

Uganda domestic radio and newspapers, July 19th, 2010 (covering July 19th to July 25th 2010)

By Laura Schülke, MIGS reporter for Uganda

1) State-owned media

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. July 20, 2010, in English "Police to recruit 5,000 immediately" by Steven Candia, Annet Nantongo and Justine Nakitende

- The Uganda Police Force is to recruit over 5,000 officers immediately. The United Nations recommends one policeman to 500 people, but Uganda's ratio is 1:1,200. Deputy police spokesperson Vincent Sekate yesterday said the recruitment drive is to bolster the force to ensure effective policing of the elections due next year.
- Recent elections were marred with incidents of violence. A parliamentary committee compiled cases of election violence, but its report has not been debated.

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. July 21, 2010, in English "Africa lacks resources for Somali mission" by Anne Mugisa, Henry Mukasa and Milton Olupot

- African countries have failed to join Uganda and Burundi forces in the peacekeeping mission in Somalia due to inadequate resources, the African Union Commission vice-president, Erastus Mwencha, has said.
- Mwencha told journalists at the 15th AU summit in Kampala yesterday that accusations of lack of commitment and indecision on sending a full-strength AMISOM peacekeeping force to Somali are false. "If someone gave us resources today, we would send 20,000 troops to Somalia immediately," Mwencha stated.
- "Why isn't the international community committing funds? Maybe they have not felt the pinch yet. It's after piracy that they got interested," he added.
- Mwencha also responded to a question on why some strong African nations like Nigeria and Ghana had reneged on their promise to contribute troops to AMISOM.
- He said the UN, which should also have sent troops to Somalia, has questioned, "what peace is there to keep?" "Peace in Somalia will not only benefit Africa, but the whole world by stopping terrorism. We are not doing ourselves a favor. It is an obligation," Mwencha said.
- Mwencha cautioned that the AU would not allow members to use nuclear energy for reasons other than peaceful means. "We want Africa to be a nuclear-free zone."

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. July 21, 2010, in English "Arrests not targeting Muslims, says Kasaija" by Joyce Namutebi

- Terror arrests are not targeting Muslims but criminals, the internal affairs state minister, Matia Kasaija, has said.
- "I assure the country especially Muslims that the government is not witch-hunting Muslims. We have never done it. We are looking for criminals regardless of religion," Kasaija said yesterday. He was appearing before the parliamentary committee on defense and internal affairs to discuss matters related to the police's budget.
- The minister appealed to the Muslim community in the country to feel comfortable. He, however, warned that those who commit crime, whether believers or not, would be hunted down. He was responding to concerns raised by Hussein Kyanjo, the Justice Forum flag-bearer, about reported arrests of Muslims from Kisenyi and Katwe suburbs in Kampala and in Fort Portal.

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. July 22, 2010, in English
"Otunnu backs Somalia mission" by Moses Mulondo

- Going against the common stand of most opposition politicians, the Uganda People's Congress president, Olara Otunnu, has defended President Yoweri Museveni for sending troops to Somalia, which he said is becoming a breeding ground for terrorism in Africa.
- Addressing journalists yesterday shortly after his return from the USA, Otunnu dismissed politicians calling for the withdrawal of Uganda's troops from Somalia.
- Forum for Democratic Change President Dr Kizza Besigye, Conservative Party leader John Ken Lukyamuzi and several other opposition politicians, have been calling for the withdrawal of the Ugandan forces from Somalia since the recent bomb blasts. Besigye and Otunnu will next month tussle it out in the race for a joint opposition presidential candidate under the Inter-Party Cooperation.

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. July 23, 2010, in English
"4 nations plan Somalia entry" by Mary Karugaba

- Four African countries have sent officers to study the situation in Somalia before deciding on whether to send troops to the peacekeeping mission in the war-ravaged country. The countries are Nigeria, Zambia, Senegal and Ghana.
- The commander of the land forces, Lt-Gen Katumba Wamala, was optimistic that with more troops the situation in Somalia would be brought under control. He informed the MPs that investigations had established that the ADF [Allied Defense Forces rebels], Al-Shabab and Al-Qa'idah had links, given the type of bombs used in the 11 July twin bombings in Kampala and how the attack was executed.

2) Privately owned media

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. July 19, 2010, in English

"Do you know these suicide bombers?" by Tabu Butagira

- Ethiopian intelligence have reportedly alerted Uganda that the mastermind of Kampala's 11 July bomb attacks is still at large within the country as police yesterday tagged the explosions to suicide bombers. A highly placed security source told this newspaper that a Somali national, whose identity is being kept secret so as not to jeopardize investigations, was beamed in the Saturday red notice as the brain behind the attacks which officials say claimed 76 lives.
- President Museveni has declared that the Ugandan military in Somalia under an African Union mandate, will openly confront the self-declared Al-Qa'idah-affiliate once continental leaders, gathering in Kampala for a summit opening today, agree to change Amisom's [African Union mission in Somalia] mandate from peace-keeping to peace enforcement. [...]
- Inspector General of Police Kayihura did not specify if another terrorist attack is imminent but said they would "not to take any chances". It has emerged that Ugandan intelligence picked information a week prior to the 11 July attacks, indicating suspected terrorists had infiltrated the country but were uncertain what method or location they would choose to strike.

- Asked why they did not alert the public, the police chief said: "We had to balance between not disrupting normal life and taking security precaution. But blaming security (organizations) is a red-herring; it's scapegoat as usual."

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. July 23, 2010, in English

"Al-Shabab man arrested on US plane to Uganda" by Tabu Butagira and Andrew Bagala

- A 20 year-old man accused of providing material support to Al-Shabab militant group that claimed responsibility for the 11 July bomb attacks here has been arrested in New York, US authorities announced on July 21st. He was arrested as he tried to board a plane to Uganda on 10 July, a day before the suicide bombers struck in Kampala, killing 76 people.
- Information posted on the Federal Bureau of Investigations website indicates that Zachary Adam Chesser alias Abu Talhah Al-Amrikee, in an affidavit filed in court told federal agents he attempted on two occasions to travel to Somalia to join Al-Shabab as a "foreign fighter".
- About a fortnight ago, an unnamed senior Department of State official, in a background briefing to journalists in Washington D.C., said Al-Shabab was recruiting from American soil and expanding operation bases in East Africa and Arab Peninsula [...]
- Yesterday, the Ugandan police set free some 12 suspects, eight of them Pakistani nationals who had been detained over the 11 July bomb blasts.

Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. July 25, 2010, in English

"President says UPDF will attack al Shabaab" by Al-Mahdi Ssenkibirwa

- President Yoweri Museveni yesterday said Uganda has a right to attack the Al-Shabab terrorists in self-defense. The president said by attacking and bombing civilians in Kampala, Al-Shabab had committed an act of aggression against Uganda: "In the past, we were only guarding the three installations as per the AU Force mandate. These reactionary groups have now committed aggression against our country. We have a right of self-defense. We shall now go for them."
- In view of President Museveni's comments it's not clear whether Uganda will go ahead to attack Al-Shabab whether or not their peacekeeping mandate is changed to peace enforcing in Somalia.