

Ugandans to the rescue



May 25, 2010

UPDF rapes, murders a blind school teacher....

On 7th October 2003, the UPDF raped and murdered Betty Alum, who was a blind teacher at St. Theresa Primary School in Kitgum. According to the daughter of the deceased who very narrowly survived the incident this is what happened:

Six armed UPDF soldiers stormed their home in the evening of 7th October 2003. They demanded to talk to "the person who had just returned from Gulu" (that person being Betty Alum). They spoke in a mixture of Luo, English and Kiswahili, although their Luo wasn't coherent. The soldiers demanded foodstuff, money and young children. The deceased offered them all the material things they asked for but pleaded with them not to take her daughter (who is only 12 years old). Her cry was to no avail. Two UPDF soldiers grabbed the child and marched her into the bush. It was whilst they were heading for the bush that Alum's daughter managed to escape. "It seems my escape could have provoked them to kill my mother" the young girl narrated.

On the morning of the 8th October 2003, Betty Alum was found lying dead on the floor of her grass thatched house. Her under wear (knickers) and bra was pushed through her mouth with a stick towards her stomach. It is believed the UPDF soldiers smashed her head with a grinding stone, but not before they had brutally raped her. There was also a bayonet wound to her chest. No food items, clothes or any money was taken.

The above incident took place less than 50 meters from a UPDF base (detach). Sources report that the UPDF soldiers involved have since been transferred to other bases with some going to a place called "Gang dyang".

And the rapes continue.....

In the early days of the NRA/UPDF life in Northern Uganda, the UPDF went by the name of "Lagungu-ngu". Translated into English simply as "those who rape you whilst standing up". Even men were sodomised. The assaults were carried out on such an organised scale that it was believed the purpose of these rapes was to spread the deadly HIV virus amongst the northern populace. Whatever the true motives, the assaults were to turn northern Uganda from an area in which there were hardly any cases of HIV/AIDS to an area which to date has the highest HIV/AIDS infection rates in the country.

On 6th October 2003, the UPDF mobile brigade came to Dure trading centre, which is situated 7 miles south of Kitgum. At around 6pm they ordered everybody to leave their homes. They brought out the women, elderly, children and the men - no one was left behind. They then went ahead and separated the female from the male (including children). The male citizens were ordered to return to their homes. Their womenfolk remained with the UPDF. In the morning of the 7th October 2003 when the female citizens of Dure (including young girls) returned to their homes, they told of their horror at the hands of the UPDF. They had all been brutally raped.

A similar incident happened in Orom division in October 2003. A 72 year old woman by the name of

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May 25, 2010

Ventorina Lariang was raped by soldiers of the 89th division of the UPDF stationed in the area. The assaults against the civilian population of Orom had become so rampant that the deputy LC5 chairman, Mr. Dominic Balu issued an outcry about the activities of the UPDF in the area. It would seem "Lagungu-gungu" had indeed landed.

In October 2003 a commander in the UPDF 43rd battalion base in Atiak, a Lt. Nicholas, abducted and raped Grace Adokorac of the same location (Atiak). Sources report that the UPDF soldier also stole Shs 187,000/= from his victim. As it is common in the north, despite the crime he has committed, Lt Nicholas remains in his post.

Observers note, that events like Dure and Orom are not isolated incidents. Quite the contrary, so much so that when you ask women in outlying areas in Acholiland they would tell you this "during day time we belong to our husbands. At night, we belong to the UPDF".

UPDF shoots civilians at Bobi market.....

On 21st October 2003, the UPDF shot and killed Alfonsio Ojok at Kulu-Owa in Bobi Paidwe parish. Sources report that Ojok was in a group of people returning from Bobi market centre at around 6.30pm. It is reported that they came across 7 UPDF soldiers who opened fire without asking any questions. Ojok died immediately and it is believed many other civilians sustained bullet wounds and might have died from their injuries after the incident.

Operation groundnut....

Ever since the NRA/UPDF set foot in Acholiland, the word operation has been synonymous with death and destruction. Scotched earth tactics have been used, with foodstuff destroyed and even drinking wells poisoned. It is an open secret that the so called protected villages are an extension of the same scotched earth policy i.e. the idea being that if you deny the rebels food and people they would lack the capacity to fight. In the words of Major General Salim Saleh any one found outside of the so called protected villages would be deemed a rebel and liable to being killed without any further questions asked.

On 7th October 2003 a group of soldiers belonging to the mobile brigade of the UPDF came to Pagen parish in Kitgum district. They went about destroying people's homes ostensibly to provide firewood for the army. The UPDF then systematically looted the entire foodstuff the villagers had. Crops in the field like maize, cassava, sweet potato etc. were harvested on the spot. The headmaster of Pagen Primary school (Mr Lokunyen) had an acre of groundnuts. This too went the same way as the rest of what the other villagers had.

Observers believe that this action by the mobile brigade is deliberate. The UPDF strategy being that foodstuff left behind would be used to feed the LRA. Furthermore, the villagers, having no food to sustain themselves or shelter (in the middle of the rainy season), would be forced to go to the camps - where the

Ugandans to the rescue



May 25, 2010

UPDF want them in the first place. In the camps, the civilians face death from starvation, disease, if not being trapped in crossfire between government and rebel troops. The end result is the same - death. But the government policy of emptying the countryside would have been achieved.

Is the UPDF becoming desperate?

We have learnt from a source close to the LRA that the UPDF has become desperate in its fight against the rebels and it has resorted to using "dirty" bombs, many of which have been dropped on the civilian population. According to the source, the injuries caused by these bombs have never been seen before in the 17 year old conflict. On the following dates and places, the UPDF aircraft dropped substances (not conventional bombs) which given the unique injury caused and the smell/odour left in the area, suggest of a possible chemical substance. The dates and places are listed below: -

1. 1st July 2002 - Labongo ogali, Amuru Sub-County, Gulu District.
2. 6th July 2002 - Alero Opok, Gulu District.
3. 12th July 2002 - Pamot Lukili, Lamwo County, Kitgum District.
4. 4th August 2002 - Labongo ogali, Amuru Sub-County, Gulu District.
5. 28th August 2002 - Bar, Agoro Sub-County, Kitgum District.
6. 28th August 2002 - Okung Gedi, Amuru Sub-County, Gulu District.
7. 28th August 2002 - Orum, Kamdini, Apac District.
8. 30th August 2002 - Puranga, Pader District.
9. 4th September 2002 - Palenga, Gulu District.
10. 6th September 2002 - Bobi Nyek, Gulu District.
11. 18th September 2002 - Bobi Nyek, Gulu District.
12. 10th September 2002 - Aleb Tong, Lira District.
13. 22nd September 2002 - Acholibur, Kitgum District.
14. 22nd January 2003 - Awac, Gulu District.
15. 5th February 2003 - Ogom, Atiak, Kitgum District.

Also of interest, is the number of UPDF soldiers who have died from a range of unusual illnesses at Lacor (military wing) hospital. One such UPDF soldier, an officer by the name of Okello, died from a condition, which pointed to exposure to high levels of radiation. Many others have since perished from conditions which medical experts suggests, relate to the "unusual" weaponry that the UPDF is deploying.

Ugandan newspapers also recently reported an incident in Gulu district whereby a child (boy) of two years was discovered to have developed genital features of a mature man. Observers believe this deformity is related to the war and in particular the side effect of the weaponry, which the UPDF may have used against the civilian population.

Whatever the case might be, many questions remain unanswered as to the exact nature of the kind of weaponry that the UPDF is using and the likely effect on the northern populace.