

Chronology

A more detailed chronology prior to 2002 is available in Accord 11 (2002): Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda, www.c-r.org

1986 – 88

Joseph Kony starts his group of resistance fighters from the remnants of earlier rebel groups, later to be named the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

1989 – 92

Fighting between the LRA and Ugandan Armed Forces intensifies, with government forces accused of serious human rights abuses. The government begins to move civilians in the affected areas into displacement camps.

1993 – 94

First attempt at finding a negotiated solution, led by the Ugandan Minister for the North, Betty Bigombe. It ultimately fails and fighting worsens.

The LRA moves its bases into Sudan's Eastern Equatoria region at the invitation of the Government of Sudan in Khartoum. Khartoum begins to support the LRA with provisions and weapons.

1995 – 96

LRA violence against civilians intensifies and abductions become more commonplace. The LRA announces a ceasefire to allow people to vote in the 1996 national elections.

1997 – 98

A diaspora-led attempt to negotiate a settlement fails, and fighting again intensifies.

1999 – 2000

The LRA is forced into Sudan for much of 1999, allowing some civilians to leave the camps. The Ugandan government passes an amnesty law, which is followed by renewed efforts to find a negotiated solution, led by the Carter Center. But insecurity persists in northern Uganda, with 400,000 civilians now living in camps.

2001

The Carter Center process leads to the re-establishment of diplomatic ties between Uganda and Sudan. The period around the 2001 Ugandan election is relatively peaceful, and a temporary ceasefire in June allows contact between commanders from the LRA and the Ugandan army.

2002

February – The LRA launches renewed attacks.

March – Sudan and Uganda sign an agreement aimed at containing the LRA. Ugandan forces launch an offensive against the LRA in Southern Sudan, named Operation Iron Fist. LRA fighters move back into northern Uganda and step up attacks on civilians, displacing hundreds of thousands of people.

August – Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni offers a temporary ceasefire to allow negotiations to commence but sets conditions that are rejected by the LRA. No talks take place and hostilities resume.

October – The Ugandan government orders a large number of civilians to move back into camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). LRA operations continue, with allegations of renewed support for the LRA by the Sudanese government.

2003

March – Kony announces a unilateral ceasefire, agreed a few days later by President Museveni who appoints a team to lead negotiations. Talks do not take place and the ceasefire is revoked by the Ugandan government in April.

September – A 'Framework Agreement' is signed between the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), which implies continued support for the LRA from Khartoum. In response, the LRA re-organizes its command structure, acquires substantial new weaponry and extends its area of

operations inside Uganda, notably eastwards into Teso and Lango.

November – UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland, visits northern Uganda and describes the situation as 'the biggest forgotten, neglected humanitarian emergency in the world today'. More than a million civilians are now in IDP camps.

December – President Museveni refers the situation in northern Uganda to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

2004

January – The ICC Prosecutor officially opens investigations into events in northern Uganda.

February – LRA rebels slaughter more than 300 people at a camp for displaced people in Lira District, north eastern Uganda.

March – Operation Iron Fist II is launched, as the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) re-double their efforts to take on the LRA in Southern Sudan.

November – An initiative launched in early 2004 by former mediator Betty Bigombe begins to gain momentum, with both the LRA and the Ugandan government seemingly open to negotiations. President Museveni declares a ceasefire which enables LRA fighters to re-group.

December – Face-to-face talks are held between the government and the LRA. Hopes are high for an agreement, as Bigombe flies to a remote location on the Sudanese border to meet senior LRA commanders, including LRA deputy leader Vincent Otti. The Ugandan government sets a deadline of 31 December for Kony to sign a peace deal.

2005

January – Fighting resumes on 1 January between the LRA and Ugandan forces. But talks mediated by Bigombe continue, with senior LRA figures Sam Kolo and Otti participating. A Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is signed between the SPLM/A and the Sudanese government, establishing a semi-autonomous Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS).

February – President Museveni declares a further temporary ceasefire and talks continue, despite ongoing hostilities. LRA chief negotiator Sam Kolo surrenders to the Ugandan government, leading to a breakdown in communications.

July – The ICC issues five sealed warrants, its first ever, in relation to its investigations in northern Uganda.

September – A group of LRA combatants moves into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for the first time, establishing bases in Garamba National Park in Orientale Province. DRC President Joseph Kabila sets a deadline for LRA forces to leave. President Museveni threatens that Ugandan forces will enter the DRC in pursuit unless the LRA are removed.

October – The ICC unseals arrest warrants for five LRA commanders, including Kony. Bigombe warns that the warrants will make a negotiated peace difficult, and her initiative comes to an end.

December – First indications that the GoSS might be prepared to act as a mediator in new talks.

2006

January – A botched reconnaissance mission against LRA positions in Garamba National Park by Guatemalan forces serving with the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC) results in the death of eight peacekeepers, killed in 'friendly fire'.

April – A first meeting is held between Vincent Otti and GoSS Vice President Riek Machar.

May – Joseph Kony and Riek Machar meet. Machar is filmed handing Joseph

Kony USD\$20,000, which leads to much controversy when the footage is leaked.

June – After a third visit by Riek Machar to the LRA in the bush, Kony appoints a delegation to represent the LRA/M in peace talks. The Ugandan government is approached by GoSS with the suggestion to enter negotiations in Juba.

July – Peace talks between the government and the LRA begin in Southern Sudan, mediated by Riek Machar. The LRA/M delegation is led by Martin Ojul, despite many efforts to get Vincent Otti to join the delegation. The Ugandan government delegation is led by Internal Affairs Minister Ruhakana Ruguna. A large delegation of civil society leaders and politicians from both Sudan and Uganda, as well as family members of LRA fighters, travels to Ri-Kwangba in Sudan for several days of meetings with the LRA. Joseph Kony apologises to Acholi in Uganda and Sudan for atrocities committed.

12 August – One of the five LRA commanders wanted by the ICC, Raska Lukwia, is killed in combat with Ugandan forces.

26 August – The Ugandan government and the LRA/M sign a 'Cessation of Hostilities Agreement', which comes into force on 29 August. Under the terms of the agreement, LRA combatants are to assemble in two designated safe areas in Southern Sudan (Owiny Ki-Bul and Ri-Kwangba), while Ugandan forces allow them safe passage.

September – Talks on substantive issues of reconciliation, justice and 'comprehensive solutions' to the problems of northern Uganda continue amid accusations of breaches of the Cessation of Hostilities agreement.

October – A Cessation of Hostilities Monitoring Team, made up of representatives of the Ugandan government, the LRA and the GoSS travel to assembly areas to investigate accusations. President Museveni attends the Juba talks in person. Attacks in northern Uganda diminish.

November – The First addendum to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement is

signed, extending the ceasefire to give the LRA more time to move to assembly areas where food and support is provided by relief agency Caritas. Despite this, LRA forces fail to assemble. Continuing talks in Juba are slowed by the need to allow LRA delegates to travel to Garamba to consult with the LRA's leaders.

December – Former President of Mozambique Joaquim Chissano is appointed by the UN Secretary-General as the Special Envoy to Areas Affected by the LRA. Fighting is reported between the LRA and Ugandan forces outside the 'safe zones'. Talks at Juba recommence on 14 December and a second addendum to the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement is signed on 16 December, again extending the deadline for assembly.

2007

January – No talks take place at Juba, with the LRA delegation demanding a change of venue and expressing dissatisfaction with the mediation of Riek Machar. LRA leaders refuse to meet with Chissano.

February – Talks remain stalled. Rumours circulate that elements of the LRA have moved towards the Central African Republic (CAR). LRA forces are now largely concentrated in DRC and Southern Sudan.

March – Chissano is able to meet with Kony and announces that talks will restart in mid-April.

April – A third addendum is signed, extending the deadline for LRA assembly to August 2007. Substantive talks restart on 26 April.

May – Agreement is reached on 'Comprehensive Solutions' to the problems in northern Uganda. The LRA delegation travels back to Garamba for discussions on the next agenda item, accountability and reconciliation. Talks resume on 31 May.

June – The parties sign an agreement on the general principles of accountability and reconciliation on 29 June, agreeing to combine national justice with traditional mechanisms.

September – President Museveni and President Kagame of the DRC sign an agreement setting a 90-day deadline for the departure of LRA forces from the DRC, after which military action will be taken. The LRA and Ugandan government continue consultations with stakeholders.

October – Senior LRA commander Opiyo Makasi surrenders to Congolese forces in the DRC following Kony's arrest of his deputy, Vincent Otti. Otti is subsequently reported to have been killed. The Ugandan government officially launches the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for northern Uganda.

November – An LRA negotiating team arrives in Uganda to begin consultations on the detail of the accountability and reconciliation agreement. It meets with President Museveni on 3 November and asks that he request the ICC to suspend arrest warrants. The Cessation of Hostilities Agreement is extended for a fourth time. Otti's death is confirmed, launching a period of diminished communication with the LRA leadership.

2008

January – Talks resume at Juba on 30 January. The LRA delegation is changed by Kony, with David Matsanga replacing Martin Ojul as lead negotiator. A fifth extension of the Cessation of Hostilities is agreed.

February – Arrangements for a permanent ceasefire are signed on 23 February. Agreements on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and on implementing and monitoring protocols, are concluded on 29 February. Together with prior agreements on Comprehensive Solutions, and on Accountability and Reconciliation, these five elements make up the Final Peace Agreement (FPA). The Cessation of Hostilities is extended again, until 28 March.

March – The Cessation of Hostilities Agreement is again extended, to mid-April.

April – Kony fails to appear at a scheduled signing ceremony. Matsanga is dismissed as LRA chief negotiator. LRA attacks and abductions in the DRC and Southern Sudan become more frequent.

June – Despite increasing frustration on the part of the government of Uganda, the mediator continues to push for agreement. Kony tells journalists that he wishes to return to negotiations but that the ICC should drop the warrant against him.

September – Kony again does not arrive at a scheduled meeting, blaming the ICC warrants. LRA attacks in the DRC continue to intensify.

November – Machar holds a conference in Kampala on 5 November bringing together multiple stakeholders, which demands that Kony sign the FPA by 30 November. A meeting between Kony, Chissano and Machar, scheduled for 28 November, does not take place.

December – The Juba Process officially ends on 2 December, although the option is left open for Kony to sign the FPA at a future date. A joint military operation by Ugandan, Congolese and Southern Sudanese forces – and supported by the US military – 'Operation Lightning Thunder', is launched on 14 December with air strikes against the LRA's base in Garamba National Park. They fail to have a significant impact on the LRA and Kony escapes. The LRA responds with atrocities against civilians in the DRC and Southern Sudan, including massacres and large-scale abductions.

2009

Operation Lightning Thunder continues sporadically throughout the year, although its name is dropped in March. LRA/M representatives request a universal ceasefire to provide space to clarify issues with the agreements on justice and accountability and disarmament. Riek Machar voices his support for a non-military solution.

Key texts and agreements

Documents relating the Juba peace process 2006-08

ICC cases against LRA commanders: www.icc-cpi.int

The following documents can be found at:
<http://northernuganda.usvpp.gov/downloads.html>
www.beyondjuba.org/peace_agreements.php
www.csopnu.net

Juba talks agenda items

- Agenda Item I. The Cessation of Hostilities – 26 August 2006 (with extensions and addendums)
- Agenda Item II. Agreement of Comprehensive Solutions – 2 May 2007
- Agenda Item III. Agreement on Accountability and Reconciliation – 29 June 2007

- Agenda Item IV. Agreement on a Permanent Ceasefire – 23 February 2008
- Agenda Item V. Agreement on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration – February 2008

The Final Peace Agreement between The Government of the Republic of Uganda and The Lord's Resistance Army/Movement, Juba, Southern Sudan and Implementation Schedule (unsigned by LRA leadership)

Declaration of the Stakeholders' Consultation on the Juba Peace Process, Munyonyo, Kampala – 5 November 2008