
A CASE FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, PEACE, DEMOCRACY AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOR ALL UGANDANS.

The official presentation of the Lord's Resistance Movement/Army (LRM/A)

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Mr Chairman, My fellow Acholi, Friends and well-wishers, Ladies and gentlemen.

I bring you warm and sincere greetings from the Lord's Resistance Movement/Army. I am very pleased indeed to be here with you today. This is one of the few opportunities we have to talk to you and explain to you who we are. Forget at the moment all that you think you know about LRM/A that you have learnt from President Yoweri Museveni's propaganda and his world wide collaborators including the Western media. I beg you to listen very carefully and be patient with me in case I have to repeat myself for emphasis.

If any one of you have thought that the LRA is just an 'Acholi thing' and is remotely placed some where in northern Uganda, then you are dreaming, naive, or at worst, you are politically ignorant. I am stand before you here as a Ugandan and as a son of Acholi, on behalf of the LRM/A which is one of the many liberation movements in Uganda that have arisen since 1986 to oppose Museveni's forceful occupation of Uganda and the oppression of its people. We are here to speak for ourselves.

2.0 Historical background.

2.1. Museveni's Role:

2.1.1.

It is a well-known fact that Museveni as minister of defence in the Lule/Binaisa's UNLF government recruited personally some 4000 young men and women in the national army (UNLA), including 126 officers who were taken for training to Munduli in Tanzania. The majority of these recruits were Bahima or Rwandese Tutsi refugees from established UNHCR camps in Uganda. They were recruited in an unprecedented conspiracy to eventually subvert future governments of Uganda including neighbouring governments.

2.1.2.

When Museveni lost the 1980 parliamentary elections (his party the UPM won only one seat in Kasese), he called on his friends and relatives including his half-brother Salim Saleh, to start a guerrilla war against the government of Uganda. A fairly large section of the UNLA recruited earlier by Museveni abandoned the main stream national army and joined him with their guns and equipment. They formed the National Resistance Army which started operating from Luwero. Museveni's well planned conspiracy

now began to unfold. The UNLA and the NRA got locked up in battles where thousands of innocent civilians lost their live and properties. This vicious war raged throughout 1981 to 1984.

2.1.3.

Historically, therefore, Museveni stands accused for being the first person in Uganda to introduce the culture of violence as a means of resolving political problems, especially if one is defeated in a competitive election. This was the beginning of the undermining of the constitution and the rule of law by Museveni and it is ironical that Museveni should now threaten that any one who opposes his regime by constitutional means will be killed or charged with treason.

Museveni's main strategy and tactics during the bush war against Obote was to portray the UNLA as northern army belonging to Obote. Ethnic groups from northern Uganda who had large representation in the army were labelled by Museveni as anti people or murders. The aim of Museveni was to cause maximum polarisation between other Ugandans and the people of northern Uganda whom he accused of dominating and oppressing other Ugandans. Deep rooted anti-northern sentiments are still being openly displayed by Museveni and his close associates.

2.1.4.

In our view, the following are the major events that have led to the present impasse in northern Uganda especially in Acholiland:

a) The targeting of the Acholi, by the NRA/Museveni regime under the pretext that they were pursuing 'remnants of the Obote dictatorship' or soldiers of the Okellos was an important factor in sparking off the current war in northern Uganda. Although the coup leaders of the UNLA who mutinied and overthrew the elected government of Obote were from Acholi, i.e. General Bazilio Okello and Major General Tito Okello Lutwa, the overthrow of the UPC government was not an Acholi conspiracy as some malicious people would like to portray. The people of Acholi were not consulted before the coup nor were they involved in any way during the coup process. It is therefore absurd for anyone including the media to refer to Tito's regime an Acholi government. Museveni must admit that he had a hidden agenda against the people of northern Uganda particularly the Acholis that is why he forced a war on them.

b) General Tito Okello having come to power in 1985 invited the NRA/Museveni group to join the ruling Military Council. Tito naively, but in good faith though, went out of his way and accepted to hold peace talks with Museveni under the mediation of the Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi. The Nairobi Peace Agreement was signed between General Tito and Museveni/NRA. Predictably and in complete consistency with his corrupt and dishonest behaviour, Museveni violated the peace accord by overthrowing the Lutwa regime in the most bloody take-over Uganda has ever seen, thereby shattering all hopes of reconciliation and peaceful co-existence.

c) In the pursuit of the defeated UNLA soldiers to northern Uganda by the NRA, many innocent and non-combatants in Jinja, Tororo, Kumi, Soroti, Lira, Gulu and Kitgum lost their lives and properties. Another recurrence of the Luwero triangle soon commenced in northern Uganda.

d) Remnants of the defeated UNLA factions fled from Uganda to Sudan and Zaire. They regrouped under the UPDA, crossed back into and launched a war against the NRA regime. The conflict between the UPDA and the NRA caused untold suffering and loss of lives and properties of civilians in Gulu and Kitgum districts. The Acholi as a people were caught up in a power struggle between the warring parties, thereby forcing them to become victims of circumstances.

e) Many defeated UNLA soldiers were tricked and lured to hand over their guns and surrender to the NRA with false promises of amnesty while in fact there were well coordinated plans to arrest and kill all of them. When the pattern of killings and disappearances became clear, shock waves and fear spread among the soldiers who had no alternative but to save their own skins by running away.

f) What became clear was that President Museveni was always fully informed or aware of the terrible injustice that was being inflicted on our people, but he did practically nothing or very little to stop them. In fact, on many occasions, it appeared as if Museveni was happy about many of the atrocities.

g) The general hostile attitude the NRA/Museveni leadership displayed while dealing with the northerners left no doubt in many minds that as far as Museveni was concerned northerners were indeed a lot of people to be rejected. Our people were repeatedly and publicly insulted and ridiculed. This persistent hatred and persecution of the northerners and other Ugandans who did not agree with the NRA pushed many against the wall and forced them to become sympathetic with the rebel cause as confidence and trust in the NRA quickly evaporated.

h) Many intellectuals from the north and generally those Ugandans perceived by the regime as 'hostile' to their ideology were unjustly retrenched from government jobs or simply blocked or sidelined from participating or having

any meaningful voice in the running of the affairs of our country. Many were abandoned or left to perish in adverse poverty while their counterparts from the "right areas" were busy "eating" and enjoying the fruits of the NRA "conquest".

i) When the UPDA was finally destroyed, the NRA continued with atrocities which they carried out with arrogance and a sense of revenge. The marauding NRA soldiers killed our fathers and mothers, raped our sisters in the open, sodomised our brothers while we looked on. As if these were not enough, our homes were torched and raised to the ground, livestock and produce looted. This has been one of the most miserable periods in our history and many people were greatly terrified.

2.2. *The Role of Previous Governments:*

2.2.1.

In order to understand the real causes of the present rebellion and war in northern Uganda, it is necessary to understand the nature, type and conduct of all the regimes that have ruled Uganda since independence.

From 1962-1966 Uganda was ruled by Kabaka Mutesa and President Milton Obote as executive Prime Minister. None of the three political parties that were in existence i.e. UPC, DP and KY had an outright majority in parliament. UPC and KY formed an alliance in order to take charge of the government. However, in 1966 when the alliance failed and collapsed, Obote overthrew the constitution with the backing of the military and turned Uganda into a one party state. Obote ordered the army to storm the palace of the Kabaka of Buganda during this crisis and in the process many innocent people were killed. The army played a central role in maintaining Obote in power until 1971 when he was thrown out of power by General Idi Amin in a coup d'état.

2.2.2. From 1971 to 1979, Uganda was ruled by one of the world's most brutal military dictatorships under the leadership of Idi Amin. During this period, hundreds of thousands of Ugandans were butchered by the Amin regime. Many people fled into exile. The economy and essential infrastructures in the country were totally destroyed. To date, Uganda has not fully recovered from these destructions.

2.2.3. After the overthrow of Idi Amin in April, 1979 by a conglomeration of Ugandan exiles assisted by the Tanzanian government, Yusuf Lule was appointed President of Uganda. Paul Mwangi was appointed Chairman of the Military Commission while Yoweri Museveni was made Minister of Defence. Within a period of 68 days, Prof. Lule was overthrown in a bloodless coup by the military commission. Museveni used this period to recruit as many Rwandese Tutsis as possible in the Ugandan national army. These Tutsis were later used by Museveni to bring him to power and stabilise his regime before they returned to Rwanda and grabbed power militarily. These are the peo-

ple who are responsible for the horrific genocide the world witnessed in Rwanda in 1994 and the many atrocities still going on in that country and more recently in Zaire.

2.2.4. After the overthrow of Prof. Lule, the military commission appointed Godfrey Binaisa as President of Uganda. He ruled Uganda for a period of about one year before he too was overthrown by the military commission under the chairmanship of Paul Muwanga .

2.2.5. The Military Commission in 1980 conducted a general election which UPC claimed to have won, but many including the D,P and UPM considered the election rigged. Museveni decided to go to the bush to wage war against the UPC government with the aim of removing Obote from power.

2.2.6. From 1980 to 1985 Obote ruled Uganda by relying heavily on the army for support partly because of the war between the government and Museveni's NRA. Hundreds of thousands of innocent Ugandans were killed by government troops as well as the NRA during this period.

2.2.7. In 1985, army mutineers led by Brig. Bazilio Okello overthrew the UPC government and were in turn, as previously mentioned, overthrown by Museveni and his backers.

2.2.8. From 1986 up to date, Museveni has been President of Uganda. His government just like all previous regime has been relying heavily on the military to maintain himself in power. Wars and killings have been the order of the day since Museveni grabbed power in our country. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed so far and Museveni's appetite for killing his opponents appears to be growing by the day and abuses of human rights and dignity continue unabated.

2.2.9.

From the brief history above, there is no dispute over the fact that all successive governments that have ruled Uganda have grossly misused the military to achieve their selfish aims. The army has been misused to suppress, intimidate, torture, eliminate or indiscriminately kill innocent Ugandans. Under Museveni, these crimes are being committed in a highly obscure but skilful manner. It is important to note that in spite of the fact that past armies in Uganda were heavily dominated by people from northern Uganda, northerners were much of victims of irresponsible regimes of the past just like any other ethnic groups that were unjustly treated in our country.

3.0. The emergence of the Lord's Resistance Army.

3.1. The security problems in northern Uganda continued to be harsh against our people and complicated, even after the defeat of the UPDA and the Holy Spirit Movement. Rampant killings and atrocities by the NRA were going on in many parts of Acholiland. The NRA continued to pursue innocent young men right into the heart-land of Acholi.

This was the period when Museveni and top NRA officials used to announce with intense pleasure and uncontrollable excitement how the army was "butchering these illiterate bastards". This was also the time when many of the current NRA (UPDF) officers became "WAR HEROES". They were rewarded with top promotions for butchering hundreds of thousands of Ugandans.

3.2. Those in Acholi who escaped Museveni's NRA killing machine were terrified and took flight to nearby bushes. As they were pursued, hiding where they could, they went for days without food or water to drink. They scavenged for wild fruits and tubers. At first there were several small groups of people who later bunched together and helped each other. Most were Christians and therefore prayed together and shared whatever little they had. They began to capture small amounts of arms from their NRA pursuers and used these to effectively defend themselves. Many people began to join and Joseph Kony emerged as an effective organiser and leader. The primary and paramount objective of Kony and the few survivors was simply to defend and save the lives of the unarmed civilians from NRA aggression. They felt that there were no other viable options left except to fight the NRA to preserve future generations and guarantee their survival. Their action had nothing to do with any attempts to overthrow the NRM/A government by the use of force. Contemptuous statements that the LRA is fighting the NRM regime because they want to "restore their past glory or military dominance" are ridiculous and only intended to generate more isolation and hatred of the Acholi and northerners.

3.3. Kony and the group pressed on with the struggle to defend themselves and were able to stand up to the might of the NRA-Tutsi army. Their resolve, without doubt, helped slow down the NRA 's heinous programme of extermination. The group constantly prayed and thanked god for keeping them alive. In appreciation for the mercy and protection God had shown on them, these survivors gave the name LORD'S RESISTANCE MOVEMENT/ ARMY (LRM/A) to their liberation movement.

3.4. Propaganda by the Museveni regime and the media that the LRA is a group of Christian fundamentalists with bizarre beliefs whose aim is to topple the Museveni regime and replace it with governance based on the Bible's ten commandments are despicable and must be rejected with all the contempt it deserves.

4.0. Aims and objectives of the LRM/A

4.1. Naturally, as the war continued, LRM/A found it necessary to expand their vision and for that matter aims and objectives. They were convinced that to safeguard not only the Acholi or the people of Northern Uganda, all Ugandans had to be protected against the excesses of the NRA, which has de-humanised Ugandans and taken away their basic rights and freedoms. It was necessary to bring about change that would extend nationally. A change that would result in NATIONAL RECONCILIATION,

PEACE, DEMOCRACY and ECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOR ALL UGANDANS so that one group, ethnic or otherwise, is not used against another. Contrary to the lies spread by our detractors therefore the LRM/A have clear reasons why they are fighting the NRM regime. The aims and objectives may be summarised as follows:

- a) To remove dictatorship and stop the oppression of our people.
- b) To fight for the immediate restoration of competitive multi-party democracy in Uganda.
- c) To see and end to gross violation of human rights and dignity of Ugandans.
- d) To ensure the restoration of peace and security in Uganda.
- e) To ensure unity, sovereignty and economic prosperity beneficial to all Ugandans
- f) To bring to an end to the repressive policy of deliberate marginalization groups of people who may not agree with the NRA ideology.

5.0. The current state of the struggle.

5.1. We all know that war is a very bad thing. It must be avoided as much as possible. We know that violence brings great misery and the destruction of property and loss of lives. A society can completely disintegrate and be brought to a state of total desperation because of war. We must, therefore, stop and reject a person or groups of persons who introduce violence as a means of conflict resolution.

5.2. Museveni and the NRA are the ones who introduced into the Uganda society the culture of violence as a means of allegedly solving political problems, and indeed as a means of coming to power and holding onto it even without the people's consent. This is wrong and we totally reject it. The responsibility for the war and the accompanying loss of life rests entirely with Museveni who started the war in a conspiracy against the people of Uganda as far back as 1979. This was when Museveni recruited Rwandese refugees from UNHCR camps in Uganda into the Uganda national army (UNLA) and later ran with them to the bush. He used this mercenary soldiers to attack UNLA government troops in Kabamba on 6th February 1981. This was the beginning of the violence that has spread and continues to date.

5.3. What the LRA has been trying to do for the last 8 years should therefore be clear to everybody. They have been defending themselves against the violence that Museveni began almost 20 years ago against Ugandans. The LRA is a small force but very well organised and highly motivated. Although we are not adequately armed, we have managed to defend ourselves and beat back the NRA at all encounters in the last eight years. The NRA has pursued us in all places with sophisticated armament including helicopter gunships, tanks, armoured personnel carriers, heavy artillery and whole array of deadly weapons no sane government can use against its own citizens, but we have managed to survive.

5.4. The world is aware of the number of deadlines Museveni, Salim Saleh and cabal have given to annihilate us. All of these deadlines have come and gone and we are still here. The world should know that despite all the propaganda to the contrary, we have survived mainly because of the support of our people. We re-iterate that no amount of force or threat is going to divert us from our just cause, which is the liberation of our people from oppression. If we have persevered all the atrocities, poverty, hunger, frustrations, sadness, humiliation, discrimination and all forms of oppression for the last eight years, surely we shall survive and prevail in the months or years to come no matter how painful it will be for us. We are ready for the sacrifice for freedom, peace and prosperity have a price that we are prepared to pay.

5.5. It is no secret that we are also well co-ordinated with other liberation movements in Karamoja, Soroti, Iganga, Mukono, Mpigi, Bushenyi, Hoima, Kisoro, Kasese (ADF) and now Mbarara, as well as the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF). It is the usual NRA lie that the LRA is only a remote and insignificant Acholi affair.

6.0. The humanitarian situation.

6.1. We earlier warned you about the dangers of war. We would now like to turn our attention to the humanitarian situation of the war in Acholiland. As a result of our struggle to defend ourselves against the NRA, miseries and enormous sufferings and hardships associated with war have no doubt befallen our people and the LRM/A acknowledge this, hence the reason why they are keen to see that the conflict is resolved as quickly as possible. However the NRA has a lot to answer for countless incidents of human rights abuse ranging from those they committed in Koch Goma where they herded innocent civilians in huts and burnt them alive, to the suffocation of several people in covered pits at Bucoro. To date, the commissions of inquiries that were promised have never reported their findings about these and many other atrocities committed by the NRA.

6.2. Let it be clearly known that discipline and good behaviour is the number one priority and emphasis of the LRA. Although there might have been instances of in discipline amongst some of our fighters in the past, firm and corrective measures have always been taken to stamp out such acts. In fact the LRA leadership has always restrained its fighters from targeting notorious elements acting as government informers or agents who persistently undermine our struggle and cause death of many civilians as well as our fighters.

6.3. Because our aim is to protect and liberate the people, we encourage support from the people, without whom we would not have survived for the last ten years. It is therefore not the policy of the LRM/A to abduct or, force people to join its ranks. Many people join the ranks of LRM/A for fear of their lives and to avoid harassment by the NRA.

The LRM/A has tried to the best of its ability to investigate and deal with allegations against its fighters who may have acted outside official policy and reportedly taken people against their will or committed atrocities. Disciplinary measures, including even the execution by firing squad of LRA fighters who have grossly abused civilians have taken place in our camps. Currently the LRM/A is engaged in investigating various allegations of abductions and by the time this paper was prepared the outcomes were not yet available.

6.4. One of our other major concern has been around the use of land mines. i.e. anti-personnel and anti-tank mines in fields or major roads. This has been blamed solely on the LRA. While it may be true that the LRA have in the past planted land mines in selected areas to defend themselves against the NRA (UPDF), the government has in its desperate attempt to discredit the LRA and at the same time induce terror among the civilian population planted anti-personnel mines in fields or paths regularly used by civilians. Whenever people get maimed or killed by these mines planted by the government troops the blame is heaped on the LRA by the government and its collaborators. No one has attempted to determine what Museveni has been doing with the land mines which he is busy assembling in the Nakasongola "army factory". The Shariat newspaper of 18th - 24th June 1996 for instance reported the planting of land mines in Arua. According to the report

" The people of Vura county in Arua district laid a trap. They caught two UPDF soldiers with several mines as they were planting them. On interrogation, the soldiers revealed that they had been planting the mines under instruction from their overall commander in West Nile Region, Lt. Col Katagara. Arua people ordered Katagara out of West Nile and since then there has never been any mine again planted in West Nile.."

6.5. The LRM/A have taken great steps in curbing the use of land mines in its operations. Not long ago, senior LRA commanders, as well as field commanders underwent short courses conducted by a well known NGO on the hazards of land mines particularly in conflicts like that in northern Uganda. Extensive materials for this course were provided by a well known NGO and since then the LRM/A has reviewed its policy on the use of land mines and withdrawn all types of mines from the war zones in order to avoid unnecessary civilian casualties now and in the future.

6.6. There has been an unfair blanket labelling of LRA as a brutal group, carrying out mutilations of ears, lips and limbs of alleged government informers. We would like to emphasise here once more that LRA has no official policy of carrying out such atrocious acts. All captured NRA soldiers and informers have either been reformed and integrated into the LRA or released without any such brutality inflicted on them. It therefore raises the question as to the identity of the individuals who may be carrying out such heinous crimes. The Shariat once again gave an insight

into NRA (UPDF) implication in these crimes when it wrote:

"There was the cutting of people's lips, noses, and ears and chopping of legs. This business went on for long and the government kept on dramatising it that Kony rebels were behind it. It was not until after two NRA soldiers were caught red handed slicing people's lips while dressed in rags to appear like rebels, that the business came to an end. From the day those NRA soldiers were caught up to today nobody has again lost a lip or nose or an ear or a leg in northern Uganda."

6.7. Many other incidents have been reported even in the pro government mass media, of NRA (UPDF) soldiers masquerading as LRM/A and committing crimes. Some of such incidents cited include the ambushing of a vehicle at Onyona, 16 km on Gulu-Pakwach road by soldiers later identified as UPDF, which caused the death of one passenger and resulted in the amputation of the legs of two others (The Monitor, 27th -29 May 1996). Also the previous week NRA (UPDF) robbers masquerading and carrying documents on LRM/A headed paper looted Mr Sisto Apire's home in Pece. (The Monitor, 27th -29 May 1996). Again in August 1996 former Gulu LC5 Chairman and CA delegate for Omoro, Mr Onesimo Okwonga Latigo was arrested and held incommunicado by the UPDF. This was reported as an LRM/A abduction until Mr Latigo was released and it emerged that the NRA (UPDF) were the "abductors" (The Monitor, August 28 - 30 1996).

6.8. We assert that it is in the government which is the cause and perpetuator of the insecurity our people are experiencing at home. We are usually shocked and puzzled when we hear government allegations that the LRA are massacring civilians in the villages of northern Uganda. LRA has no programmes or intentions of killing the very people they are supposed to defend and protect. We must not forget the activities of the NRA in Luwero Triangle during Museveni's bush war where they perfected the art of disguise and concealment of atrocities. They would kill innocent civilians while pretending to be Acholi or Langi soldiers of the UNLA. They have continued with the same tactics in northern Uganda.

6.9. The aim for these atrocities by the UPDF and the shifting of the blames for them on the LRA is intended to discredit the LRA and simultaneously frighten and anger the civilian population of northern Uganda with the hope of turning them against LRA. Government also believes that this tactic is the best way of generating massive outrage and universal rejection of the LRA by the international community thereby denying the LRM/A any sympathetic recognition. It is a cheap, dirty and extremely desperate tactic. The trick has now been discovered by the civilian population of northern Uganda. The government must be squarely held responsible for the savage killings of large numbers of unarmed civilians and those responsible for planning and executing such barbaric acts must be brought to books no matter when.

6.10. The world must wake up to the fact that the NRA (UPDF) are carrying out untold deliberate, unjustified arbitrary killings of so called LRA suspects. The People newspaper of August 28th -Sept 4 1996 graphically reported a horrific incident which took place on Friday 16th August 1996 in Gulu Town. In this incident, the 4th Division Commander, Col. James Kazini and his aide Major Sula instigated and supervised the summary execution, by stoning (mob justice), of four LRA suspects. The extra judicial killings of John Otim 27, Bosco Odok 29, George Okello 15, and Samuel Anyer 25 was carried out in cold blood by suspected NRA operatives in civilian clothes and street boys who are used by NRA officers to help them illegally sell helicopter fuel which is commonly used by the local population for lighting lamps.

6.11.

In this case of Col. James Kazini and Major Sula, Museveni has taken over the role of the courts and has decided to "clear" the two commanders of any wrongful doings. Museveni claims that the suspects were grabbed by the mob from these officers and since the army has not been trained to handle and control mob riots, they could therefore do nothing to save these suspects from lynching by mob justice. The army didn't fire a single shot in the air to try and restrain the mob. Amazing way of exonerating criminals by Museveni

6.12. The bottom line is, no one cares or is seriously bothered about what takes place in "that part of the world" across Karuma bridge. Such incidents should serve as a strong indicator of how Museveni's commanders conduct themselves when they are out in the bushes of northern Uganda far away from the eyes of journalists or the international media. Most of the army commanders in northern Uganda including Salim Saleh operate the NRA (UPDF) with such cruelty and arrogance that people have been forced to look at the NRA (UPDF) as an occupational force of mercenaries ruling and controlling a conquered lot of people.

6.13.

The miseries in northern Uganda especially in Acholi are countless. Right now:-

- Thousands of people have been killed by government troops and human skeletons are scattered all over the bushes of Gulu and Kitgum districts. Many more have been secretly buried or their bodies burnt to ashes to destroy any evidence of killings.
- Thousands of orphans, widows, the disabled and the old are constantly displaced by the endless war. They desperately try to stay alive amidst adverse conditions of poverty and diseases that words can not describe.
- Homes, whole villages, dispensaries, health centres, hospitals or anything that might reveal any

signs of civilisation have been systematically razed to the ground by the NRM/A regime. People have been forced to live in squalid makeshift shelters or bushes like wild animals. Even the so-called "protected zones" the UPDF have established in some parts in northern Uganda and herded people into are nothing but concentration camps in disguise designed to provide human shields for the UPDF soldiers against rebel attacks. Women in these camps are routinely raped by the UPDF soldiers.

- Education has been thoroughly disrupted and children of school age have been forced to abandon their studies because there are no schools to go to or teachers have either been killed or fled the region. Northern Uganda is being prepared, moulded and steered to become the land of the illiterates as we approach the 21st century. This region will definitely be the leading source of cheap, unskilled labourers, in fact slaves unless something is done urgently to reverse the trend.
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- Due to inadequate medical facilities, many people are dying of curable diseases. Mortality rate is at its highest level. With the very large numbers of HIV carriers and AIDS victims in the region death and misery are glaringly hanging over the people of northern Uganda.
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- The culture and society in northern Uganda is near total disintegration. Children have grown up in an environment of war and violence. Many have no confidence or respect for their parents or any authority. The war has forced many families to be broken up because men have been forced to flee their homes to avoid the war.
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- Many intellectuals have long fled the region to avoid death in the hands of government troops. This exodus of intellectuals has given the NRM the golden opportunity to impose on the people of the region incompetent, unpopular, opportunistic and toothless sycophants. Elected politicians are deliberately sidelined or ignored making meaningful communication or dialogue between the people of the region and the government very difficult and complicated.
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- Acholi is registering negative population growth. Matters have become worst by the fact that of the entire UPDF forces that have been deployed to "wipe out the rebels" at least 75% of them are Acholi. Government for reasons best known to itself have decided to pitch the Northerners against each other. UPDF deployment of soldiers from other parts of Uganda usually consists largely of offices and personnel who control money and flow of vital information and are never sent to the battle fronts. The bulk of the UPDF

soldiers sent to fight the rebels are people from Eastern and Northern Uganda. Such deployments raises serious suspicion that the government has a secret agenda to ensure that only certain type of people perish in this conflict while the privileged are watching the destruction of “these primitive bastards” from a distance. Some top NRM/UPDF officials are known to be quietly thrilled about what is going on and deep in their dirty hearts, they view the scenario as a blessing in disguise

7.0. Demands of the LRM/A

The following are our demands:

7.1. That Lt. General Yoweri Museveni steps down immediately to allow Uganda to return to civil rule. Museveni has clearly demonstrated that his intransigence and military approach to politics is are major obstacles to Ugandans co-existing peacefully.

7.2. Immediate disbanding of Museveni’s personal army, the NRA and the national army that reflects, at all levels, realistically ethnic diversity, regional balance and talents available throughout Uganda. LRA is totally opposed to a tribal army or one which has its allegiance in an individual, movement or party.

7.3. Cessation of all hostilities immediately in Uganda, particularly in Acholiland so that peace, democracy, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development can be ushered in. We propose the formation of a government of national reconciliation and reconstruction after which free national elections based on multi party democracy and one man one vote must be conducted.

8.0. Conclusion.

8.1. By way of conclusion we would like to reiterate that:

- We reject the rule by force of arms. Any legitimate government must be consented to by the people.

- We reject the arrogance of the NRA regime and strongly condemn the atrocities and insecurities they have deliberately inflicted on innocent Ugandans, thereby destroying their hopes and aspirations.

- We reject corruption in high places which has become so massive and rampant amongst the NRA ruling elite that the majority of Ugandans are becoming poorer by the day while the minority amass unprecedented amounts of wealth at their expense.

- We reject being ruled by lies and deception.

- We reject the use of Uganda territory as a launching pad against neighbouring countries.

- We reject Museveni/NRA use of rampant nepotism and tribalism, and the marginalization of people perceived as being against the NRA ideology.

9.2. Finally, we are happy and appreciative of the concern of many of you here about home. Many of you can survive wherever you are and you did not have to bother about the situation at home. But, you still found time to come for this historic conference. We are aware of the pressures that have been put on some of you here and perhaps to the extent of what you are even suppose to say. We are equally aware of the works of people like Dr Martin Aliko who has been urging the NRA regime to use maximum force to destroy us, and in the process obviously destroy Acholi totally; this being his concept of bringing peace. We also know the ambivalent attitude of Hon. Alfred Ogaba (MP Aruu, Kitgum) and many others. All these do not bother nor deter us from our noble goals.

9.3. We wish to thank the organisers of Kacoke Madit, particularly the volunteers of the London Organising Committee, the Acholi Association and other organisations and individuals for their commendable effort in bringing together the various Acholi communities from home and abroad for this important gathering. Our final message is to all of you is that the task still ahead is big but not impossible to complete. With your co-operation and participation, this will be completed sooner. The door is open to all of you and you are welcome to the struggle.

Thank you very much.

THE LORD BE WITH YOU