minutes, the two sides agreed to meet again.

At the close of the meeting, the Ugandan government insisted that the follow-up meeting, agreed for the 18 Jan 1998 should be attended by LRA field officers from Sudan.

During the two-day meeting Powell Onen was in regular telephone contact with the author and even contributed a number of suggestions. He assured the author that he was keeping the LRA leadership informed of progress by satellite phone. However, it later transpired that Onen had kept the LRA completely in the dark. Thus, when the events in Rome were later revealed, it appeared to the LRA fighters that the author had overstepped his authority.

Collapse of the Sant'Egidio and ECF processes

When the author returned to Sudan it became clear that Powell Onen had swayed the LRM/A increasingly towards a military approach. The author realised the magnitude of the challenge of winning support for the Sant'Egidio process from the increasingly hard-line 'High Command', as well as from the government of Sudan. He decided not to disclose the facts about the Rome meeting or the ECF-mediated contacts to the Khartoum-based LRM/A officials until he had talked to Kony, whom he still considered to be supportive of negotiations. Another complicating factor was that the ECF, which had facilitated significant investment in the process to-date and were kept in the dark about the progress with Sant'Egidio, were growing increasingly impatient with the lack of progress on their separate initiative. A breakdown of communication and confidence between the author and the NGO occurred. Before the author could meet with Kony, Powell Onen had phoned Kony in southern Sudan to accuse the author of having received money to betray the movement. The author travelled to southern Sudan to the LRA camps unaware of what awaited him. Onen travelled immediately from London to be present at the author's 'trial'. Acceding to an

increasingly hard-line 'High Command', Kony arrested the author and accused him of being a traitor. He was stripped of all responsibilities and sentenced to death. As the drama unfolded, Onen claimed that he had pressing business commitments in London and departed suddenly. For some time it was rumoured that the author had been killed, but he was released after a few months in detention. It is not known why his life was spared.

The difficulties within the LRM/A led to the simultaneous collapse of both the Sant'Egidio and the ECF processes. The government of Uganda delegation travelled to Rome for the planned January 1998 meeting but waited in vain for the LRM/A delegation. With the author out of the way, Onen assumed a dominant role in the LRM. But the episode led to further fracturing and the near-collapse of an increasingly hard-line external wing. This was compounded by the arrest of Onen on suspicion of fraud in July 1998. He was convicted and is presently serving his sentence. In May 1998, Sant'Egidio was again involved in an unsuccessful attempt to secure the release of the 'Aboke girls'. ECF also persevered in its efforts, which to date have not borne fruit.

Rwot Joseph Oywak Ywakamoi describes his experience as a peacemaker:

Rwodi (hereditary chiefs) are arbitrators. We settle disputes by sitting down to dialogue and we have the moral voice to call society to order. Everyone in Acholi blesses the peace mission of the rwodi. The rebels still heed our voice and Kony trusts the rwodi. There is no feeling of revenge against the rebels. The people have forgiven them all the atrocities.

I began my peace mission in 1994 at Kony's invitation. In 2000, the rebels again called the rwodi, local councillors and government officials for peace talks. But government troops stormed the venue and opened fire. The rebels fixed another meeting for April 16, 2001, but on April 13 government troops stormed the rebel base. Another meeting was set for April 26, but government troops sprayed bullets and bombs on the civilians and rebels at the meeting. I was shot in the right leg.



Philip Oneko-mon-kikoko was abducted whilst still at primary school

After 14 years, I found bush life unfavourable. But escape from Kony is risky. I left with 35 combatants. We sneaked into Uganda. We wrote to the local authorities, but as we waited the government troops attacked us. I was angered by the betrayal.

The rest of my combatants have returned to their villages. But I am bitter. I came out of the bush hoping for a better life. I have no house, no property to begin life with. The resettlement package is ridiculous. Bush life seems bad to most people but I know what privileges the bush offers. If the status quo is not reversed, even those who have surrendered will return to the bush.

What I have seen is that the talk of peace in Uganda is empty talk. It is pure politicking. The spirit of those who framed the Amnesty Act and Commission is not the spirit of its implementation. The government has the resources and can be helped out by donors. Redress can best be through trustworthiness.



Restoring relations between Uganda and Sudan:

The Carter Center process

Joyce Neu

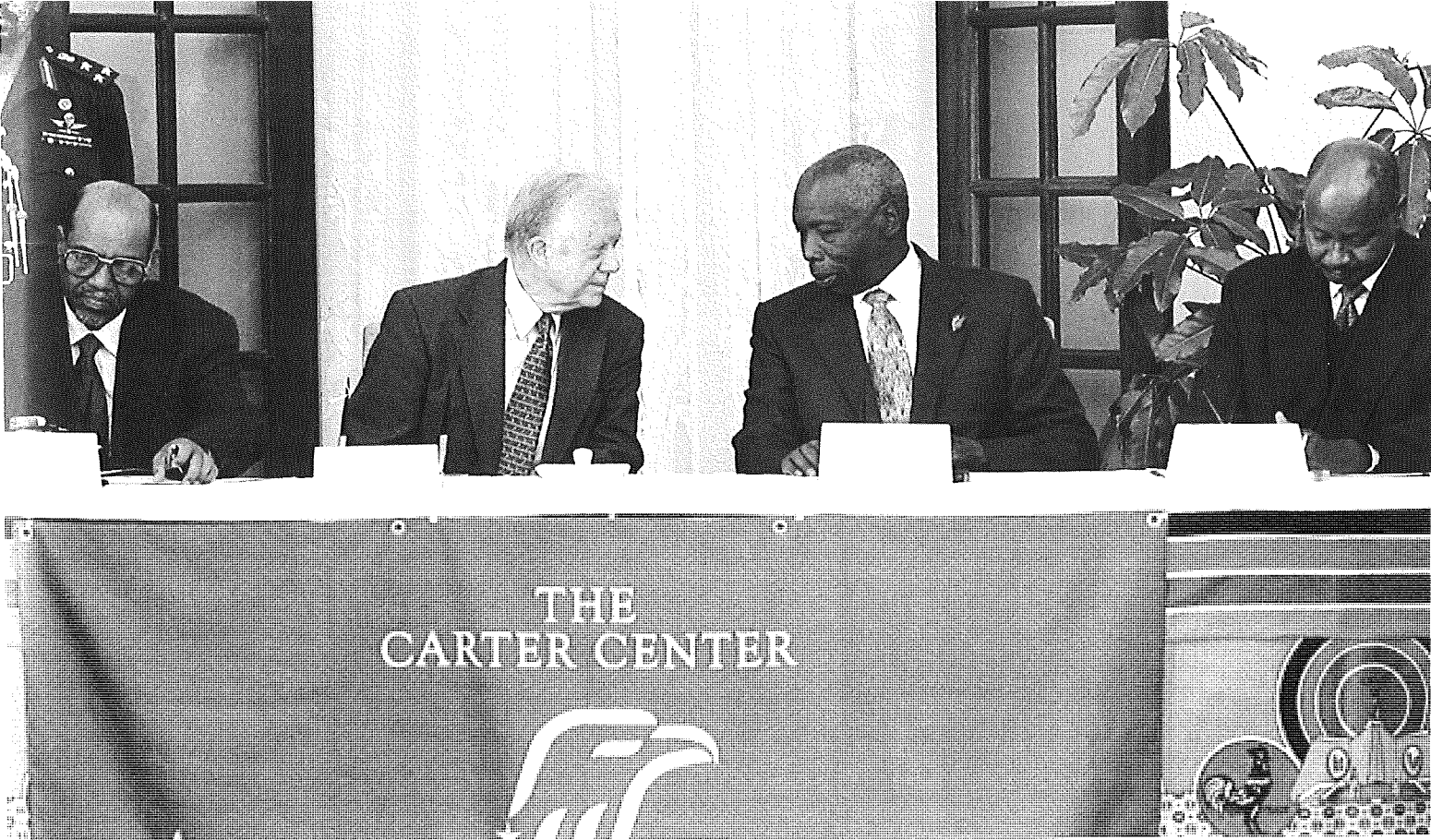
Joyce Neu is the first director of the newly-established Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice in San Diego, California. Dr Neu previously worked with The Carter Center in Atlanta, where she helped facilitate discussions between parties in conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Congo-Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Mali, Sudan and Uganda.

Efforts to end the war in northern Uganda have been entwined with the wider dynamics of hostility between the governments of Uganda and Sudan and war in south Sudan. Each government has accused the other of violating the common frontier and supporting the other's insurgents. Diplomatic relations between the two states were severed in 1995, allegedly because of Sudan's support for the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in retaliation for the government of Uganda's participation in the Sudanese government's war against the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). In early 1999, the governments of Sudan and Uganda asked former US President Jimmy Carter to help normalise relations.

Decision to negotiate

A central question was why the two presidents decided at that point to request help to resolve their differences, and why they approached Carter. The two countries were not at war, nor were they suffering a 'hurting stalemate' that might encourage them to seek a negotiated settlement. Their motives appear to have been less direct.

Sudan was on a 'charm offensive' to improve relations with its neighbours. Although the Sudanese government used the LRA to fight the SPLA, The Carter Center believed this was not decisive in the balance of military power, and the government might have judged that it could afford to cease supporting the LRA so as to improve its international standing. Sudan also had reasons to involve a former US president. The Clinton administration had declared Sudan a terrorist state for its alleged role in the assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and for hosting Osama bin Laden, accused of masterminding the 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. In August 1998, the US fired missiles into a suburb of Khartoum to destroy an alleged chemical weapons factory. By late 1998, the Sudanese government wanted to improve relations with the US and knew that Carter had been a friend to Sudan in the past. They believed Carter had access to Clinton and could influence US policy on Sudan.



Uganda's interest in re-establishing relations with Sudan was less clear. Uganda enjoyed privileged status with the US government, and US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had characterised President Yoweri Museveni as one of the 'new generation of African leaders'. Museveni may have been motivated to reduce military spending to conform to World Bank requirements on debt repayments. In addition, the Ugandan People's Defence Forces (UPDF) were fighting on three fronts: in the north against the LRA; in the west against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the northwest against the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) and the Uganda National Rescue Front II (UNRF II); and, most notably, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) where Ugandan troops were fighting armies from Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe and even their erstwhile ally Rwanda. Museveni may have wanted to withdraw troops from the north and west to send to the DRC. Uganda's continued presence in the DRC was not popular with some donor 'allies' in the West.

The Carter Center's role

Since 1988, former US President Jimmy Carter and the Conflict Resolution Program at The Carter Center had tried to help resolve the Sudanese civil war. In 1995, Carter negotiated a ceasefire with the SPLA commander, Dr John Garang, and Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir. Called the 'Guinea Worm Ceasefire', it allowed health workers access to areas where the disease was endemic. Carter hoped the ceasefire would create space for peace talks to resume between the SPLM/A and the government of Sudan. Unfortunately, this did not happen.

The regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) led international efforts to support peacemaking for Sudan during the late 1990s, but a definitive settlement remained elusive. IGAD and the newer Egyptian-Libyan mediation continued attempts to resolve the Sudanese civil war, and a breakthrough on the Sudan-Uganda stalemate appeared likely in spring 1999, when Presidents al-Bashir and Museveni invited Carter to help restore their diplomatic relations. Although Carter later received a similar request from LRA leader Joseph Kony, a parallel invitation from Garang was not forthcoming. Discussions within The Carter Center focused on responding to the invitations from Bashir and Museveni and on the prospects for obtaining Kony's and Garang's participation in the process. Carter accepted the invitations, believing that improvement in relations between Sudan and Uganda might serve as a catalyst to advance the Sudanese peace talks.

These invitations were not completely unexpected. In late 1998, Jongomoi Okidi-Olal, a Ugandan-American, acting in his personal capacity but then under the sponsorship of the Acholi diaspora peace network Kacoke Madit (based in London), initiated efforts to reach an agreement. He met the presidents and senior officials of Sudan and Uganda, and senior commanders of the LRA and SPLA. Sudanese, Ugandan and LRA leaders all agreed in principle to negotiate. Although no ceasefire was formally declared, hostilities between the LRA and the UPDF quieted in 1999. Okidi discussed both substantive and procedural issues with the combatant groups and all agreed to third-party mediation. Okidi looked to key figures in the US to provide this mediation and proposed President Carter to the parties.

Establishing relations with the parties

When Carter received the letters from Bashir and Museveni in April 1999 relationships were already established and both knew Carter's style. Yet the Carter Center staff who would facilitate the process had not developed political contacts in the region, so for several months they consulted experts to develop the knowledge required to intervene effectively and develop a workable agreement.

The Carter Center's goal was to restore bilateral relations by holding talks between the four warring parties. The assumption was that an agreement would need to include a pledge to cease support for the other country's insurgency movements. Therefore Bashir, Museveni, Garang and Kony would all need to be involved. The Carter Center considered including others in the process (e.g. civil society groups), but was advised against this and to keep the process as quiet as possible. There appeared to be great fear that any public discussion of a peace process would alarm Kony and prevent his participation. From the beginning, the Carter Center was concerned to ensure participation of the armed movements, while recognising this would be a challenge. Although Carter had met Garang many times, in recent years Garang had failed to appear at prearranged meetings with Carter and their relationship was not strong. Neither Carter nor the centre's staff knew Kony but believed, from conversations with Okidi and other Uganda experts, that securing his participation would be the greatest challenge. Carter wrote to Garang and Kony informing them that he had been asked to mediate between the two governments and urging them to take part in the process.

In June 1999, Carter sent a delegation to meet the governments and insurgent leaders to explore the parameters of the talks and the issues to be negotiated. As The Carter Center's representative, the author travelled to Sudan and Uganda with Vince Farley, a former US diplomat, engaged by The Carter Center as a consultant. Okidi met us in the region and accompanied us in our meetings. Our objectives were:

- a) to meet the negotiating teams designated by each president and discuss the preconditions to re-establishing relations;
- b) to agree on a time and an agenda for a first meeting between the negotiating teams;
- c) to gain Bashir's and Museveni's assistance in arranging meetings with the armed movements, with the goal of including them in whatever talks would follow; and
- d) to begin building trust with Kony and to secure his participation in the talks.

The trip began in Sudan, with a meeting with the Foreign Minister and members of the contact group led by Dr Nafie ali Nafie, Advisor on Peace to the president. They raised the previous accords they had signed with

Museveni, said the same issues remained and that these had to be discussed in any peace process. These included:

- a) security concerns:
 - not using each other's territories for incursions by rebels;
 - removing the logistical centres for the other's rebels in each country;
 - moving refugee camps out of border areas (out of SPLA lines);
- b) confidence-building steps:
 - improving treatment of refugees (forced recruitment of Sudanese refugees in Uganda into the SPLA);
 - halting Uganda's negative propaganda against Sudan;
 - establishing bilateral or multilateral monitoring teams;
 - re-establishing diplomatic relations.

The team also discussed arrangements for Kony's parents to travel to Khartoum to see their son, whom they had not seen or spoken to in 13 years. Kony's mother had told Okidi that she wanted to urge her son to stop fighting. It was thought that a face-to-face meeting would be a valuable confidence-building gesture. The Sudanese authorities agreed to cooperate, but said they were not sure it would be possible for The Carter Center delegates to meet Kony on this trip.

On 30 June, in Uganda, the team met Museveni and his negotiators, led by Dr Ruhakana Rugunda, Minister for the Presidency and a key confidante and advisor to the president. Museveni said that 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 anyone 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 a one week visit.

The Ugandan contact group and The Carter Center team had further discussions. The Ugandans noted that:

- a) they did not know what the goals of the LRA were, so it would be difficult to address them;
- b) diaspora groups were not helpful;
- c) the SPLA and the LRA could not be linked; and
- d) they would respond to a proposal for an agenda for the meeting with the Sudanese contact group.

Once these agreements were secured, arrangements were made to bring Kony's parents to Khartoum, but a meeting between Kony and his parents fell through. It appears that there was a breakdown in communications. Kony expected to meet them in the LRA camp outside Juba and did not travel to Khartoum. The attempted confidence-building measure backfired, undermining both Kony's trust in the process and trust within the mediation team. The mediators continued to seek meetings with Kony on two subsequent trips, and through verbal and written messages, but were unsuccessful. A major problem was that we had to rely on the Sudanese government to convey messages to him. When we finally established an alternative channel, it proved unreliable and slow. The invitation to participate in the December 1999 summit, therefore, reached him only days before, and he said that it gave him inadequate time to prepare.

Because Museveni had made clear that he was not inclined to pressure Garang, and because Garang had neither responded to Carter's letter nor shown up at scheduled appointments, The Carter Center delegation again consulted Bashir and Museveni. They urged us to move forward with re-establishing bilateral relations without the insurgent leaders. We returned to Atlanta and began planning.

The negotiations

Preliminary talks began in London in August 1999 with a meeting between the Sudanese and Ugandan contact groups. The most contentious issue was the case of the Aboke girls. The Ugandan delegation insisted the girls had to be returned for relations to be normalised. By the time of the London meeting, the girls' plight had become a highly political issue in Uganda and abroad. The Sudanese government objected to the Government of Uganda singling out the issue, saying that they were using it to draw negative attention to Sudan. Over the first day or two, the government delegations exchanged documents listing their grievances and positions on re-establishing bilateral relations. Putting their positions on paper seemed to fix them and made the discussions very difficult.

After several days, the government delegations agreed on many issues, including stopping support for each other's rebel movements, but there was no consensus on how to address the issue of the Aboke girls. Before leaving London, both sides agreed on the need to meet again before a summit of the heads of state.

Preparations for the summit

As I prepared to return to Sudan and Uganda to meet the contact groups, Carter made calls to both presidents urging their cooperation and setting dates for the

summit. The Sudanese said they would help to ensure Kony's participation. At the same time, they wanted reassurance that Garang would be there, which Carter could not give. By this time, early November, it seemed unlikely that Museveni could or would exert pressure on Garang to participate. In November and December 1999 I made another trip to the region, accompanied by a Carter Center colleague and by former Ugandan Minister for Northern Reconstruction, Betty Bigombe. While in Khartoum, the delegation again sought to meet Kony but succeeded only in meeting one of his deputies. He assured us that Kony had received the invitation from President Carter, but it arrived too late for Kony to prepare adequately. We asked that Kony reconsider, and that if he could not participate, to designate a representative to attend. In Kampala we met Museveni, who assured us of his willingness to talk to the LRA.

The Nairobi talks 6-9 December 1999

The Sudanese and Ugandan contact groups arrived in Nairobi for pre-talks on 5 December, two days before Bashir, Carter, and Museveni. The facilitation team had drafted an agreement that each group read and commented on. During these first two days, aside from having some meals together, the parties did not meet face-to-face. Instead, the facilitation team met each group separately to discuss the points of the agreement. (This was done at the insistence of the Executive Director of The Carter Center, who feared the contact groups might cancel the summit. The facilitation team disagreed, understanding the desire of the contact groups to meet together before their presidents arrived to ensure that the text of the agreement was acceptable). By the afternoon of 7 December, the facilitators believed we had a text that both presidents could agree to. We continued to wait for word on whether the LRA might yet send someone to the talks, but were not very hopeful.

Carter and Bashir arrived in Nairobi on 7 December, and Museveni sent word that he would arrive the next morning. After I briefed Carter on the two days of preliminary meetings, he and I met that night with Bashir and Ambassador Mahdi Ibrahim, a key member of the Sudanese contact group and former Sudanese Ambassador to the US. Carter and Bashir discussed US policy on Sudan, and Carter noted that without Garang's participation, there was little he could do on that score. Carter referred to Sudan's relationship with Kony and reports of slavery in Sudan as 'indefensible'. He went through all the points of the agreement with Bashir and they agreed to a timetable for restoring relations with Uganda. The meeting ended after 10pm. We then went to meet the Ugandan contact group, without Museveni. The Ugandan team reiterated the need to release the Aboke girls and Carter assured them The Carter Center would help with efforts to get the children out of Sudan.

By the next morning, Carter had re-worked the text of the agreement so that he could present it to Museveni. Carter met with Museveni, talked about Garang and the Sudan peace process and then went through the 11-point agreement point by point. Museveni agreed to release Sudanese prisoners of war. Carter asked that the Aboke girls' case not be the obstacle to an agreement. He said he had the names of all the girls and would ensure their release. He offered to send his son Chip to guarantee this. Museveni asked that restoration of relations be contingent on implementation of the points of the agreement.

As Carter went back and forth between the two presidents in a method he first used at Camp David in 1978 – the 'single document approach' – each head of state and his contact group made and reviewed modifications. By mid-afternoon on 8 December, earlier than any of us had thought possible, we had agreement. Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi was quickly notified and a signing ceremony was held at State House with Carter and Moi as witnesses. Bashir and Museveni shook hands, and the Nairobi Agreement came into existence.

But the presidents had asked Carter for more. Previous agreements between the two countries had collapsed as soon as the ink was dry because of lack of trust. They asked for The Carter Center to remain engaged and to oversee implementation. On 9 December, with Bashir and Museveni gone, the two contact groups met again with the facilitation team. It was decided to retire the contact groups once teams had been created to implement the agreement. We all agreed to meet in six weeks in Nairobi and each side agreed to take some constructive action in that time to implement the agreement.

Conclusion

In June 2000, I left The Carter Center after almost nine years. My successor on this project continues the work, and many of the obstacles of 1999 remain as divisive now as they were then. Importantly, however, with the continued cooperation of UNICEF and the Norwegian and Dutch governments, more abducted children have been released.

Just as obstacles remain, so do quandaries. Foremost among them is, does the Ugandan government have an interest in maintaining an unstable north? It is difficult to understand why the UPDF has not suppressed the LRA, which has come close to extinction several times. For the Sudanese government, the LRA has clearly proved useful in fighting the SPLA. If it were truly willing to give up this ally, why has it not yet negotiated a deal to relocate the LRA or to re-patriate them from Sudan?



Sudanese President Bashir (left) and Ugandan President Museveni seal the Nairobi Agreement with a handshake, as former US President Carter (second from left) looks on, 8 Dec 1999

Source: Agence France Presse

The dilemmas of the conflict between Sudan and Uganda may be challenging to unravel, but they are deadly to thousands of children who care only to live in peace and safety. The mediation process undertaken by The Carter Center was intended to save lives and bring peace. It has not yet done so. But it has not yet failed. Sadly, we may need to look back on this process as just one in a series that was one step towards peace, but perhaps not the ultimate one.

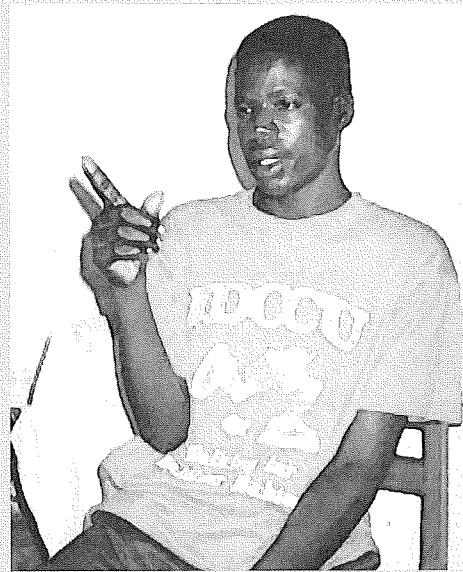
Charles Ochaya was abducted by the LRA in 1995

First they abducted my brother, then swooped again that evening on our village and snatched several of us. That was in 1995. I was in P.3.

Life was hard. We started plundering villages for foodstock. When the stock got exhausted before another raid, we picked wild leaves, boiled them and drank for the day's meal.

I thought of my loving mother back home. I was her last born son and feared dying without seeing her. I risked escape. More people could escape but many of them fear they may not reach home. The women are told that escape means being captured by the Arabs as sex slaves. The captives also fear the hostile armed Dinka tribesmen. If the Ugandan and Sudanese governments could persuade the Dinka to receive the runaway captives, most combatants would have escaped.

As for me, I need basic physical necessities like housing and beddings. I still fear the rebels left in the bush. I just want to go back home and see what has become of it in my long absence. I want to gain a vocation.



Seneth Aol Opobo tells of her capture and imprisonment by the LRA

The rebels yanked us out of sleep and ordered us out. [They] released Mother and our seven year-old brother since several of her children had been abducted. At Jabelein I was given to Kony. Because I hoped to return to school one day, I acted the mad and AIDS-infected girl. I wanted to avoid pregnancy because once you have delivered there's no escape. Luckily Kony did not accept me into his household. [Kony's lieutenant] was directed to deploy me in the hospital since I was educated. But I didn't know anything to do with syringes, midwifery, etc. I got introductory training and learnt the rest from a big medical handbook.

On April 20, 2001, out of the five of our family, two of us managed to escape. But I was to return to a home without parents. Mother returned from captivity heart broken and her chest grew weak from gun butting. She wasted away and died. Father remained on our trail until we crossed into Sudan. He trudged back home weakened and heart broken. He didn't live for long.



Implementing the 1999 Nairobi Agreement

Patrick Oguru Otto

Dr. Patrick Oguru Otto is the Coordinator of the London-based Kacoke Madit (KM) Secretariat. He has worked extensively with KM's international peace promotion activities since 1996.

Start of a new era?

When the Nairobi Agreement was signed by Presidents Yoweri Museveni and Omar al-Bashir in Nairobi, Kenya, on 8 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 travelled to Nairobi. From a northern Ugandan perspective, the optimism that greeted the signing of the agreement was, however, short-lived. Within a week, hundreds of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) fighters crossed from Sudan into Uganda and attacked civilian and military targets in Kitgum and Gulu districts. The Ugandan government reacted by accusing Sudan of bad faith in failing to comply with the terms of the agreement. The government of Sudan replied that it was unable to stop the LRA crossing into Uganda.

It had been agreed in Nairobi that the Sudanese Defence Minister would travel to southern Sudan immediately to brief Joseph Kony and other LRA leaders about the agreement and ask for their cooperation. In the event, the Sudanese faced more pressing political matters on returning to Khartoum. On the day of their return, the President dissolved the National Assembly. The state security organs were therefore more preoccupied with stabilizing the domestic situation than with implementing the Nairobi Agreement. The absence of timely official notification about the substance of the agreement appears to have compounded Kony's anger with the Nairobi process. He would have been terribly alarmed about the decisions to 'disarm and disband' the LRA. In that state of mind, it seems, he decided to send a defiant statement to the Sudanese and Ugandan governments by launching the attacks.

In a bid to save the agreement, ex-President Jimmy Carter intervened personally to urge the presidents to exercise restraint, calling on Sudan to 'take steps' to stop the



incursions by the LRA. He extracted assurances from both governments that they would continue to work towards the agreement's full implementation. Thus the Nairobi Agreement survived its first crisis.

By the start of the new millennium security in northern Uganda had deteriorated considerably. On 2 and 3 January 2000, LRA fighters raided Kitgum and Gulu towns, looting, abducting people and destroying property. Among the people of northern Uganda, euphoria and optimism gave way to questions about the agreement's viability. The popular perception was that the renewal of hostilities had been precipitated by the exclusion of the LRA from the Nairobi negotiations and its fears about the explicit commitment to 'disarm and disband' them.

Implementation begins

The day after the agreement was signed, the Ugandan and Sudanese contact groups established a Joint Ministerial Committee and three sub-committees to address security, humanitarian affairs, and political issues. They agreed to hold the first ministerial meeting in January 2000. The committee met as arranged in Nairobi. It was reported to be a tense and difficult meeting with little evidence of a thaw in relations, despite some modest but significant achievements since the signing: the successful management of the strains that followed the LRA incursions into Uganda, the repatriation of

Sudanese prisoners of war in early January 2000 and the return of the first group of 'ex-LRA' escapees from Sudan. The Ugandan delegation was adamant that the Sudanese had not done enough to start disarming and disbanding the LRA and to secure the release of the Aboke girls. The Sudanese, on the other hand, pointed to the successful identification and gathering of seventy-five ex-LRA escapees in Juba as evidence of their commitment to the process. They proposed moving swiftly towards restoring diplomatic relations. Uganda took the position that progress on the diplomatic front required successful implementation of all the commitments in the agreement. Despite these difficulties, the delegations agreed to work on their commitments and to meet again on 1 March 2000 in Nairobi.

As the LRA escalated its insurgency operations to pre-1999 levels, it dawned on the civilian population that far from ushering in a new era of peace, the Agreement had disrupted a lengthy lull in the violence that was unprecedented in the 14-year conflict. At this point, the Kacoke Madit (KM) Secretariat, which had been actively and discreetly supporting peace efforts, initiated consultations with civil society groups in northern Uganda to agree a common strategy to persuade the governments and Carter Center to consider options for a more inclusive resolution of the conflict.

The Carter Center also realised, shortly after Nairobi, that the renewed attacks by the LRA were undermining the

chances of successful implementation of the agreement. Dr Joyce Neu, head of their Conflict Resolution Programme, asked the Sudanese government to arrange for her to meet Kony and the LRA leadership before the next implementation meeting. Increasingly conscious of the disquiet among civilians in northern Uganda following the LRA incursions, she also decided to visit the area – a visit many thought to be 'too little, too late'.

In the third week of February 2000, with assistance from the Sudanese government, she and a colleague, Craig Withers, met Kony and senior LRA leaders at their camp at Nsitu (south of Juba). The meeting was reportedly awkward and difficult. Kony expressed his anger, sense of betrayal and deep suspicion of the 'American government' (which he apparently did not distinguish from The Carter Center). No specific proposals to include the LRA in the peace process were discussed. Again this courageous and well-meant visit to the LRA seemed to have come too late.

Dr Neu later wrote: 'Kony and his spokesperson talked about the need for democracy in Uganda, and how many people in northern Uganda say he's bad. He said he would not talk to northerners but wanted to speak with the government of Uganda but refused to give us a timeframe for such a meeting. Also, the breach of trust in the incident with the parents tainted all of our subsequent communications. Kony was angry about the deceit he felt we had committed. They were also angry at what they said was the 'trickery' of UNICEF taking their children away. Kony asked for us to move slowly and not to rush the process. Before the end of the meeting, Kony told us that he hoped to meet with us again, and that we were now his "ambassadors" to "spread the gospel for the LRM/A."

As the second ministerial meeting drew near, the KM Secretariat brought together representatives of Acholi civil society to lobby The Carter Center and the parties to the agreement. The civil society representatives presented a joint memorandum to The Carter Center and the governments calling on them to bring the LRA into the process immediately. They also stressed the need to address the plight of all abductees, instead of giving preferential treatment to the Aboke girls, emphasizing that the freedom of abductees should be considered in the context of an overall peace settlement.

The second ministerial meeting, in March 2000, was evidently even more difficult than the first and came close to breakdown on the first day. The implementation timetable agreed in December had slipped badly and each side accused the other of lacking commitment. The Ugandan delegation insisted on a strict interpretation of Point 11 of the agreement, which made normalisation of

relations contingent on honouring all other terms of the agreement. The Sudanese argued that the appointment of diplomats would smooth the way for full implementation of the agreement. Worse still, one of the Ugandan delegation referred to 'slavery' in Sudan, which angered the Sudanese delegates immensely. Most of the first day was wasted in argument over the issue until the Ugandan delegate withdrew the remark. The meeting then went on to consider substantive implementation issues, ending on the second day without agreeing a date for the next meeting. The delegations decided that because so little progress had been made and the timetable had slipped so much, each side would need a fresh mandate to proceed from its government. The joint statement issued at the end of the meeting re-affirmed the governments' commitment to restoring relations and fully implementing the Nairobi agreement.

Without a clear agreement by the governments on implementation, a period of uncertainty followed and momentum noticeably slowed down. Dr Ben Hoffman, who replaced Dr Neu as head of The Carter Center's Conflict Resolution Programme in June 2000, sought to put the process back on track. He decided to visit Sudan and Uganda to meet the key players and to familiarise himself with the issues and the progress made so far. On his way to Africa, he visited the KM Secretariat in London. KM representatives discussed some of the perceived shortcomings of the agreement with him and appealed for action to address them. In particular, the Secretariat strongly recommended that The Carter Center should take steps to engage the LRA in dialogue, and to promote greater involvement of northern Uganda civil society in the process.

In Sudan, in early July 2000, Hoffman met government officials and discussed the resumption of the implementation meetings. He also requested the government to arrange for him to meet the LRA. The Sudanese agreed, and he was taken to Nsitu to meet Kony and other senior LRA leaders. The meeting was very tense and formal at the beginning but became progressively less confrontational. Kony expressed his anger and disappointment with the Nairobi process, but by the end of the three-hour meeting, he had left the door open to further cooperation and dialogue. The LRA leaders promised to confirm their recognition of The Carter Center's mediation role once they had completed consultations with their members. This was to be the last face-to-face contact between Carter Center representatives and the LRA.

The need to restore momentum to the process, and the likelihood that the personal participation of Jimmy Carter was needed at that stage, led to a decision to hold the next implementation meeting in Atlanta. The location of

the meeting was particularly significant for the Sudanese government given its poor diplomatic relations with the US government at the time.

Other initiatives emerge

The Nairobi Agreement had generated much international interest and raised expectations, especially on the issue of abducted children. However, as implementation of the accord slowed, other countries began to explore opportunities for intervention. Libya and Egypt, both of whom had long-standing interests in promoting improved diplomatic relations, took the opportunity of an OAU summit to invite the governments of Uganda and Sudan to a side meeting in Lomé, Togo. Although the details of what transpired are scanty, they are said to have reached an understanding that Egypt and Libya would reassert their interests in furthering the process of improved diplomatic relations, and that they would address the northern Uganda conflict in the wider regional context including a resolution of the Sudanese civil war. The parties also agreed to make the release of the 'Aboke girls' a priority. The meeting produced the 'Lomé Non-Paper' of 11 July 2000. The governments agreed to meet again in Kampala in late September 2000.

A week after the Lomé meeting, a new Carter Center team hosted the Joint Ministerial Committee in Atlanta from 18 to 19 July. The meeting focused mainly on rebuilding trust and restoring the momentum of implementation. It produced the Atlanta Joint Action Plan, asserting renewed commitment by the governments to proceed with implementing the Nairobi Agreement. The governments also agreed to meet again in Khartoum in October and in Nairobi in November.

Abortive Sudan visit by Acholi elders

During the Atlanta meeting the governments agreed to a Carter Center-organised visit by select northern Uganda civil society representatives to southern Sudan to meet Kony and other LRA leaders. However, it soon became apparent that the government-sponsored nature of the venture undermined any anticipated 'independence' of the mission. Disagreements also surfaced over who was to be included (or excluded). As a result of an apparent shift of policy within the government of Uganda, elders from all over Acholi who had gathered in Gulu were left waiting for their flight to Sudan which never came. Unexpectedly, it was decided that the religious leaders' and elders' mission would have to be preceded by a visit to Sudan by Kony's parents. No official explanation was given for this sudden change in priorities. A Carter Center representative flew with Kony's parents and an official of the Ugandan Internal Security Organisation (ISO) to Khartoum. On arrival he contacted Kony to arrange a

meeting. News of the confusion surrounding the arrangements for the religious leaders' and elders' visit appears to have reached Kony, who became suspicious. He refused to talk to or meet his parents, who returned to Uganda in disappointment. After this, Kony withdrew his cooperation with The Carter Center, and yet another potentially significant initiative collapsed.

Meeting in New York

On 11 August 2000, before the International Conference on War Affected Children in Winnipeg, the government of Canada and some international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) invited The Carter Center, UN agencies and representatives of the governments of the UK, the USA, Ghana, the Netherlands and Norway, to a meeting in New York to discuss 'children abducted by the LRA'. The meeting agreed to step up action to secure the release of children abducted by the LRA, and to establish a 'Partners in Support of the Abducted Children' coalition. A follow-up meeting was planned for September in Winnipeg.

Winnipeg, September 2000

For The Carter Center, the Canadian interest in playing a political role in northern Uganda was apparently seen as something of a broadside, which they feared might detract from the implementation of the Nairobi Agreement. On 15 September, at the start of the ministerial meetings of the International Conference on War Affected Children, the Canadian Minister for International Development, supported by Egypt's Ambassador to Canada, convened a special 'experts meeting' to discuss the northern Uganda children abducted by the LRA. Those invited to the meeting included the UN secretary-general's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu; UNICEF; the Concerned Parents Association, Women's Coalition on Refugee Women and Children, KM, Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief, World Vision and representatives of the governments that had attended the New York meeting. Delegates were surprised to learn that The Carter Center representative, who was expected to attend, had unexpectedly left Winnipeg the previous day. Thus the meeting got off to a poor start and ultimately failed to advance the 'Partners in Support of the Abducted Children' coalition. The Canadian and Egyptian governments were undeterred. Having generated publicity and interest in the issue, the two governments seized the opportunity and convened a special meeting of the Ugandan and Sudanese delegations on 17 September 2000 to discuss the issue. The meeting resulted in the governments of Sudan and Uganda signing the Winnipeg 'Joint Communiqué on Immediate Action on Abducted Children', witnessed by

the Canadian Foreign Minister and the Egyptian Ambassador. Significantly, the Ugandan government had agreed to 'take all measures to engage in dialogue with the LRA' – a public commitment absent from the Nairobi Agreement.

Kampala, September 2000

On 26 and 27 September 2000, the governments of Libya and Egypt again brought the governments of Sudan and Uganda together in Kampala, in a follow-up to the Lomé meeting. The Carter Center, though not convening this initiative, sent its Uganda representative to attend. As the Kampala meeting ended, with a commitment to meet again, a senior Ugandan government official told the press that an agreement had been reached to relocate the LRA to new camps '1,000km north of the Uganda border'. The surprise disclosure was widely reported by the Ugandan and international press.

Khartoum, October 2000

The Carter Center, in an effort to ensure that the multiple initiatives were complementary and coherent, sought to restore some order to proceedings at a Uganda/Sudan ministerial meeting on 6 and 7 October 2000. It invited the governments of Libya, Canada and Egypt, as well as UNICEF and Ugandan Concerned Parents Association (CPA). The Center brought to the attention of the delegates the difficulties of implementing their agreement amid the multiple initiatives. It persuaded the governments to bring the Canada/Egypt and Libya/Egypt initiatives under the 'Nairobi Agreement umbrella'. Thus the agreements and commitments reached in Winnipeg, Lomé, Kampala and Khartoum were incorporated into a single implementation plan. Roles were also defined for the governments of Canada, Libya and Egypt. A detailed implementation plan was drawn up and three technical committees were established to oversee the main components:

- to relocate, disarm and disband the LRA/M;
- to establish an SPLM/A Observation Team;
- to search for and repatriate the Aboke girls (and eventually all abductees).

It was by any standards an ambitious and challenging plan, fraught with risks of failure and uncertainty. Although the LRA was absent and had not assented to their disarmament and relocation, the plan specified a very tight implementation timetable of one month. The Libyan and Egyptian governments committed funds to build new camps, while the government of Uganda pledged to cover the flight costs for the relocation. Other agencies drafted proposals to manage the demobilization, decommissioning and resettlement of the LRA, and a wider circle of European donor governments promised funds. It is baffling why the

governments agreed to such an unrealistic plan, given the obvious challenges and why the signatories were so confident of success that CPA was asked to remain in Khartoum to help identify the Aboke girls. The governments and participating agencies remained pointedly ambiguous about whether the means for the LRA's disbandment and disarmament were to be ultimately peaceful or military. This may have reflected differences of views – but it had the effect of establishing an 'in-principle' consensus that the military option was open to consideration.

After hearing about the relocation plans, the LRA adopted an even more defensive stance. By this time its offices in Khartoum and Juba had closed, and its forces had withdrawn to their camps. Relations with the Sudanese government had clearly deteriorated to an all-time low when it cut off logistical, armed and material support. LRA leaders stopped travelling out of their camps to Juba or Khartoum after December 1999, but when they learned about the detailed relocation plan they abandoned Nsitu and moved nearer the Ugandan border. From that point, the government of Sudan was able to claim credibly that the LRA was no longer in territory under government control and that all links had been severed. More than one year on, none of the key components of the Khartoum implementation plan had been implemented.

Nairobi, November 2000

A follow-up ministerial meeting was convened in Nairobi in November 2000 by The Carter Center. In addition to the governments of Uganda and Sudan, representatives attended from the governments of Canada, Egypt and Libya, and UNICEF. During the meeting the participants drafted and signed a letter to Kony asking for a meeting to discuss implementation of the Nairobi Agreement and inviting the LRA to express its concerns. No mention was made of the relocation plans. Together with an unidentified 'Acholi representative', the signatories were hoping to engage Kony and the LRA in peace dialogue. The letter was to be delivered by the government of Sudan.

On 24 November the KM2000 conference was held in Nairobi, attended by civil society representatives from northern Uganda and Acholi in the diaspora. Government representatives from Uganda, Sudan and Canada as well as the Carter Center and UNICEF also attended. In his presentation, David Lord of The Carter Center explained the centre's work and asked for the support of the Acholi people. The head of the Sudanese government delegation stated that his government had decided to 'get rid of Kony' and had stopped providing food and arms to the LRA. The Carter Center representative publicly acknowledged that this was the case.

In December, Ben Hoffman received a letter from Kony promising a meeting. Hoffman left immediately for Juba and Nsitu. On arriving in Nsitu, he was informed that Kony had been taken ill and was therefore unable to proceed with the meeting. He was told to return to Juba where he would be contacted to make alternative arrangements. After a time in Juba with no attempts from the LRA to make contact, Hoffman returned to Khartoum and waited there for their response. He was promised a date would be set for the meeting within the week. But he received neither a date nor any other information from the LRA. He returned home disappointed. A period of relative inaction continued until June 2001.

Nairobi, June 2001

On 2 June 2001 The Carter Center again hosted implementation meetings in Nairobi. In addition to the delegations from the governments of Canada, Egypt and Libya, and UNICEF, Save the Children-Denmark and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) attended the meeting. It was decided that an Egyptian-Libyan Observation Team (OT), which had been agreed in October 2000 in Khartoum but whose deployment had been delayed by the outbreak of Ebola, should be deployed to monitor the border. It was also agreed that the draft protocol and status of forces agreement for the OT would be submitted to the foreign ministers as soon as possible for review – a suggestion welcomed by Egypt and Libya. At the time of writing, the OT had not been deployed. It was also agreed that the government of Sudan would be permitted to visit Sudanese refugee camps in Uganda immediately, in accordance with international law. While the legality of such a visit was questionable, ultimately the planned visits did not take place. Uganda and Sudan resumed diplomatic relations in August 2001 with the appointment of *chargés d'affaires*. It was a belated but welcome development.

Nairobi, November 2001

The next round of implementation meetings was held in Nairobi on 26 and 27 November. New members of the Ugandan delegation and the background of 11 September, meant that the mood was changing, signalling new challenges for the process. The Ugandan delegation pressed for the use of force against the LRA. Sudan (with support from the Canadians and UNICEF) rejected this on humanitarian grounds. As a compromise, another letter was written to Kony asking for a meeting to 'talk about talks', and referring repeatedly to the Amnesty Act. The letter was to be delivered by a senior Sudanese military officer. At the time of writing Kony had not replied.

Latest developments

After the attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001, the US State Department declared the LRA, among others, a terrorist group. With the global scene largely dominated by the anti-terrorist campaign in the last months of 2001, prospects for a peaceful resolution to the conflict appeared to recede. The Ugandan government publicly demanded a military solution to the LRA problem. Museveni visited Sudan in January 2002 for the IGAD meeting, and at a pre-summit meeting with Bashir both presidents pledged support for the war on terrorism. This visit, like the earlier visits of President Bashir to Kampala in 2001, signal a marked improvement in bi-lateral relations. Towards the end of January 2002 there were reports of a significant UPDF military build-up in northern Uganda and speculation grew that a move to attack the LRA inside Sudan was imminent.

In retrospect, it is perhaps not surprising that the exclusive framework of the Nairobi Agreement could not promote a durable settlement in northern Uganda nor deal with the wider issues underpinning the conflict. The implementation plan agreed by the governments and supporting agencies was by any standard quite ambitious and expectations that diplomatic relations would be restored within weeks of the Nairobi Agreement were probably unrealistic given the deep-rooted mistrust between the two governments, the previously un-implemented agreements, and years of outright hostility. The response of the LRA should perhaps have been predicted. Although there is still no peace in Acholi, the Nairobi process has placed enormous political and military pressure on the LRA. While many civilians have died or continue to suffer the ravages of war, according to UNICEF over 300 escaped children have returned to Uganda since 2000 thanks to extensive governmental and non-governmental cooperation. Despite these gains it seems that the logic of the Nairobi process will only deepen confrontation. As long as the key players have confidence in a 'military option', despite the obvious perils and consequences, the option of building a sustainable peace in Acholi remains a distant dream.

The role of the religious leaders

Carlos Rodriguez



Source: Father Carlos Rodriguez



Procession at Gulu Peace Walk and Prayer, 30 Dec 2000

Father Carlos Rodriguez is secretary of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Gulu. He has worked with Kitgum Peace & Justice Committee and Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative on peacebuilding and human rights education and advocacy.

During the early years of the war in Acholiland, religious leaders in the region focused primarily on providing moral and practical support to their parishioners and Church institutions became centres of support for thousands seeking shelter from the violence. Over time a greater consensus emerged amongst church leaders in the North on the need to be proactive in 'bearing witness' about the conflict and to engage directly in peacebuilding. This transformation has resulted in a number of initiatives that have placed religious leaders at the heart of efforts to support a political resolution of the conflict and to address the consequences of the war. The most prominent bodies conducting these initiatives have been the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) and the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (JPC).

When the NRM government came to power in 1986, both the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church of Uganda were regarded with some suspicion by NRM leaders whose secular ideology viewed these religious institutions as divisive and as potential opponents. As the rebellion started in Acholiland in August 1986, religious leaders of the Catholic and Anglican churches were branded as 'rebel collaborators' and were subjected to harassment and threats. This occurred within the context of a residual historical rivalry and mistrust between the two religious bodies, which made it difficult for them to undertake common initiatives. Furthermore, the churches in the north had little concrete support or sympathy from their counterparts elsewhere in the country, most of whom tended to support the government and tacitly viewed the war as remote and not of concern.

Some church leaders participated in the peace talks between the LRA and the Government in 1993-94. Following their collapse, two massacres in Kitgum in 1995 motivated the newly created Anglican Diocese of Kitgum led by Bishop Macleod Baker Ochola, who had participated in the failed negotiations, and the Catholic

Comboni Fathers to begin an ecumenical initiative to 'speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.' In 1996, an inter-faith group in Gulu organised peace training workshops and the first public prayer for peace – an event that narrowly avoided being banned as groups advocating negotiated solutions were regarded with intense suspicion by government officials. These events marked the first significant peace initiatives instigated by religious institutions. Yet the violence continued to escalate. In 1997, Bishop Ochola chaired a series of meetings between Catholic and Anglican, and later Muslim, officials to discuss the situation. That August, they organised a peace rally and issued an unequivocal message asking the LRA to stop its violence against civilians and calling on the government to seek a negotiated end to the conflict. This event was followed in September by a workshop that produced a strongly worded publication denouncing the UPDF's attempts to force villagers into the displacement camps. This letter was read in most churches and met with an angry response from political leaders.

From these experiences, the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative was formally inaugurated in February 1998 with the Anglican Bishop of northern Uganda Nelson Onono-Onweng as its founding Chair. Its first major event was the Bedo Piny pi Kuc (sitting down for peace) conference. It drew over 150 Acholi who discussed the causes and effects of the insurgency, the reasons for its persistence and possible strategies to end it. They concluded that 'the insurgency cannot be won by the gun' and subsequently called for dialogue between the government and the LRA, an amnesty and efforts at reconciliation through the Acholi traditional practice of *mato oput*. They agreed that Acholi religious leaders would work with other Acholi civil society and political leaders within Uganda and in the diaspora to help achieve these aims. The event marked a turning point, and the unity of the Anglican and Catholic churches was in itself a symbol of reconciliation given their history of division along political lines.

ARLPI subsequently developed its activities in a number of directions: continuation of efforts to build a public consensus for peace through sensitisation, training and dialogue; advocacy for specific policies, especially the amnesty law; and mediating or supporting negotiations. The next year, it held a joint international conference with ACORD and issued a communiqué setting forth a 'reconciliation agenda' that it has since sought to promote. Through staffed offices in Gulu and Kitgum, a network of peace committees and volunteer 'peace animators' has been established throughout the region. It has regularly organised large rallies and other events to promote the peace agenda. These events have largely been ignored in the national media, reinforcing a distorted image of an Acholi society not interested in ending the conflict.

In its advocacy capacity, ARLPI has consistently called for an end to violence, dismantling of the IDP camps, and the use of negotiations to end the conflict. It has sought to raise international awareness of the situation by lobbying foreign governments and INGOs. The most sustained effort was on securing an amnesty law and, once the 1999 Amnesty Act was passed, promoting its implementation. When making public statements the religious leaders emphasise the complementarity of the Acholi reconciliation system of *mato oput* with the Biblical understanding of unconditional forgiveness. The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission complements these policy efforts with human rights monitoring and documentation. It publishes a monthly newsletter describing local developments and has advocated investigations into a number of cases of gross abuses, such as the alleged killing of thirty children shot by the UPDF in a helicopter gunship ambush against the LRA in 1997 and cases of returned abducted children held in military installations.

In addition to seeking to address the war with the LRA, ARLPI has also sought to play a role in mediating other conflicts. The seasonal Karamojong (Jie) migration into eastern Acholiland is often accompanied by violence. ARLPI therefore initiated the Acholi-Jie Peace Dialogue and Reconciliation dialogue process, and a series of meetings from November 2000 to May 2001 led to a more peaceful dry season.

Since its inception, ARLPI has sought to draw the senior LRA leadership into peace talks. While meaningful high level meetings remain elusive, discreet contacts by some religious leaders with field commanders have taken place. The main focus has been around implementation of the amnesty law, which allows combatants to report to religious leaders. These initiatives have encountered difficulties, particularly in co-ordination with local UPDF units. One of the 'bush peace talks' with junior LRA officers was attacked by a UPDF unit on 26 April 2001 – even though Fr Tarcisio Pazzaglia alerted the military authorities prior to the meeting. Despite the risks, ARLPI and other traditional leaders remain committed to continuing these efforts that offer hope for demobilising the LRA.

Most ordinary people in Acholiland, without regard to their membership of a religious community, have trust in the motivations of the religious leaders to play a meaningful role in the search for peace. Thus far the religious leaders have resisted the temptation to present themselves as the ones who can deliver peace. After fifteen years of brutality, the community has become weak and divided, and to address this challenge, the religious leaders are promoting a philosophy that sees the creation of peace as a long-term, group effort.

Women's contribution to peacebuilding in northern Uganda

Rosalba Oywa



Source: Father Carlos Rodriguez

Speaker at the Gulu Peace Walk and Prayer, 30 Dec 2000

Rosalba Oywa is acting Programme Director for the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD) in Gulu. She has been involved with People's Voice for Peace in peacebuilding and advocacy.

The conflict in northern Uganda has had diverse effects on women, resulting from mass displacement and the destruction of families, livelihoods, infrastructure and the environment. The conditions have led to cultural fragmentation, abject poverty and vulnerability to preventable diseases, sexual abuse, mutilation and death. Women have learned that any form of war and violence is a gender-differentiated activity in which few women stand a chance to gain regardless of which side is dominant. Women from Acholiland have responded to this challenge by assuming diverse roles, becoming combatants, negotiators and, most frequently, community peacebuilders. Many have turned their suffering into a driving force in the search for peace – even at risk to their lives.

Since its beginning, Acholi women have been armed combatants in the conflict. The most notable was Alice Auma 'Lakwena' who led the armed group that preceded Joseph Kony's LRA. In the LRA, most girls and women were forced to join after being abducted, but nevertheless comprise a significant presence in the movement. The abducted girls are mainly allocated as 'wives' to LRA officers or used as sex slaves by other rebels. Abducted girls who have returned home tend to show acute emotional disturbance, but with adequate care most recover over a period of time. Some women also joined the NRA. Most women combatants testify that they joined out of a need to save themselves or their families. Their experience demonstrates that many Acholi women have had to respond to the pressures of violence in extraordinary ways that are profoundly challenging to traditional social roles.

Most women, however, have tried to remain with their families and used their roles as caregivers to support peace in their homes and communities. Over time many have joined efforts to promote peace. One approach has been to appeal to the fighting forces to use peaceful means to resolve their differences and encourage the rebels to come back home. Many women testify to

having used a variety of means to persuade or prevent their husbands, sons and other male relatives from actively engaging in the war. They have tried to persuade individual fighters to drop their arms and return to their communities while encouraging the government to change its policy to promote peace.

In 1989, the Gulu District Women's Development Committee mobilised other women in a peaceful demonstration at a time when no other groups dared to speak out about the war. Wearing rags and singing funeral songs, the women marched through Gulu town demanding an end to the violence. At the same time, many from the LRA gave up fighting and returned home. Although there are no available statistics to substantiate the outcome of the demonstration, a period of relative calm followed which provided an opportunity for various agencies to resettle displaced populations in Gulu.

In addition to signalling their disapproval of the LRA's behaviour, Acholi women have organised to try to influence government policy and the practices of UPDF troops in the region. Realising that simple moral appeals to the fighting forces could not stop the war, in 1996 a delegation sought an audience with the President of the Republic of Uganda, army commanders and top government officials to articulate their concerns and demand a peaceful solution to the conflict and prevention of further violence. An audience with Museveni was denied but the more positive responses of military authorities, Local Councils (LCs), and the Resident District Commissioner for dialogue and development of joint strategies have greatly improved civil-military working relationships. Women have tried to prevent the excesses of UPDF soldiers by monitoring and reporting violations. Acholi women have also served on the LC committees in an effort to demand that their concerns are taken seriously. These leadership roles have demanded extra courage because of the high risk of reprisals from LRA fighters and, paradoxically, risk of the UPDF claiming that high profile women are LRA collaborators.

Women have also been leaders in efforts to draw international attention to the conflict. When the LRA abducted girls from St. Mary's School in Aboke in October 1996, the Concerned Parents Association was formed to campaign for their release. With the school's Deputy Headmistress, Sister Rachele Fassera, they initiated a high profile advocacy campaign that received attention worldwide and influenced the agenda in negotiations around the conflict. The strategy for the release of the Aboke girls has had some criticism, as the thousands of children abducted before 1997 received no such attention. The strong government support for the campaign has in fact helped to strengthen popular belief in a 'conspiracy of silence' and a lack of political will to end the conflict in northern Uganda.

Local NGOs such as People's Voice for Peace have used participatory research to document people's experiences. This process has helped to empower the participants with a deeper understanding of the nature, pattern and dynamics of the armed conflict – knowledge that the women's peace movement has used to strengthen its capacity. Documentation projects have also generated information for advocacy and lobbying work.

Women have also been active in forming or joining community-based organisations and local NGOs intended to address the consequences of the war by promoting reconciliation, reintegration and regeneration. For example, women worked with elders and traditional leaders to establish a reception centre for ex-combatants between 1989–90. This initiative ended when the government began transferring returning combatants from the camp to Kampala, a move which created so much anxiety that many of those who had previously surrendered disappeared back into the bush to continue fighting. Women have also been active in psycho-social programmes, particularly those focusing on the rehabilitation of returnees and supporting rape victims and amputees.

In addition to peacebuilding at the community level, Acholi women have played a direct role in efforts to find a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Women representatives were among those involved in the 1994 delegation led by the government's Minister for the North, Betty Bigombe – herself an Acholi woman – to negotiate with the LRA. This initiative fostered a cessation of violence for almost six months before it collapsed.

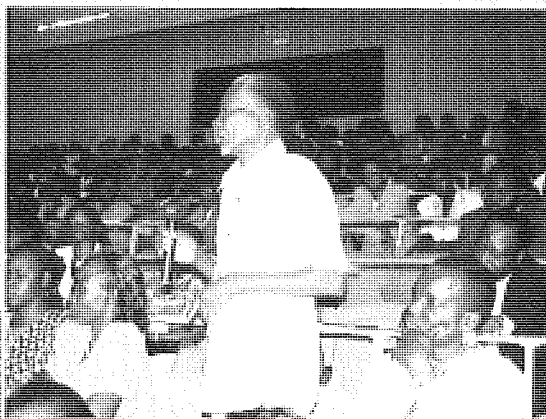
Despite the fact that Acholi women have demonstrated both their motivation and capacity to be involved in peace initiatives, they continue to be marginalised from many of the official initiatives to address the war. They have not had a role in recent negotiation processes and, despite appeals, have not been appointed to such bodies as the Amnesty Commission. There is a general assumption that women MPs are representatives of the wider grassroots women's organisations, but in reality the links are inadequate.

The conflict and particularly the population displacement have undermined many traditions of social support. Women's groups are working with others to revive cultural institutions and to prepare the community for reconciliation and re-integration. Working through local cultural institutions with activities such as prayer meetings, peace education, as well as through songs, proverbs, poetry and story-telling, women's groups have helped to build community support and respect. Generally, women peacebuilding activists have recognised the need to address all the consequences of the conflict to develop a truly sustainable peace, and continue to work towards that end.

Kacoke Madit:

A diaspora role in promoting peace

Nyeko Caesar Poblicks



KM conference 1998

Nyeko Caesar Poblicks is KM's Project Officer in the London Secretariat and is the author of *The Quest for Peaceful Co-existence in Uganda*.

In 1996 members of the Acholi community living in the diaspora started the Kacoke Madit (KM) initiative as a means of raising awareness about the conflict and finding a viable means of bringing the conflict to an end. Kacoke Madit translates simply as 'a big meeting' in Luo, the language of the Acholi. KM is probably best known for organising a series of international conferences bringing together the affected northern Uganda community, the Acholi-diaspora community, the government of Uganda, the government of Sudan, the LRA, representatives of the international community and other stakeholders with an interest in the conflict. The first two KM conferences were held in London, UK in April 1997 and July 1998. The last major conference, KM2000, was held in Nairobi, Kenya in November 2000.

A Kacoke Madit conference is an open forum for all sides of the conflict: Acholi people and community leaders, parliamentarians and traditional and religious leaders, government officials and civil servants, representatives of the LRM/A, and overseas members of the Acholi diaspora. It is this inclusiveness, combined with a common concern to see that the conflict is brought to a peaceful end that gives KM an unusual role in promoting and building consensus for sustainable peace.

"Acholi people who have borne the brunt of the conflict are concerned about being marginalised from a process, which will have far reaching implications for them, whatever the outcome. Until now, there has been limited communication and dialogue between the process and the civilian population of northern Uganda... It is only realistic that the people of Acholi (civil society) are actively involved in a process that seeks solutions to problems that they have been the major victims of. It does not bode well for the prospect of a durable and sustainable solution for the process to ignore the needs and input of civil society as a critical stakeholder with interest in both the process and outcome of the negotiations" – Excerpts from KM Memorandum to The Carter Center, 2000

Since its early formation the work of KM has been intended to support an inclusive dialogue process, combining the search for peace dialogue opportunities with peace education within the affected communities, as well as other practical efforts to support peace initiatives. KM is also involved in disseminating information about the conflict and peace initiatives around the world, using a variety of methods, including the internet (www.km-net.org) and a weekly email-based newsletter.

“It is the view of the KM Secretariat that only a sustained dialogue and a peace process leading to a comprehensive settlement, followed by reconciliation, reconstruction and development can break the cycle of violence in northern Uganda and bring about durable peace. The overriding reason for our call for a negotiated peace process between the LRA and the Government is based on our concern for the suffering of civilians rather than the military strength or weakness of the rebels. Before all these can be achieved, it is necessary to create the conditions that will make it possible for such a peace process to take hold and succeed. KM, its partners and other groups and the Acholi people in general have crucial roles to play in this respect.” – KM Secretariat Presentation, ACORD/ARLPI Conference, Gulu, September 1999

KM activities are co-ordinated from its Secretariat in London, UK. The Secretariat works with and through a network of Regional Coordinators in Uganda, southern Africa, USA, Canada, Scandinavia and the rest of Europe, as well as with partner groups in Uganda including Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiatives (ARLPI), the Acholi Parliamentary Group (APG), Acholi Development Association (ADA), Peoples' Voice for Peace (PVP), the Council of Acholi Chiefs (rwodi moo) and other local stakeholders.

Since its first meeting in London in April 1997, KM has sought to identify and facilitate opportunities for the conflict parties and interested intermediaries to engage in dialogue. KM has sought to play a facilitative and supportive role.

“Governments that are concerned about the plight of abducted children and who wish to contribute to their release, protection, reintegration and rehabilitation should adopt clear, unambiguous and effective policies to support and where possible facilitate dialogue as the only viable means of realising those goals.” – KM presentation to the international conference on war affected children, September 2000, Winnipeg

Over time, the KM Secretariat has been mandated by the KM conferences to play more of a role in advocacy. Key issues which have engaged the KM secretariat have included advocacy for a peaceful settlement ('Manifesto for Peace' released during the Parliamentary elections, and published on KM's website), inclusion of Acholi (civil society) representatives in efforts to find a settlement, promotion of conflict-sensitive international approaches to the plight of the war-affected children, and lobbying for the Amnesty Act to be implemented in the context of the overall resolution of the conflict – rather than as an end in itself.

In 1999, KM and Conciliation Resources (CR) began working together in a partnership. While KM's programmes remain independent, the collaboration allows for a constructive relationship, which has helped KM to build its own capacities and enhance its role in supporting intermediaries and its partners.

KM walks a difficult path in sustaining a principled position on a negotiated settlement in a conflict characterised by manipulation and misinformation. With its organisational structure – as both a decentralised network and an operational Secretariat, KM has been able to act quickly and flexibly to capitalise on opportunities to move the peace agenda forward, while at the same time guarding against actions which inadvertently enhance the belligerence and militarism of the main actors and therefore prolong the war.

A dialogue process, which presents real alternatives to violence, remains a political and ethical imperative for all those committed to peace in Acholiland. The failure of external agencies to 'deliver peace' has shifted the onus for a resolution back to Uganda and Ugandans. KM and its partners will continue to play their part in meeting this challenge. The task of establishing and helping peace take root will take both patience and skill but the efforts for peace must continue because only sustainable peace and equitable development will guarantee the future of northern Uganda.

Because the majority of the LRA combatants were abducted as children, appropriate response strategies must be sensitive to this reality. KM has found that cultural values are still held in high esteem and can be used as ethical reference points for the challenges of reconciliation. KM will work with its partners in Uganda and beyond to provide opportunities for dialogue to take place, to create platforms for Acholi voices to be heard, and to encourage the relevant governments and international agencies to listen to those who remain in the line of fire.

Reconciliation and justice:

'Mato oput' and the Amnesty Act

Barney Afako

Barney Afako is a Ugandan lawyer who has worked in the fields of human rights and criminal justice in Uganda, Zimbabwe and the United Kingdom. He is currently working with African Rights in Kampala and northern Uganda, and is a technical assistant to the Ugandan Amnesty Commission.

The unacceptably high costs of civil war have caused Ugandans to re-assess approaches to resolving conflict. Among the Acholi of northern Uganda, the bitter experience of unending conflict has generated a remarkable commitment to reconciliation and a peaceful settlement of the conflict rather than calling for retribution against the perpetrators of serious abuses. Through their civic and religious leaders, and in other public fora, they have called for the government to pursue dialogue and to introduce a comprehensive amnesty for combatants as a confidence-building measure. This call for amnesty was underpinned by their faith in the capacity of the community and cultural institutions to manage effective reconciliation even against the background of serious offences.

Many conflicts yield meaningful distinctions between victims and perpetrators. Yet the majority of Acholi recognise that most combatants in the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) were forcibly abducted and have themselves been victims. This generates the realisation that anyone could be subjected to the conditions that produced the perpetrators of the crimes experienced in the conflict. Combined with a profound weariness with the war and the suffering it has caused, this creates a moral empathy with the perpetrators and an acknowledgement that the formal justice system is not sufficiently nuanced to make the necessary distinctions between legal and moral guilt. As a result, most Acholi have decided to promote reconciliation, rather than a retributive understanding of justice, to create conditions to end the war and reintegrate the community.

A history of impunity?

Ugandans have been subjected to extensive human rights abuses under successive regimes. Yet no systematic or effective efforts have been made to prosecute the perpetrators. In part, this might have been due to the fragility of new governments whose weak



institutional and political bases have made robust legal responses difficult. Whether in Acholi, West Nile, or in the Luwero Triangle where many civilians have lost their lives in civil conflict, there have been no formal prosecutions and convictions. For example, following the violent overthrow of Amin's regime, many former members of the security services were detained pending trial but most were eventually released without charge because of lack of evidence.

Ugandans have had to grapple with the meaning of justice in this context. For a country with such a troubled history, amnesty has come to be seen as the most effective way of drawing a line between the past and the present, in order to rebuild the nation. In the Acholi region, traditional reconciliation processes of 'mato oput' complement and underpin the pardon offered by the state.

The amnesty law

When the government introduced an Amnesty Bill in 1998, it was revisiting an old political formula of offering pardons to insurgents as a means of ending intractable

conflict. Previous de facto and de jure amnesties under the National Resistance Movement (NRM) had offered general and specific pardons to groups that had engaged in rebellion, notably the UPDM/A and the UPF/UPA. The Amnesty Statute of 1987, which was passed by the National Resistance Council (NRC), professed to encourage various fighting groups and sponsors of insurgency to cease their activities. In particular, the statute targeted 'Ugandans in exile who are afraid to return home due to fear of possible prosecution'. Under the statute, four offences – genocide, murder, kidnapping and rape – were considered too heinous to be included under the amnesty. Similarly, the subsequent 1998 Statute also sought to exclude certain offenders from amnesty.

Subjecting all the LRA members to a formal prosecution did not seem, to many people, a valid or effective alternative. Thus, when in January 2000 the government introduced a new Amnesty Act, it was building on tradition and responding to the expressed wishes of the people of Uganda – particularly those of the people of Acholi whose specific concerns were incorporated into the law.

In a memorandum to the government, Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (ARLPI), reflecting the aspirations of the people of Acholi at home and in the diaspora, rejected the partial proposals and strongly advocated the adoption of a general amnesty. Their draft was in fact to form the basis of the current Amnesty Act. Advocates of the comprehensive amnesty saw that any threats of prosecution, even of a minority of combatants, would pose an obstacle to peaceful resolution of the conflict. The government's own findings were that there was solid support for the proposed law. Although the enactment of the Amnesty Act may have coincided with the Nairobi Accord between Uganda and Sudan, the groundwork and the discussions had preceded that particular initiative.

Under the Act, 'amnesty' means a pardon, forgiveness, exemption or discharge from criminal prosecution or any other form of punishment by the state'. In translating the word 'amnesty' into Acholi the word 'Kica', which also means forgiveness, has been used. This expression has caused difficulties with the LRA resenting the suggestion of guilt and submission. Since they were not party to the formulation of the law, the Act still needs to be more fully explained to the LRA.

For the individual, the greatest significance of the amnesty law is a legal one: it confers upon the beneficiaries of the amnesty an irrevocable legal immunity from prosecution or punishment. Under the Act, amnesty is extended to cover all insurgency-related offences ranging from combat to collaboration and aiding rebellion. Once a person has renounced insurgency that person can never again be charged for the same offence. However, under legislation now being introduced by the government, if, after receiving amnesty, another insurgency offence is committed, he or she will not be protected from prosecution for the subsequent offence. The immunity from future prosecution for previous offences is also underwritten by the Ugandan Constitution (Article 25(10) 1995), which protects a person granted a pardon from any prosecution or punishment. While it is effective within the country, the amnesty does not protect a person outside the borders of Uganda.

Under international law, the increasing trend is to require states to prevent and punish crimes against humanity, and the already restricted space for an international jurisprudence of amnesty to emerge is set to become even more limited. In northern Uganda this has posed a dilemma, particularly for international agencies protecting children's rights. Most have had to recognise the complexities of attributing moral guilt against the background of extensive and prolonged abduction. With the added limitations and risks of military operations quite apparent, the alternative of an amnesty and reconciliation process becomes even more attractive.

Institutions of the amnesty

An Amnesty Commission and a Demobilisation and Resettlement Team (DRT) were established by the Act to oversee the amnesty process and to perform a range of activities including: promoting dialogue, sensitisation, drawing up programmes for decommissioning of weapons and resettlement of returnees. Resettlement assistance has, however, been primarily carried out by other agencies working in collaboration with the Commission. Originally passed for a renewable period of six months, the Act has so far been renewed without much difficulty. Gradually, the Commission is establishing its presence nationally and in the region. Gulu and Kitgum now have Amnesty Commission offices as do Arua and Kasese in western Uganda, and another is planned for Mbale in the east. In addition to its media presence through Acholi language programmes reaching into Sudan, the Commission has already made one visit to Khartoum in Sudan and is keen to make contact with the LRA leadership in order to explain the amnesty.

Impact of the Act

To date, over 4,000 people across the country have formally applied for amnesty under the Act, and many more will have returned in response to the amnesty without formal procedures involving the Amnesty Commission. Combatants who return directly from combat experience are debriefed by the authorities for security purposes. This has not had any discernible adverse effect on the numbers of people reporting. In Acholi, even before the arrival of the Amnesty Commission, the community, local government and other agencies had developed reception and reintegration programmes for those returning. Their work has continued with the Commission retaining responsibility for the legal procedure of issuing amnesty certificates.

It is clear that the existence of the amnesty has encouraged hundreds of insurgents around the country to return home. Accounts by LRA ex-combatants indicate that news of the amnesty, received through radio and word of mouth, is a critical factor in motivating their escape. The law provides the legal and political space within which community and other initiatives for pursuing dialogue and reconciliation can take place. Pajule, in the Pader district of Acholi, has become a focal point for LRA combatants returning in response to the amnesty. There, the local traditional chief, working with priests from the local Catholic mission, has been involved in receiving such combatants on behalf of the Amnesty Commission.

Traditional approaches

Acholi tradition embodies the principles and practices which have been central to the support for reconciliation and amnesty within that community. Through the mediation of the traditional chiefs (rwodi) many offences, including homicides, have traditionally been resolved by reconciliation. Whenever a homicide takes place the rwodi intervene in the situation to 'cool down the temperature' and to offer mediation. Although the traditional chiefs had, since 1911, been supplanted by the colonial appointed chiefs (Rwodi Kalam) their legitimacy has never been destroyed. The 1995 Constitution, which allowed for traditional or cultural leaders to exist in any part of Uganda, has led to the revival and celebration of cultural and traditional institutions in all parts of the country. Today, in a project supported by the Belgian government, the rwodi of all the Acholi clans have been reinstated and the Lawi Rwodi (head chief) has been elected by the other rwodi. After years of conflict and marginalisation, the chiefs, like most of their people, are poor and royal houses are in need of repair. However, the greatest asset of the chiefs – their political independence – gives them enhanced credibility in mediating reconciliation.

The unique contribution of the rwodi is through their mediation of the reconciliation process, *mato oput*, which many Acholi believe can bring true healing in a way that a formal justice system cannot. This ceremony of clan and family-centred reconciliation incorporates the acknowledgement of wrongdoing, the offering of compensation by the offender and then culminates in the sharing of symbolic drink. Early in November 2001, a group *mato oput* ceremony was held in Pajule. This involved about 20 recently returned LRA combatants and included many others who had already settled in the community. The ceremony was supported by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), churches and by Acholi in the diaspora. Government officials, the amnesty commissioners, senior army commanders in the region and several representatives of NGOs attended the function, demonstrating the support of the wider Ugandan community. Another ceremony has taken place in Pabbo, in Gulu district, and others are planned for different parts of Acholi.

In addition to *mato oput*, individual cleansing rituals routinely take place whenever former LRA members return to the community. Most agencies that receive and reintegrate ex-combatants ensure that traditional rituals are integrated into the process. In a demonstration of the value attached to traditional approaches locally, in Kitgum the district earmarked some funds for elders to carry out atonement rituals. The Amnesty Act enjoins the Amnesty Commission to 'promote appropriate mechanisms of reconciliation in the affected areas' (Section 9c), and the Commission has been supportive of

the initiatives in Acholi. Although all these efforts have contributed to a successful reintegration process it is difficult to attribute specific effects to each element.

Challenges

It remains to be seen to what extent the hardening of international positions against terrorism after the events of 11 September in the United States will affect the amnesty and reconciliation process. The LRA and the ADF are now labelled by the United States as terrorist organisations. So far there is no indication that these moves have affected international support for the amnesty and reconciliation process in Uganda. The Ugandan government has extended the amnesty for another six months until July 2002. At the same time, however, it has introduced the 'Suppression of Terrorism Bill, 2001', which is currently making its way through Parliament. As with a previous bill that was passed in 1998, the LRA, LRM and the Allied Democratic Forces are labelled terrorist organisations. The new bill outlaws membership of these organisations and any contact with members of such groups also attracts punishment. It appears that the government will continue to pursue the dual approach of maintaining an amnesty without suspending military action against insurgents. Inevitably this creates a tension between reconciliation and protection, which the government has a duty to resolve carefully.

Conclusions

The breadth of support for restorative justice in Acholi indicates a popular recognition of the complexities of the current conflict and of the inability of formal processes to deal adequately with serious violations within the community. This has led to a rediscovery of and renewed role for tradition. Its focus on community participation and acknowledgement of wrongdoing deals with individual guilt in a social context. This is particularly appropriate given that the offences committed in the course of the insurgency were directed at the community. The amnesty law, establishing both a political and legal mechanism for ending the conflict, has emerged from the advocacy of the communities who have been the principal victims of the war. Their active role at the inception of the amnesty and their participation in the different forms of traditional and social reconciliation enhances the value and legitimacy of these processes. However, questions about the meaning of justice and the role of amnesties will continue to be relevant. The demands of the people may also change as the conflict unfolds. Prolonged conflict has challenged perceived notions of justice and has posed serious moral dilemmas with which the people of Uganda and the international community must continue to grapple.

Which children count?

The politics of children's rights in northern Uganda

Chris Dolan

Chris Dolan was the International Research Officer for the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD) working with their Gulu programme. He is presently completing his doctorate at the London School of Economics.

In international eyes the forcible abduction of children and adults by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is probably *the* defining characteristic of the war in northern Uganda, and there is little doubt that it has done much to draw international attention and intervention to the area. According to the Abducted Child Registration and Information System (ACRIS) set up by UNICEF and the government of Uganda, some 9,818 children under the age of 18 have been abducted since the LRA war began, or about one third of the total of 28,217 recorded abductionsⁱ. Of these 9,818 about one third, or 3,300, were under the age of 12 when abducted. Although these figures do not reflect the differing duration of the abductions (which range considerably from a few days to several years), they nonetheless point to an average abduction rate of just over 800 children per year over a twelve-year period. While women account for 12% of those abducted overall, amongst the under-18s the proportion rises to about 24%. Until very recently UNICEF estimated an overall return rate of 50% (ACRIS), with a lower rate of return amongst girls than boys, while the US State Department Human Rights Report 2000 talked of 75%ⁱⁱ.

For those immediately affected, whether the abductees themselves or family and peers, abduction has been a deeply disturbing experience. Oral testimonies collected from returnees indicate that many have been directly involved in traumatic and brutalising activities: forced to kill, participate in or experience rape, acute hunger and thirst, forced marches, separation and displacement. Those not captured live in extreme fear that it could happen to them, resulting in thousands of people seeking shelter either in the larger towns or sleeping in hideouts in the bush. During one of the peaks of LRA attacks in 1996, for example, around 9000 people took shelter in the compound of Lacor hospital outside Gulu town every night. The trauma of abduction does not end with return; some are kept in the UPDF barracks for weeks at a time for questioning. Others are incorporated directly into the UPDF. The Kitgum Justice & Peace Committee for example, reported in early 2000 the case of one 16 year



old boy who 'after escaping from rebel captivity in January has spent so far three months in Gulu barracks and is under a lot of pressure to join the Army'.

At the heart of this very real suffering the most recent figures give some grounds for cautious optimism. In contrast to earlier estimates of a 50-75% return rate (which would suggest that between 4,909 and 7,363 children would have returned by now), the most recent figures indicate that some 7860 children have already returned and been reintegrated by World Vision and Gulu Support the Children Organisation (GUSCO). Indeed, allowing that some 10% of those abducted would have become adults in the years following their abduction, these figures would suggest that less than 1000 children remain to be returned and reintegrated.

Total Number of children abducted, 1989 – 2001	9818
Number that grew from children into adults (approx 10%)	982
Number of children yet to be reintegrated	8836
Number reintegrated by World Vision 1995-2001	5560 ⁱⁱⁱ
Number reintegrated by GUSCO 1995-2000	2300 ^{iv}
Total number of children reintegrated to date	7860

This indicates a reintegration rate of at least 88% - and a return rate which is even higher, given that not all returnees pass through the World Vision or GUSCO centres. Assuming that some children have undoubtedly returned without passing through any process of reintegration it also suggests that the number remaining to be returned as of early 2002 is at the very most around 900.

Unfortunately, if all the accounts of children dying or being killed on forced marches or when seeking to escape are true, then several hundred must have died during their captivity. Hundreds more are thought to have been killed in skirmishes with the UPDF and SPLA, and it is alleged that hundreds have been sold into slavery by the LRA in Sudan. It is therefore unlikely that many of these 900 or so children still survive. Although there is an additional unknown number of children born in LRA camps, the figures raise a huge question mark over the widely publicised claim that children make up 90% of the LRA.

Consideration is overdue to the fact that the focus on LRA abductees and returnees has, for some time, diverted attention from the extreme needs of the children who live in the affected districts of northern Uganda as a

whole. The 99.8% of the child population left behind experience a daily catalogue of major forms of abuse. Most are in constant fear of abduction due to a lack of adequate protection from the government. A majority of them live in 'protected villages' where parenting and socialisation practices are severely disrupted. From there some are forcibly recruited into the government's own Home Guard - the Local Defence Units (LDUs) deployed to other conflict zones such as the DRC. Some lose life and limb stepping on landmines and picking up unexploded grenades, while others suffer severe malnutrition necessitating the interventions of World Vision and Action Contre la Faim supplementary feeding schemes. Universal Primary Education is by no means universal, and secondary schooling is almost wholly unavailable. The phenomena of child prostitution and of parents marrying their under-age daughters to soldiers, in the hope of increased protection and security, are well documented. Although no figures for this are available, it is probable, given the degree of militarization in the north, that at least as many young girls are married off to UPDF soldiers as those abducted annually by the LRA.

In terms of the position of children and youth in society in general, there is evidence of a backlash against youth as adults seek to recapture the power and status accorded them under more traditional age hierarchies which the war has weakened, effectively blocking many youth initiatives. This and other long-term effects of growing up in a war-affected society are potentially disastrous. A USAID report recently commented that while 'the physical risks are obvious: children can be killed or injured... The psychosocial impacts are harder to see but can be persistent and even more debilitating than physical trauma'⁵.

Given these factors, the emphasis on the LRA's child soldiers can at times seem disproportionate to the other interventions which are required if cycles of violence are to be broken, raising the question of why northern Uganda's 'other youth' (i.e. those not abducted by the LRA) should not have been given more attention. Without questioning the good intentions of those who have been involved in those dynamics, it is possible to highlight some of the interests which have been served in the process.

Firstly, the lack of any kind of reception and formalised reintegration process for returnees until 1995 was a distinct gap which has since become something of a niche for certain humanitarian agencies. It is relatively easy to raise money internationally for children's issues, especially when they are in synergy with multiple and global rights agendas. The case of abducted children of northern Uganda has become something of a *cause célèbre* in the movement for the rights of the child, as well as in campaigns to ban child-soldiers and the anti-slavery

campaigns, and it has been a key shaper of international perceptions of the war in the north. The abduction of 139 teenage girls from Aboke Secondary School in the neighbouring district of Apac on 10 October 1996, and the exceptional campaigning work done by the Ugandan Concerned Parents Association, along with the UN's 1996 report on the 'Impact of Armed Conflict on Children' which featured the returned LRA abductees as a case study, were major drivers of this process. The degree to which institutional agendas have diminished external agencies' potential role(s) in protecting all children in northern Uganda remains an open question.

Secondly, as argued earlier, one of the principal psychosocial dynamics set in motion or exacerbated by conflict of this nature is the problem of inter-generational conflict in which adults feel that they have lost control over and respect from the younger generations, with a backlash against youth as a result. Most child-rights based interventions, while exhorting adults to respect children's rights, are not working with adults to overcome deeply entrenched belief systems regarding age hierarchies. Indeed, the presentation of the war as being principally waged around children who need to be reintegrated or brought back under control 'for their own good and the good of society' plays directly into the hands of adults who are seeking to restore their diminished authority. Principal mechanisms of this which have been evident in northern Uganda and have gained much government and NGO support are cleansing and reconciliation ceremonies and the re-establishment or reinvention of 'traditional leadership' structures (male elders).

Thirdly, the presentation of the war as child-centred has undoubtedly enabled demonisation of the LRA by the government of Uganda – despite the NRM's own notorious use of *kadogos* (child soldiers) in its struggle for power in the mid 1980s, and its more recent involvement in the training of child soldiers in the DRC. The irony of this is not lost on people in the north; as the then co-ordinator of GUSCO stated in his acceptance speech of the Anti-Slavery Award 2000, 'the first time I saw a child holding a gun was in 1986 in Uganda when the National Resistance Army, which brought the current government in Uganda to power, took over power in Kampala' (7 December 2000). Nevertheless, the image of the LRA as being led by individuals who are indifferent to children's rights has in some circles justified a non-negotiation stance by the Ugandan government. It has also enabled people to turn a blind eye to the government's current abuses of children, such as the forcible recruitment into LDUs to be sent to the DRC, and the marriage of young girls to UPDF soldiers, as outlined above.

In short, the furtherance of the interests of these three groups (NGOs and human rights campaigners, local adults, Ugandan government) through the issue of



Women marching at the Gulu Peace Prayers, 31 Dec 2001

Source: Father Carlos Rodriguez

abducted children has done little either to help resolve the conflict or to create a climate conducive to longer-term peace and stability. Not only have the abducted children themselves not been properly counted, but children as a whole in northern Uganda appear not to count.

In terms of solving the conflict, the abducted children have become a further pawn in international power brokerage, a point of leverage with which to gain the support of international public opinion at the cost of analysis of the overall dynamics. As a result a set of beliefs concerning the nature and dynamics of the war have been entrenched in the minds of both local and international audiences, despite the fact that they do not stand up to close scrutiny. In terms of creating conditions conducive to long term stability this has been compromised by disproportionate focus on a relatively small group of children at the expense of concern for children as a whole and the future they may or may not be able to build.

As mentioned earlier, 88% of all abducted children have already been reintegrated. Humanitarian and human rights interventions in the northern Uganda conflict now need to make *all* children count, both literally and figuratively. This means a switch of emphasis from the existing reception centres to following up the returnees and the realities of their reintegration within the community, and doing this hand in hand with interventions in support of relatives and peers. In terms of the numbers affected, improving the context of a lack of adequate economic and educational opportunities, which currently pushes children into early marriages and

prostitution, may be more of a priority than increasing military protection from abduction. Most importantly, rights-based and psycho-social interventions must address the tensions of inter-generational conflict if some of the internal dynamics which help to sustain the wider conflict are to be broken.

There needs to be more careful analysis of the issues resulting from child abduction by armed groups and forcible recruitment by government forces – just what do they mean for the longer term dynamics of northern Uganda and stability in the country as a whole? There may be no better starting place for this than a re-assessment of the experiences of the government's own *kadogos* and their subsequent involvement in building what is still widely regarded as one of the success stories of Africa.

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- i See UNICEF 'Abductions in Northern and South-western Uganda: 1986-2001'
 - ii US Department of State Human Rights Report 2000
 - iii <http://www.wvi.org/wvi/old%20files/childsoldiers.htm>: 'Girl returns Home After Three Years in Captivity' by Simon Peter Esaku
 - iv Radda Barnen Save The Children, Sweden: Children of War. No3-4/00, December 2000, p3
 - v USAID: The Displaced Children and Orphans Fund's Report on Northern Uganda Children Affected by Violence, September 1998, p3

Key texts and agreements

Documents relating to the northern Uganda peace process

All texts listed are available on Conciliation Resources' website, <http://www.c-r.org/accord>.

*Titles listed in **bold** are reproduced in full here.*

- **'Nairobi Peace Agreement'**, with appendixes A, B, C, D and E, between the military government of Uganda (Military Council) and the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) hosted by the government of Kenya, December 17, 1985. Nairobi, Kenya
- **'Pece Agreement'**, agreement between the Uganda government (NRM) and the Uganda People's Democratic Movement (UPDM), June 3, 1988. Pece Stadium, Gulu, Uganda
- **'Addis Accord'**, agreement between the Uganda Peoples' Democratic Movement (UPDM) and the Uganda (NRM) government, July 14, 1990. Hilton Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- **'Gulu Ceasefire'**, NRA-LRA Ceasefire Agreement and Ceasefire Implementation Schedule. February 2, 1994. Gulu, Uganda
- **'LRM/A Letter to President Museveni'**, November 6, 1997. London, UK
- **'President Museveni Letter to LRM/A'**, November 22, 1997. Kampala, Uganda
- **'Signed minutes'** of the meeting between the LRM/A and the government of Uganda hosted by the Community Sant'Egidio, December 13, 1998. Rome, Italy
- **'Nairobi Agreement'**, agreement between the governments of Sudan and Uganda hosted by the government of Kenya and The Carter Center, December 8, 1999. Nairobi, Kenya
- **'The Amnesty Act'**: government of Uganda, January 17, 2000. Kampala, Uganda
- **'Joint Statement of First Ministerial Committee Meeting'**, governments of Sudan and Uganda January 21, 2000.
- **'Joint Statement of the Second Ministerial Committee Meeting'**, governments of Sudan and Uganda, March 3, 2000.
- **'Lomé Non-Paper'**, agreement between Uganda and Sudan, sponsored by governments of Libya and Egypt, July 11, 2000.
- **'Atlanta Joint Action Plan for Implementation of the Nairobi Agreement'**, from the Uganda/Sudan joint ministerial committee meeting held in Atlanta July 18-19, July 19, 2000. Atlanta, USA
- **'Winnipeg Communiqué'**, Joint Communiqué on Immediate Action on Abducted Children, issued by the governments of Uganda and Sudan, hosted by the government of Canada and Egypt. September 17, 2000. Winnipeg, Canada
- **'Khartoum Implementation Plan'** Minutes of Technical Committee Meeting with workplans. Uganda/Sudan ministerial meeting hosted by The Carter Center, October 7, 2000. Khartoum, Sudan
- **'Record of Commitments Made'**, with letter to Mr. Joseph Kony, November 19, 2000. Nairobi, Kenya
- **'Agreed Minutes of the Nairobi Meetings'**, Uganda/Sudan ministerial meeting hosted by The Carter Center. Participants included Sudan, Uganda, and observers included: governments of Egypt, Canada, and Libya, Save the Children – Denmark, UNICEF, IOM. June 2, 2001. Nairobi, Kenya.
- **'Meeting Record'** of the ministerial meeting hosted by The Carter Center with Letter to Joseph Kony. Participants included delegations from the governments of Sudan, Uganda, Libya, Canada and Egypt and observers included: Save the Children – Denmark, UNICEF, IOM. November 27, 2001. Nairobi, Kenya.

THE NAIROBI PEACE AGREEMENT (17 DECEMBER 1985)

THE UGANDA PEACE TALKS AGREEMENT FOR THE RESTORATION OF PEACE TO THE SOVEREIGN STATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

This agreement is made pursuant to the Peace Talks held in Nairobi, Kenya during the period 26th August 1985 to 17th December 1985 under the Chairmanship of His Excellency Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya, between the Military Government of Uganda, which assumed power in Uganda following the ouster of the former government of that country on the 27th of July 1985 (Hereinafter referred to as 'The Military Government'), and the National Resistance Movement.

We, the Military Government and the National Resistance Movement, the parties to this agreement;

APPRECIATING the offer by his Excellency President Daniel Toroitich arap Moi and the brotherly people of the Republic of Kenya to convene, host and chair our talks and search for peace in our beloved Uganda;

RECALLING the desire of the people of the sovereign state of Uganda at independence on the 9th of October 1962 to exercise fully the right to self-determination of one nation within the United Nations Organisation;

MINDFUL of the determination proclaimed by the people of the world in the charter of the United Nations to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of all men and women of all nations and to promote social progress and freedom, which determination was restated and subscribed to by the sovereign state of Uganda in the charter of the Organisation of African Unity but more particularly in the bill of rights contained in the independence constitution of Uganda and the successive constitutions of Uganda;

AWARE of the endless conflicts resulting from the denial of, or impediments in the way of, freedom and peace for the citizens of and people in Uganda by successive governments, which conflicts have destroyed peace and stability, eroded national institutions and democratic principles and threatened the sovereignty and integral status of our country so dearly cherished by us and all Ugandans everywhere;

CONSCIOUS of the need for the creation of conditions of stability and well-being and peace based on respect of individual persons and of the need for respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all persons in Uganda without distinction as to race, sex, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or language;

RECOGNISING the passionate yearning for peace and freedom for all citizens of Uganda everywhere and other people living in Uganda, a yearning shared by all nations and people of good will towards Uganda and the decisive positive role that such citizens, nations and people can play in the political, social and economic development of Uganda in times of peace;

CONVINCED that any continuation of armed conflict, dictatorial rule, denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms prevent development in Uganda as well as positive international co-operation with friendly and brotherly nations and other bodies and militates against the ideals of peace;

CONVINCED that Uganda has an inalienable right to peace and complete political and economic freedom and in that regard must exercise the right of self-determination as a sovereign state and integral national territory whose boundaries were more particularly delineated and described in schedule 1 to the constitution of the Republic of Uganda of 1967;

WELCOMING the commitment to and participation in the search for peace in Uganda by our brotherly neighbours the Republic of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania and recognising that instability in any one of the nations is a threat to the peace and

stability of the whole East African region;

BELIEVING that the process of restoration of peace, stability and democratic rule and government is now irresistible and irreversible as exemplified by the spirit of mutual co-operation, trust and frankness between the parties at the peace talks: and in so believing desiring a formula to terminate the problems that have for so long bedevilled and manacled Uganda, such as dictatorial rule and all practices of denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms, discrimination and massacres associated with such rule;

NOW DO SOLEMNLY PROCLAIM for and in the name of Uganda the urgent necessity:

- (1) of bringing to a most speedy end dictatorship in all its forms and manifestations, armed conflict and denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- (2) of restoring peace, security, law and order throughout the country through reconstruction of the country's economy, re-establishment of an effective administration both in central and local government, initiation and implementation of military reforms designed to ensure balanced, disciplined and national armed forces and security services and,
- (3) of laying the groundwork for the preparation and drafting of a popular constitution which will be the supreme law of Uganda, which constitution shall be promulgated by a popularly elected Parliament/National Assembly in due course and ensuring the speedy return to democratic government through free and fair general elections within the framework of such a constitution.

AND TO THIS END DECLARE AND AGREE THAT:
CEASEFIRE

Article 1: CEASEFIRE TERMS

After the signing of this agreement, there shall be a ceasefire on the following terms:-

- (a) With effect from 0920 hours on the 17th day of December 1985, there will be complete and immediate cessation of hostilities. The commanders of the

various combatant forces shall issue instructions to the forces under their command to ensure that within 48 hours of the signing of this agreement, all fighting everywhere in Uganda shall cease.

(b) There shall be immediate cessation of recruitment into or formation of any combatant force other than the National Force and the National Army to be formed by the Military Council pursuant to Article 7 and 8 of this Agreement.

(c) All roads in the country shall be opened and made safe for the civilian and commercial traffic to operate normally.

(d) All hostile propaganda shall cease immediately.

(e) With effect from the date of signing of this agreement, all parties shall forthwith stop the acquisition and procurement of arms, ammunitions and any other military hardware.

(f) No soldier or any other personnel under the command or control of any of the combatant forces shall engage in any criminal acts or other acts that violate human rights.

(g) All members of the security forces or any of the other combatant forces who have violated human rights since the 27th July 1985 shall be immediately punished and disciplining of such forces shall be a routine practice and part of the operational code of conduct. Nothing in this paragraph shall be interpreted to mean that any person who may have committed similar acts prior to 27 July 1985 is exonerated.

(h) All political detainees who are known to be members of the National Resistance Movement shall be immediately released.

(i) Arrangement shall be made to provide non-military supplies to the combatant forces behind ceasefire lines and neutral agents may be involved in this exercise, and without prejudice to the generality of the fore-going, the provisions of Article 3 of the Geneva Convention on the amelioration of the condition of wounded and sick in the armed forces in the field dated the 12th August 1949 set out in Annexure 'D' to this Agreement shall apply.

(j) All combatant forces shall not, under any circumstances whatsoever,

mobilise or deploy their troops without first obtaining authority of the Military Council and informing the monitoring/observer force.

(k) The parties to this agreement shall establish, on behalf of the Military Council, a committee to be known as the Ceasefire Committee, consisting of representative of the forces represented on the Council and the monitoring/observer force for the purpose of implementing the terms of the ceasefire.

THE MILITARY COUNCIL

Article 2: THE MILITARY COUNCIL

(1) There shall be a Military Council which shall be the supreme organ of the government in Uganda and which shall upon the signing of this agreement be composed of representatives of the combatant forces and the Head of State as follows:

(a) Head of State/Chairman, Military Council	1
(b) Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA)	7
(c) National Resistance Army (NRA)	7
(d) Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM)	1
(e) Federal Democratic Movement (FEDEMU)	2
(f) Former Uganda National Army (FUNA)	1
(g) Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF)	1
Total	20

(2) All the combatant forces shall nominate their representatives to be appointed to the Military Council in accordance with the agreed numbers, and the Head of State and Chairman of the Military Council shall sign the instruments of appointment. All representatives of the combatant forces who are appointed to the Council shall take the prescribed oath of allegiance.

(3) The political parties that took part in the 1980 general elections may be represented on the Military Council but the mode of their representation shall be decided upon by the Military Council after due consultation with the political parties concerned and in accordance with Article 5 (1) (i).

Article 3: CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COUNCIL

(1) There shall be a Chairman of the Military Council who shall also be the Head of State of Uganda.

(2) The Chairman shall preside at all meetings and sessions of the Military Council.

(3) There shall also be a Vice-Chairman of the Military Council who shall in all respects rank second to the Chairman/Head of State and who shall, subject to paragraph (6) of the article, in absence of the Chairman/Head of State, exercise the power and perform the duties and functions of the Chairman/Head of State.

(4) The Head of State at the date of signing of this agreement shall continue to be the Head of State and Chairman of the Military Council.

(5) The Chairman of the High Command of the National Resistance Army at the date of signing of this agreement shall be the Vice-Chairman of the Military Council.

(6) If the office of the Chairman/Head of State or Vice-Chairman shall become vacant by resignation, death or incapacity resulting from infirmity of mind or body, the Military Council shall, by secret ballot and two thirds majority, elect the Chairman/Head of State or Vice-Chairman, as the case may be, from among the representatives of the combatant forces on the Military Council.

(7) At no time during the rule of the Military Council in Uganda pursuant to this agreement shall the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman to the Military Council be members of the same political party or combatant force. The Military Council shall formulate the procedures for securing this agreed position.

Article 4: POWERS OF THE MILITARY COUNCIL

(1) The Military Council shall be the supreme authority in whom the executive and legislative power shall vest.

(2) All powers of the Head of State shall be exercised by him in Council.

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (1) above, the Head of State

may exercise the legislative and executive powers of the Council in exceptional circumstances, which exceptional circumstances will be determined by the Military Council by a two-thirds majority.

(4) After the signing of this agreement and appointment of the representatives of combatant forces to the Military Council, the Military Council shall review decrees promulgated and political appointments and promotion made by the Military Government since 27 JULY 1985.

Article 5: PROCEDURES OF THE MILITARY COUNCIL

(1) The Military Council shall formulate its own rules of procedure.

The normal method of reaching decisions shall be by consensus except in regard to the following matters where a two-thirds majority shall be required to reach decision by secret ballot:

- (a) Matters affecting the provisions of the agreement.
 - (b) National defence policy and building of a new army and other security services.
 - (c) Programmes of the interim period.
 - (d) Political appointments, promotions, including appointment in the security services.
 - (e) Review of decrees.
 - (f) Rehabilitation of war ravaged areas and settlement of displaced persons and fighters and soldiers who will not be absorbed into the new army.
 - (g) Issue of violation of human rights.
 - (h) Matters concerned with the promulgation of the new constitution and the holding of elections.
 - (i) Admission and dismissal of members of the Military Council.
- (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of the foregoing paragraph, the Military Council may, in its own discretion and from time to time, determine such other matters of national importance upon which decisions shall be reached by a two-thirds majority.
- (3) The two-thirds majority referred to herein shall mean that decisions by the Military Council requiring a two-thirds majority vote shall not be reached unless at least fourteen members of the twenty members of the Council vote in favour of those decisions.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Article 6: NEED FOR AND FORMULATION OF NATIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT.

- (1) There is need for a change in the political direction of Uganda and in this regard, the Nation shall require a code of conduct for leaders and public officers.
- (2) The Military Council shall, as a matter of urgency, set up a committee or commission to formulate a National Code of Conduct which shall, among other things, prescribe the qualifications for members of the Military Council, the Cabinet and other public officers.
- (3) Until such time as the National Code of Conduct is worked out, sections 41 and 42 of the 1967 constitution of Uganda, with the necessary modifications, shall provide the minimum qualifications for membership of the Military Council, the cabinet and appointments to the other public offices.

THE NEW NATIONAL ARMY AND NATIONAL DEFENCE POLICY

Article 7: RECRUITMENT OF A NEW NATIONAL FORCE AND ITS FUNCTIONS

- (1) Soon after the cessation of hostilities under article 1 of this agreement and subject to paragraph (2) of this article and the sequence of events set out in Annexure 'A', there shall be established a new national force, composed of soldiers from all the combatant forces nominated by the respective combatant forces in the following numbers:
 - UNLA 3,700 soldiers
 - NRA 3,580 soldiers
 - FEDEMU
 - UFM
 - FUNA 1,200 soldiers
 - UNRF
 - Total 8,480 soldiers
- (2) The Military Council shall establish a selection committee consisting of the representatives of all the combatant forces represented on the Military Council together with the representatives of the monitoring/observer force for the purposes of selecting and vetting the soldiers

nominated by the respective combatant forces to form the new force. The terms of reference of the selection committee and the criteria to be applied in the selection and vetting shall be determined by the Military Council.

- (3) The functions of the said new national force shall be:
 - (a) To ensure general security in the country.
 - (b) To supervise the voluntary laying down of arms by all combatant forces in the country and to disarm any force which does not do so voluntarily.
 - (c) Under direction of the Military Council and in conjunction with the monitoring/observer force to collect and store arms received throughout the disarmament under Article 12.
 - (d) To participate in the recruitment and training of a new national army.
- (4) During the exercise of selecting the said new force, the Military Council shall:
 - (a) Subject to article 9(1)(b) make arrangements for the maintenance and upkeep of those soldiers of the combatant forces awaiting selection into the new army.
 - (b) Ensure the retraining and resettlement of all men and women of the various combatant forces who are neither eligible nor qualified or who may not wish to join the said new national army, and for this purpose the Military Council shall work out, as a matter of priority, a program for resettlement of those men and women back into civilian life.
- (5) The soldiers and combatants who may be absorbed into the new national force or army shall be given priority in the Police, Prisons and other security services.

Article 8: THE NEW NATIONAL ARMY

- (1) The new National Force established under Article 7 shall be the first batch of the new national army.
- (2) The new national army shall be broad-based and representative of the country as a whole and shall be recruited in the first instance from the combatant forces existing at the date of signing of this agreement and in accordance with the national defence policy formulated under Article 9, provided that the second batch or

recruitment shall be composed in the same proportions as those used for the first batch.

Article 9: THE NEW NATIONAL DEFENCE POLICY

(1) After the signing and coming into force of this agreement, the Military Council shall, as soon as practicable embark upon the formulation of a national policy to determine:

- (a) The functions, size, nature, name and composition of the new national army to enable the new national force established under Article 7 and the monitoring and observer force to carry out recruitment of the new national army and the demobilisation of the combatant forces and,
 - (b) The arrangements for the maintenance and upkeep of those soldiers of the various combatant forces awaiting selection into the new national army.
- (2) In formulating a new national defence policy, the Military Council shall take into account the views of the national conference on this matter.

THE MONITORING/OBSERVER FORCE

Article 10: THE MONITORING/OBSERVER FORCE

(1) After the signing of this agreement, the Uganda government shall invite into Uganda a force from four Commonwealth countries namely: Kenya, Tanzania, Great Britain and Canada. The force shall be known as the Monitoring/Observer Force and shall carry out the following duties:

- (a) To observe and monitor the implementation of the ceasefire.
- (b) To observe the security arrangement throughout the whole country.
- (c) To assist in the disarmament/security arrangements exercise as may be requested by the Military Council within their terms of reference.
- (d) To monitor the movements of troops to agreed assembly points.
- (e) To assist in the collection and securing of arms from soldiers who have been demobilised.
- (f) To monitor compliance with agreed arrangements and investigation of alleged breaches of the ceasefire.

(g) To assist in the recruitment and training of the new national army.

(h) To carry out any other duties assigned to them by the Military Council in consultation with their respective governments.

(2) Prior to the monitoring/observer force moving into Uganda and after the ceasefire has been effected, there shall be sent into the country a reconnaissance team, which may be from one or more of the countries invited to contribute to the monitoring/observer force, to identify the positions of all the combatant forces and thereafter to determine the size of the monitoring/observer force required. The terms of reference of the reconnaissance team shall be as specified in Annexure 'B' and manpower and equipment in Annexure 'C'.

(3) During the period of operation of the reconnaissance team, all the combatant forces shall remain at their positions as at the end of ceasefire.

(4) The provisions of Annexure 'A' and 'B' as they pertain to the operation, functions and duties of the monitoring/observer force shall be in addition to and not in substitution of the derogation from the provisions of this Article.

Article 11: RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND THE TOP RANKS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

When reviewing the political appointments and other promotions made since the 27th July 1985, the Military Council shall ensure a balance between the combatant forces represented on the Military Council existing immediately prior to the signing of the agreement and the National Resistance Movement in the distribution of responsibilities in the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces.

COLLECTION AND STORAGE OF ARMS

Article 12: COLLECTION AND STORAGE OF ARMS

(1) Upon the ceasefire coming into effect, all arms of the combatant forces shall be collected and stored by the respective forces within known

armouries belonging to those forces. The said collection and storage shall be monitored by the monitoring/observer force which shall enumerate and verify the said arms.

(2) No arms shall be drawn from any armoury referred to in paragraph (1) of this Article without the express authority of the local commander and concurrence of a representative of the monitoring/observer force in the area.

It shall be the duty of the representative of the monitoring/observer force to report drawing of arms without his concurrence to the next higher command headquarters where all the parties to this agreement shall be represented.

DEMILITARISATION OF KAMPALA

Article 13: DEMILITARISATION OF KAMPALA

(1) The city of Kampala shall be demilitarised and neutralised by removing out of Kampala all troops to be determined by the reconnaissance team. The security of Kampala shall be maintained by the police force which shall have been screened and whose arms shall have been verified by the monitoring/observer force. The Monitoring/observer force shall be adequately represented to ensure the neutrality of Kampala.

(2) The demilitarisation arrangements for Kampala shall remain in force until the complete demobilisation of the combatant forces has been achieved through recruitment in the new force established under Article 7 or resettlement of the men and women not so recruited.

PERSONS WHO SERVED IN IDI AMIN'S REGIME

Article 14: PROVISIONS FOR PEOPLE WHO SERVED IN IDI AMIN'S REGIME

(1) All persons who served in responsible position(s) in Idi Amin's regime, including those who served in the army, the State Research Bureau or other security services and who are known to have committed atrocities or other heinous crimes shall be punished according to law. The prosecution of such a person shall not be time barred.

(2) All persons who served in the notorious State Research Bureau and Public Safety Unit shall not be eligible to join the new national army or any other security services.

(3) All ex-soldiers who served in the army in the period 1971-1979 and who are not covered under (1) above shall have to be carefully screened and vetted to be eligible to be admitted to the new national army or any other security services.

(4) In vetting such persons the committee shall give preference to those who have special skills to fill places which cannot otherwise be filled. The said persons must have clean records.

CONVENING OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND GENERAL ELECTIONS

Article 15: NATIONAL CONFERENCE

As soon as practicable after the signing of this arrangement, the Military Council shall convene a National Conference to discuss key national issues, to wit, tenure of the interim government, the future national constitutional framework, elections and the national army. Representatives of the said national conference shall be drawn from all districts as well as all national institutions, political parties, religious groups and the Military Council.

Article 16: HOLDING GENERAL ELECTIONS

Free and fair general elections shall be held in Uganda as soon as practicable to return the country to parliamentary democracy.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT

Article 17: IMPLEMENTATION

(1) For the purpose of ensuring the implementation of this agreement, the Military Council constituted pursuant to Article 2 of this agreement shall at its first meeting expeditiously discuss and resolve matters relating to the following issues:

(a) Review of all the decrees promulgated by the Military Council government since the 27th July 1985.

(b) Formulation of the broad guidelines for the government programme of action.

(c) Establishment and formulation of the terms of reference of a commission of inquiry into violation of human rights in Uganda since independence.

(d) Formulation of broad guidelines for the restructuring of the new national army and the harmonisation of ranks within the combatant forces, as a basis for the formation by the Military Council of a new national defence policy under Article 9 of this agreement, which guidelines shall include strategies for the rehabilitation and resettlement of the combatant forces who will not be recruited into the national army.

(e) Review of cabinet portfolios and other political appointments made by the Military government since 27th July 1985.

(f) Such other urgent matters as may be determined by the Military Council.

(2) The Military Council when deciding the above issues shall not be governed by the two thirds majority rule set out in Article 5 of this agreement, but shall reach its decisions by consensus.

Article 18: PREPARATION OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE MILITARY COUNCIL

Upon the signing of this agreement an ad hoc committee shall be set up for the purpose of making the following practical arrangements for the first meeting of the fully constituted Military Council.

(a) Preparation of agenda for the meeting.

(b) Designation of date and venue for the meeting.

(c) Making necessary security and accommodation arrangement for the meeting.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereunto have, through their representatives, set their hands at Nairobi this 17th day of December 1985.

SIGNED BY:

General Tito Okello LUTWA
Chairman, Military Council and
Head of State of Uganda

Yoweri Kaguta MUSEVENI

Chairman, High Command of National Resistance Army and

Interim Chairman, National Resistance Movement

IN THE PRESENCE OF AND WITNESSED BY:

H.E. Daniel Toroitich Arap MOI

President and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of The Republic of Kenya and

Chairman of the Uganda Peace Talks

ANNEXTURE 'A'

Sequence of events leading to the formation of the new National Army and the demobilisation and rehabilitation of combatant forces:

1. Signing of the agreement.
2. Ceasefire implementation.
3. Nomination of the country to provide the monitoring and observer force commander and the reconnaissance team.
4. Formation of ceasefire committee.
5. Formation of the ad hoc committee to prepare the first meeting of the Military Council.
6. Reconnaissance team deployment.
7. Monitoring/observer team deployment.
8. First meeting of the Military Council.
9. Formation and training of national army.
10. Demobilisation and rehabilitation.
11. Withdrawal of the monitoring/observer teams.
12. Decommissioning of the ceasefire committee and the monitoring/observer force.

The participants at the Uganda Peace talks considered the requirements for training and formation of a new national army beginning with the new military force as the nucleus and made the following observations:-

Training:

To train a soldier takes approximately six months. However, converting those who have had basic military training would require approximately three to four months. Training an officer takes between 9-12 months. It was therefore agreed that those with basic military

training be put under cadre courses and could thereafter be utilised to train others.

Formation of a new National Force:

It has been agreed upon that a nucleus force of 8,480 soldiers be formed consisting of members from all combatant forces. The subsequent recruitment and training would depend on availability of funds and training facilities. However, it is recommended and agreed that to train the 8,480 soldiers cannot be done at one go and therefore this would be done in stages which would take a minimum of 9 months.

ANNEXTURE 'B'

The Reconnaissance Team and the Monitoring/Observer Force

Terms of reference for the Reconnaissance Team:

1. After the effectiveness of the ceasefire has been confirmed by the commanders of all parties, a reconnaissance team will be sent to the field and their terms of reference would be as follows:-

(a) To confirm that ceasefire is effective before the monitoring/observer force moves into the country.

(b) To identify locations of all fighting units and mark their positions on the map.

(c) To assess the size of the monitoring/observer force required.

(d) To recommend to the Military Council the regrouping of various units (if necessary for the ease of administration).

(e) To recommend areas where assembly points will be located for the troops who are in permanent barracks, preferably in areas with adequate storage facilities for the arms and also with good logistic and administration facilities.

(f) To recommend which forces should be disengaged.

(g) To determine logistic support required for both the troops and the monitoring/observer force.

(h) To work out evacuation contingency plans for the monitoring/observer force members in the event of resumption of hostilities.

(i) To recommend the location of joint

operation centres at regional levels and sub-joint operation centres at district level.

(j) Any other duty the Military Council may deem necessary.

(k) The above task must be completed within one week.

2. The Military Council shall determine which country will provide the monitoring/observer force commander; preferably the same country should provide the reconnaissance team.

Terms of reference and operational strategies for the monitoring/observer force:

3. After the reconnaissance team's recommendations have been approved by the Military Council, the monitoring/observer force will be deployed in various areas of the country and terms of reference will be:

A: Unit Level

- To monitor and observe the maintenance of the ceasefire by the various forces.
- To monitor and observe the movement of all the combatant forces.
- To monitor and ensure that no arms are drawn without the authority of the local commander, with concurrence of the monitoring/observer team representative or higher authority.
- To attend all meetings of an operational nature.
- To liaise with the monitoring/observer team leaders of neighbouring units.
- To send daily situation reports (SITREPS) to sub-joint operational centre.
- Any other duties the Military Council may deem necessary.

B: District Level (Sub-joint operation centres)

The district S/JC will be responsible to regional joint operation centres (JOC) for:

- Attending all district security meetings.
- Co-ordinating all activities of the monitoring/observer teams deployed in the district.
- Compiling and sending daily SITREP to the regional joint operation centre.
- Paying regular visits to the units within the district.

• Liaising with the neighbouring districts.

• Liaising with district administration on operational and security matters.

• Any other duty the Military Council may deem necessary.

The Sub-joint operation centres will be composed of:

- The district administration.
- The monitoring/observer force representative.
- Representatives of fighting forces within the district.

C: Regional Level (Joint Operating Centre)

The Military Council shall appoint a person to be the Chairman of the joint operation committee at the regional level. The regional joint operational centres will be responsible to the ceasefire committee for:

- Attending all regional security meetings.
- Co-ordinating activities of the monitoring/observer teams deployed in the region.
- Compiling and sending situation reports (SITREPs) to the ceasefire committees.
- Paying regular visits to the district headquarters within the region.
- Liaising with the other regional monitoring/observer force representatives.
- Any other duty the Military Council may deem necessary.

ANNEXTURE 'C'

Manpower and equipment requirements for the Reconnaissance Team:

1. A: Composition of the Reconnaissance Team Headquarters:

The Reconnaissance Team Headquarters shall be composed of the following personnel:

- Recce Team Commander
- Deputy Commander/Operation Officer
- Logistics Representative
- Communication Representative
- Medical Representative
- 2 Staff Officers
- 2 Military Government Representatives

- 2 NRA Representatives.

The Military Council shall provide the supporting administrative staff.

B: Composition of each Recce Team

Each Recce team shall compose of the following:

- Team Leader
- Logistics/Administrative Representative
- Communication Representative
- 2 Military Government Representatives
- 2 NRA Representatives
- Medical Representative
- Representative of the fighting force to be visited

C: Number of Teams

The Recce teams shall be allocated as follows:

A: Kampala and Mpigi Districts

One Recce team to cover Kampala and Mpigi districts. They would require road transport to visit areas where units are located; a helicopter may be used where necessary.

B: Central Region

One Recce team to cover Luwero, Mubende and Mukono districts. They would use a helicopter and partly road transport.

C: Western Region

One Recce team to cover Masaka, Rakai, Mbarara, Kabale, Rukungiri, Bushenyi, Kasese, Kabarole, Bundibugyo, Hoima and Masindi districts. They would use a helicopter and partly road transport.

D: Eastern Region

One Recce team to cover Kamuli, Iganga, Jinja, Soroti, Moroto, Tororo, Mbale, Kapehorwa and Kumi districts. They would use a helicopter and partly road transport.

E: Northern Region

One Recce team to cover West Nile and the rest of northern Uganda. They would use a helicopter and partly road transport.

2. Summary of the Manpower and Equipment Requirements

Total manpower required 51

Total helicopter required 6

Total vehicle required:

2 staff cars, 7 communication

Landrovers and 8 cargo Landrovers 17

Radios for communication between the Recce teams and the headquarters will be required.

3. The Military Council will need to arrange the following facilities to be available for use by the Recce team:

- Fuel for helicopters and vehicles
- Feeding and accommodation
- Medical facilities
- Air and road transport
- Office facilities for the Recce team headquarters
- Any other facilities that may be deemed necessary.

ANNEXTURE 'D'

Article 3 of the Geneva Convention for the amelioration of the condition of the wounded and the sick in armed forces in the field dated the 12th August 1949: Conflict not of an international character:

In the case of armed conflict not of an international character occurring in the territory of one of the high contracting parties, each party to the conflict shall be bound to apply as a minimum, the following provisions:

1. Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed Hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention or any other case, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without adverse distinction found on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth or any other similar criteria.

To this end the following acts shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever with respect to the above mentioned persons:

- (a) Violence to life and persons in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture,
- (b) Taking of hostages,
- (c) Outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment,
- (d) The passing of sentence and the carrying of executions without previous judgement pronounced by a regular constituted court affording all judicial guarantees which are recognised as indispensable by civilised peoples.

2. The wounded and sick shall be taken care of. An impartial humanitarian body, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, may offer its services to the parties to the conflicts. The parties to the conflicts should further endeavour to bring into force, by means of special agreements, all or part of the other provisions of the present conventions.

The application of the proceeding provisions shall not affect the legal status of the parties to the conflict.

ANNEXTURE 'E'

Participants to the Uganda Peace Talks

Kenyan Delegation:

1. His Excellency Hon. Daniel Toroitich arap Moi, CGH, MP, President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya and the Chairman of the Uganda Peace Talks
2. HE Hon. Mwai-Kibaki, EGH, MP, Vice President and Minister for Home Affairs
3. Hon. Justus Ole Tipis, MP, Minister of State, Office of the President
4. Hon. Elijah Mwangale, MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs
5. Hon. K.N.K. Biwott, MP, Minister of Energy and Regional Development
6. Mr Simeon Nyachae, Chief Secretary
7. Mr Bethuel A. Kiplagat, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
8. Mr James S. Mathenge, Permanent Secretary, Office of the President
9. Mr A. Kiptanui, Private Secretary/Comptroller of State House
10. Ambassador Omar A. Fakh, Deputy Secretary/Head of Africa and OAU Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
11. HE Lawrence C.T. Dena, Kenya High Commissioner to Uganda
12. Major General Dedan N. Gichuru, Chief of Staff, Kenya Army
13. Major James M. Mulinge, Kenya Army
14. Major Hency Biwott, Kenya Army
15. Mr Stephen M. Mwenesi, Attorney General's Chambers
16. Mr Marx G.N. Kahende, Second Secretary, Kenya High Commission, Kampala

Military Government Delegation:

1. General Tito Okello Lutwa, Chairman of the Military Council and Head of State
2. Lt. General Bazilio Olara-Okello, Chief of Defence Forces
3. Hon. Abraham Waligo, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
4. Brigadier Gad Wilson Toko, Vice Chairman of the Military Council and Minister of Defence
5. Hon. Paul Kawanga Ssemogerere, Minister of Internal Affairs
6. Hon. Dent Ocaya-Lakidi, Member of Military Council
7. Brigadier Fred Okecho, Member of the Military Council
8. Lt Col. Dr James Kweya, Member of the Military Council
9. Captain Livingstone Kalyesubula-Kabaale, Member of Military Council
10. Hon. Olara Otunnu, Minister of Foreign Affairs
11. Hon. Sam Kuteesa, Attorney General and Minister of Justice
12. Hon. Robert Kitariko, Minister of Public Service and Cabinet Affairs
13. Hon. Professor Yoweri Kyesimira, Minister of Planning and Economic Development
14. Lt Col. Eric Odwar, Ministry of Defence
15. Major Thomas Kiyengo, Ministry of Defence

Officials:

1. Mr Jack Bugingo, Uganda High Commissioner to Nairobi
2. Mr Phillip Adonga, Uganda High Commission, Nairobi
3. Dr Christopher Twesigye, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kampala
4. Mr Dick Nyai, Office of the Chairman/Head of State
5. Captain Patrick Nkurunziza, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

National Resistance Movement Delegation:

1. Mr Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, Chairman High Command, National Resistance Army and Interim Chairman National Resistance Movement
2. Dr Samson B. Kisekka, Co-ordinator National Resistance Movement, External Mission

3. Mr Eriya Kategeya, Secretary for Political Affairs, National Resistance Movement
4. Mr Matthew Rukikaire, Secretary for External Operations, National Resistance Movement
5. Mr Zak K.R. Kaheru, Secretary for Finance and Supplies, National Resistance Movement
6. Elly Tumwine, Army Commander, National Resistance Army, Member NRM
7. Mr Sam. S. Male, Secretary of Executive Committee, National Resistance Movement
8. Mrs Gertrude Njuba, Member of National Resistance Council
9. Mr Kirunda Kivejinja, Member NRC

THE PECE AGREEMENT (3 JUNE 1988)

THE PEACE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UGANDA GOVERNMENT AND THE UGANDA PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

This AGREEMENT is made pursuant to the various Peace Talks and Negotiations held between the Government of Uganda and the Uganda People's Democratic Movement at GULU and STATE HOUSE ENTEBBE.

We, the GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA and UGANDA PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (UPDM), the Parties to the Agreement:

AWARE: that Uganda has undergone Persistent Political, Social and Economic turmoil since Independence in 1962;

CONSCIOUS: that this period of turmoil has resulted into retrogression in all the various aspects of our lives and National Affairs;

CONVINCED: that the aforesaid turmoil and its ramifications is a result of the wrong politics adopted and pursued by the past successive Governments during the said period;

BELIEVING: that this NEGATIVE development can only be arrested, checked and REVERSED by the adoption of a correct political line,

proper economic policies and the observance of the cardinal principles of the Rules of Law, to wit:

a). The respect for the Dignity of the Human person, the Fundamental freedom and Liberty, and the basic Human Rights of all Ugandans without distinction or discrimination on whatever grounds;

b). The respect for justice to all, AND obedience to the will of the people of Uganda in the running of National Affairs;

UNITED IN PURPOSE: in the search for lasting peace and the attainment of a just society and social progress in our Motherland Uganda;

NOW DO SOLEMNLY PROCLAIM IN THE NAME OF UNITY, JUSTICE, DEMOCRACY, PEACE AND PROGRESS IN UGANDA the need:

1. To bring immediate and lasting peace to Uganda;

2. To bring an end to the social retrogression occasioned by the wrong politics of the past;

3. To establish and sustain a system of Government acceptable to and endorsed by the people of Uganda;

AND IN THIS PURSUIT DECLARE AND AGREE THAT:

A. POLITICS

(1) Government shall expand and complete the formation and constitution of the NRC before the end of 1988, in accordance with the stipulated NRM Programme, and Section 2(iii) (a) and (b) of Legal Notice No. 1 of 1986.

For the avoidance of doubt, UPDM shall be accorded appropriate representation in the NRC in accordance with the provisions of Legal Notice No. 1 aforesaid, and also in the Government Executive.

(2) The expanded and fully constituted National Resistance Council shall, within the period of tenure in office of the present Government as stipulated in Section 14 of Legal Notice No. 1 of 1986, resolve itself into a Constituent Assembly and draw up a Popular National Constitution that shall safeguard the Interest and Fundamental Rights of the people of Uganda.

Provided that in the making of the Constitution and the economic situation in the country allowing, a National Referendum shall be conducted to enable the people of Uganda to decide on the issue of Party System and system of Government that shall replace the present Interim Government.

(3) The Interim Government shall call for and organise free and fair General Elections within the period of its tenure of office.

(4) Government shall continue and complete the exercise of election of Resistance Councils and Committees from village to District level in war ravaged areas, as a matter of priority.

(5) In the Interim Period, while the appointment of Cabinet Ministers and their Deputies remains the prerogative of the President, the composition thereof shall reflect the National interest of the People of Uganda.

B. MILITARY

(1) All hostilities between Government and UPDM shall cease forthwith upon the signing of this Peace Agreement.

(2) Upon the signing of this Peace Agreement the Implementation Committee herein established shall ensure that Government releases all the combatants and non combatants arrested as a result of the hostilities between the UPDM and Government, and are currently being held in various Prisons and Detention Centres.

(3) The UPDA Officers and men who wish to continue with Military service and qualify shall be absorbed and integrated into the NRA and shall participate at all levels of the Army depending on their experiences, ability and merits and shall not be victimised, discriminated against, frustrated, or maligned in any way at all.

Provided that while the absorption and integration exercise is going on any charge or allegation that is brought against any officer or soldier of UPDA or NRA shall first be investigated by the Implementation Committee to determine the genuineness of the charge or allegation and decide on the course of action to be taken thereon.

(4) All UPDA Officers and men who desire to Join the Productive Unit of the NRA shall initially be sent to Pabo

Military Farm, and later to such other Productive Units appropriate for the attainment of their individual skills, trade or needs.

(5) The UPDA Officers and men who opt NOT to continue with Military Service shall be free to do so, and shall within the National Programme be assisted either to pursue education in schools and Institutions of Higher learning, or be adequately assisted and provided with the means to settle and resume civilian life.

Provided that the safeguards contained in the proviso to paragraph (3) of part B hereof shall apply.

(6) All UPDA School-going-age children (Kadogos) shall be resettled and provided with education in Military Schools.

(7) All civil servants who due to the hostilities between UPDM and Government have not been able to carry out their duties shall be considered for reinstatement in accordance with Public Service Regulations.

(8) The National Army shall be balanced and drawn proportionately from all Districts of Uganda and shall guard against all forms of discrimination, sectarian politics, misuse of the Armed Forces for the attainment of personal political ends and shall uphold the Constitution in force.

(9) After the Interim period the elected Parliament shall determine the name of the minimum entry qualifications for the National Army.

(10) A Military Implementation Committee comprised of representatives of UPDA or NRA is hereby established to oversee and supervise the execution and implementation of the Agreement save those that are to be done by NRC.

Provided that other Groups that will join the Peace process shall be co-opted into the Implementation Committee.

C. REHABILITATION

(1) Government shall mobilise all available resources to rehabilitate the socio-economic infrastructure in Gulu and Kitgum Districts as well as in other war ravaged areas.

(2) Government shall declare a policy of free education at all levels, up to the end of the year 1989, for pupils and students from the war ravaged areas.

(3) Government shall, up to the end of the year 1988, exempt the peasants of the war ravaged areas from paying graduated tax.

(4) The declared Government policy of rehabilitating people and restocking their livestock which were looted, rustled or lost during the hostilities should be strengthened and made more realistic to have practical effect on the population.

(5) The currency Reform Exercise shall be carried out in all areas that were due to the war incapacitated from so doing.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF THE PARTIES HERETO HAVE SET THEIR HANDS THIS 3RD DAY OF JUNE 1988.

Signed by:

President Museveni, On Behalf of the government of Uganda

John Angelo Okello, On Behalf of the Uganda People's Democratic Movement

In the Presence of:

Bishop Emeritus of Gulu

THE GULU CEASEFIRE (2 February 1994)

THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE UGANDA GOVERNMENT AND THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY

This cease-fire agreement is made pursuant to the peace initiatives conducted during diverse dates between May 1992 and January 1994, as a means of finding a non-violent solution in the Northern Uganda districts of Gulu, Kitgum and neighbouring areas in the region, between National Resistance Minister of State, Resident in the North, Hon. Mrs Betty Atuku Bigombe with National Resistance Army 4th Division

Commander Colonel Samuel Wasswa on the one hand and the Lord's Resistance Army leader H.H. Joseph Kony and his High Command on the other.

We,

The National Resistance Army and the Lord's Resistance Army (hereinafter referred to as 'NRA' and 'LRA' respectively), parties to this agreement,

Appreciating the necessity for viable and sustainable peace in this region of Uganda that has been bedevilled by insecurity for a long time now,

Recalling the desire of both the people and the government for peace in the region and mindful of endless conflicts that fail to improve the plight of our people in the region,

Convinced that any continuation of armed conflict prevents development in this region,

Welcoming the commitment to, and participation in, the search for peace in the region by the government of the National Resistance Movement and the Lord's Resistance Army leadership,

Do now solemnly proclaim for and in the name of peace in the region, the urgent necessity:

- Of bringing to a most speedy end, armed conflicts in all its forms and manifestation.
- Of restoring total peace, security and good order throughout the region and laying groundwork for that goal.

And to this end declare and agree that:

After the signing of this agreement there shall be formalised a cease-fire on the following terms:

- With effect from 14:00 hours on the 2nd day of February 1994, hostilities between the two parties to this agreement formally cease forthwith.
- Atrocities in the form of abductions, highway robberies, ambushes, real and all their disguised forms and manifestations cease henceforth.

All subsequent peace negotiations between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army will be channelled through and handled by the Office of the Minister of State, Resident in the North and that of the 4th Division Commander, National Resistance Army.

In the event of violation(s) of the cease-fire, punishment will be meted out to the individual member of the force concerned, accruing to the rules of the force and the laws of the country.

This cease-fire agreement will be implemented according to the programme of schedule attached herewith.

In witness whereof the parties hereunto have, through their representatives, set their hands at Laceykot this 2nd day of February 1994.

Col. Samuel WASSWA

Division Commander

4th Division National

Resistance Army

George Komakech OMONA

Field Commander

Lord's Resistance Army

In the presence and witnessed by:

Hon. Mrs. Betty BIGOMBE

Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, Resident in the North

The District Administrator, Gulu

The District Administrator, Kitgum

Mr Yusuf Okwonga ADEK

Mr Okot OGONI

Mr Okidi ANGOL

Mr George William LUGAI

APPENDIX A

CEASEFIRE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Pursuant to the Cease-fire Agreement signed on 2nd February 1994, the Lord's Resistance Army undertakes:

1. To regroup all their forces, and this shall equally incorporate the duty of:
 - (a) Locating and assembling casualties and other LRA members in sickbays;
 - (b) Collecting all LRA military equipment and hardware from where they were hidden;
 - (c) Documenting men and women under LRA control;
 - (d) Upon orderly regrouping, LRA will inform government and the 4th Division Commander for the purpose of seeking area of assembly.
2. (a) To, in conjunction with district authorities of Gulu and Kitgum, conduct public rallies in all counties

for the purpose of explaining the peace process to the public. During this process two elders shall be nominated from each Division for the purpose of performing traditional cleansing rituals.

(b) LRA leader H.H. Joseph Kony will consequently thereafter meet all the nominated elders to draw a programme for the cleansing rituals.

(c) Performing for the rituals aforementioned to take place immediately after the meeting in 2(b).

Delegate members from both sides for the peace talks and discussing modalities for the peace accord.

To expeditiously conclude the peace process within five months from the date the cease-fire agreement becomes effective, LRA agrees that mobilisation of elders and performing rituals shall take place within two months from now and the final peace talks to take place within one month before the conclusion of the process.

A Cease-fire Implementation Committee constituted by both sides shall periodically review progress on all points every month.

If however not all is achieved within the stipulated time frame, both sides will review the time schedule with a possibility of an extension of one month within which all will have been accomplished.

LETTER FROM THE LRM/A TO PRESIDENT MUSEVENI

6 November 1997

His Excellency
Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
President of the Republic of Uganda
State House, Kampala, Uganda

Mr President,

I am writing this letter to you on behalf of the Military High Command of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and its political wing, the Lord's Resistance Movement (LRM) who have authorised me to communicate this message to you personally.

We acknowledge in the national interest of our country, that of the people of northern Uganda, and especially the Acholi people the urgent need for a just and permanent resolution to the armed conflict in northern Uganda, between the LRM/A and your government which has gone on relentlessly for the last eleven years. We also recognise the overwhelming demands by a wide section of fellow Ugandans as well as the international community for peace to be restored to northern Uganda and indeed throughout the country. We further recognise that without peace and security, there will never be any economic development or prosperity for our people and they will be consigned to perpetual poverty and underdevelopment.

We hereby, therefore, inform you that in response to the demands and wishes of the majority of our people, the Lord's Resistance Movement/Army have resolved to pursue a peaceful resolution to the northern conflict through constructive, meaningful and honest dialogue with your government. This decision to give peace a chance has not been reached lightly, but was agreed upon after exhaustive and widespread consultations of our people. Our resolution to pursue peace is in line with our commitment to consider all viable means of achieving a lasting sustainable peace in our land and a clear benchmark of good will, responsibility and courageous leadership on our part.

Given the seriousness and sensitivity of this matter, we have decided to communicate this message directly to you, in order to give you the opportunity to consider and respond to its content without the constraints of publicity. If you and your government are equal to the challenges for peace, and sincerely wish to see an end to the suffering of the northern people, especially the Acholi people, then we will expect reciprocal initiatives from you, which will facilitate further dialogue and subsequent meaningful negotiation between the two parties. We would like to make it clear that although we have chosen to communicate directly with you at this stage, we will at an appropriate time in due course require the involvement and participation of neutral third parties in any peace process that may evolve.

In April 1997 at the Kacoke Madit (KM) in London, United Kingdom, the LRM/A's publicly declared intention of

pursuing a peaceful resolution to the northern conflict was enshrined in the conference resolutions. We are aware that in a recent letter 'on behalf of the government of Uganda' to the KM international coordinator, the Director General of external security organisation Mr David Pulkol stated that your government was waiting for an unequivocal communication from the LRM/A concretising their declared intention to seek a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Acholiland.

I therefore hope that this letter now removes any obstacles on your part and that you will now respond appropriately to the demands and wishes of the people of Acholi and Uganda as a whole and will fully commit yourselves without any further ambiguity to a peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue with us.

The multiple causes and effects of the 11 years of war in Northern Uganda, and the modalities for a just and permanent resolution are enormously complex and require detailed and systematic consideration of all the underlying factors and related issues. As a result, there are no short cuts nor quick fixes to achieving a lasting and meaningful peace. It will require serious and demonstrable commitment on all sides. We hope that in the national interest your government will also make such a declaration of your intentions.

Yours thankfully,
Dr James A. Obita
Secretary for Foreign Affairs

LETTER FROM PRESIDENT MUSEVENI TO THE LRM/A

22 November 1997

Dr James Obita
Secretary for Foreign Affairs
Lord's Resistance Movement/Army

Dr Obita,

I have received your letter of 6th November 1997, which states that you are ready for a peaceful settlement of the sustained campaign to attack, maim and kill innocent civilians in the North of Uganda. This is not to forget the kidnapping, raping and defilement of young girls and press-gang young boys into military service. These criminal activities have gone on for too long.

We have never hesitated to negotiate peace with former enemies: Mustapha Adrisi, Moses Ali, Ateker Ejalu, Omaria, Otema Allimadi, late Tito Okello, late Odong Latek, Angello Okello, Luwero, Kironde and many others. We have negotiated with or pardoned all the above people.

As far as your group is concerned, we have never prosecuted any of your members that have been surrendering; not even the ones we captured. Indeed, some years ago, Betty

Bigombe negotiated with Mr Kony to the East of Gulu. We gave your group a safe zone, where to stay with your force. When we got impatient with the negotiations, we publicly gave you seven days in which to decide to come out of the bush. We did not launch a surprise attack on you. You decided to return to the bush.

All along, therefore, we have never needed convincing to engage in dialogue with enemies. However, following the breakdown of the Betty Bigombe/Kony talks and the intensified atrocities against the population of Uganda, we decided to adopt the policy of forgiving all members of your groups except: Kony, Lagony and Otti Vincent because they were the authors of these heinous crimes against humanity. I personally feel very strongly against these individuals because of the damage they have done to our people in Northern Uganda.

As I said previously, however, Uganda is not my personal property. Since reasonable numbers of Ugandans feel that we should talk even to the Konys in spite of these crimes, we have been ready to do so for sometime and you cannot say that you do not know this. Sister Rachele has told some of your people; the priests of Sant'Egidio of Rome have contacted some of your people; Dr Martin Aliko, in addition to attending Kacoke Madit, has contacted some of your people, etc. You have been evasive or even arrogant. On our part we are determined and able to bring peace to Northern Uganda by peace or by war. The latter costs much more in terms of lives and money.

Therefore, since you have, at last, contacted me indicating your readiness to negotiate an end to this criminality with few parallels, I only need to inform you that we have always been ready, our revulsion at your methods notwithstanding.

Therefore, our delegation is ready to discuss with your representatives anywhere and we are ready to reach a peaceful settlement within the confines of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

Yoweri K. Museveni
President

NAIROBI AGREEMENT (8 DECEMBER 1999)

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF SUDAN AND UGANDA

In order to enhance relations between our two countries and to promote peace in the region, we make the following commitments:

1. Each of us will respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the other, in accordance with the charters of the United Nations and the Organisation for African Unity.
2. We renounce the use of force to resolve differences, and will take steps to prevent any hostile actions against each other.

3. We will make every effort to disband and disarm terrorist groups and to prevent any acts of terrorism or hostile actions that might originate in our territory that might endanger the security of the other nation.

4. We agree not to harbor, sponsor, or give military or logistical support to any rebel groups, opposition groups, or hostile elements from each other's territories.

5. We will join in a common effort to promote regional peace, both on our own initiative and in full support and in no way to prejudice or interfere with IGAD's role in bringing an end to the civil war in Sudan.

6. We will refrain from hostile and negative propaganda campaigns against each other.

7. We will return all prisoners of war to their respective nations.

8. We especially condemn any abuse or injury of innocent citizens, and will make a special effort to locate any abductees, especially children, who have been abducted in the past and return them to their families. All information about such cases will be shared with The Carter Center, UNICEF, and other international organisations and we will cooperate fully in the search and rescue of these victims, beginning immediately with those who can be identified.

9. We will honor international laws governing refugees, NGO activities, and cross-border transportation, and facilitate the return or resettlement of refugees in accordance with UNHCR regulations.

10. We will offer amnesty and reintegration assistance to all former combatants who renounce the use of force.

11. If all other terms of this agreement are honored satisfactorily, we desire to reestablish normal relations between our two countries. Within a month of this date, we will open offices in both capital cities and assign junior diplomatic personnel for service. By the end of February 2000, ambassadors will be exchanged and full diplomatic relations restored.

In order to implement this agreement, designated members of our contact groups will act as an interim committee. As soon as practical, a joint ministerial committee will be established with at least three sub-committees, to deal with political, security, and humanitarian issues.

We understand that, when requested, The Carter Center will publicize this agreement and continue to play a role in its implementation.

Signed by:

Yoweri MUSEVENI

President, Republic of Uganda

Omar al-BASHIR

President, Republic of Sudan

Witnessed by:

Jimmy CARTER

Former US President,

Chair, The Carter Center

Daniel Toroitich arap MOI

President, Republic of Kenya

**Fr Tarcisio Pazzaglia with a friend at the site where
Fr De Bari, peace advocate, was killed**



Chronology

Pre-colonial period

Luo-speaking peoples enter the territory of contemporary Uganda from southeastern Sudan in the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century, reportedly conquering local people and setting up a series of new dynasties, of which the western kingdom of Bunyoro is the largest. By the mid-seventeenth century, Bunyoro suffers disastrous military defeats after efforts to expand. Buganda uses this opportunity to extend its borders westwards from its stronghold on the northwest corner of Lake Victoria, doubling its size and starting to emerge as the dominant kingdom in the region. By the mid-nineteenth century, Buganda and Bunyoro are the most powerful of the Bantu kingdoms in the Great Lakes region and are well positioned to trade with Arab travellers' trading initiatives. European expeditions arrive in search of the source of the Nile in the early 1860s, marking the beginning of contact that increases first with missionary activities in the following decades and, in 1890, with the formation of the Imperial British East Africa Company. In the last decades of the century, conflict between followers of Islam and Christianity – and Catholic versus Protestant – for predominance intensify, while the Buganda and Bunyoro kingdoms are continually at war.

The colonial period, 1894-1962

A British Protectorate over Uganda is formally declared in 1894. An indirect rule policy enables the kingdoms to retain some of their institutional structure, though British manipulation eventually weakens their legitimacy. Britain gives Buganda a privileged status under a treaty in 1900, resulting in unequal development of the regions and considerable resentment towards Buganda in the period leading up to independence. Cultural differences between the northern and eastern peoples versus the southern and western peoples, exacerbated by colonial policies, make it difficult to foster a sense of unified Ugandan nationalism. When political parties begin to emerge in the 1940s, they are differentiated primarily by religion rather than ethnicity or political ideologies and most are as concerned with maintaining privilege as with achieving independence. In 1960 Buganda declares unilateral independence. Although this declaration is ignored, Milton Obote – leader of the Uganda People's Congress – seeks an alliance with the Buganda-based Kabaka Yekka or 'King alone' party. The Democratic Party – which draws its support from the Catholic population – wins the most seats in the 1961 Legislative Council elections amid a boycott by most of the Buganda population. Yet the UPC/KY alliance is able to form the government on 9th October 1962 and Milton Obote becomes the first prime minister of a newly independent country.

Post-independence period, 1962-1970

As a part of the alliance agreement, in 1963 Kabaka Mutesa II (the Bugandan king) becomes President. In 1964 Milton Obote accedes to the demands of mutineers in the army, possibly weakening the position of civilian government. Later that year a section of the army led by Idi Amin Dada supports a Simba uprising in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire). In 1966, a dispute between Obote and Mutesa II over the constitutional status of Buganda results in Baganda people ordering the central government out of the capital city of Kampala, which is in Buganda territory. Following clashes with the army at the palace, Mutesa II escapes into exile. In 1967, Obote pushes through a constitution abolishing the monarchy and declaring Uganda a Republic. In 1969, Obote announces an ideological 'Move to the Left' that antagonises much of the military, administrative and political leadership of Uganda – as well as the British government, worried that their continued influence in the country will be undermined. Obote also continues to promote a pan-Africanist, non-aligned, and pro-Arab foreign policy.

The Idi Amin years, 1971-79

1971

In January tensions between Maj. Gen. Idi Amin Dada and Obote escalate. While Obote is at a Commonwealth conference in Singapore, Amin deposes him in a bloody coup d'état. Obote is given asylum in Tanzania. Amin launches a purge of the army. Thousands of Acholi and Langi soldiers and officers are massacred. Some sectors welcome the overthrow of the Obote government, particularly in Buganda, but enthusiasm is short-lived.

1972

Ugandan exiles invade Uganda from Tanzania in September. The incursion is repulsed by the Uganda Army, which inflicts heavy losses on the insurgent forces. Gen. Amin responds with further arrests, torture, and killings of soldiers and intelligentsia. Security forces abduct and murder the leader of the Democratic Party and Chief Justice Benedicto Kiwanuku. Gen. Amin declares an 'economic war' based on ideas of 'Africanisation' or 'Ugandanisation', and orders non-citizen Asians (and later even those with citizenship) to leave the country. Tanzania and Uganda sign an agreement in Mogadishu, Somalia, to cease mutual hostilities and to deny the use of Tanzanian soil by Ugandan exiles for aggression against Uganda.

1973

Security forces execute scores of Ugandans (accused of being guerrilla infiltrators) in their hometowns throughout the country. Yoweri Museveni establishes the Front for National Salvation (FRONASA), a guerrilla movement, to fight the Amin regime.

1974

Internal discontent grows among the ranks of the Ugandan Army. Troops loyal to Amin suppress a revolt under Brig. Charles Arube. He and Michael Ondoga, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs, are murdered.

1976

Britain severs diplomatic ties with Uganda.

1977

The killings of Archbishop Janani Luwum and three cabinet ministers on February 17 mark the climax of Amin's bloody repression. In September Amin publicly executes people accused of plotting against his government.

1978

Relations between Tanzania and Uganda deteriorate. Ugandan invades and annexes Kagera region of Tanzania. Tanzania launches a counter offensive.

The UNLA years, 1979-85

1979

The Tanzanian People's Defence Forces (TPDF) and armed groups of Ugandan exiles – Kikosi Maalum and FRONASA – inflict successive defeats upon the invading Ugandan army and pursue them deep into Ugandan territory. In March, Ugandan opposition groups hastily convene a Unity Conference in Moshi, Tanzania and form the Uganda National Liberation Front / Army (UNLF/ UNLA) Yusuf Lule is elected Chairman. In April, TDPF and Ugandan exiles topple Amin and install a Unity Government with Lule as President. Later, the National Consultative Council (NCC) of the UNLF relieves President Lule of his duties in June, citing incompetence and ethnic nationalism. Godfrey Binaisa, former Attorney General, takes over as President.

1980

May

President Binaisa retires UNLA chief of staff Lt. Col. David Oyite Ojok from the army and posts him to Libya. The UNLF Military Commission, led by Paulo Muwanga, rejects the decision and deposes Binaisa. On 27 May, former President Milton Obote returns to Uganda.

June

Yoweri Museveni, Vice Chairman of the Military Commission, founds a new political party, the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) to contest the December elections.

October

Former Uganda Army exiles loyal to Amin raid UNLA positions in West Nile.

December

General elections are held. The UPC is declared the winner, with Milton Obote as President and Muwanga as Vice President with allegations of widespread irregularities. The Democratic Party (DP) contests the result but takes its place in parliament as the opposition. Museveni claims that the results were rigged and opts to wage a guerrilla war to reverse the outcome of the elections.

1981

UNLA forces in West Nile come under increased pressure from the Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF). Museveni's Popular Revolutionary Army (PRA) attack the UNLA training school in Kabamba in February, marking the beginning of their insurgency against Obote's government.

June

The last remaining Tanzanian troops are withdrawn. The security situation in Luwero and West Nile deteriorates.

1982

Armed opposition groups, Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM), National Rescue Front (UNRF) and National Resistance Movement (NRM) unite as the Uganda Popular Front (UPF) and attack government installations in and around Kampala.

March

The NRM/A establishes de facto control over a large area of the 'Luwero triangle'. Obote asks the International Committee of the Red Cross to leave Uganda after its reports of civilian massacres. All foreign journalists are ordered out of the country.

July

The UNLA launches massive cordon and search operations against NRM/A in Luwero District and civilians are cordoned into camps in areas under government control.

September

Rwandan refugees come under attack in Ankole for their perceived support of the NRA and approximately 80,000 are evicted from their homes.

1983

December

Army Chief of Staff, Maj. Gen. Oyite Ojok and several senior army officers die in a helicopter accident when visiting the UNLA frontline.

1984

March

UNLA operations force 20,000 civilians to flee Karamoja. NRA attacks on government and public transport vehicles on the Northern Highway intensify.

August

President Obote controversially appoints Brigadier Smith Opon Acak as the new Army Chief of Staff, drawing protest and creating divisions among senior army officers. The US State Department claims that up to 200,000 have been killed through the war in Luwero blaming the government for a 'scorched earth' policy.

1985

July

The UNLA Northern Brigade under the command of Brig. Baizilio Olara Okello overthrows Milton Obote on 27 July. Lt. General Tito Okello Lutwa is sworn in as Head of State. They invite Museveni and other fighting groups to join a government of national unity. FUNA, UFM, FEDEMU and UNRF join the Military Council. The NRM refuses to do so, demanding special recognition and concessions.

August - December

Peace talks between the Okello government and the NRM commence in Nairobi chaired by Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi. On 17 December they sign a peace agreement in Nairobi. Weeks later the NRM withdraws from the agreement and intensifies its military campaign against the Okello government.

Museveni and the National Resistance Movement

1986

January

On 25 January, the NRM/A overthrows the Military Council. Yoweri Museveni is sworn in as President two days later and unveils the 'Ten Point Programme' as the new government's principle governance and policy framework. Many 'northerners' are lynched in Kampala and other parts of the south.

March

The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) attacks Acholi refugees in southern Sudan.

April

The NRA establishes control over the whole country.

May

The NRM/A directs all ex-UNLA soldiers to surrender and report to Army posts.

July

The defeated ex-UNLA establish the Uganda People's Democratic Army / Movement (UPDA/M).

August

NRA / FEDEMU / UFM execute scores of civilians at Namokora, Akilok, Oryang and Padibe.

September

Alice Auma 'Lakwena' forms the Holy Spirit Mobile Force (HSMF) to oppose the government.

October

Mistrust of the NRM/A and the SPLA is widespread in Acholi and support for the resistance fighters is strengthened. In late October, elder Tiberio Okeny Atwoma leads the Good Will Peace Mission into the bush of Acholi and Sudan to initiate peace talks with the UPDM/A.

November

On 3 November, the Good Will Peace Mission makes contact with the UPDA. The team proceeds to southern Sudan to meet UPDA top commanders. The Peace Mission and UPDM/A issue a joint communiqué declaring willingness to negotiate and accept a comprehensive amnesty.

December

The HSMF attacks NRA positions, winning several major battles.

1987

January

A combined UPDA/HSMF force attacks the NRA in a fierce battle at Corner Kilak in southern Kitgum. The 4-day battle results in over 1,600 HSMF/UPDA deaths and over 200 NRA dead. Around 1,000 UPDA fighters surrender.

January – April

Joseph Kony forms the core of his fighting group aligned within the HSMF movement.

February

The Peace Mission returns to Uganda and recommends negotiation with the UPDA fighters but not its political wing, the UPDM. Insurgency begins in Teso.

May

The government introduces amnesty laws in response to the Peace Mission's reports.

July

The NRA executes 97 civilians at Kona Kilak.

August

'Karamojong' cattle raiders sweep through Kitgum and eastern Gulu looting most of the region's livestock, estimated at over 300,000, and in the process effectively destroy the economic base of Acholi society. Many Acholi perceive NRA complicity in the raids.

November

The NRA defeats the HSMF in Jinja, halting their march on the capital. Alice Lakwena flees to Kenya and remnants of her followers return to northern Uganda. Museveni gives the go-ahead for his brother, Maj. Gen. Salim Saleh, to talk to the UPDA.

End of UPDA war as LRA emerges

1988

The United Holy Salvation Army, led by Joseph Kony, arises out of the collapsed Holy Spirit Movement.

March

On 17 March 1988, an NRA delegation led by Salim Saleh and a UPDA delegation meet in Gulu and agree a ceasefire. This paves the way for the first peace negotiations.

April

On 9 April, the UPDA presents a memorandum to President Museveni, who in response promulgates a Presidential Pardon to succeed the lapsed amnesty laws. Acholi communities in Kampala, Jinja and Entebbe meet and support the peace process but urge inclusion of all factions – including the HSM and UPDM external wing. In mid-April, members of HSM and NRA meet to explore common ground for peace. Talks collapse when NRA mobile forces attack Kony before talks begin. On 30 April the LRA attacks government positions at Bibia, after which there are no direct negotiations for years. Fighters in Teso District take advantage of the Presidential Pardon to end their insurgency.

June

On 3 June, UPDA/M and NRM/A sign a peace accord in Gulu. The external wing, based in London and Nairobi, who were excluded from the negotiations, reject the agreement. The NRA steps up military operations in Acholi to crush the insurgency. The NRA at Koch Goma executes 40 civilians.

1989

April

Joseph Kony's forces intensify operations. Government troops order thousands of Acholi out of their villages into camps. The NRA at Purongo executes 30 civilians.

1990

February

The NRA launches a major offensive against armed groups in Teso and rounds up thousands of civilians into camps.

July

On 14 July the NRM/A and UPDM political wing sign the Addis Agreement and exiled UPDM leader, Otema Allimadi, returns to Uganda.

1991

March

On 31 March, NRA Maj. Gen. David Tinyefuza launches, 'Operation North', against Joseph Kony's army, now renamed the United Democratic Christian Movement /Army (UDCM/A).

April - August

The northern districts of Apac, Lira, Gulu and Kitgum are sealed off and a 'media blackout' is imposed. The NRA allegedly commits human rights violations, including extra-judicial killings. 18 prominent politicians and local leaders from Acholi and Lango are detained. Reprisals against civilians by the LRA escalate, including killings, abductions and mutilation.

Movement towards peace

1992

July

The government announces the creation of the Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Programme (NURP). A similar scheme is announced for Teso, where a peace process based on cooperation with the civilian population and a presidential commission ends the conflict.

August

Kony's UDCM/A is re-named the Lord's Resistance Movement/Army.

1993

February

Pope John Paul II visits Gulu, speaks out against atrocities and calls for a resolution to the conflict.

March

The Constitutional Commission endorses a Draft Constitution, which would prohibit political parties for another seven years. The DP and UPC oppose the draft. Insurgency in Teso district ends.

August

Minister for the North, Betty Bigombe initiates contacts with the LRM/A.

November

On 25 November a government delegation led by Bigombe meets with LRM/A representatives for face-to-face talks.

Expansion of the war

1994

January

After several meetings and protracted negotiations, the LRA and NRA fail to reach agreement and the Bigombe initiative appears on the verge of collapse.

February

On 6 February, Museveni gives the LRA seven days to surrender or face military onslaught. The LRM/A retreats into southern Sudan, where they establish camps and receive military support from the Sudanese government. The LRA launches attacks in Acholi and plants landmines on roads and footpaths.

March

Elections to the Constitutional Assembly (CA) are held.

November

Ex-President Gen. Tito Okello Lutwa returns from exile.

1995

April

Violence escalates throughout Acholi as the LRA steps up its operations. A massacre by the LRA of more than 200 people in Atyak triggers the severing of diplomatic relations between Uganda and Sudan.

June

The CA endorses a 'no-party' political system. Deputy Prime Minister and long-time DP leader, Paul Ssemwogerere, resigns and announces his intention to contest presidential elections.

August

The LRA invades Kitgum and abduction of children intensifies. Government helicopter gun-ships kill rebels and their captives on the way to southern Sudan.

October

The new Constitution takes effect and the NRA is re-named as the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF). The UPDF and the SPLA conduct a joint offensive against the LRA in southern Sudan lasting until early 1996, overrunning their camps and capturing hundreds of LRA fighters.

1996

The security situation in Acholi worsens and civilian targets are attacked by the LRA. The attacks occur on an almost daily basis and whole villages burned.

March

Rwot Achana leads a delegation of Acholi chiefs and elders to Rwakitura to ask Museveni to adopt a peaceful approach to ending the conflict, and to allow a delegation to establish contact with the LRA. The LRA declares a unilateral ceasefire to allow people to vote for the Inter-Political Forces Coalition opposition led by Paul Ssemwogerere.

May

Acholi overwhelmingly vote for Ssemwogerere in the Presidential elections won by Museveni. Soon after the elections, Museveni announces his determination to defeat the LRA militarily and appoints Gen. Salim Saleh to take charge of operations in Acholi.

June

On a government approved peace mission to the LRA, Acholi Elders Okot Ogoni and Olanya Lagony, are murdered by the LRA.

July

The Acholinet internet discussion group starts out of York University in Toronto Canada, to link the diaspora and homeland in discussions to forge a consensus for a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

September

Col Kazini, the Division Commander in Gulu, incites a mob to lynch several suspected rebels in military custody.

October

The LRA abducts 139 girls from St Mary's College Aboke in Lango. Sister Rachele Fassero follows the rebels into the bush and secures the release of all but 37 of the girls. Parents of the abducted girls form the Concerned Parents Association (CPA) and mount an international campaign for their release.

November

The government institutes its policy of relocating the people of Gulu into 'protected villages'. Food, sanitation, health and education facilities are inadequate for those displaced into the camps. The UPDF allegedly uses violence to force the unwilling into the camps.

Acholi peacemaking as war continues

1997

January

The LRA massacres 400 villagers in Lamwo County, Kitgum District. The Parliamentary Sessional Committee on Defence and Foreign Affairs recommends the government continue to use military means to end the conflict. A Minority Report presents the opposite view claiming to reflect the majority view of Ugandans.

April

Acholi living abroad and in the homeland meet at the first large gathering of Acholi in a 'Kacoke Madit' (KM) in London. KM highlights the human rights and humanitarian situation of the conflict in northern Uganda. It also brings LRM/A and government representatives face-to-face, where both sides are implored to seek a speedy and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

June

Sister Rachele Fassera and members of the CPA meet with LRA Commanders in Juba. Although the LRA initially deny holding the Aboke girls, they later offer to release them through the ICRC in return for a government ceasefire. When the government of Uganda refuses, the LRA blame them for the breakdown in talks and hold them responsible for anything that might happen to the girls.

August

Acholi religious leaders hold an inter-faith prayer for peace in Kitgum.

November/December

After the KM conference, the Nairobi-based political representative of the LRM/A writes to the government proposing talks. With the mediation of the Community of Sant'Egidio Italy, the LRA meets a Ugandan delegation led by a Minister of Foreign Affairs in Rome in December 1997. The government makes the next round of talks conditional on participation by an LRA field commander but disputes within the LRA over its political representation lead to a collapse of the initiative. Museveni later dismisses negotiations with the LRA. The UPDF and SPLA launch another joint offensive inside Sudan, forcing the LRA to move its camp further north.

1998

February

Muslim, Catholic and Anglican Church leaders in Acholi form the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (ARLPI).

June

UNICEF estimates that 10,000 children have been abducted by the LRA.

July

The second Kacoke Madit (KM) takes place in London. The LRA does not attend. The KM reiterates the Acholi consensus for peace and calls on the parties to the conflict to make an unambiguous commitment to a peaceful settlement, to declare a ceasefire and to accept international third party mediation. A Ministerial Mission tours war-torn southwestern and northern Uganda where the public endorses the need for a general amnesty and negotiated settlement to the conflict. US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visits Gulu and offers US support to the Ugandan government in its conflict with Sudan.

1999

After several attacks in early 1999, most of the LRA return to Sudan and for nearly ten months the fighting in Gulu and Kitgum ceases. The UPDF attempts to seal the border with Sudan and many civilians start to return to their homes from the 'protected villages'.

May

Over 8,000 people demonstrate in Gulu against Maj. Ronald Kakooza Mutale, Presidential Advisor on Political Affairs and head of a paramilitary Civil Defence Unit, for calling district leaders rebel collaborators.

August

With the mediation of The Carter Center, the governments of Uganda and Sudan start negotiations to normalise relations and end the conflict. The LRA and the SPLA are excluded from the talks.

September

Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative and the development agency ACORD. convene a conference on the 'Peace Research & the Reconciliation Agenda' in Gulu.

December

Parliament passes the Amnesty Bill raising hopes of a return to peace. The Carter Centre process culminates in a Nairobi summit meeting, where the Ugandan and Sudanese governments sign the Nairobi Peace Accord on the 8 December. Shortly afterwards, the LRA attacks Gulu town and hopes for peace are undermined.

2000

Insecurity persists in Acholi and approximately 400,000 people – approximately half the population – remain in the 'protected villages' where they come under repeated attack by LRA fighters.

January

LRA fighters raid Kitgum and Gulu. The first implementation meeting of the Nairobi Accord takes place in Nairobi.

February

The Carter Center representatives meet with Kony and LRA leaders in Nsitu, Sudan. KM and Acholi civil society representatives make presentations to the negotiating parties through The Carter Center calling for an inclusive peace dialogue.

March

A second Nairobi Agreement implementation meeting is held in Nairobi.

July

The governments of Uganda and Sudan meet in Lomé. The outcome is the 'Lomé non-paper'. The Carter Center hosts a joint ministerial meeting in Atlanta on 18-19 July where the Atlanta Joint Action Plan for the Implementation of the Nairobi Agreement is drawn up.

August

A meeting on children abducted by the LRA is held in New York and a 'Partners in Support of Abducted Children' coalition is proposed.

September

Canada hosts the International Conference on War Affected Children in Winnipeg. An 'experts' meeting is held on northern Uganda abducted children. Uganda and Sudan sign a communiqué underlining their commitment to peace and the release of all abducted children. The foreign ministers of Sudan and Uganda attend a meeting convened by Egypt and Libya in Kampala on 26-27 September. It is announced that Sudan has agreed to move the LRA 1,000 miles north of the Ugandan border.

October

The Carter Center convenes a ministerial implementation meeting of the governments of Uganda and Sudan in Khartoum on 6-7 October. Ebola breaks out in Gulu.

November

A follow-up ministerial meeting is convened by the Carter Center in Nairobi. The third Kacoke Madit (KM2000) is relocated from Arusha, Tanzania to Nairobi, Kenya on 24 November. It is cut short by the Government of Kenya due to concerns over Ebola.

December

ARLPI organises a mass demonstration and prayer for peace in Gulu.

2001

The period leading to the presidential elections in mid-March is comparatively calm in northern Uganda.

March

Museveni wins a second Presidential term. The majority in northern Uganda vote overwhelmingly against him. Soon after, the LRA resume attacks against civilian targets. Sudan repatriates 62 abductees who escape from an LRA camp.

April

The Amnesty Commission holds a two-day workshop attended by a cross-section of leaders from the Acholi districts, the central government, UPDF officers and religious leaders.

A UPDF Mobile Unit twice attacks religious leaders and elders who are meeting with LRA commanders to discuss the modalities for reporting under the amnesty. Military authorities blame the mishaps on miscommunication.

June

The Carter Center hosts another implementation meeting in Nairobi on 3 June. On the 4 June, local LC 5 Chairman, Lt. Col Walter Ochora initiates peace dialogue with a group of LRA fighters. A 'demilitarised zone' is declared by government of Uganda to facilitate movement of LRA as a confidence-building measure.

July

ARLPI holds a three-day consultative meeting of religious leaders from northern Uganda and Sudan, under the theme "Standing together for Peace". They ask the Ugandan government to dismantle the 'protected villages' in Acholi.

August

The LRA indicates in a letter that the ceasefire effectively in place since the beginning of June is coming to an end.

September

Sudan re-opens its Embassy in Kampala after a six-year break in diplomatic relations with Uganda. Soon after Uganda sends a Chargé d'Affaires to Khartoum.

November

A Nairobi Agreement implementation meeting is convened by The Carter Center in Nairobi where a letter to Kony is written inviting him to participate in the dialogue.

December

In a meeting with the Sudanese Chargé d'Affaires in Uganda, Museveni states that unless the government of Sudan relocates Kony's rebels to the north of Sudan, the displaced population from Acholi can not go back to their homes.

2002

January

Museveni visits Sudan for the IGAD summit and meets President Bashir in a pre-summit meeting. Both pledge their support to the war on terrorism.

February

LRA launch an armed attack on Agoro taking the Local Defence soldiers stationed in the protected village and trading centre by surprise. Three soldiers and two civilians are killed, and at least one hundred camp dwellers abducted. The trading centre is looted and the military barracks burnt down. The LRA later withdraw to Sudan.

March

10,000 UPDF troops are mobilised and there are reports of incursions into Sudan and fierce battles between the army and LRA fighters.

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- Government of Sudan: www.sudan.net/govt
- Government of Uganda: www.government.go.ug
- Kacoke Madit: www.km-net.org
- The Carter Center: www.cartercenter.org

News sources

- New Vision (on-line): www.newvision.co.ug
- The Monitor (on-line): www.monitor.co.ug
- Sudan Net: www.sudan.net

conciliation resources

Conciliation Resources (CR) was established in 1994 to provide an international service and act as a resource in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. CR's principal objective is to support the activities of locally-based groups working at community or national levels in preventing violent conflict or seeking to transform armed conflict into opportunities for social, political and economic development based on more just relationships.

In striving to attain that objective, CR:

- assists organisations in developing innovative and sustainable solutions to short- and long-term problems related to armed conflict;
- involves previously marginalised groups in community and national peacemaking and peacebuilding processes;

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- contributes to the local and international development and dissemination of conflict transformation practice and theory

In addition to the Accord programme, CR has in 2001 and 2002 worked with:

- civic groups in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria
- Kacoke Madit and its partners in northern Uganda
- journalists and media organisations in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Uganda
- the Angolan non-governmental organisation ADRA and its local partners

- the Citizens' Constitutional Forum in Fiji
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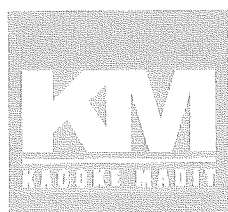
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Kacoke Madit was established in 1996 by Acholi people living in the diaspora, in response to the escalation of the conflict in northern Uganda.

Although started with the main objectives of raising awareness about the conflict and mobilising the support of the international community for a speedy resolution, it has now grown into a worldwide network of community groups, organisations and peace initiatives working together to end the conflict and promote reconciliation.

The work of KM continues to be based on supporting inclusive dialogue processes, combining pro-peace consensus building initiatives with efforts to offer practical support and enhance peace initiatives in Acholiland.

KM's main activities include: 1) identifying and facilitating opportunities for dialogue;

2) supporting organised civil society; 3) organising thematic conferences about the situation in northern Uganda; 4) advocacy for a peaceful resolution of the conflict and 5) information sharing through its worldwide network.

KM will publish a Luo version of this publication.

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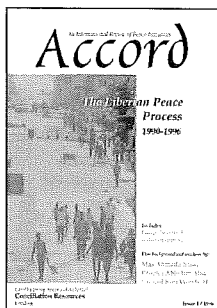
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The Accord series

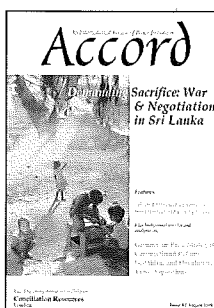
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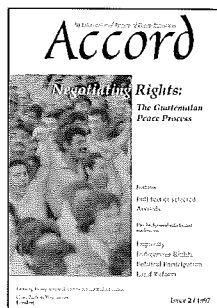
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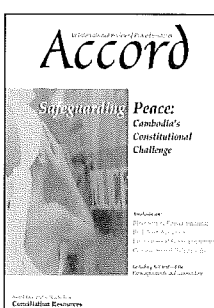
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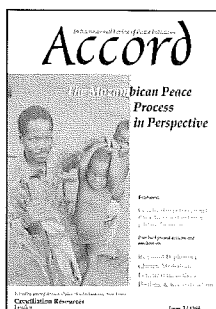
Issue 5 November 1998

This issue documents the violent collapse in July 1997 of the country's governing coalition barely six years after the 1991 Paris agreements that had 'officially' ended Cambodia's long war.

Khmer language edition (1999): The Khmer Institute of Democracy

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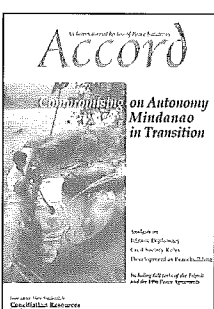
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The Mozambican Peace Process in Perspective

Issue 3 January 1998

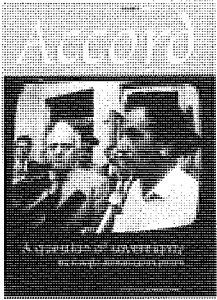
This issue revisits key aspects of the Mozambican peace process five years on from the negotiated settlement between the Frelimo Government and Renamo.



Compromising on Autonomy: Mindanao in Transition

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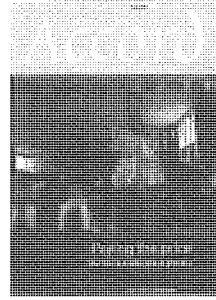


A question of sovereignty: the Georgia–Abkhazia peace process

Issue 7 October 1999

Accord 7 provides a unique insight into a political stalemate and points towards possible avenues out of the deadlock. Writers from both Georgia and Abkhazia analyse the obstacles and the opportunities of the negotiations process. International authors look critically at interventions from the UN and the Russian Federation and at civic peace initiatives. The conflict illustrates the challenges faced by divided communities in the search for peace when parties are unable to move beyond grievance and insecurity.

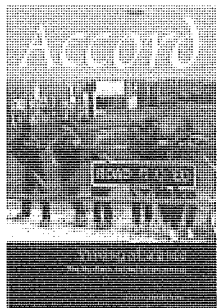
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Paying the price: the Sierra Leone peace process

Issue 9 2000

In Accord 9, the authors - most of them Sierra Leonean - explore the processes leading to the Abidjan (1996), Conakry (1997), and Lomé (1999) accords. They analyse the dilemmas around implement these agreements, the difficulties of power-sharing, and the challenge of supporting justice and reconciliation. They also document a range civil society peacebuilding initiatives, including those by women and local community activists and by the Inter-Religious Council.

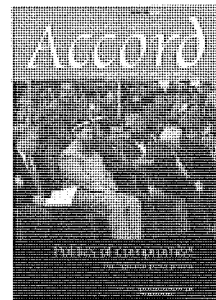


Striking a balance: the Northern Ireland peace process

Issue 8 December 1999

The authors of Accord 8, many of them key players in the peace process, explore the factors that convinced those on all sides of 'the Troubles' that talking was a better alternative than fighting. They describe the development of an environment conducive to negotiations and assess the aspects of the Belfast Agreement that have either facilitated the political process or caused problems with implementation.

Russian language edition available from CR and on the website www.c-r.org from Spring 2002



Politics of compromise: the Tajikistan peace process

Issue 10 2001

In Accord 10, Tajikistani and international authors examine the evolution and dynamics of the war and the peace process, as well as the ongoing challenge of post-conflict peacebuilding. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the central asian republic of Tajikistan fragmented along regional, ethnic and ideological lines, descending into civil war in 1992. This publication provides an in-depth and analytical look at the role of foreign governments and international institutions, as well as at official and 'unofficial' initiatives within an exceptionally well-coordinated peace process that led to the acceptance of the 1997 peace agreement.

Future issues

The Bougainville peace process in Papua New Guinea. The South Pacific has lately been referred to as a 'rim of fire' with political conflicts – some of them violent – raging from Fiji to the Solomon Islands, from Papua New Guinea on into Indonesia. The story of the Bougainville peace process provides a rare glimpse of peacemaking Melanesian style. The long-standing secessionist war, triggered in part by disputes over the RTZ copper mine and led by the Bougainville Revolutionary Army came to a negotiated end in 1997. Since then, an extraordinarily inclusive peace process has proceeded with mixed results. The indigenous and innovative methods and models employed provide an important lens for comparative reflection to inform conflict resolution processes elsewhere.

Mechanisms for public participation in reaching peace agreements. Many people involved in peacemaking and conflict transformation are seeking to ensure that peace processes address the underlying causes of conflict and are responsive to the needs of all those affected by it. Yet process mechanisms for enabling public participation in the political negotiations for reaching peace agreements have not been studied systematically. This first thematic project in the Accord series is aimed at addressing that gap. By drawing out insights from case studies of three processes which have incorporated such mechanisms, and by examining some of the cross-cutting issues and challenges, the publication will provide resources for those seeking to promote, design or implement mechanisms for public participation in current or future processes.

Acronyms

ACORD	Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development
ACRIS	Abducted Child Registration and Information System
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
AP&JC	Acholi Peace and Justice Committee
APG	Acholi Parliamentary Group
ARLPI	Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative
CDF	Chief of Defence Forces
CPA	Concerned Parents Association
DFID	Department for International Development
DP	Democratic Party
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRPT	District Reconciliation and Peace Team
FEDEMU	Federalist Democratic Movement of Uganda
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique (Mozambique Liberation Front)
FRONASA	Front for National Salvation
FUNA	Former Uganda National Army
GUSCO	Gulu Support the Children Organisation
GWENET	Gulu Women's Network
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
HSMF	Holy Spirit Mobile Forces
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IPFC	Inter-Political Forces Coalition
JFP	Joint Forum for Peace
KM	Kikosi Maalum
KM	Kacoke Madit
KP&JC	Kitgum Peace and Justice Committee
LA	Lord's Army
LDU	Local Defence Unit
LRM/A	Lord's Resistance Movement/Army
NALU	National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
NCC	National Consultative Council
NIF	National Islamic Front
NRM/A	National Resistance Movement/Army
NURP	Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Programme
PRA	Popular Revolutionary Army
PVP	People's Voice for Peace
RC	Resistance Council
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
TPDF	Tanzanian People's Defence Forces
UCDA	Uganda Christian Democratic Army
UDCM/A	Uganda Democratic Christian Army / Movement
UFM/A	Uganda Freedom Movement/Army
UFF	Uganda Freedom Fighters
UHSA	United Holy Salvation Army
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNLA/F	Uganda National Liberation Army / Front
UNRF	Uganda National Rescue Front
UPA	Uganda People's Army
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
UPDM/A	Uganda People's Democratic Army / Movement
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces
UPF	Uganda Popular Front
UPM	Uganda Patriotic Movement
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WNBF	West Nile Bank Front



The population of Gulu demonstrates against the Atiak massacre of 17-18 April 1995

Source: Erika Croucher