



JUSTICE AND PEACE NEWS

Newsletter of the Justice and Peace Commission of Archdiocese of Gulu - "If you want peace, work for Justice"

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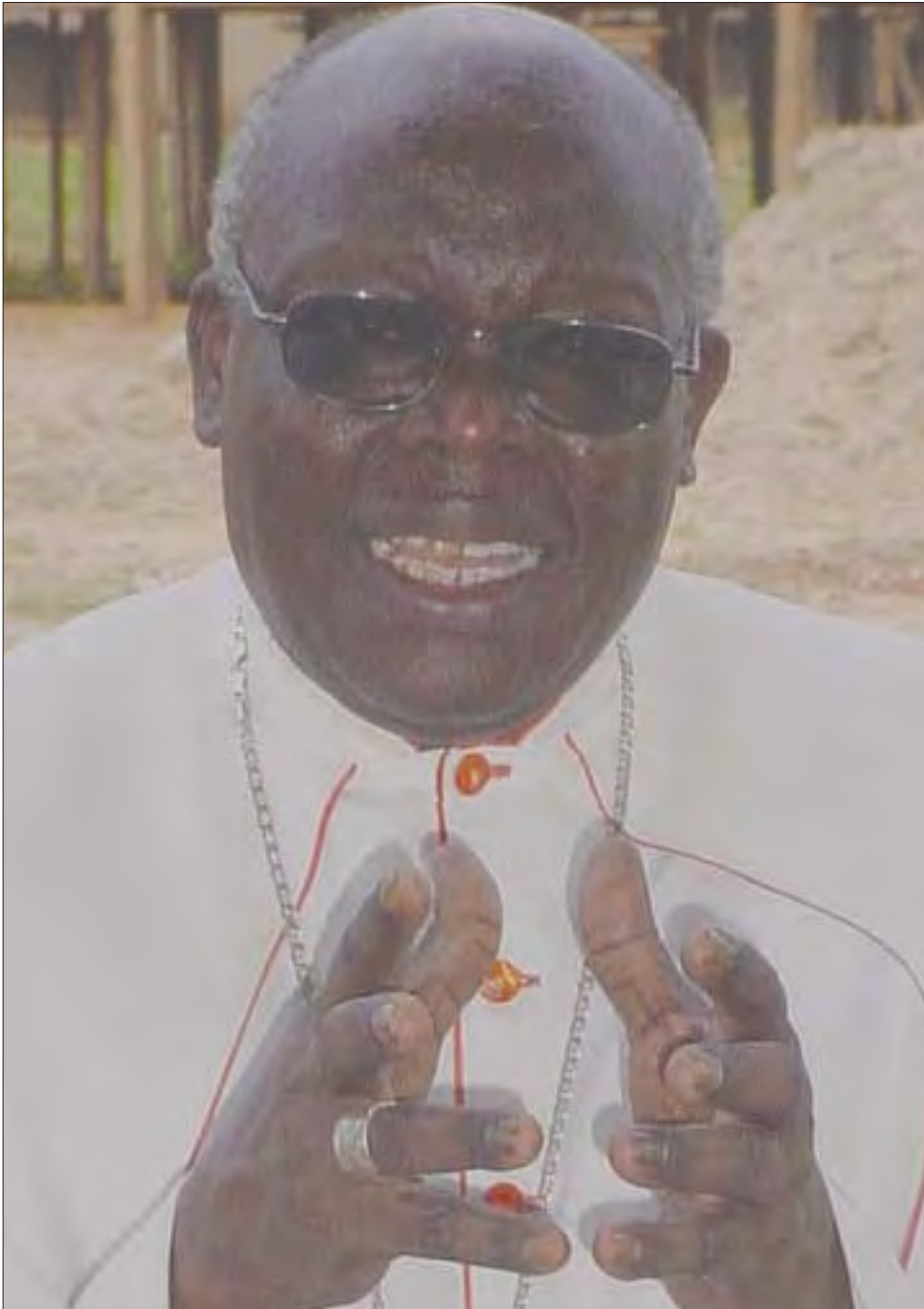
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A child from garden near Coo-peke IDP camp.

The UN's April 2008 humanitarian update for northern Uganda identifies a lack of basic services - particularly safe water, schools and health centers - and livelihood opportunities as a major obstacle for displaced persons trying to return home. The security situation in the north continues to remain stable, though criminal robberies and armed Karamojong activity continue to disrupt returnees. While over 160,000 people have returned fully to their villages of origin since January 2008, nearly one in nine civilians in Acholi (970,000 people) remain displaced, according to UN report.

Give peace a chance - bishops



Archbishop JB Odama: Appealed to people to have hope for peace

The Archbishop of Gulu John Baptist Odama has said peace is God's project and he (God) always wants his children to live in peace, but, people concern delay it for their own interest.

The Archbishop said he will not mention

names of any body with self interest because he has no varified information about them.

"If I have, I will not even announce to the press, I will rather go and talk to them about the danger of their acts," Odama

added.

He was on June 20th briefing the press at Gulu Cathedral about the statement of Catholic bishops of Uganda on the status of Juba Peace Talks between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels.

Giving his own opinion, Odama said ineffective communication between the two parties, mediator, UN representative and the population was responsible for the failure of signing the final peace agreement.

He suggested that communication barrier be addressed, trust and confidence be rebuilt between the two parties as a way for lasting peace.

"Kony should make is mind clearly to the international community, government of Uganda and the public," Odama added.

He encouraged people to have hope for peace. He also advised stake holders to the peace talks to work together to make a positive change. "We all know the effects of the two year's talks: Life is normalising, trade booming between Uganda and Sudan," Odama added.

Turning to the bishops' statement entitled, "Give Peace a Chance," Odama read that they are impressed with the tremendous progress made by both parties in the process, especially the remarkable consensus reached on all the five agenda items which were leading to a comprehensive peace agreement.

On the ground, it has translated for the last two years into relative peace in the north and north-east of Uganda, with people resuming their normal lives after 20 years

Bishops ask gov't for patience

of severe disruption.

He continued that they note with concern the failure by the LRA to sign the final agreement which would have paved the way for implementation of decisions that would have brought an end to the suffering of the people of north and north-eastern Uganda, southern Sudan, and the eastern DRC.

They are also deeply troubled by the latest announcement from the Uganda government, that jointly with the government of DRC, southern Sudan, MONUC, it will resume full military operations against the LRA, currently holed up in Garamba, in DRC. This was reiterated by the President of Uganda during his address to the nation when opening third session of the 8th Parliamentary meeting on June 5th.

He said they are full aware of government's primary responsibility of protecting its citizens from any form of violence, and they appreciate the apparent desire to end once and for all the more than 20 year old war.

However, they are also convinced that given the delicate situation in the Great Lakes Region, a military option cannot at this moment provide the needed solution to this conflict. Instead, it has the potential of triggering a very complex military crisis similar to the one they saw in the DRC in the late 1990's and recently.

They appeal to the government of Uganda to exercise restraint and patience, and give time for every effort to bring the LRA to sign the final peace agreement. The peace delegations on both sides should once more come together to iron out the outstanding issues that seem to be block-

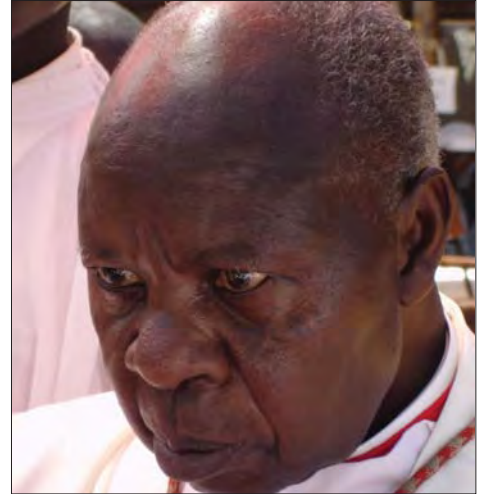
ing the signing of the final peace agreement.

The government of Kenya, Tanzania, DRC and Sudan should together with the United Nations and the African Union provide assurance to the LRA of their commitment to ensuring a successful signing and implementation of the final peace agreement.

He said they are committed to playing their part in ensuring that the different parties to the conflict pursue this important process to the very end. They shall work together with all stake holders in and outside Uganda in offering hope to the anxiety stricken people of northern and north-eastern Uganda, southern Sudan, and eastern DRC.

Odama added that they remind all participants in this conflict that the choices they make now will determine how they will be judged for posterity.

The statement was signed by all the twenty seven bishops in Uganda.



E. Cardinal Wamanala, bishop F. Drandua, bishop M. Luluga and S. Odoki (left) and Franzelli (not in picture).



High rates of stress & depression in north

A survey of adults displaced by war in northern Uganda found high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. It also found out that these individuals were more likely to favor violent means to end the conflict compared to persons without these symptoms, according to a study in last years' August 1 issue of Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), a theme issue on violence and human rights.

Patrick Vinck, Ph.D., of the University of California, Berkeley, and colleagues assessed the level of exposure to war-related violence and the prevalence of PTSD and depression symptoms by surveying 2,585 adults in villages and camps for internally displaced persons in four districts of northern Uganda.

The researchers also examined if these factors are associated with respondents' views as to whether violent or nonviolent means should be pursued to achieve peace in northern Uganda.

War in Uganda has been waged since the late 1980s by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) against the Ugandan government. Numerous people have been killed or abducted and up to about two million people have been displaced in camps, where they live in poverty and despair.

The researchers found that about three-quarters of the respondents (74.3 percent) met PTSD symptom criteria and almost half (44.5 percent) met depression symptom criteria.

Four patterns of exposure to trauma were distinguished: those with low exposure (group 1; 21.4 percent); witnesses to war-related violence (group 2; 17.8 percent); those threatened with death and/or physically injured (group 3; 16.4 percent); and those abducted (group 4; 44.3 percent).

Respondents in groups 3 and 4, who experienced the most traumatic exposures, were more likely to have PTSD and depression symptoms compared with group 1. Respondents who met the PTSD symptom criteria were more likely to identify violence as a means to achieve peace. Respondents who met the depression symptom criteria were less likely to identify nonviolence as a means to achieve peace.

According to the authors, "...local cultures,



One of the victims of the twenty-year-war. There are very many kinds and types of the effects of the northern war on people.

beliefs, and social factors play a role in shaping attitudes and opinions toward peace. Efforts to establish peace and accountability mechanisms must be informed by population-based data that reflect the opinions, attitudes, and needs of all sectors of a society.

Such research should identify how patterns of war-related exposure to violence, psychosocial trauma, and cultural and political factors influence the process of social reconstruction and peace building in the aftermath of mass violence."

Peace budget a right move

Towards the end of the month of April, on Tuesday 22nd to be exact, the Ministry of Internal Affairs asked Parliament to approve Shs. 2 Billion to be included in the Ministry's budget to be used for peace negotiations.

More specifically, it is meant for peace negotiations between the Government and the LRA and ADF.

It was reported that while appearing before the Committee of Parliament on Defence and Internal Affairs, the Junior Minister for Internal Affairs, Mr. Kasaija, stated that the ADF that has been operating mostly in western Uganda, is willing to negotiate with the Government for a peaceful settlement.

He also noted that although negotiations had suddenly broken down between the Government and the LRA, there was hope the negotiations would take off again.

When members of Parliament in the committee expressed doubt whether it is really necessary to have that money included in the budget, the Minister informed them that there is need to prepare. "When we started the negotiations with the LRA in Juba, we had no funds. We would not like this to happen again," he reportedly said.

To ordinary Ugandans this is a clear sign that the government is keeping its doors open for negotiations to end the conflicts that have dogged our country for a long time.

The MPs who are doubtful of the need to prepare for the peace talks should appreciate that at this time in our history, Ugandans are so tired of wars and the resultant destruction.

Whatever it is that can be done to end

our armed conflicts through peaceful means should be explored at whatever costs. Shs. 2 billion is a small fraction of

what would be spent on ammunitions to fight these rebels, who have persisted for several years.



REAGAN OKUMU: One of the MPs from the Acholi sub-region

EDITORIAL

New steps for negotiations needed

Uncertainty over the outcome of the peace process leaves the civilian population in a continued state of deprivation and desperation.

A safe and supported return to homelands, away IDP camps, is necessary for their survival.

Instead of signing the comprehensive peace agreement, the leaders -- Kony and Museveni continue to hurl accusations and threats at each other.

It is, therefore necessary that stakeholders, including people in the Diaspora, pick up the pieces and continue to work for peace.

We should critically assess what led to the current breakdown in the Juba peace talks and identify new steps to successfully move the peace process forward.

Uganda starts PRDP

Southern Sudan Wants UPDF out of its land

July 2008 marks the second year since peace talks began between the LRA and the Ugandan government, a process that despite its failings has brought unprecedented security to northern Uganda. However, the absence of fighting cannot fill the void left by destroyed schools, nor can silent guns be hammered into ploughshares overnight.

Recognizing this, the Ugandan government today officially is to begin implementing the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP), a three-year initiative to help war-affected communities recover from the effects of two decades of war. At the heart of the PRDP are three fundamental goals: helping war survivors return home, rebuild their lives and reconcile broken relationships within their communities and the nation as a whole.

Yet, if the PRDP is to achieve its lofty goals, it must overcome a multitude of challenges, ranging from the threat posed by corruption to concern that it will not address the root causes of the conflict. If it is to make a tangible difference in the lives of war-affected communities, the PRDP will need an infusion of funding and political will from the US and international leaders.

Ensuring our leaders make these investments in Uganda's future speaks to the essence of our mission as ordinary citizens to help build sustainable peace in Uganda in which all its citizens can participate.

To that effect, the Refugee Law Project has released a speech given by its director, Chris Dolan, on the challenges to achieving

peace, recovery and development in northern Uganda. The speech focuses on the PRDP, the Ugandan government's \$606 million recovery initiative for northern Uganda slated to officially begin implementation in July. Dolan maintains the PRDP is currently a "three-legged table" that offers technical solutions for political problems and fails to adequately address the need for national reconciliation and peace building.

He argues, if the PRDP broadens its vision to address these issues it can mend the fourth leg and

"achieve an effective synergy between economic and political recovery."

The speech, given to a gathering of international NGOs, also urges humanitarian groups to avoid using humanitarian principles as shield from engaging with political complexities and local concerns in northern Uganda. It also urges humanitarian institutions to be flexible to local realities and refrain from imposing convenient definitions and categories on their northern Ugandan beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, at the end of June the government of South Sudan reported by the press to have ordered Ugandan troops hunting LRA rebels to leave its territory.

South Sudan's Vice-President Riek Machar reported to have said the decision was intended to avoid past mistakes, saying the UPDF abducted and killed a South Sudanese man during anti-LRA operations this June.

"If there are any forces in Sudan

that are UPDF, these should move back to Ugandan territory," he was reported to have told the South Sudanese assembly.

"If the option to fight the LRA is going to be made, (South Sudan) can handle this on its own."

Uganda, which has had troops pursuing LRA forces in southern Sudan since 2002, said it would keep its soldiers there to stop the rebels returning to northern Uganda and threatening Ugandan security.

Army spokesperson Major Paddy Ankunda said the Government had received no formal communication telling its soldiers to leave, according to the New Vision newspaper.

"We have troops in southern Sudan under an arrangement with the government there, because the threat by LRA rebels still exists," he was reported to have told Reuters.

Uganda's two-decade civil war uprooted two million people in northern Uganda.

At an African Union summit in Egypt yesterday, the top US diplomat for Africa said the LRA's fugitive leader Joseph Kony was re-arming, and said the United Nations should boost its peace-keeping force in Congo to contain or catch him.

Two years of peace talks between Uganda and the LRA broke down in April prompting Uganda, Sudan and Congo to threaten a joint military offensive against the guerrillas.

Jendayi Frazer, the US assistant secretary of state for African affairs, said the talks established a mechanism for reconstructing war-torn northern Uganda and had been positive. However, she said LRA violence against Congolese civilians demanded a response.

"We need to pursue other avenues, particularly since he has increased his attacks against local villages, forcing into service women, children," Frazer was reported to have told reporters on the sidelines of the summit in Sharm el-Sheikh.



PRDP should transform this kind of camp life into a better economically viable community. The civil war uprooted and ruined the way of living of more than two million people for the last two decades. PRDP should enable war-affected communities recover from the effects of war

UN tries to save Juba peace talks



Joaquim Chissano: The UN peace envoy to the conflict in northern Uganda

Former Mozambique president Joaquim Chissano Early this June met Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni in a bid to breath life into a stalled process aimed at ending more than two decades of insurgency.

The peace process stalled in April when Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel supremo Joseph Kony refused to sign a peace deal that had been reached with Uganda government because of outstanding International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrants.

Kony's behaviour cast a pall over peace hopes, prompting Chissano to intervene to save the fitful process.

"President Museveni and his guest reviewed issues pertaining to the peace process between the government of Uganda and the LRA," the presidential press wing said in a statement.

Chissano is the UN peace envoy to the conflict in Uganda, a troubled east African nation that has been battling rebels for more than two decades.

In July 2005, The Hague-based ICC issued warrants accusing commanders, including Kony, of responsibility for the rape and muti-

lation of civilians, forcibly recruiting child soldiers and the massacre of thousands of people.

In April, Kony refused to show up and sign a peace agreement, insisting that ICC warrants be lifted first. But he has hinted at his readiness to face a traditional Ugandan tribunal.

But Ugandan Internal Fairs Minister Ruhakana Rugunda said the June's talks could determine the fate of the peace process that started in July 2006 and was seen as the best chance to restore stability in Uganda.

"This review will determine the next course of action," added Rugunda, who attended the talks.

"Ugandan government remains committed to the peace process despite the problems experienced in the past," he told AFP. Rugunda is the government chief negotiator at the peace process normally held in the South Sudan capital Juba.

Kony took charge in 1988 of a regional rebellion in northern Uganda, two years after the original insurgency started.

The war has killed tens of thousands and displaced over two million people, mainly in northern Uganda, in what humanitarian workers have described as one of the most neglected conflicts.

Meanwhile the semi-autonomous region of South Sudan same week accused the LRA of killing more than 20 people, including soldiers and several children, in the region near the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The region's army spokesman General Peter Parnyang said LRA guerrillas had targeted the villages of Nabanga and Yamba on Wednesday and Thursday.

"They killed six children and 14 soldiers" in Nabanga before also killing a local chief in Yamba, he told AFP.

The LRA fighters are in the jungles of South Sudan and Congo.



Internal Fairs Minister Ruhakana Rugunda, also the government Chief Negotiator

Archdiocese sets Marriage tribunal

Ecclesiastical province of Gulu has introduced a marriage tribunal, the Archbishop revealed on Sunday 22nd June 2008.

John Baptist Odama said this during the celebration in which he ordained three deacons at Gulu Cathedral. Odama said the tribunal would help to handle conflict within the marriage institution.

He informed the Christians that the chief judge is Rev. Fr. Pierino Madra and shall be assisted by Rev. Fr. Olum Peter of Gulu, Rev. Fr. Geoffrey of Lira and Rev. Fr. Emmanuel of Nebbi.

"This team is to help settle dispute and reconcile the parties, bring them back to the sacrament of Holy Eucharist as a way of restoring love with Christ", Odama added.

He therefore appealed to all Christians to come back to the Eucharist as a way of strengthening their faith.

The newly ordained deacons are Willy Obina Felicity of St. Joseph's Cathedral Parish, John Mark Oryem of Namukora Parish and Joseph Jong Opoka of Omiya-anyima Parish.

The ordained deacons were called upon to continuously pray so that they practise their call to serve and lead God's people.

Odama advised the newly ordained deacons: "As ministers of Christ, you are to serve people in love with Christ, be men of good reputation full of good will and charity."

The Justice and Peace Commission of Gulu Archdiocese in collaboration with John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre has already begun family outreach programme.

The programme is in line with the Pope Benedict sixteenth this year's peace theme of "Human family: Community of Peace."

During this year's ecclesiastical Province of Gulu Peace Week held in Nebbi Odama called upon all the leaders; government, religious, cultural and others to ensure that families live in peace, live a healthy life and empowered economically.

Odama highlighted a number of issues regarding the family. Among other things, he



Deacons Willy Obina, Joseph Opoka and John M. Oryme (not in picture).

acknowledged that in a healthy family life, people experience some of the fundamental elements of peace.

He named them as justice and love between brothers and sisters, the role of authority expressed by parents, caring for the weaker members (due to sickness or old age), mutual help in necessities of life, readiness to accept others and, if neces-

sary, to forgive.

"In this respect therefore, the family is the first and indispensable teacher of peace" he said.

Following the directive by Odama, the JPC of Gulu Archdiocese and Pope Paul Centre aim at promoting human integral develop

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Archdiocese sets Marriage tribunal

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ment by contributing to the building of a just, reconciled and peaceful Uganda.

They meet their vision through education on the social teaching of the church, research and documentation on justice and peace issues and through advocacy.

Objectives of the Outreach Programme is to ensure just, reconciled and peaceful families in Uganda, specifically to: reflect on the importance of mutual relationships among family members and remind the couples of their rights and duties as people of one big blessed family.

Also to deepen the love and concern for humanity and the environment and enable the couples appreciate effective communication and dialogue as the best ways for resolving family conflicts.

The entire family outreach programme is focused on giving a two days workshop/training to couples in their respective parishes.

However, due to inadequate capacity, only representatives (TOTs) from the different sub-parishes and out stations are attending.

These representatives are expected to disseminate what they learn to the families they represent. The role of the catechists is considered vital in this respect as they are best information disseminators in the community, hence they are attending the work-

shop. The staff of JP II JPC are helping to conduct the training.

JPC liaise with the parish priests of the

respective parishes to mobilise the participants to be trained in the parishes.



Archbishop JB Odama and bishop Sabino Odoki with three deacons and Christians

Letter to the Editor

We shall begin publishing letters or opinion from the public following request from our readers to have their views published.

The Editor,
has the twenty one-year-war in north changed our culture?

I am not happy with the current lifestyle of our people in the Acholi sub-region.

People are selling almost everything including chicken and their eggs to the Sudanese who flash bundles of money and buy without a bargain.

Booze and relying on handouts has become imprinted in people's mentality. In their word, unless some drastic changes occur, it may take more than 5 years for the current lifestyle to change.

Massive behaviour change education will be required to achieve a reversal of the

status quo. As far as I see it, Our people's lifestyle completely twisted.

Even if People went back home from the Internally Displaced Persons' camps now, the Acholi are in complete cultral, social, economic, name it, disarray.

WAR IS NEVER GOOD NEWS

War is never, never good news for
humanity.

Its children are:

Death,

Destruction: It destroys what it claims to
defend, save

Loss of property, misery,

Madness/Nonsense,

Dehumanization,

Desecration of Human Life,

Fear,

Falsehood, Counter-Accusations,

Broken Relationship,

Self-Defeat of Humanity,

Hatred, Anger, Revenge,

Mistrust,

Trauma, etc.

Those who intend and
Plan to go to War or,
Have started Must know that the Cry
Of the Innocent like
Babies, Children,
Their Mothers, the
Elderly, Indeed
The Majority, will
Reach God.

Those Architects and
Contractors of War
Will have to be Accountable,
First Witnesses
Against Themselves
Infront of God and
Humanity.

Let Reason, Trust, Hope, Courage, and Love
Dialogue Triumph to
Save the Sacred and
Precious Human Lives
In whichever Country.

+ John Baptist Odama
Archbishop of Gulu

Kony wants return to talks

The leader of Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army rebels announced that he wants to return to peace negotiations with the Uganda government.

In an exclusive interview with Radio France International, the first such he has given in more than 20 years, Joseph Kony says he believes negotiation is the only way to end the conflict that has ravaged northern Uganda.

Until recently the peace talks between the LRA and the government of Uganda appeared on the verge of collapse.

The peace talks have been going on in Juba, since 2006, mediated by the semi-autonomous government of Southern Sudan.

Two months ago, the LRA leader twice failed to turned up to sign a final peace accord, and cut off all contacts with mediators. Recently there were clashes between the LRA and Southern Sudanese troops, raising fears that the peace process was over.

On Monday 23rd, Joseph Kony, speaking from the jungle in the north of the Democratic Republic of Congo, told RFI's Billie O'Kadameri that he wants to immediately restart the process.



Chronology of recent events

June 30:
South Sudan urges Ugandan troops hunting LRA rebels in its territory to leave

June 30:
Land disputes in Acholi increasing as displaced persons return home

June 26:
Failed States Index ranks Uganda as a tie for 16th most unstable country in the world

June 26:
UN Secretary-General: LRA allegedly responsible for abductions in three countries

June 26:
Eight members of LRA negotiating team quit, dissatisfied with Kony and Matsanga

June 25:
UN SG reported that LRA "renegades" believed to be responsible for looting, abductions in CAR

June 23:
Kony calls for talks to resume, gov't open to dialogue but insists negotiations complete

June 23:
MPs from war-affected regions urge gov't, LRA to have patience with peace process

June 21:
Chissano is reported to have said regional gov'ts open to peace process, but impatient with LRA atrocities

June 21:
The press has reported that Chief mediator Reik Machar has written letter to LRA leader Kony in effort to restart dialogue

June 19:
EU expressed support for peace process, urges LRA to release abducted persons

June 19:
Human Rights Watch urged UN Security Council to "rein in" LRA, support arrest of indicted leaders

June 18:
US State Dept has issued a press statement supporting peace process, called for protection of civilians from LRA

June 18:
UN reported that nearly one in five Acholi IDPs has returned home, 50% remain in original camps

June 17:
Special Envoy expected to brief UN Security Council on Juba peace process on Friday

June 17:

SPLA reportedly clashed with group of LRA fighters in Nimule, near Uganda border

June 16:
Chief mediator released report, recommending revitalizing peace process

June 16:
Ugandan army said to be preparing, vowing to attack LRA rebels that approach Uganda border

June 10:
Gulu LCV Chairman Mao warned that "War-mongering is ill-advised" until peace process completely exhausted

June 09:
After weekend attack that left 23 people dead, SPLA reported to be committed to "forcing Kony out"

June 08:
UN Special Envoy Chissano returned to Sudan/Uganda to try to salvage peace process

June 06:
Archbishop of Gulu JB Odama urged continued efforts to salvage final peace deal with Kony

June 05:
Rwot Acana of Acholi said Kony hasn't abandoned peace process, "military option should wait"

June 05:
Museveni Yoweri Museveni of Uganda in annual State of the Nation address vowed to "destroy" Joseph Kony if he returned to northern Uganda

June 04:
Govt. of Uganda shifting to regional military approach with UN support to confront LRA rebels. Army and Defense spokesman Major Paddy Ankunda said, "The negotiations are no more, the man (Kony) doesn't know what he wants and we have resolved to go the military way." In a meeting on Monday, security chiefs from across Africa's Great Lakes Region, including the UN Mission in Congo (MONUC), committed to confront Kony.

June 03:
Refugee Law Project: has criticised PRDP as a "three-legged table" without peacebuilding and reconciliation

June 02:
Regional military leaders met in Kampala to discuss regional threat posed by LRA

June 01:
Former UN official's (Jan Egeland) book casts doubt on Museveni's commitment to

peace process

May 25:
Press reported that Joseph Kony informed Ugandan government that he will not sign peace agreement

May 24:
ICC called for Ugandan government to intensify efforts to arrest Joseph Kony

May 24:
Local church officials in DRC reported that LRA rebels occupying village in eastern part of the country

May 22:
US challenged UN for its lack of action for children abducted by LRA rebels

May 21:
Report has indicated high rates of symptoms related to PTSD and depression in northern Uganda. Over half of those surveyed by the study showed signs of PTSD and other two-thirds showed signs of depression. The impact of the twenty-year conflict in the region is clearly seen in the results, as displaced persons linked their symptoms to gender, marital status, distance of displacement, experiencing ill health without medical care, experiencing rape or sexual abuse, experiencing lack of food or water, and experiencing higher rates of trauma exposure.

May 21:
Acholi leaders planned meeting with Kony diaspora advisors to discuss peace process

May 20:
UN has reported that lack of basic services, livelihoods major obstacle to return among northern Uganda IDPs

May 20:
Seven children died, seven others seriously wounded recently when a hidden cluster bomb exploded in Pader district. An unknown number of landmines and other unexploded ordinances (UXOs) remain buried in northern Uganda.

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