

Uganda domestic radio and newspapers, April 12th, 2010 (covering April 5th to April 11th 2010)

By Laura Schülke, MIGS reporter for Uganda

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. April 6, 2010, in English

“Uganda denies buying Russian jets” [Author unknown]

- Uganda has denied international media reports that it has signed a deal for the purchase of six fighter jets from a Russian company.
- Several Russian media houses yesterday reported that state-owned arms exporter Rosoboronexport signed two contracts worth 1.2bn dollars for the delivery of six fighters to Uganda and another 16 to Algeria.
- Russia's state-owned radio, The Voice of Russia, quoting a Moscow military-diplomatic source, said Uganda was planning to sign the agreement and pay for the planes with oil money. "Since Uganda is short of real money to pay for the planes, Russian LUKoil is negotiating its potential participation in developing large oil fields in Uganda, implying a possible swapping," said the radio.
- However, army spokesperson Lt-Col Felix Kulayigye dismissed the reports as untrue. He said they had not entered into an agreement because the cost of the planes was too high.

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. April 6, 2010, in English

“Ugandan LRA rebel commander speaks of Sudan support” [Author unknown]

- The Sudan government is in touch with the Lord's Resistance Army command and has given the rebels fresh supplies of food and medicines, a captured commander has said.
- The LRA political commissar, Okello "Mission", told journalists in Kampala that he was part of the LRA team that trekked to the Darfur region in Sudan where they met officers of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) on 4 October 2009. He said Khartoum solicited for the meeting.
- "The subject of the discussion was to resume the partnership with the government of Sudan," Okello Mission said. He first narrated that the SAF commanders told them they were welcome to Darfur as long as they disarmed.
- When pressed, he said SAF promised to give the LRA a "safe corridor" to central Sudan, as well as food and medicines.
- The Khartoum government has been denying reports that the LRA is in Darfur or that Sudan is still supporting the rebels.
- The Sudanese embassy said that in his recent visits to South Sudan, President Umar al-Bashir made it very clear that Kony will not be given refuge inside the country. He vowed to arrest him if he entered Sudan territory and hand him over to Uganda.
- Army spokesman Felix Kulayigye said Okello confirmed earlier intelligence information that the LRA group met Khartoum officials in Darfur.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 7, 2010, in English

“Ugandan opposition leader faces police investigation” [Author unknown]

- Police are investigating opposition leader, Dr Kizza Besigye, over allegations that he ordered his supporters in Arua District to break the thumbs of rival NRM supporters.
- Dr Besigye, the leader of the FDC [Forum for Democratic Change] opposition party, allegedly told his supporters during a campaign rally in Arua last month to "break the thumbs" of rival NRM supporters should they flash their "thumbs-up" symbol in public. This could incite violence, detectives investigating the matter said
- Some of the people interrogated by the detectives told this newspaper yesterday that they were being forced to give evidence implicating Dr Besigye, while others said they were being asked to testify in court against the FDC leader.
- Besigye’s campaign spokeswoman Sarah Eperu said his comments had been taken out of context. She told Daily Monitor that Dr Besigye only mentioned the "NRM thumbs" when he tried to mock ordinary ruling-party members who are living in poverty like other Ugandans under a "rotten regime" but keep on showing their thumbs and saying "No Change".

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. April 10, 2010, in English

"Armed man attacks Besigye" by Gerald Bareebe

- An armed man dressed in civilian attire on Friday evening attacked opposition FDC leader Kizza Besigye and tore his shirt during a political rally at Madu trading centre, Ggombe Sub-County in Mpigi District [central Uganda]. When supporters tried to take a hold of him, a group of men from the crowd helped him escape. Besigye told the newspaper that they were soldiers in civilian clothes.
- Police spokesperson Judith Nabakooba in a press statement yesterday refuted claims that the persons who confronted the FDC leader were members of the security forces, and that a firearm was recovered from one of the alleged attackers.