

Uganda domestic radio and newspapers, December 13th, 2010 (covering December 6th to December 12th 2010)

By Laura Schülke, MIGS reporter for Uganda

1) State-owned media

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. December 7, 2010, in English

"Congolese attack Ugandans" by Benedict Okethwengu

- Congolese soldiers from Mahagi Port in the DR Congo on Saturday attacked Ugandan fishermen at Dei fishing site in Nebbi district [northwest Uganda].
- The Nebbi district police commander, Alex Wabwire, said the soldiers entered 400 metres into Uganda on Lake Albert, where they confiscated boats, pressure lamps and boat engines. They were arrested after.

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. December 8, 2010, in English

"5,000 still living in IDP camps" by Chris Ocowun

- Over 5,000 people are still living in internally displaced peoples camps in Lamwo and Kitgum Districts [northern Uganda], the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has said. Charles Ssekatawa, the IRC field coordinator, said there were 5,708 people living in eight camps, 738 of whom were extremely vulnerable and in need of food and housing.
- "A total of 319,646 former IDPs, out of 325,354 living in 25 IDP camps in the two districts have since 2008 returned to their homes. Camps that are still operational are Potika 'A' and 'B', Aweno-Olwiyo, Pangira and Ngomoromo and Akilok and Mucwini in Lamwo District and Orom in Kitgum District.
- The IRC deputy director said the organization would support the government's long-term development programs in improving health, reducing gender-based violence and modernizing agriculture. "We shall continue working closely with UNHCR to rebuild the lives of the IDPs," Walden said.

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. December 8, 2010, in English

"NGOs launch elections SMS platform" by Taddeo Bwambale

- Non-Governmental Organizations, under the Citizens Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (Ccedu), have launched a short messaging service platform to receive complaints regarding the ongoing elections.
- The move is intended to promote transparency in the electoral process ahead of next year's general elections. For 100 shillings, members of the public can send a message to 6090 on any network. The messages will then be used to alert the police and electoral officials about people's concerns. The platform is part of a national campaign to help the public, especially the youth, choose their leaders wisely.
- He said the coalition, which brings together about 600 organizations, would traverse the country to sensitize the voters. The messages will also be aired on over 40 radio stations countrywide, social networking sites like Facebook, road shows and on three TV stations. The campaign also aims to increase the voter turn-out from 69.2 per cent during the 2006 elections to 75 per cent and above next year.

Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) Radio Kampala, 0400 GMT. December 12, 2010, in English

- The United Nations Office for Human Rights official based in Kitgum says it is unfair for the government to set guidelines that discriminate against some groups of population. The official was speaking in regards to government requirements that people need to meet before accessing various funds.

2) Privately owned media

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. December 6, 2010, in English

"Government releases new election guidelines" [Author unknown]

- The government has drafted new rules of political engagement ahead of the 2011 general elections, making it mandatory for opposition and independent candidates to recognize the current Electoral Commission.
- The new regulations published on December 3rd prohibit political parties, organizations and independent contestants from using language that may provoke violence, intimidation of members or supporters of any party, organization or candidate. However, the demand that all political players recognize the current EC could be the sticking point, considering that the opposition has spent considerable time trying to unseat it on claims of bias and favoring the ruling party. The move, according to some watchers, could also be aimed at pre-empting UPC leader Olara Otunnu's planned constitutional petition, demanding the disbandment of the Dr Badru Kiggundu-led commission.
- The Supreme Court ruled in 2006 that the current EC was incompetent to preside over the country's general elections. The new rules empower the EC to hear and determine complaints and allow the district returning officers in consultation with the police to stop or allow campaign rallies for security reasons. However, the reasons for stopping a political rally in a given area must be in writing.
- This is a second time in five years the government is attempting to draft a code of conduct for political parties. The 7th parliament rejected the proposal on 28 December 2005 and ordered further consultations.

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

"IPC says the government is training militia" by Richard Wanambwa

- The four-party opposition Inter-Party Cooperation (IPC) coalition yesterday accused the police, the army and other security agencies of helping the ruling party recruit militia ahead of next year's general elections, an allegation the authorities have rejected.
- This accusation comes at a time when the police authority has directed that opposition political parties drop their declared plans to recruit what they call "vote protecting brigades" to forestall anticipated rigging. It also follows a reported ongoing nationwide exercise in which the ruling party is launching similar youth wings.
- According to Ms Margaret Wokuri, director for publicity and communication at the IPC campaign bureau, police has suspiciously combined its Mobile Police Patrol Unit (MPPU) and the Anti Stock Theft Unit (ASTU) to form a Field Force Unit (FFU) and is helping district authorities create Village Crime Fighters - with an eye on next year's election.

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

"East African legislators root for peaceful polls" by Yasiin Mugerwa

- The East African Parliament yesterday urged Uganda to ensure that the 2011 polls are conducted peacefully and asked voters to emulate Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania where elections seemingly passed without violence.

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

"New leaks show US views on Museveni" by Emmanuel Gyezaho

- President Museveni yesterday denied reports that he was scared of an assassination plot by Col Mu'ammarr al-Qadhafi on a day that more leaked cables showed that US diplomats believe the country is going backwards under his rule, despite making significant gains earlier. The US envoy Jerry Lanier also passed an indictment on the prospect of alternative leadership from Uganda's opposition, describing the parties as "fractured, politically immature and greatly outnumbered in parliament".
- The government yesterday moved to dismiss the contents of the leaked cables. In a separate cable, however, US concerns about possible war crimes committed by the UPDF in its fight against rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army with the aid of US supplied intelligence are revealed. Mr Lanier curiously wrote that he had in fact warned Uganda to let the US know in advance when the UPDF intended to commit war crimes using American intelligence.
- In the 16 December memo, Ambassador Lanier reported to Washington that Defense Minister Crispus Kiyonga had verbally assured him that US intelligence was being used "in compliance with Ugandan law and the law of armed conflict."
- But just a day later, Mr. Lanier authored another memo revealing US concerns over alleged human rights abuse, citing the case of an LRA colonel who had been killed eight years ago. He reported that Col Peter Oloya, who had been jailed in Gulu had been shot on the orders of then UPDF northern Uganda intelligence coordinator Col Charles Otema, now a brigadier, on 1 July 2002.

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

"Government arming militias, say MPs" by Mercy Nalugo & Isaac Imaka

- Opposition MPs from Acholi sub-region yesterday said the government is arming people in northern Uganda, creating tension among the civilians who are already traumatized by two decades of civil strife. The allegations were made at a press conference called shortly before the Electoral Commission appealed for calm in an interview with this newspaper.
- A number of MPs said that the Inspector General of Police, Maj-Gen Kale Kayihura, is in northern Uganda recruiting 100 youths from each village to form youth brigades to facilitate cheating in the 2011 polls.
- The legislators' fears also follow reports from residents of Ongako Village in Omoro County who early this week said they are living in constant fear of armed civilians. The residents said gun-wielding civilians, who sometimes don new police uniforms, target their victims in their homes and social places in the night.
- The police said "We are training crime preventers all over the country and there is nothing wrong with that. Everybody is being trained including journalists and professionals." But one of the MPs insisted intelligence operatives and military personnel were arming locals.