

Ugandans to the rescue



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Uganda Angered by accusation of Aiding and abetting Genocide in Congo

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The noose is tightening against the Gang

Uganda has responded angrily to a leaked draft UN report which accuses it of war crimes in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In a letter obtained by the media, the Ugandan foreign minister, Samuel Kutesa, condemns the report as based on rumors, "deeply flawed" and lacking in proof.

He warns that the report could threaten Uganda's commitment to regional peacekeeping missions.

It follows a similar reaction by Rwanda to the same report.

The UN report - into conflicts in the DR Congo between 1993 and 2003 - is expected to be published on Friday and is said to detail crimes never previously documented.

The draft version alleges that the Ugandan army committed war crimes and crimes against humanity when it backed Congolese rebels who overthrew President Mobutu Sese Seko in 1997 and went on to occupy parts of the east of the country.

They include allegations of massacres of civilians, torture, and the destruction of infrastructure that led to civilian deaths.

But in his letter, Ugandan Foreign Minister Sam Kutesa says his country rejected the allegations.

He accuses the authors of relying on information provided by parties whose motives are suspect, and of failing to consult Uganda on the allegations.

"Such sinister tactics undermine Uganda's resolve to continue contributing to, and participating in, various regional and international peacekeeping operations," said the letter by Mr Kutesa to the UN.

The report has generated significant controversy even before its official publication.

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Rwanda was furious over allegations of genocide made in the report.

It only retracted a threat to withdraw its peacekeepers from Darfur after a visit from the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, and being allowed to submit comments for inclusion in the report.

Uganda soldiers have been accused of carrying out genocide in Congo and Northern Uganda by some opposition politicians including the former UN under-secretary general Olara Otunnu.