

We Are Sure of Final Victory Soon

Full Speech: Museveni Addresses the Nation

New Vision (Kampala), April 16, 2004

Greetings to the people of Uganda:

I am addressing you, again, about the residual terrorism in the north-central part of our country (Acholi-northern and Lango areas). I call it 'residual terrorism' because, as you know, at one time, Sudan had sponsored terrorism in the North-West of Uganda (West Nile), North East (Teso) and West (Kasese-Kabarole-Bundibugyo areas, operating out of Congo DRC. Earlier on, we had had terrorist activities in the East (Tororo-Busia) emanating from Kenya.

The Army (the UPDF) and the people of Uganda have defeated all these terrorist campaigns. The only one that is still continuing is the one of Kony's so called Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) that has been supported by the same Sudan until about six months ago.

Recently, there were indications, again, that certain Sudanese elements had contacts with Kony again.

In spite of the obstructions from the donors in relation to our defence budget (they insisted that it should not exceed 1.9% of GDP), the Army has fought a valiant struggle leading to the defeat of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) on the Congo border, Juma Oris' West Nile Bank Front in the part of Sudan opposite West Nile, Force Obote Back Again (FOBA) operating from Kenya, etc.

All these groups, as you know, originated from the dictatorship of Amin and Obote. Their criminal and potentially-genocidal frames of mind and methods are nothing new.

This is exactly what they were doing in the Luweero Triangle (1981-86) where there are 70,000 skulls preserved in 30 mass graves; or what was happening during Amin's time (1971- 79) when 500,000 were killed extra-judicially. What they are trying to do in the Acholi-Lango area now, is what they were doing in the whole country at one time.

As you know, in April, 2002, our army entered Sudan and uprooted Kony from the Kit Valley and the Imatong Hills which he had turned into permanent bases from which he sprang to kill people in Uganda and then go back to his safe location (Southern Sudan).

After dislodging Kony and forcing him to release a lot of abductees, he entered Uganda, thinking that that would stop us from maintaining our forces in the Sudan so that he goes back in safety. They tried to spread the terrorism to Teso, Lango, Kaberamaido and Adjumani districts. All these efforts were defeated. That is why the remnants of Kony have now retreated to the Acholi area.

In the last ten months, in the Teso, Lango and Acholi areas, we have killed 1,150 terrorists including 72 of their commanders; 500 have reported (surrendered to Government forces); and 6,000 abductees have been rescued. We have captured the following weapons: 700 SMGs; two-SPG-9s (anti-tank guns); two B-10s (82 mm recoilless guns) etc.

Among the terrorist leaders killed are the following: Yadin Nyeko, Tabuley; Ochitti; Opiro; Okello-trigger, Akuri, Ojoku, Paul Okodi, Achaye, etc. etc. It is important to kill these leaders because they are the authors of the killings in the North. The only way to save themselves is to stop terrorism and come home.

It is these serious losses that have rendered Teso non-appetising for them; hence the peace now reigning in Teso and Kaberamaido. The 400,000 people, formally in internally displaced people's camps (IDPCs), are now going home.

Thanks to the resolute vigour of Army (UPDF) and wanainchi. The Teso political leadership was particularly helpful. The remnants that have fled back to the Acholi area are very much weakened.

The group that had come from Sudan with Vincent Otti to attack big targets has been decimated promptly.

Between 18th - 21st of March, the Army killed 98 terrorists, 80 of them surrendered.

These blows, delivered promptly by UPDF both inside Sudan and just inside Uganda, meant that the group of 300 fighters and families that had come to disturb Uganda was promptly dealt with.

This demonstrated the mobility and the lethality the Army is beginning to have.

Using the improved funding for the Army, we are, at last, creating a comprehensive spectrum of capabilities in dealing with these killers.

We are, therefore, sure of final victory and soon.

In fact, I regard the present operations as mopping-up ones.

Nevertheless, since some years ago, we have been open to a quicker option for solving this problem through the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

I wish to, therefore, reiterate my earlier call (2002) for the terrorists to end their evil campaign and go for a dialogue with us so that this problem is resolved.

In spite of working with different mediators (President Carter, St. Egidio, Archbishop Odama's group, Bishop Onono's group, Chief Ojwak and, recently, a certain Western Government), the terrorists have never shown any inclination to use this peaceful option, which would exonerate them from the numerous crimes against humanity they have committed. This was, partly, because they thought they could commit these crimes with impunity.

The killing of many of their leaders in the last 10 months has shown them, hopefully, that there is a price for those crimes. The wages of sin is death. Nevertheless, I am renewing my readiness to talk with the terrorist leaders, either directly or through intermediaries, in order to expeditiously resolve this problem.

As I have told them through intermediaries in the past and also directly through broadcasts, if they indicate, through intermediaries, that they are ready to give up their terror campaign and move to mutually-agreed assembly areas near the border with Sudan, then I will order a ceasefire and give them a few weeks to move to the assembly area.

Once in the assembly area, which will be monitored by mutually agreed neutral parties, they will be supplied with food, clothing, drugs, etc. Then we shall be able to talk with them about their future and any other grievances they may have.

The biggest victims of this terror campaign have been the civilians that had to gather in IDPCs. These IDPCs are quite uncomfortable, especially, if they are badly administered. In Soroti, I was part of an IDPC. In Barlegi, where I am camped now, I live next to one.

If the administrators were serious, these IDPCs could be more hygienic and could be productive.

I had instructed our former Vice-President to organise commercial and food crop production around the huge expanses of land around these camps. They only engaged in desultory efforts around a few of them.

Anyway, our intention is to end insecurity so that the IDPCs are wound up like we are doing with the 400,000 IDPC occupants in Teso or the 180,000 that were in the Rwenzori region's IDPCs during the terror campaign by ADF.

It would be useful and even profitable, however, to ameliorate the conditions in the IDPCs while the conflict lasted.

I thank the international community for the support, in terms of feeding, they give to our people in these IDPCs. The Government of Uganda, through the World Food Programme, has been contributing sh350m per month to the feeding of the IDPCs.

Meanwhile, the day and night operations aimed at wiping out the terrorists, both inside Sudan and the Acholi area, are continuing and are being intensified until every terrorist leader is accounted for; or until the remnants of the terrorists come out of their crime-laden way of existence.

09.07.2010

Museveni

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