

Uganda domestic radio and newspapers, May 31st, 2010 (covering May 24th to May 30th 2010)

By Laura Schülke, MIGS reporter for Uganda

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. May 26, 2010, in English
"Obama endorses anti-Kony legislation" by Barbara Among

- US President Barack Obama on Monday [24 May] signed a law aimed at helping Uganda and its neighbors fight Joseph Kony and his Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels.
- According to a White House press statement, Obama called the LRA rebels "an affront to human dignity that must be stopped". "The legislation crystallizes the commitment of the US to help bring an end to the brutality and destruction that have been a hallmark of the LRA across several countries for two decades," he said in a statement.
- The law requires the Obama Administration to develop a comprehensive strategy with regional governments for dealing with the rebels, including steps to protect the civilian population, provide humanitarian assistance, apprehend the LRA leaders and disarm its followers within six months.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. May 26, 2010, in English

"Eleven African states sign mutual defense agreement" by Ismail Musa Ladu

- Foreign Affairs ministers of 11 Great Lakes countries meeting in Kampala last evening signed a new mutual defense agreement to flush out "unfriendly forces within their territories". Uganda, Kenya, Central African Republic, Zambia, Sudan, Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia and DR Congo signed the agreement that is an extension of the one signed about two years ago.
- Though he was reluctant to divulge details of the agreement, Daily Monitor established that the treaty will be binding on all member states to collectively fight insurgencies propagated by what the executive secretary of the Great lake region, Ms Liberata Mulamula, referred to as "negative forces".

Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) Radio Kampala, 0400 GMT. May 27, in English

- President Museveni urges political parties to focus on country's common good including national defense and security, justice, basic freedoms, human rights and flourishing economy.
- Formerly displaced people in Gulu and Amuru districts celebrate closure of the last camps.

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. May 28, 2010, in English
"ADF regrouping in Congo - Brig Mugira" by Hope Mafaranga

- Rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) are regrouping in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, posing a security threat to Uganda, the chief of military intelligence, Brig James Mugira, has said.
- The ADF operated in the Rwenzori region from 1996 to 2001 but some remnants fled to the DR Congo, while the LRA also continue to wreck havoc in the DR Congo, Sudan and Central African Republic despite the joint military operation against the rebels.
- "The cooperation of our Congolese colleagues has enabled us to fight against rebels and I am very sure that even if the LRA and ADF regroup, they will not manage us.

So, Ugandans should rest assured that we will eliminate all rebel groups permanently," he noted.

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

"World court told to pursue sponsors of violence" by Emmanuel Mulondo

- Activists yesterday urged delegates at the International Criminal Court review conference in Kampala to expand the category of actors in conflict so as to cast wide the net against impunity and send more criminals to The Hague.
- Ugandan rebel Joseph Kony and Sudanese President Umar al-Bashir are among the numerous high-ranking people that have been indicted by the court over war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- However, activists urged that "invisible actors" or sponsors of violence should also be targeted for prosecution. The activists said the net should include arms traffickers, those who trade with perpetrators of war crimes to bankroll their activities as well as media practitioners who aid the crimes with propaganda.
- "Often, there are invisible but powerful actors who should be treated like the prime perpetrators. I am looking at people like the arms dealers in Europe and around the group," Mr. Lawrence Duru from the war-ravaged northern Uganda said.
- Other activists cited Sierra Leone where the trade in the "blood diamonds" perpetuated the armed catastrophe.
- Dr. Onaria from Makerere University said the challenge is for states to strengthen their judicial systems to inspire confidence among the victims and citizens in general. He added that citizens feel unsatisfied if states protect people who may have had a hand in crimes against humanity.

The New Vision (state-owned, mass-circulation daily) website. May 29, 2010, in English
"Acholi warn Obama on Kony" by Chris Ocowun

- Acholi religious leaders and a number of NGOs have cautioned American President Barack Obama against fighting Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army. They instead advised him to support non-violent means of settling the conflict, such as negotiating with Kony.
- In a two-page letter that was being circulated for signatures this week, the leaders argued that for two decades military means could not end the conflict. They added that even the mighty Operation Lightning Thunder that was supported by the United States in 2008 could not wipe out the LRA. They also appealed for an opportunity to have dialogue with Obama's government so they can influence the strategy.
- The letter was drafted by the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (ARLPI), which is chaired by Archbishop John Baptist Odama of Gulu Catholic Archdiocese. The religious leaders and other organizations said in their letter that while many have lost hope of any peaceful resolution to the conflict, the reality is that the peace process which started in 2006 is responsible for the relative calm being experienced in northern Uganda.

The Daily Monitor (leading privately-owned newspaper) website. May 30, 2010, in English

"Cabinet's new media strategy leaks" by Chris Obore

- The government has finally acknowledged that the media in the country is mature; therefore, it must be exploited to boost development.

- In a new draft government communications strategy prepared by the Cabinet secretariat, a copy of which Sunday Monitor has obtained, the government also admits that it often reacts slowly to fast moving issues and does not take advantage of platforms as they develop.
- Although the draft policy credits the local media's maturity, the information minister, Ms Kabakumba Masiko, has proposed new media bill that seeks to oblige newspapers to have annual licences and give powers to the government-appointed Media Council to close any newspaper whose publications amount to a danger to national security and economic sabotage among others.
- She added that the media needed to be controlled because it is still in infancy.
- The new strategy suggests that senior government officials need to become accessible to the journalists. The report, prepared in August last year, states that the government was slow to take advantage of the media landscape thus undermining its image and successful implementation of programs.