



The Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative

Situational Report: July, 2011

East African Drought Endangers Millions:

- The United Nations reported on July 5th that parts of Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti are experiencing the worst drought the region has seen in 60 years. Officials report that 10-11 million people desperately need food aid in the region. Civil unrest in much of the region is compounding the problems there and preventing much humanitarian aid from reaching its intended recipients (NEW YORK TIMES).

Kweyelo Trial Begins:

- On July 11th the trial of former LRA commander Thomas Kweyelo began in Gulu. The former operations commander for the LRA faces numerous charges, among these, kidnapping and murder. Kweyelo is the first LRA officer to stand trial since the ICC indicted Joseph Kony and four of his top commanders on crimes against humanity (DAILY MONITOR).

Mao Criticizes Kweyelo Trial:

- It was reported on 25th July that Democratic Party President General Norbert Mao described the trial of former LRA commander Thomas Kwoyelo as “a pre-emptive attack on the truth and reconciliation process of the country.” In addition, Mao stated that he believed the trial is part of the government’s strategy to pre-empt the ICC indictments of Joseph Kony and other high-level LRA leaders. Mao also said that the trial has the potential to restart the debate as to whether or not the ten-year experience of many Northern Ugandans in the IDP camps constitutes an act of genocide (INDEPENDENT).

American Think Tank Identifies 2016 as Year of Transition:

- It was reported on 25th July that The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), an American policy solutions provider, has issued a report that suggests a difficult political transition is approaching in Uganda. Due to the advanced age of

President Yoweri Museveni and what the CSIS identifies as the long-term decline of the ruling National Resistance Movement, the CSIS believes that the current regime might not survive past the 2016 elections (INDEPENDENT).

Resettlement of Acholi IDP's:

- On July 22nd it was reported that 10,900 IDP's still in camps in the Acholi subregion will be returned home by December, 2011. Facilitated by the UNHCR, the move will primarily affect vulnerable IDP populations such as the disabled, elderly, and the terminally ill, many of whom have remained in camps long after their able-bodied neighbors have resettled (NEW VISION).

Amuru District Land Wrangle:

- A dialogue session was held on Friday, July 29th between residents of Apaa in Amuru district and Uganda Wildlife Authority officials over disputed land. Government officials claim that local residents settled illegally on land set aside as a national game reserve. The aggrieved residents counter claim that their settlements are legal and just, as that they have simply returned to their traditional homeland after years of displacement as a result of the LRA conflict. The Minister of Tourism, Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu, pledged that a "win-win" resolution to the dispute would be arrived at within a fortnight (DAILY MONITOR).

UN Declares Famine in Somalia:

- United Nations officials declared a famine in two regions of southern Somalia on July 21st. Owing to a combination of regional drought and denial of food aid by local militants controlling much of the country, nearly half of Somalia's 3.7M citizens are in danger of starvation (NEW VISION).

LRA Related for the month of July:

UN Security Council Issues Press Release on the LRA:

- On July 21st the UN Security Council issued a press release condemning the ongoing attacks by the LRA in the CAR, the DRC, and South Sudan that have led to the displacement of 380,000 people in the region. The council praised the governments of the CAR, the DRC, South Sudan, and Uganda (as well as the AU) for their joint efforts in bringing about an end to the violence. The statement, the first such from the council on the subject of the LRA since 2008, also reiterates former demands that all attacks on civilians by the LRA must be immediately ended and urges all LRA members to surrender and disarm (RELIEF WEB).

UPDF in CAR:

- It was reported at the end of July that UPDF forces pursuing the LRA in the CAR have retreated to bases in the south of the country. The Ugandan forces were requested by CAR president Francois Bozize to withdraw from the field. The shift leaves only a small number of UPDF forces in active pursuit of Kony and his army within the CAR, the DRC, and South Sudan. The rationale behind president Bozize's request remains unclear but some believe the move may be an attempt to increase CAR's role in pursuing the LRA, in a bid to garner greater international assistance (RELIEF WEB).

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