



## Armed Conflicts Report

### Uganda (1987- first combat deaths)

Update: January 2009

#### Summary

#### Type of Conflict

#### Parties to the Conflict

#### Status of the Fighting

#### Number of Deaths

#### Political Developments

#### Background

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#### Summary:

**2008** Resumed talks between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government were again stifled as LRA leader Joseph Kony continued to demand the removal of ICC warrants as a precondition to signing a Final Peace Agreement. After months of ultimatums, the armies of Uganda, Southern Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo commenced joint operations against the LRA on December 14th. As the LRA fled into the Central African Republic, reports suggest that hundreds were raped (100+), abducted (350+) and killed (400-500) in late 2008 and early 2009, in addition to the estimated 100 people killed by the LRA throughout the first 11 months of 2008. Nonetheless, the LRA has since called for truce and the renewal of peace talks to be mediated by the UN in a neutral setting.

**2007** Significant achievements were made in the peace process during the year by the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Both parties signed the 'Agreement on Comprehensive Solutions', which binds them to find a lasting resolution to the underlying causes of the conflict in Northern Uganda. They also resolved disputes regarding accountability and reconciliation by agreeing to adhere to the alternative, clan-based justice system of Mato Oput. Despite these gains, the peace process has not been concluded because the International Criminal Court has refused to drop the indictments against the leadership of the LRA and LRA leader, Joseph Kony, has refused to sign a final agreement. President Yoweri Museveni issued an ultimatum to the LRA that if it did not fully conclude the peace deal by January 31, 2008, the government would launch a new military offensive against the LRA. Despite many gains, neither side has abandoned the use of violent force to achieve their objectives. Fighting also continued in the Karamoja region between local inhabitants and the army leading to many casualties, including children.

**2006** Halfway through the year, 2006 appeared to be the year of peace in the 20-year civil war that has devastated Uganda and has spilled into neighbouring countries. LRA leader, Joseph Kony appeared in public for the first time in twenty years and peace negotiations were conducted throughout the summer. However, the two parties failed to come to agreement over the terms surrounding a ceasefire, resulting in the boycotting of peace negotiations by the LRA. Despite a renewed non-violence pact in November, the two sides appeared to still be engaged in violent clashes. Reported casualties for the year totalled only 100, but this figure does not include the thousands that have died each month as a result of deplorable conditions within refugee camps. Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni, declared amnesty for the five LRA leaders indicted by the ICC, but individuals such as Joseph Kony continue to adamantly declare their innocence.

**2005** Fighting between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government escalated in northern Uganda, spilling over into the Darfur region of Sudan. The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for senior LRA leaders including Joseph Kony.

**2004** Fighting between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Ugandan People's Defence Forces (UPDF) and LRA abductions of children continued. Following LRA attacks on Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers and Sudanese civilians, the SPLA retaliated. Statements by the Government of Uganda and the LRA on their willingness to hold talks did not yield results. Despite this failure the Government extended an amnesty and rehabilitated LRA fighters were incorporated into the UPDF. Meanwhile, the International Criminal Court (ICC) began investigations into the LRA.

**2003** The Lord's Resistance Army continued a campaign of terror against the population of northern and north-eastern Uganda, raiding villages and killing and abducting hundreds of civilians. Apart from a short-lived ceasefire in March, the government pursued resolution of the conflict through military means, an approach which has thus far served to intensify the conflict.

**2002** After two years of relative peace, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) stepped up attacks against civilians in northern Uganda in response to a massive military offensive launched by the Ugandan government against suspected LRA bases in southern Sudan. By October, over a thousand civilians were reported killed in the fighting. Hundreds more were abducted by the LRA for use as fighters, slaves or concubines.

**2001** Hundreds of civilians, rebels and soldiers were reported killed in continued fighting throughout the year. In April the army captured the headquarters of a rebel commander and in August 5,000 rebels asked to return home peacefully. Also in April, the Ugandan president announced the withdrawal of Ugandan troops from the DRC.

**2000** Fighting between government forces and rebel groups, rebel attacks on civilians, and tribal warfare continued to grip Uganda. As of September, more than 150 people were killed by the fighting, down from the estimated 1,000 deaths in the previous year.

**1999** The population in the north, west, and southwest bore the brunt of Uganda's conflict as rebel attacks on civilians, fighting between government forces and rebel groups, and tribal feuding continued in 1999. At least 1,000 people were killed, a figure similar to 1998 estimated deaths. More than 350,000 people remained displaced by the fighting.

**1998** The conflict between rebel groups and government troops continued in the north and the west of the country in 1998, as did a rebel campaign of terrorism focused on civilians.

### **Type of Conflict:**

State control

### **Parties to the Conflict:**

- 1) Government of the National Resistance Movement:  
- Led by President Yoweri Museveni, and the government's Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF).
- 2) -allied with local defence units, numbering approximately 15,000 fighters, which are armed and trained by the government to fight the rebels. (*Military Balance 2003/2004*)

"The Ugandan government has said that its technique of arming militia groups in the eastern Teso region is succeeding in weakening the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group." [*IRIN*, September 8, 2003]

### **versus**

- 3) Rebel groups:  
The principal group is the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) which is actively known for its recruitment and abuse of child soldiers. The LRA is led by Joseph Kony and in recent years has been reduced in size from several thousand to a few hundred members. On October 6, 2005, the International Criminal Court announced that arrest warrants had been issued for five members of the LRA for crimes against humanity. Kony, as well as the LRA's deputy commander Vincent Otti and LRA commanders Raska Lukwiya, Okot Odiambo and Dominic Ongwen were issued the warrants following a sealed indictment. The West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), active against the government in the past, have been less active recently.

However, in June 2005 the Ugandan government stated that the ADF was regrouping and rearming in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. In late 2006, Karamoja warriors in the north-eastern region of the country clashed with government forces when the Ugandan army attempted to implement a forced disarmament programme.

“Our research shows that Kony and his henchmen abducted as many as 38 000 children and 37 000 adults into his rebel army over the past eleven years... These conscripted civilians were forced to commit horrible crimes, including mutilation and killing of fellow villagers and even family members”. Eric Stover, Faculty Director of University of California’s Berkeley Human Rights Centre. [*AllAfrica.com*, June 2007]

“Tribal warriors in Uganda’s restive northeast region, who are resisting government disarmament attempts, have become an increasingly unified force with deadly results. Long accused of banditry and cattle rustling, warriors in the country’s lawless Karamoja region have now organized to carry out bloody attacks against the country’s military, sparking fears of war in the region, a senior official said.” [*Agence France Presse*, November 08, 2006]

### Status of the Fighting:

**2008** The LRA conducted periodic raids on villages and military bases in the Central African Republic and Southern Sudan throughout the first 10-11 months of the year. UN mediators set a November 30th deadline for the signing of the Final Peace Agreement. When it was not met, forces from Uganda, the DRC and Southern Sudan commenced “Operation Thunder Lightning” against LRA rebels in the DRC’s Orientale Province. The military operations began on December 14th, and had UN support, as well as US technical assistance. The rebels retreated towards the Central African Republic, killing hundreds and vowing further retaliation. The rape of women and abduction of children continued to be infamous features of the LRA’s activity. Even before the renewed conflict in December, the LRA were believed to have abducted upwards of 350 people, including 100 children. Since the renewed offensive against the LRA, at least 100 incidents of rape have been reported. In the face of this violence, tens of thousands of civilians, some 30,000 by one estimate, have fled from Faradje and other villages in north eastern DRC.

**2007** Hostilities continued in the Karamoja region and resulted in the deaths of civilians, government soldiers and a UN worker. The fighting mainly occurred during operations conducted by the army aimed at capturing suspected cattle rustlers and during continuing disarmament operations in the area. The UN World Food Program [WFP] was forced to suspend operations following the ambush of a convoy of trucks that resulted in the murder of the driver. Peace talks between the government and the LRA were jeopardized in April when the military accused the LRA of executing an ambush in Uganda that resulted in the violent death of seven civilians despite denial by the LRA that it had any involvement in the attacks. Steady diplomatic gains and improvements in the relationship between the government and the LRA continued throughout the year, however neither party has abandoned the use of violent force to meet political goals and objectives. The government was heavily condemned by international actors for the propagation of human rights abuses, specifically involving the indiscriminate killing of children in the Karamoja region. Both the government of Sudan, as well as the Democratic Republic of the Congo declared that LRA soldiers taking refuge in their country were no longer welcome and that armed action would be taken to remove them if they did not leave voluntarily. The LRA refused to return to Uganda until the ICC indictments against its members are lifted.

“WFP condemns this vicious attack on a clearly marked WFP humanitarian convoy in the strongest terms and demands that the killers be pursued and brought to justice... WFP has no choice but to temporarily suspend our activities in Karamoja until security is improved”. Tesema Negash, WFP Country Director [*IRIN*, July 16, 2007]

“I call on the government of Uganda to respect its obligations to protect the human rights of all individuals under its jurisdiction at all times...[the country] must take all necessary measures, including reviewing the ongoing disarmament process, to prevent further human rights violations in Karamoja” Louise Arbour, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [*UN News Service*, April 19, 2007].

"We cannot go back to Uganda without lifting these indictments. That is impossible. We cannot go, and without our going none of the other soldiers can go. But we can fight... If they [the ICC prosecutors] refuse, then the war will continue. I am prepared to do anything – even war. I am ready for war. If they don't stop the indictments you will see that we have enough to capture power. We were seven [people when the LRA was formed in 1986]. Now we are thousands. Everybody in Uganda wants change but they can't do anything without the barrel of a gun". Vincent Otti, LRA Deputy leader [*Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, May 24, 2007]

**2006** Fighting between government forces and the LRA was somewhat subdued throughout 2006 with skirmishes limited to the north-eastern Karamoja area of the country as well as along the DRC border. Clashes were limited as the LRA and the Ugandan army attempted on numerous occasions to reach a peace settlement. Talks were held in the southern Sudanese town of Juba, however controversy surrounding the conditions for a ceasefire as well as the prosecution of top LRA commanders by the ICC effectively stalled negotiations. In a separate conflict, the Ugandan military clashed with tribal warriors in the country's restive northeast region over a forced disarmament campaign.

"Ugandan rebels hidden in Congo will not surrender unless the ICC drops arrest warrants for them, the deputy commander of the LRA said. Vincent Otti, one of five LRA leaders named last year by the world court in its first indictments, said its fighters would stay in the bush as long as the warrants were active." [*Reuters*, September 06, 2006]

"The top UN humanitarian affairs official says there has been dramatic improvement in northern Uganda since the start of peace talks to end nearly 20 years of devastating civil war." [*VOA News Online*, October 30, 2006]

**2005** The Ugandan military clashed repeatedly with the LRA in northern Uganda and Darfur as fighting spilled over into neighbouring Sudan. The Sudanese government also clashed with the LRA in Darfur while the LRA continued bloody attacks on villages and refugee camps in both northern Uganda and Darfur. LRA rebels were also reported to be active in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

"Sudanese government forces have recently attacked the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) - a Ugandan rebel group - in Mangala, south Sudan, Maj Shaban Bantariza, a Ugandan army spokesman, told IRIN on Monday. 'Early last week, Sudanese government forces attacked [LRA leader Joseph] Kony and his men in Mangala,' Bantariza said. 'We are still awaiting further information about fatalities.'" [*IRINnews.org*, April 12, 2005]

"Northern Uganda's conflict has witnessed an escalation in violence over the past few weeks, government officials have said. 'Rebels have stepped up their attacks, especially on women,' Maj Shaban Bantariza, an army spokesman, told IRIN on Thursday. 'The situation has worsened in the past three weeks,' Walter Ochola, council chairman for the northern district of Gulu, told US ambassador to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, Tony Hall, when he visited the area on Monday." [*IRINnews.org*, March 25, 2005]

**2004** Fighting escalated at the beginning of the year when an LRA attack in February resulted in the killing of over 200 people in a camp for internally displaced persons. The Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) launched a retaliatory offensive against the LRA following attacks on Sudanese civilians and SPLA soldiers. Some LRA fighters defected under the amnesty agreement and were integrated into the UPDF. Although the UPDF captured a few high ranking LRA officers and President Museveni declared that the war was virtually won, fighting and abductions continued.

"There had been relative calm in most of the northern region, except for some isolated attacks by the LRA. The calmness prompted Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni, to declare last week that the LRA war had virtually been won and that the army was going to concentrate on disarming lawless 'warriors' in northeastern Karamoja region." [*IRIN*, September 29, 2004]

"On three occasions this week, the Ugandan army has fought battles with LRA groups that reportedly crossed over from Sudan on Monday. The groups were reportedly led by LRA leader, Joseph Kony." [*IRIN*, October 1, 2004]

**2003** The Lord's Resistance Army continued a campaign of raiding villages beyond the reach of the UPDF's protection, killing and abducting thousands of civilians. During the year the attacks shifted eastward from the central region of northern Uganda into the north-eastern districts of Lira, Kaberamaido, Katakwi and Soroti. Although the government intensified military efforts against the LRA, resulting in hundreds of rebel and civilian deaths, the frequency and devastation of the latter's attacks increased. The LRA's use of child soldiers also continued unabated.

"The LRA, which has historically fought in northern Uganda, decided three months ago to expand its areas of operation to include three northeastern districts: Kaberamaido, Katakwi and Soroti." [Agence France Presse, September 28, 2003]

"The Ugandan army said Sunday that rebels from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) had killed more than a dozen child captives in a village in northern Uganda's Lira district over the weekend." [Agence France Presse, August 17, 2003]

"Rebels waging a 16-year insurgency attacked two villages and abducted more than 180 people in northern Uganda, a government official said Thursday." [Associated Press, April 24, 2003]

**2002** In March, the Ugandan army launched a counter-insurgency offensive against the LRA. However, rather than wiping out the rebels, 'Operation Iron Fist' prompted an increase in the frequency and brutality of rebel attacks across northern Uganda.

"The rebels have carried out a terror campaign against the population of northern Uganda, killing and abducting people, especially young boys and girls, and forcing them to become rebel fighters or concubines." [Associated Press, July 11, 2002]

"The highly mobile rebels have been carrying out frequent attacks right across the north of the country in recent weeks, prompting criticism that the Uganda army is incapable of defending the civilian population." [BBC News, July 15, 2002]

**2001** In April the Ugandan army captured the general headquarters of a commander of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). Cattle raiding in the northeast killed some 20 people in September. More positively, in August over 5,000 rebels appealed to the Ugandan Amnesty Commission to return home peacefully.

"Over 5,000 current and former rebels have appealed to the Ugandan Amnesty Commission to be allowed to return home peacefully to their homes. 'We expect 2,000 from Kenya. They have written to us to have them cleared for their return,' senior Commissions officer Hajji Ganyana Miiri was quoted as saying." [IRIN, August 22, 2001]

"The Ugandan army said on 15 September that it had deployed a battalion of (720) soldiers in the northeast of the country to counter Karamojong cattle raiding and civil unrest in which over 20 people have been killed." [IRIN, September 17, 2001]

**2000** Clashes between government forces and the rebel LRA in the north, and the ADF in the west continued during the year, despite a "clean up" government military operation against the latter. The rebel groups continued attacks on civilians in camps for displaced people. Tribal fighting, linked to cattle-rustling, persisted in the Karamoja area in north-eastern Uganda.

"President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda has promised to improve security in the west of the country following a series of attacks by anti-government forces in recent months ... He visited the western district of Hoima, which has seen an upsurge of activity by rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) ... Military spokesman Maj. Phineas Katirimi said in Kampala that the army had launched a 'clean up exercise' against the rebels 'so that Ugandans can have peace.' The military operation will be extended to northerner Uganda, the location of a 14-year old rebellion led by Lords Resistance Army chief Joseph Kony, he said." [BBC News, September 9, 2000]

**1999** Rebel attacks on civilians, fighting between government forces and rebel forces, and tribal feuding continued in 1999. The ADF was responsible for most attacks against civilians, targeting trading centres and

private homes, although the LRA and Rwandan Hutu rebels also targeted civilians. In September 1999, local tribes around the town of Moroto engaged in fierce fighting, ignited by cattle-rustling and revenge.

"In the west and southwest, the ADF continued to attack civilian targets, trading centers, and private homes, resulting in hundreds of deaths and abductions. The ADF killed at least 350 persons and abducted an estimated 200 children, half of whom remain missing. ... In the north, forces of the LRA, led by Joseph Kony, continued to attack civilian targets, as well as some refugee camps. After a year of few major attacks, the LRA began a series of assaults on civilian targets in late December. ... The LRA continued to abduct children and, at clandestine bases, terrorized them into virtual slavery as guards, concubines, and soldiers .... In addition to being beaten, raped, and forced to march until exhausted, abducted children were forced to participate in the killing of other children who attempted to escape. UNICEF estimated the number of abducted children still held captive by the LRA at almost 5,000; other estimates vary widely."  
 [1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Uganda, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, February 25, 2000]

**1998** Fighting continued to be steady in both the west and the north, with major insurgencies in both regions, including a particularly macabre massacre in June which saw 80 students at a technical training college burned to death when, out of fear of abduction, they refused to leave their dormitories upon order by the Allied Democratic Forces.

### Number of Deaths:

**Total:** Hundreds of thousands of people, possibly as many as 500,000, have been killed in the course of the conflict. In addition, 20,000 children have been abducted by the rebels and approximately 2 million people have been displaced by the conflict.

"Everybody has lost a brother, mother or husband. Everybody has lost cattle, and the community has lost investment because of the insecurity". Simon Lemuin, local councillor in North-eastern Uganda [Mail & Guardian, February 14, 2007]

"The agency [Oxfam] said half a million people had been killed in the war, while attempts to resolve the conflict peacefully had faltered over the last few months, with the two sides instead returning to military action." [IRINnews.org, May 10, 2005]

**2008: Information from a number of sources suggests that at least 500-600 have been killed due to the conflict in 2008 and the first weeks of 2009. About 100 deaths resulted from attacks carried out against villages and army bases in Southern Sudan and Central African Republic (CAR) in the first 10-11 months of the year. The LRA are believed to be responsible for these attacks, although reports suggested that the Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF) may have been responsible for the deaths of 20 Sudanese soldiers in June. The other 400-500 deaths resulted from LRA massacres in villages of the CAR in December 2008 and early January 2009, as they fled military operations against them.**

**2007** Information from several reports suggest that more than 100 deaths occurred due to violence during the year. Most of the casualties resulted from fighting between the army and Karamojong warriors in North-eastern Uganda during clashes over cattle theft and the attempted disarmament of the region by the army. As many as 66 children were killed during the fighting, some shot by soldiers, run over by armoured vehicles or crushed by stampeding animals. A UN hired truck driver was also killed during an ambush of a World Food Programme convoy. The ambush and murder of seven Ugandan civilians threatened the peace process following accusations by the government that the LRA had committed the assassinations, however the LRA denied any involvement in the killings.

[Sources: UN News Service, April 19, 2007; Institute for War and Peace Reporting, June 5, 2007; BBC News, April 2, 2007; Mail & Guardian, February 14, 2007]

**2006** Only 100 combat casualties were reported throughout 2006, however not included are the 3500 people, half of which are children under five, who die each month as a result of conditions in Uganda's northern refugee camps.

"The Acholi live in squalid camps where 1 000 people die each week, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). A separate report by 50 charities in northern Uganda said 41 percent of the dead are children under five. The violent death rate is estimated to be three times higher than in Iraq and the study says that the war is costing Uganda \$85 M US a year. All this puts the region in the UN emergency category." [*The Observer*, April 02, 2006]

"Each month more than 3500 people die from easily preventable diseases, extreme violence and torture. Hundreds of children are abducted and abused, or killed in battle. Nearly two million people are forced to live in squalid and life-threatening conditions, dependent upon relief and denied access to incomes and education. Millions of dollars are squandered in wasted productivity and in the pursuit of a 'military' solution." [*Africa Focus Bulletin*, April 20, 2006]

"It was surprising how little we heard about the 20 000 kidnapped children and the nearly two million displaced people," [UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egland] said. "Mortality was higher last year in Uganda than it was in Darfur on average." [*VOA News Online*, October 30, 2006]

**2005** Although exact numbers remain difficult to determine it was reported that over 4,000 people were killed by conflict violence in the first seven months of this year. Tens of thousands more died due to conditions arising from the conflict -- disease, starvation and a lack of basic necessities throughout northern Uganda.

"Violence was the cause of 4,000 civilian deaths during the first seven months of 2005, with an average of 20 violent deaths every day...an estimated 1, 168 people were abducted by the LRA during that period – an average of 42 per week." [*Reuters*, November 9, 2005]

"Olara Otunnu, a northern Ugandan and the former U.N. envoy for children in war zones, characterized the battle against the LRA as a pretext to subjugate people in the north by herding them into 135 camps and stealing their livestock. He said that the situation 'should be deemed as genocide' with 1,000 people dying each week. Secretary-General Kofi Annan should lead a campaign to stop it as well as the brutalities of the LRA, Otunnu said." [Evelyn Leopold, *Reuters*, October 19, 2005]

"A total excess mortality of 25, 694 (of which 10 054 children under 5) can be projected for the entire Acholi region between January and July 2005, namely almost 1000 excess deaths per week...We estimate that 3971 persons were killed in the study population between January and July 2005." [Ministry of Health, Republic of Uganda, International Rescue Committee, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, UNFPA. *Health and mortality survey among internally displaced persons in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts, northern Uganda*, July 2005]

"At least 60 percent of women in the largest camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in war-torn northern Uganda have encountered some form of sexual and domestic violence, a new survey has revealed. The report, titled 'Suffering in Silence', was based on the findings of a joint government and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) nine-month study in Pabbo camp in Gulu District, about 380 km north of Uganda's capital, Kampala." [*IRINnews.org*, June 17, 2005]

**2004** At least 845 people were reported killed; this includes at least 482 civilians and 363 combatants.

**2003** The US State Department reported over 3,000 deaths in the conflict in 2003, the vast majority being civilians and LRA fighters. In addition, the Lord's Resistance Army continued its abduction of thousands of children.

"There were credible reports that some of these militias received arms and other support from the UPDF. Militia fighting resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians from the DRC. ... During the year, LRA attacks resulted in the deaths of approximately 3,000 persons, including children; numerous injuries; and the destruction of homes and property. For example, on August 23, LRA rebels killed 50 civilians and burned down a primary school in Akeriau village in Katakwi District." [*Uganda: Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2003*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US State Department, February 25, 2004]

**2002** Unconfirmed media sources report that over 1,000 people were killed. Most were civilians targeted by the LRA, although the Ugandan government claimed to have killed hundreds of rebel fighters.

"Ugandan rebels killed hundreds of people in southern Sudan as they retreated from the advancing Ugandan army ... The rebels retreated to the surrounding mountains where they burned six villages, killing at least 470 people ..." [ *The Toronto Star*, May 12, 2002]

"The Ugandan army has claimed a significant success against the rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda. At least thirty rebels were killed in two separate attacks over the week-end, according to an army spokesman." [ *BBC News*, July 15, 2002]

**2001** Hundred of civilians, soldiers and rebels were reported killed by October.

**2000** By September, more than 150 people were killed as a result of fighting.

"Army officials in Uganda say at least 95 herders have died in inter-communal fighting over the weekend in north-eastern Uganda. Army spokesman Major Phinehas Katirimi said the herders were two rival groups within the Karamojong tribes in Kotido district ... This is the second reported attack in a month in Karamoja where armed herders frequently mount attacks to seize livestock from rival tribes." [ *BBC News*, July 26, 2000]

**1999** At least 1,000 people, mostly civilians, were killed in 1999.

"Some 400 people were killed in tribal fighting in the north east of Uganda on 11 September. Most were members of the Mathenniko tribe, and were killed by warriors of the Bokora tribe. The raid was apparently in retaliation for a Mathenniko attack about a month ago on Bokora villages, in which 140 people were killed." [ *Jane's Defence Weekly*, September 29, 1999]

"Monitor Correspondent Sylvester Onyang investigated the September 9 killing of over 500 Karimojong by UPDF and recounts a tale of cattle-rustling, revenge, modern war-lordism and superstition in Uganda's most backward region. Almost everyone in the villages around Moroto town has red paste on their heads and faces. This traditional sign of mourning in Karamoja began two days after the September 9 mid-day massacre of over 500 Karimojong when the UPDF attacked and shelled Kalosarich." [ *The Monitor*, September 22, 1999]

**1998** Though the numbers vary, the estimated number of deaths in the conflict during 1998 exceeded 800.

## Political Developments:

**2008:** After initially positive steps, diplomacy broke down as LRA leader Joseph Kony repeatedly refused to sign a Final Peace Agreement. On January 31st, 2008, the government and LRA had resumed peace talks, signing agreements in February for accountability, disarmament and even permanent ceasefire. On March 26th, a "penultimate" agreement was signed; in April however, Kony showed signs of evasiveness towards the Final Agreement, again demanding that ICC warrants for himself and several lieutenants be lifted, and repeatedly failing to show up for meetings. Dissent within the LRA was evident: amid reports that 9 LRA rebels were killed in internal fighting, their Chief Negotiator resigned in April, followed by 9 other LRA negotiators in June, citing frustration with Kony. Neighbouring governments also grew increasingly impatient: food aid to the LRA was suspended in April, military leaders of the DRC, Southern Sudan and Uganda threatened military action in June, Uganda President Museveni announced repeatedly that negotiations had finished, and, in August, the United States issued personal sanctions against Kony. With mounting pressure, UN mediators set a November 30th deadline for the LRA to end its cross border attack and for Kony to sign the Formal Peace Agreement. When neither of these conditions were met, Uganda, with forces from the DRC and Southern Sudan, commenced "Operation Thunder Lightning" on December 14th against LRA rebels in DRC's Orientale Province. Although the Ugandan government has claimed success, the efficacy of the operation has been questioned in the Ugandan Parliament and media. Nonetheless, an LRA delegation approached UN mediators at the year's end, requesting a truce and return to peace negotiations. The LRA has, however, refused to return to Juba for peace talks. They've called for talks to resume in South Africa or Tanzania, and to be mediated by the UN appointed envoy.

"There is going to be peace through negotiations ... I am the one who started the peace talks, so I

am not going to refuse anything that will bring peace. I am going to struggle to make sure that this war is resolved.” – Joseph Kony, June 2008 [*IRIN*, 23 June 2008]

**2007** Despite several disruptions, the Ugandan government and the LRA signed the ‘Agreement on Comprehensive Solutions’, which binds them to find lasting solutions to the underlying causes of the conflict in Northern Uganda. The agreement commits both parties to principles such as the need for broad based government, affirmative action for marginalized groups and equitable land distribution. It also recognizes the right to return and resettle of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and the need for making more resources available for recovery programmes in conflict-affected areas in Northern and North-eastern Uganda. Following comments made by the Sudanese President Salva Kiir Mayardit, that the LRA was no longer welcome in southern Sudan, the LRA disengaged from the peace negotiation and requested that a neutral host for the talks be found. Despite this set back, the agreement was reached in Juba, Sudan, following the joining of South Africa, Kenya and Mozambique, to the peace process as mediators. The LRA and the government struggled to agree on the issue of accountability and reconciliation due to the continued refusal by the ICC to drop the charges against LRA members. Both the government and the LRA have asked the international community and the ICC to support a traditional and clan-based justice system known as ‘Mato Oput’ justice, as an alternative to jail sentences for dealing with the war crimes committed by the LRA. Following the agreement, the LRA sent a peace delegation to Kampala, Uganda for a six week authorized visit, the first to occur since the fighting started, but they continued to refuse a final agreement until the ICC dropped the indictments against its members. President Yoweri Museveni responded by issuing the ultimatum that if the LRA had not concluded the peace deal by January 31, 2008, the government would launch a new military offensive against the LRA.

“Our traditions have sustained our societies for centuries. Instead of abandoning (them)... and jumping into Western solutions, Uganda (may) decide to stick with our traditions... they have resolved conflict in the past”. Ruhakana Rugunda, Ugandan Internal Affairs Minister [*Reuters*, May 30, 2007]

“You cannot tell me that other than the ICC there is no other mechanism on us that can be worked out... that is what we are trying to work out now. We want an alternative justice system, which is specific to Ugandan issues, that would still be able to meet international justice standards”. James Obita, technical advisor to the LRA negotiating team at the Juba peace talks [*VOA News*, June 14, 2007]

“Mato Oput involves the man or women accepting responsibility for their actions and repenting for their crimes against their brothers and sisters... they then ask for forgiveness of their community and pay reparations – sometimes in the form of a goat or a cow – to those they have wronged. Finally, they rejoin their community without cruelty or victimization”. Albert Mugumya of the Kampala-based Centre for Conflict Resolution [*Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, June 5, 2007]

“(President) Museveni is acting in contravention of international law... his government signed the Rome Statute and offers of amnesty violate the letter of the law”. Justice Richard Goldstone, former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal of Yugoslavia and Rwanda [*Institute for War and Peace Reporting*, May 15, 2007]

“I did not come here for any intention other than peace. It has taken 20 years to be here and it is humbling that we are speaking with the government delegation. This shows our commitment to the peace process. We hope that it will not be a long time before we get a final agreement”. Martin Ojul, chief LRA negotiator [*IRIN*, November 2, 2007]

“This is important because the LRA has come home. We have been waiting for them for some time... This shows the progress so far made at the peace talks. With this, the people in Northern Uganda will be able to go home and lead a normal life again”. Ruhakana Rugunda, Ugandan Internal Affairs Minister [*IRIN*, November 2, 2007]

“The fate of a war that displaced nearly two million people and created the highest child abduction rate in the world, hinges on the fate of one man: Joseph Kony... Negotiations ongoing in Juba are addressing a wide array of issues, but until there is agreement about how to deal with Kony and his top deputies, there will be no peace deal”. [*IRIN*, November 2, 2007]

**2006** Around mid-2006 it appeared that significant steps were being undertaken by Joseph Kony to negotiate a ceasefire with the Ugandan government. The two sides negotiated a peace deal in August, with a mandate that expired in late September. At first, the LRA was somewhat reluctant to send top officials to the negotiations, citing fears of kidnapping as its top five commanders had been indicted by the International Criminal Court. Eventually, the second highest ranking official, Vincent Otti agreed to attend the discussions in the DRC-Sudan border region. However, the government insisted that a ceasefire would come only as the end result of a comprehensive peace agreement. This assertion reportedly resulted in the LRA walking out of and boycotting the negotiations until late September. In addition, members of the LRA indicted by the ICC (including leader Joseph Kony) continue to adamantly refuse to turn themselves over to the court and instead have opted to possibly be tried under the traditional Ugandan justice system. Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has reportedly offered the four individuals (Raska Lukwiya was killed by government forces earlier in the year) amnesty for their crimes in exchange for a peaceful settlement. Nonetheless, despite early headway, by the end of 2006 the November non-violence pact achieved by the two sides appeared to be disintegrating and plans for renewed negotiations had been put on hold as violent clashes between the two sides began to reappear.

"Uganda added six weeks to a deadline for thrashing out a peace deal with the rebel LRA, in a boost for talks this week that will aim to end one of Africa's most neglected wars...If they go well, Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni has offered to protect LRA leader Joseph Kony, who is wanted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court in the Hague." [*Reuters*, July 10, 2006]

"The rebels, who have been promised amnesty, have not sent their top leaders to the negotiations, but say they are willing to sign a ceasefire...Few of the 17-member LRA delegation that arrived in Juba on Thursday have combat experience and many of them are based abroad." [*BBC News Online*, July 14, 2006]

"Meanwhile, the ICC says the Ugandan government has not asked for the withdrawal of the LRA arrest warrants. "The arrest warrants remain in effect," the ICC's prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said in a statement after meeting Uganda's security minister, Amama Mbabazi." [*BBC News Online*, July 13, 2006]

**2005** Little progress was made in off-on talks between LRA rebels and chief negotiator Betty Bigombe who leads an international initiative backed by the US, UK, Holland and Norway launched this year. The Ugandan government continued its strategy of engaging simultaneously in fighting the LRA and negotiating with LRA rebels willing to lay down their arms. The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for five senior LRA leaders including Joseph Kony. Thousands of former LRA rebels began farming in Northern Uganda as part of the governments disarmament and reintegration program.

"The rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has responded poorly to a recent initiative by mediators attempting to peacefully end the 19-year-old war in northern Uganda between the insurgents and government forces, sources said. Launched by Uganda's four main donors: Britain, the Netherlands, Norway and the United States, the initiative involved broadcasting radio messages to the rebels inviting them to contact the chief mediator of the peace process, Betty Bigombe." [*IRINnews.org*, August 18, 2005]

"Thousands of former fighters of the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have started farming in war-torn northern Uganda in an effort to adjust to civilian life, the minister for northern rehabilitation, Grace Akello, told IRIN on Tuesday. 'The government has provided them with the land in Gulu, and they have since ploughed over 500 acres and planted their own food,' Akello said. 'The land is free to all former rebels and we have over 20,000 who have returned.' Many of the former fighters have recently given themselves up to the government or been captured during battle. Others were former child soldiers rescued from the LRA, which is notorious for abducting children." [*IRINnews.org*, April 26, 2005]

"Efforts by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to bring to justice perpetrators of war crimes in Uganda's protracted northern conflict risk jeopardising the ongoing peace process, according to local leaders. The ICC recently announced plans to issue arrest warrants for the head of the Lord's

Resistance Army (LRA), Joseph Kony, and several other high-ranking rebels, a move that was widely perceived by leaders in northern Uganda as being contrary to peace talks between the government and the rebels. 'When the ICC announced in Nairobi that they were soon issuing arrest warrants to the LRA - that was the last blow to the peace process,' Rwt David Acana II told a delegation of US diplomats and UN officials on Tuesday at his residence in Gulu, about 380 km north of the capital, Kampala." [*IRINnews.org*, March 25, 2005]

**2004** Pledges by the Government of Uganda and the LRA to hold peace talks did not come to fruition and both sides blamed the other for this failure. Meanwhile, the International Criminal Court (ICC) began investigations into atrocities committed by the LRA and the Ugandan government launched a new programme for the recovery and development of the North. Although both sides were expected to sign a truce by the end of the year, negotiations broke down on December 31 and no truce was signed.

"The International Criminal Court (ICC) is planning to issue warrants of arrest against Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leader Joseph Kony and seven of his commanders." [*New Vision*, November 3, 2004]

"The world court has begun an investigation into war crimes allegedly committed by Ugandan rebels... There is currently an amnesty for the LRA rebels and concerns have been raised that prosecuting the LRA leadership would be unlikely to bring an end to the devastating war." [*BBC*, July 29, 2004]

**2003** A March ceasefire, declared by LRA leader Joseph Kony and subsequently agreed by President Museveni, was intended to foster negotiations. However, due to alleged violations by the LRA, the government ended the ceasefire in April and resumed hostilities, while leaving in place the amnesty offer to rebel fighters wishing to surrender. Discord in the Ugandan Parliament increased pressure upon President Museveni to resolve the conflict. In spite of Ugandan allegations that the Sudanese government supports the LRA, cooperation between the two countries over Uganda's conflict with the rebels continued for a second year.

"On Wednesday, Uganda's first deputy prime minister and minister for disaster preparedness Moses Ali said the government would continue to pursue the rebels militarily, but added that any rebel who wanted to surrender under an amnesty would be protected. Most of these fighters are abducted and forced to fight, so it is important when they escape that they have a door through which to run,' he said." [*IRIN*, November 20, 2003]

"Sudan and Uganda have agreed to renew a bilateral agreement that gives the Ugandan army access to southern Sudan to carry out limited operations against the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The agreement was extended by three months on Friday despite allegations that the Sudanese army was supporting the Ugandan rebels in southern Sudan." [*IRIN*, September 15, 2003]

" Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni expressed concern on Tuesday that the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group had failed to respond to peace overtures from his government. 'All possible fora have been availed by the government such as the Amnesty Law, mediations by religious and cultural leaders and the presidential peace team but unfortunately these gestures have gone unheeded,' he said." [*Agence France Presse*, July 22, 2003]

**2002** In March, the Ugandan government struck an agreement with Sudanese authorities in order to attack suspected LRA bases in southern Sudan. However, by mid-October the agreement had not been renewed due to increased fighting between the Sudanese government and rebels in southern Sudan. The Ugandan government was initially open to forging a peace deal with the LRA, instructing Christian religious leaders to initiate peace talks with the rebels. However, as the fighting intensified, the government rejected attempts at a peaceful resolution and stepped up its military campaign to wipe out the LRA.

"The Sudanese Government has for the first time said it intends to move against the rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which it backed until three years ago... Uganda and Sudan signed an agreement in March allowing Ugandan troops to carry out search-and-destroy operations against the rebels, who launch cross-border raids from rear bases in southern Sudan." [*BBC*

News, May 19, 2002]

**2001** In April, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni stated that Uganda had achieved its objective of defeating the rebel group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), stationed in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and therefore it was withdrawing its forces from the country.

**2000** Ugandan and Sudanese foreign ministers Mustafa Ismail Osman and Eriya Kategaya met in Kampala in September and agreed to the encampment of the Lord's Resistance Army 1,000 kilometres (625 miles) north of the common border. The ministers also agreed to the disarmament and demobilization of the LRA, as well as, in principle, to return thousands of children abducted by the rebel group from Sudan to Uganda.

**1999** In early December, Uganda and Sudan signed an agreement urging each country not to support the rebellion facing the other. Uganda also offered an amnesty to rebel groups.

"When the three leaders of Sudan, Uganda and Kenya met in Nairobi and signed an agreement on December 8 to stem rebellions in Sudan and Uganda, there was the usual raising of eyebrows regarding the success of the treaty." [*The Monitor*, December 22, 1999]

"Plagued by rebellion on two fronts Uganda has offered amnesty to its enemies at home and opened talks with its rival Sudan in a bid to restore peace and win the release of thousands of abducted children. Uganda's parliament approved the amnesty bill on Tuesday night, giving rebel leaders and their rank-and-file fighters six months to lay down their guns without fear of prosecution." [*Reuters*, December 8, 1999].

**1998** No significant peace talks occurred in Uganda during 1998. A June attempt to form a united rebel front under a single leadership failed.

## Background:

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony, was formed in 1987 after the defeat of a rebellion by the Holy Spirit Movement, led by Kony's cousin Alice Lakwena. The LRA is notorious for atrocities against civilians and for the forced conscription of tens of thousands of children into its forces. Initially, the LRA had the support of the northern Acholi and Lango tribes who felt marginalized by the government but the abuses against local tribes people weakened this support. The LRA lacks any real political goals, its main stated objective being to govern the country according to its interpretation of the Ten Commandments.

In 1997, another rebel group, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), became active in western Uganda. The ADF, which includes some ex-commanders of Idi Amin's army, appears to be driven by an ideology based on Islam. For several years the ADF were able to launch attacks from bases in Democratic Republic of the Congo due to the lawless nature of the eastern DRC. However, the Ugandan government overran the ADF headquarters on the DRC border in 2001 and, with the resolution of the war in the DRC since, cross-border raids are no longer as easily executed. A third group, the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF), is dominated by tribes from the West Nile region that make up the bulk of the army of former Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. The goal of WNBF leaders is to regain power lost when Amin was ousted in 1979.

A 2000 amnesty offer by the government remains open and has been taken up by hundreds of LRA fighters. In 2005 the International Criminal Court, at the request of the Ugandan government issued indictments for five of the top LRA officials, including leader Joseph Kony. In 2006, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni offered amnesty to those indicted, but the rebel leaders have not yet accepted this offer. Despite numerous attempts at creating a peace agreement in 2006, the parties remained in conflict as of December. By the end of June, 2007: 916, 000 remained in IDP and refugee camps, many in the Acholi sub-region; 539, 000 returned to their villages; 381, 000 moved to transit settlements near their villages. The government has estimated that the reconstruction of Northern Uganda will cost an estimated \$600 million, most of which is expected to be funded by donors.

Despite progress in early 2008 and personal claims of desiring peace, Kony continued to refuse signing a Final Peace Agreement until the removal of ICC warrants. The militaries of Uganda, DRC and Southern Sudan eventually responded with a joint military offensive in late 2008. The LRA reacted by terrorizing villages of the

Central African Republic. This renewed violence, as well as the proliferation of arms in Northern Uganda, is an enormous obstacle to the resettlement of internally displaced persons. The LRA has a long history of effective guerrilla warfare, and the efficacy of renewed military operations is questionable.

"Our research shows that Kony and his henchmen abducted as many as 38 000 children and 37 000 adults into his rebel army over the past 11 years... These conscripted civilians were forced to commit horrible crimes, including mutilation and killing of fellow villagers and even family members". Eric Stover, faculty director of Berkeley's Human Rights Centre [*AllAfrica.com*, June 2007]

"The ADF, which decided to adopt Islam as its ideology, was born from a core group of puritanical Moslems from the Tabliq sect whose members portray themselves as 'Moslem evangelists'. In Uganda, the Tabliqs claimed Moslems were being marginalised by the government. Together with the obscure and largely defunct National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), the Tabliqs moved to western Uganda to start the rebellion under the ADF umbrella. They set up rear bases in neighbouring Congo where they began recruiting and training fighters with the promise of money and education. It was easier to recruit in Congo where the people were not hostile to the ADF. ...The ADF problem exploded in 1997. Prior to that there had been sporadic attacks which did not appear to concern the government too much. President Yoweri Museveni, in his book 'Sowing the Mustard Seed' published in 1996, makes no mention of the insurgency in the west. But in 1997, the ADF launched a surprise attack on Ugandan soldiers at Mpondwe on the border with Congo in Kasese district. Attacks and atrocities escalated the following year with the army apparently unable to contain them, one of its problems being the lack of an adequate alpine force." [*IRIN*, December 8, 1999]

### Arms Sources:

Uganda has received military aid and equipment from the US and there have been recent reports of weapon transfers from Belarus, South Africa, Israel, Bulgaria, Poland, China and Russia. Uganda also allegedly received weapons from the United Kingdom. The LRA and other rebel groups have secured weapons from the Sudanese government. Ethnic groups along the border with Kenya are reportedly armed by the Kenyan and Ugandan governments. In 2006, the Ugandan government reportedly accepted a shipment of armoured vehicles from a South African subsidiary of BAE, a United Kingdom-based arms corporation. Uganda is also reportedly in breach of a UN-imposed arms embargo against the DRC, who is known to have been receiving weapons from Uganda. Unfortunately, the granting of amnesty to LRA rebels has not significantly reduced the flow of arms. Although 15,000 rebels surrendered between 2003 and 2008, only 500 guns were surrendered since 2005, meaning that either former or current rebels remain heavily armed in Uganda and surrounding regions. Attempts at disarmament in the northwest region of Karamoja has drawn accusations by Human Rights Watch of excessive use of force, killing of civilians, arbitrary detention and torture by the Ugandan army. [Sources: *SIPRI Yearbook 2005*; *The Military Balance 2004/2005, 2008* ; *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1999-2000*]

"Since 2002 at least 32 armored vehicles have been sold to Uganda by Land Systems OMC, a BAE subsidiary. The most recent delivery of 12 vehicles was completed shortly before the elections," Oxfam said in a statement." [*The Monitor*, February 28, 2006]

"Oxfam says British defense companies that are barred under their national laws and guidelines of the European Union from arms sales to territories where they could potentially "provoke or prolong armed conflicts", are instead using foreign proxies to conduct business with conflict prone countries." [*The Monitor*, February 28, 2006]

"The US military is seeking to quickly implement a programme to train the Ugandan forces to make them more effective in fighting the Lord's resistance Army (LRA)..." [*Jane's Defense Weekly*, October 5, 2005]

"Correspondents say the traditional practice of cattle-raiding has become much more deadly with the arming of nomadic groups by both the Kenyan and Ugandan governments." [*BBC News*, January 29, 2000]

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