



Office of the President

UGANDA MEDIA CENTRE

PRESS STATEMENT

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RESPONSE TO INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE OF LRA ACTIVITY

Uganda welcomes all campaigns which seek to raise awareness and highlight the plight of people affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). We are grateful for renewed efforts which seek to contribute to the arrest of Joseph Kony and the elimination of the LRA from the Central African Region. The Government of Uganda however, would strongly urge that any awareness campaign fully takes into consideration the current realities of the situation.

The Lord's Resistance Army has been a concern of this government since the late 80's and have exacted a great toll on the Ugandan people and independent estimates approximate that thousands of children were abducted and used as child soldiers over the course of the 25 year conflict.

Misinterpretations of media content may lead some people to believe that the LRA is currently active in Uganda. It must be clarified that at present the LRA is not active in any part of Uganda. Successfully expelled by the Ugandan Peoples Defence Forces in mid-2006, the LRA has retreated to dense terrain within bordering countries in the Central African area. They are a diminished and weakened group with numbers not exceeding 300. The threat posed by the LRA in our neighboring countries is considerably reduced and we are hopeful that it will be altogether eliminated with the help of US logistical support.

The people of Uganda, especially those in the north of the country are on a path of rebuilding, reconciliation and reintegration and are now vibrant and prospering communities. To aid this prosperity the Government implemented a 10 Year Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP).

In addition, Uganda was among the first sub-Saharan African countries to embrace market reforms in the late 1980s and graduated as a mature reformer in 2006 with sound economic fundamentals and much improved governance. Real GDP growth accelerated from an average of 6.5 per cent year-on-year in the 1990s to over 7 per cent during the 10 years leading up to 2009-10. Not surprisingly, Uganda qualifies as one of the few durable African success stories. Yet its continued prosperity hinges on shifting the economy to a higher productivity level and integrating all its regions into the development process. The coming 'oil era' should have a powerful impact on the wider economy.

Uganda's tourism potential is immense, bigger than all the other countries in the region including Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda. For instance, Uganda was named by Lonely Planet, the world's largest travel guide book and digital media publisher, as the best tourism destination for tourists in 2012

The Ugandan Government is therefore, encouraged by this outpouring of international support for its continuing campaign to eliminate the threat posed by the LRA to all countries and communities. We are hopeful that our neighboring countries can also become free of LRA activity and enjoy the peace and prosperity that northern Uganda has experienced in the last 6 years.

For God and My Country

Fred Opolot

Executive Director