

Profiles of the parties to the conflict

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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.



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 Omoja. 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, by-passing 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.