



CSOPNU

Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda

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HALT MILITARY OFFENSIVE: PEACEFUL SOLUTION IS THE PREFERRED OPTION:

The Coalition of Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU) condemns the recent joint military offensive by the three governments of Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Southern Sudan against LRA positions. The military offensive against the LRA is a serious blow to the invaluable gains of the Juba Peace Process in terms of return of peace, end to abductions and killings in Northern Uganda. Dialogue and not armed confrontation remains the most viable opportunity for resolving the twenty year old conflict in Northern Uganda. Mindful of the unprecedented international, regional and local attention and resources committed to the peace process and fully aware of the consequences of failure of the peace process, not least, renewed abduction and senseless death of innocent victims, in particular women and children, CSOPNU strongly condemns the military approach and urge the parties to continue pursuing peaceful solution to the conflict.

Dialogue between the Government of Uganda and the LRA being mediated by the Government of Sudan, though slow, was progressing and should have been given more time. The talks have positively affected the security and economic situation in both Northern Uganda and Southern Sudan. Today, more than two thirds of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Northern Uganda have left camps to resettle in areas closer to their homes or have returned to their villages of origin. The ceasefire has facilitated freedom of movement and as a result, access to land has improved. The implication of the renewed offensive on the resettlement process in Northern Uganda cannot be underestimated. Already, there is growing sense of uncertainty and despair amongst the people of Northern Uganda.

The Government of Uganda, regional and international stakeholders to the peace process must exercise restraint in the face of renewed military offensive against the LRA in DRC to enable conclusion of the peaceful approach to resolving the conflict.

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Steering Committee:

We call upon:

The GOU:

- Together with other regional and international forces stop with immediate effect the ongoing armed confrontation with the LRA and allow the AU to guide LRA combatants to the designated assemble areas
- Remain committed to the Peace Process as it remains the best way to achieving sustainable peace, recovery and development in Northern Uganda.
- The President of Uganda should stick to his recent promise, remain open to direct negotiation and continue to pursue a peaceful solution to the conflict through dialogue.
- Implement aspects of the Juba Agenda Agreements that will reinforce the peace process.
- Critically examine the ICC indictment against the LRA commanders with a view to facilitate the signing of the Final Peace Agreement
- Urgently appoint a replacement of the leader of the Government Peace Team for continuity of the process
- Ensure protection of civilian population in the affected areas and instil confidence in the returned population

The LRA:

- Continue to pursue peaceful means to end the conflict and avoid any tendency toward military approach
- Cease hostilities, abduction and recruitment of children in Southern Sudan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and other neighboring countries
- Joseph Kony should sign the Final Peace Agreement to conclude the Juba peace process and end the conflict
- Assemble in the designated places as provided for in the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
- Release all the sick, wounded, children and women within their ranks as a demonstration of their commitment to peaceful means of resolving the conflict

The International Community (UN, donors and development partners):

- The UN should extend the mandate of the UN Special Envoy for LRA affected areas to enable the peace process continue to a logical conclusion
- The UN Security Council and the international community should renew push on the parties to the LRA conflict to facilitate conclusion of the peace process
- Make funds available to the GoU and the Chief Mediator for the continuation, conclusion and implementation of the Final Peace Agreements;

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Steering Committee:

- Urge GOU to implement aspects of the Juba Agenda Agreements that will reinforce the peace process and consolidate the existing peace rather than military option.

Government of Southern Sudan (Chief Mediator)

- Renew and maintain contact with the LRA in order to build Kony's confidence and to push the peace process to its logical conclusion
- Maintain contact with the Government of Uganda to encourage it to implement aspect of the agreement that can be implemented pending the FPA and to continue pursuing the peaceful option
- Not to despair and give up the important role of mediator

The African Union

- Call for immediate cessation of hostilities between armed forces from Uganda, DRC and GoSS and the LRA
- Provide forces preferably from countries other than those engaged in the ongoing military campaign against the LRA to monitor the implementation of a CHA and the assembly of LRA in the designated areas
- Encourage the government of Uganda to implement those provisions of the agreement which are in force or can otherwise be implemented.
- Increase diplomatic initiative with the regional government to send positive and supportive signals to the LRA to encourage both parties to sign the Final Peace Agreement.

The coalition of Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU) was established in 2002 with the purpose of advocating for a just and lasting peace in Northern Uganda based on analysis and articulation of perceptions, underlying causes and effects of the conflict.

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Steering Committee: