

Uganda domestic radio and newspapers, August 2nd, 2010 (covering July 26th to August 1st 2010)

By Laura Schülke, MIGS reporter for Uganda

1) State-owned media

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. July 26, 2010, in English
"Al-Shabab recruits in hiding - Suspect" [Author unknown]

- The latest information on the terrorist attacks was revealed during the interrogation of Ali Issa Ssenkumba, a Ugandan suspected to belong to the militant group.
- Sources said the 19-year-old did not have any formal education but attended Koranic schools locally known as maddarasa to study Islam. Ssenkumba, who is among over 30 people detained in connection with the attacks, is said to have told investigators that the bombs used in Kampala were assembled in Somalia. Ugandans, Pakistani and Somali nationals are among the detained persons.

2) Privately owned media

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. July 27, 2010, in English

"Watch out for the terrorists' unexploded bombs" by Nicholas Sengoba

- Drawing from the experience of the bombing of the Twin Towers in the USA on 11 September 2001, the world has learnt that a terror attack does not end when the din of the explosives dies down, the debris cleared, and the dead buried. [...] After Uganda's deadly 11 July tragedy, in which about 80 people died, a lot has changed and will change as a direct consequence. Unfortunately, most of this will have a direct infringement on civil liberties. In times like these, fear and anxiety reign. We can never tell when and where the next bomb will go off. Any blanket measure by the state to protect us, however illegitimate and high-handed, is therefore "understandable" and "justifiable".
- The first casualty is the right to assemble. Since terrorists mostly strike in highly-crowded areas, gatherings become contentious. It is only security agencies like the police and the army (which have been accused of being partisan in favor of the ruling NRM) that can effectively guarantee security.
- Secondly, the role of the media may be affected. As is with most terrorist attacks, the quest for maximum publicity and impact dictates that their target is the middle class. Since most of the advertisers and consumers of media products are in this bracket, many enthusiastic editors and media houses will produce to satisfy this lot by being sensitive to their concerns. The logic is that people have died and answers are needed. That will mean that the media, to keep at speed with the aggrieved, may not be too critical of the state during these trying moments.
- Arbitrary arrests, detention without trial in un-official places beyond the mandatory 48 hours will be quietly treated as being "for our own good" and so may pass in the prevailing circumstances.
- Besides, in such emergencies, a lot of what is done illegitimately becomes "classified". One may be accused of acting to compromise national security if they report the anti-terrorism efforts of the state, however blatantly unconstitutional they may be. The fear of closure and banning of media houses for "demoralizing state security" and

"motivating terrorists" by granting them a platform, will determine many editorial decisions in the foreseeable future.

- It is during times like these that the state may indulge in quickly passing laws that "strengthen" national security but weaken the observance of human rights. Laws on phone tapping with the security minister having a greater say on whose communication is tracked constitute one example. Granted, the state carries out these duties with the good intention of protecting its citizens. But terrorism provides a window of opportunity to the government to abuse the fluid situation.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. July 28, 2010, in English

"United Nations blocks change of Amisom mandate" by Risdal Kasasira, Solomon Muyita and Tabu Butagira

- The African Union summit gave in to pressure from the United Nations yesterday and turned down a request to support a changed mandate concerning its peacekeeping mission in war-torn Somalia.
- After three days of deliberations, the AU summit, however, closed with a promise of more troops from more African countries to join Uganda and Burundi, which together currently have their soldiers serving under the African peacekeeping mission in Somalia (Amisom).
- It was also agreed that Amisom, which has until now been hobbled by a mandate which restricts its troops to firing back only when attacked, now enjoy a change in rules of engagement - meaning they are free to carry out pre-emptive strikes against the Al-Shabab radical Islamist militants.
- Separately, Mr. Ping said the summit unanimously rejected the International Criminal Court indictment of Sudanese President Umar al-Bashir for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Darfur region of that country. Arguing that the indictments are an abuse of African sovereignty for a non-African entity to seek the trial of a sitting president from the continent, the summit demanded a 12-month suspension of the ICC arrest warrants against Mr. Al-Bashir. During this time, Mr. Ping said, an African process would review the alleged evidence against the Sudanese president before action is taken.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. July 28, 2010, in English

"80 arrested in anti-Electoral Commission demos" by Gerald Bareebe, Francis Mugerwa, Jansen Asiima, Paul Aruho, David Mafabi, Mudangha Kolyanga, Richard Otim and Felix Warom

- The demonstrations were organized by the National Alliance for Free and Fair Elections (Naffe) and the main opposition party, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC). They were targeted at the African Union delegates, who have been attending the just-ended summit in Munyonyo, seeking to draw their attention to the challenges of democracy in Uganda.
- While the police successfully contained the demonstration in Kampala, activists battled police in at least 12 other towns. The biggest battle between the police and the protesters took place in Rukungiri District, where live bullets, teargas and paper spray were used to disperse angry demonstrators who had displayed pictures denouncing the Eng Kiggundu-led Electoral Commission throughout the town.

- It was the first time the opposition group was mobilizing a nationwide protest against electoral commissioners who were reappointed last year despite widespread complaints about their alleged lack of impartiality and their method of appointment.
- Mr. Ismail Kasule, the district FDC youth mobilizer, was arrested and bundled onto a police truck. Party president Dr Besigye then ordered for the immediate release of Kasule and the police complied. "Do not beat up people who have committed no offence," Dr Besigye told the police. "This is evidence to prove that the country is heading for a traumatic period."

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. July 29, 2010, in English

"Army denies death of ADF commander" by Risdal Kasasira and Charles Mwanguhya

- The Allied Democratic Forces is a rebel group opposed to the Ugandan government. It is based in western Uganda with rear bases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As of 2004, the ADF had been largely destroyed by the Uganda People's Defense Forces. The ADF was formed by puritanical Muslim Ugandans of the Tabliq sect who merged with the remnants of another rebel group, the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda. The main figure of the group was Jamil Mukulu, a former Catholic.
- The ADF claimed yesterday that its overall commander Jamil Mukulu had been seriously injured and his deputy Yusuf Kabanda killed by an unidentified gunman in eastern DR Congo.
- However, the head of the Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence, Brig James Mugira, told Daily Monitor last night that he had spoken to Congolese authorities but they were not aware of the attack.
- A man, who identified himself as Ashraf Lukwago, and who said he is the operations commander for the DR Congo-based rebels, said their top command was attacked in Ruchuru, North Kivu, during a meeting to prepare for peace talks with the Uganda government. Mr. Lukwago said they suspected Uganda People's Defense Forces soldiers knew about the meeting and were behind the attack.
- However, Brig Mugira said Lukwago's claims were probably a hoax by the rebels to get attention from the International Organization for Migrations (IOM). The IOM has been trying to link the ADF and the Amnesty Commission for peace talks and their repatriation to Uganda.
- Defense and Army Spokesman Felix Kulayigye said ADF has been lying about their interest in peace talks. "The aspect of the attack I am not aware [of]. On the issue of peace talks, those people sent us on a wild goose chase. We even dispatched a team late last year and they did not turn up," Lt-Col Kulayigye said.