

# NUAPP

## Northern Uganda Advocacy Partnership for Peace



'Operation Lightning Thunder' has yet to yield evidence that the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has been disrupted or destroyed as a movement. On the contrary the situation has moved from a stalled peace process to a very hot war, and as is in most conflicts, it is civilians who have paid (and are continuing to pay) the price for the calculated risks taken by leaders in the region.

While acknowledging there is little or no independent reporting it appears that the LRA have been responsible for the vast majority of the violence against civilians, and the security forces have been unable to protect the vulnerable civilian populations. The promise of a quick and surgical military strike and the idea of a military resolution of the conflict, while an attractive one for many, is self-evidently an illusion.

NUAPP calls the attention of the British Government and the international community to the following concerns:

- NUAPP calls for the immediate cessation of violence against civilians. We feel there is no better way to protect the population than an immediate, unilateral ceasefire. A ceasefire is also the only credible way to protect the lives of children and abducted youth with the LRA and allow for the return of those who are caught up in the forests of Garamba.
- NUAPP urges all governments and humanitarian agencies to expedite the speedy delivery of humanitarian support to communities affected by the LRA in Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
- NUAPP supports the position recently taken by CSOPNU in condemning the joint military offensive of the UPDF, SPLA and FARDC. It regards this as counter-productive to the achievement of a sustainable peace in northern Uganda, potentially detrimental to the gains experienced in recent years by the people of northern Uganda as a result of the Juba Peace Process, and as putting at great risk the people of northeast DRC and southwest Sudan.
- Since the start of Operation Lightning Thunder, over 900 people have already been killed, 400 have been abducted and 130,000 displaced by the LRA. NUAPP condemns these attacks, and calls attention to the fact that the pattern of violence since December of military attacks, UPDF claims of imminent success and brutal reprisals by a scattering LRA bears great similarity to previous unsuccessful attempts to destroy the LRA militarily.
- NUAPP urges greater understanding on the part of the international community concerning the current make-up of the LRA. Much of the LRA is comprised of abductees, either from past campaigns in northern Uganda or from recent activity in Sudan and DRC. This calls into question the morality of indiscriminate military offensives and the relevance of the peace process to many of the LRA.
- Despite the collapse of trust, and the peace process, there remains a clear agenda for peace, and a great deal of work needs to be done to achieve it. The Government of Uganda made a number of solemn undertakings in the Final Peace Agreement to address the causes and consequences of this conflict. NUAPP is committed to continued partnership with our civic partner organisations and with the GoU to implement this agreement. Particularly important is to support truth and reconciliation investigations of the crimes of the past; and strengthening the institutions of traditional justice and their interface with the states' judicial system.

NUAPP aims to contribute to a just and peaceful resolution to the violent conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda through supporting processes for sustainable peace, justice and reconciliation, working closely with our civil society partners in Uganda.

- NUAPP urges that the international community does all in its power to ensure that the path to a peaceful solution remains clear. The Juba Peace Process has brought significant gains in terms of addressing the roots of the conflict, dealing with the complex issues of justice and reconciliation and the creation of a more secure environment in northern Uganda, leading to the return of 1.3 million formerly-displaced people. The UNSC is encouraged to continue its support to Joachim Chissano and to explore creative ways of reinvigorating the peace process, with or without the mediation of the Government of Southern Sudan. Essential mediation infrastructure (such as the cessation of hostilities monitoring team) which has been disbanded needs to be reconstituted or replaced. The GoU is encouraged to continue implementing the Juba Agenda Agreements, including its provisions to establish a Special Division of the High Court and to create a comprehensive judicial system, which is intended to deal with the complexities of the ICC indictments and the traditional justice system.
- NUAPP urges that opportunities for amnesty and surrender for LRA forces continue to be maintained. The Amnesty Process has provided a way out of the LRA for 12,500 former soldiers/abductees and must be continued and expanded into Sudan and the DRC.
- NUAPP urges that efforts currently underway within the international community to understand and resolve violent conflict in the Great Lakes places greater emphasis on the LRA. NUAPP commends the recent extension of the mandate of MONUC (UNSCR 1843 and 1856) and the Group of Experts (UNSCR 1857), but urges that MONUC be bolstered to protect civilians in northeast DRC and that the scope of the Group of Experts be extended beyond its current focus on the Kivus and Ituri to the activities of the LRA in Orientale Province.
- We encourage the Government of Uganda to speedily establish the Special Division of the High Court and prepare to try Okot Odhiambo