



ACHOLI RELIGIOUS LEADERS PEACE INITIATIVE

Kitgum Office
Plot 121 Uhuru Drive
P.O. Box 185
Kitgum, Uganda

Pader Office
1st Street
P.O. Box 50
Pader, Uganda

Gulu Office
Plot 16 Olya Road
P.O. Box 104,
Gulu, Uganda
Tel: 256-471-432484
Email: arlpi.interfaith@gmail.com
Website: www.arlpi.org

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

June 15, 2010

RE: Open Letter to President Obama Regarding the “*Lord’s Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009 (S.1067/HR 2478)*”

Dear President Obama,

For over two decades, the people of Northern Uganda have endured horrific violence as a result of a war between the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda (GoU). Despite numerous attempts to bring an end to the conflict, all efforts have failed and to this day the civilian population in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Central African Republic (CAR) continues to suffer from the effects of LRA violence.

Mr. President, we are thankful for your desire for peace and justice in the world. More specifically, we are grateful to you for not ignoring the plight of the people by signing the “*Lord’s Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009 (S.1067/HR 2478)*” into law. The potential of this historic legislation to support efforts to achieve sustainable peace, reconciliation, and meeting humanitarian needs in LRA affected regions cannot be understated and communicates that we are not forgotten.

As you and your administration begin the enormous task to develop a plan to implement the legislation, we strongly urge you to enter into consultations with regional CSO’s, NGO’s as well as grassroots leaders and their communities about the best way forward to bring an end to one of the world’s longest running conflicts.

While many have lost hope in any peaceful resolution to the conflict, the reality is that the peace process which started in 2006 is responsible for the relative calm being experienced in northern Uganda. Sadly after achieving such a significant outcome and ignoring the complexity of the LRA concerns and issues, the government of Uganda lost patience in the process. In a final attempt to end the LRA once and for all, a regional military offensive dubbed “*Operation Lightning Thunder*” was launched in 2008 with U.S. support. Like the numerous past military offensives launched against the LRA, this one also failed to meet its objective.

Military action has time and time again not only failed to end the conflict but caused it to spread into regions once immune to LRA violence resulting in further suffering of civilians. We therefore strongly implore you to prioritize and creatively explore non-violent actions to resolving the conflict. We believe this is the only way to bring a lasting solution that will foster healing and reconciliation in a region of the world that longs for and deserves peace.

Mr. President, we look forward to continued dialogue with you and your administration. May God guide and grant you and your administration wisdom as you discern how to effectively achieve the mandate of the “*Lord’s Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act of 2009 (S.1067/HR 2478)*”.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Baptist Odama". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized script.

Archbishop John Baptist Odama

Chairman Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI)

All Hajji Sheik Musa Khalil (the Kadi Acholi) *Vice chairman ARLPI*

Rt. Rev. Johnson Gakumba (Bishop of Northern Uganda *diocese*)-*Member ARLPI*

Fr. Julius Orach (the Dean of *orthodox*)-*Member ARLPI*

Rt. Rev. Benjamin Ojwang (Bishop of Kitgum Diocese)- *Member ARLPI*

Rt. Rev. Nelson Onono Onweng (The retired Bishop diocese of Northern *Uganda*)-*Member ARLPI*

Rt. Macleod Baker Ochola II (The retired Bishop of Kitgum *diocese*)-*Member ARLPI*

Supporting Organisations Include:

Catholic Archdiocese of Gulu-Gulu, Uganda
Diocese of Kitgum, Church of Uganda-Kitgum, Uganda
Diocese of Northern Uganda, Church of Uganda-Gulu, Uganda
Acholi Khadism (Muslims of Acholi)-Gulu, Uganda
Orthodox Church Acholi-Gulu, Uganda
Justice & Reconciliation Project (JRP)-Gulu, Uganda
Northern Uganda Driver's for Prevention of HIV/AIDS and Accident Programme (NUDPHAAP)-Gulu, Uganda
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, JPIC – USA
St Monica's Tailoring School-Gulu, Uganda
Peace & Development Foundation-Africa (PDF-Africa)-Gulu, Uganda
Concerned Parents Association (CPA)-Lira, Uganda
University of Winnipeg Global College-Winnipeg, Canada
Conciliation Resources (CR)-London, UK/Gulu, Uganda
American Refugee Committee (ARC)-Gulu, Uganda
People's Voice for Peace (PVP)-Uganda
Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA)-Uganda
Kotido Peace Initiative (KOPEIN)-Karamoja, Uganda
John Paul II Peace & Justice Centre,-Kampala, Uganda
Celebration Community Church-Denver, CO, USA
Living With Shalom, Bunroyo-Kitara Diocese-Hoima, Uganda
Justice & Peace Council (JPC GANAL)-Province of Gulu, Uganda
Justice & Peace Commission (JPC)-Gulu Archdiocese, Uganda
Agoro Community Development Association (ACDA)-Kitgum Uganda
St. Bakhita Vocational School-Pader, Uganda
Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)-Kampala, Uganda
Africa Action-Washington, D.C., USA
Riverwood Church Community-Winnipeg, Canada
Beyond Juba Project-Kampala, Uganda
Athletes for Africa (A4A)-Gulu, Uganda
Great Lakes Centre for Conflict Resolution (GLACCR)-Gulu, Uganda
Gulu District NGO Forum-Gulu, Uganda
Voluntary Initiative Support Organization (VISO)-Gulu, Uganda
Hope Limited-Gulu, Uganda
Susan St. Ville, PhD LCSW, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies-Notre Dame, USA
Friends of the Congo-Washington, D.C, USA
uNight: For the Children of Uganda-New York, USA/London, UK/Gulu, Uganda
Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)-Indianapolis, IN, USA
United Church of Christ-Indianapolis, IN, USA
Windle Trust Uganda-Kampala, Uganda
Africa Faith and Justice Network-Washington, D.C., USA
Foreign Policy in Focus-Washington, D.C., USA
Gulu Support the Children Organisation (GUSCO)-Gulu, Uganda
Pabo Save the Orphans Association-Amuru, Uganda
Children of the World Foundation (COW Foundation)- Kitgum, Uganda
IKV Pax Chrsiti-Sudan, DRC, Uganda
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.-Washington, D.C., USA
ChildVoice International-Gulu, Uganda
Kitgum Women Development Association-Kitgum, Uganda
CreatEd-Gulu, Uganda