



UPDATE FROM THE PEACE & SPORTS PROGRAMME

UPDF KILLS TURKANA PASTORALISTS – CIVIL SOCIETY BEING DENIED TO MEDIATE

Nairobi, 22nd August 2008

On Friday 15th of August, around 10 AM the Ugandan armed forces (UPDF) attacked four Turkana kraals, who had crossed the border into Uganda in search for pasture and water for their livestock. The herdsmen, from 4 different kraals (Lomukasia, Dapal and Aipa from Turkana north, and Mgiminito from Turkana central), were peacefully grazing their animals, when the UPDF attacked them from the escarpment between Kenya and Uganda, near Lokipoto. In the past the UPDF has attacked Turkana kraals on Kenyan territory, using their gunships to bomb several places, causing many deaths and injuries¹.

This time more than 150 Ugandan soldiers used heavy gunfire, including RPG (Rocket Propelled Grenade launcher), anti-aircraft guns and artillery. The attack lasted almost 24 hours, dispersing herdsmen, women and children and an estimated number of 20000 animals. 10 People are confirmed dead, 3 casualties and 3 people are still missing. Furthermore the UPDF drove away 150 cattle, 120 sheep and goats and 50 donkeys, into their army barracks across the border in Uganda. During the attack the UPDF burnt down tents and huts, destroyed cooking utensils and cloths and additionally all food stock has been stolen or burnt as well. 4000 people are directly affected, out of a community of 10000 people, according to the report by the civil society organisation LOKADO.

LOKADO (Lokichoggio Oropoi Kakuma Development Organization) is working in Turkana north amongst the pastoralist communities for more than a decade. In light of the Peace & Sports programme for youth warriors² (www.peaceandsports.org), implementing organisations from Southern Sudan, Uganda and Kenya are bringing together (previous) hostile communities. By using sports, the organisations are creating relationships between youth warriors from different communities, namely Turkana from Kenya, Jie and Dodoth from Uganda and Toposa, Buya, Didinga, Jie, Murle and Kachipo from Southern Sudan. On a regular basis peace meetings alongside sports activities are being held. Because of the highly mobile character of

¹ During the 2006 UPDF gunship bombing to the same kraals at Kaileny also in Uganda, more than sixty people lost their lives and about 3000 households benefited from the non-food items provided by ICRC.

² The Peace & Sports programme is a cross border peace programme initiated by IKV Pax Christi (www.ikvpaxchristi.nl) from the Netherlands, Seeds of Peace Africa (SOPA) Int. from Nairobi (www.seedsofpeaceafrica.com) and the Holy Trinity Peace Village of Kuron of retired bishop Paride Taban in Southern Sudan (www.kuronvillage.net)

pastoralists, the Peace & Sports programme is focuses primarily on the pastoralist communities across the borders.

The LOKADO team immediately travelled to Uganda, when they were informed by the RDC (Regional District Commissioner) of Kotido district, Uganda, about the looming attack by the UPDF. The Turkana kraals had moved into Uganda earlier this month, in search of pasture and water for their livestock. The pastoralist communities are constantly migrating, crossing the borders between Uganda, Kenya and Southern Sudan. The efforts of LOKADO and RiamRiam Kenya to intervene earlier to warn the Turkana communities to move out quickly from Uganda where blocked by the UPDF, reasoning that “the area was unsafe at the moment”. Worth to mention is that the Jie from Kotido district and the Turkana of Kenya have a 1000 years lasting peace deal, and are in no way in war with each other. To call the area “unsafe” must therefore have other reasons.

Despite several attempts to convince the UPDF to halt their planned activities and to give the targeted communities a chance to return to Kenya, the horrific attack took place causing several deaths, injuries and loss of property. The LOKADO team witnessed the attack. However, they administered first aid for the victims and assisted the community members in identifying those who where killed.

The MP of Kotido, Hon. Lokopiromoi, confirmed the attack was planned by the UPDF, and ordered by the UPDF divisional commander, although it is not clear (yet) who actually ordered to kill these people. Hon. Lokopiromoi however condemned the incident as too unfortunate. After being informed by LOKADO, Kenyan Labour Minister Munyes travelled to Turkana to visit the affected communities. He blamed the Kenyan government for neglecting the people of Turkana, and not providing security. Furthermore he has called for a meeting between Kenyan and Ugandan governments in Kampala this month. Minister Munyes also attended the cross border peace conference “Peace Beyond Borders” in Kapoeta, Southern Sudan, from May 18th to may 22nd, where more than 500 pastoralists from 10 different communities came together peacefully. Recommendations towards the governments of the three countries stemming from this cross border event were among others: providing security along the borders; to have a continuous dialogue with local communities and to organise inter communal cross border meetings.

The attack of last Friday follows after an inter governmental peace meeting held in Kotido on the 4th of July by the Peace & Sports partners KOPEIN (from Kotido) and LOKADO (Kakuma). Another successful inter governmental meeting was facilitated on July 15th. Both meetings were organised to have a certain agreement on a governmental level on policies which are harming the Turkana, when they are migrating into Ugandan territory. The attack is therefore most unexpected and hurting the pastoralist communities tremendously.

IKV Pax Christi and Seeds of Peace Africa (SOPA) strongly condemn the violent attack of the UPDF on the Turkana communities of Lomukasia, Dapal, Aipa and Mgiminito. Instead of using excessive violence, the UPDF should start a dialogue with the local communities in consultation with local CBOs and NGOs in both Karamoja and Turkana. Also an inter governmental dialogue and cross border cooperation must be the starting point.

The organisations of the Peace & Sports programme urge the Ugandan and Kenyan governments for a rapid response, which includes: provision of food and shelter for the affected communities, the recovery of stolen and lost livestock and the compensation of the death. Secondly a meeting between the two governments, UPDF and representatives of local communities and civil society organizations should take place. This meeting should result in certain agreements on pastoralist policies in both Karamoja and Turkana, which takes migration patterns of pastoralist communities into account.

The following people lost their lives:

- Mr. Nakoel Kaldo, 45 years
- Mr. Lomojeng Eregae, 42 years
- Mrs. Lokatapan Aipae, 36 years
- Mrs. Ekaal Ekoel, 30 years
- Mrs. Lokamar Lobokora, 34 years
- Mr. Ewoi Lobokora, 30 years
- Mrs. Kalobeyei Apaamakak, 12 years
- Mrs. Elamach Apaamakak, 12 years
- 2 unidentified women

The following are missing but not confirmed dead:

- Mrs Longor Namuya – 8 years
- Mr. Erodo Lotiir Lokuyen – 10 years
- Mr. Esibitar Ewoton – 12 years

Let us remember these innocent people, let us remember their names. May they rest in peace.

For more information contact:

Whycliffe Imoite of SOPA (sopa_international@yahoo.com) or
Meindert Korevaar of IKV Pax Christi / SOPA (tredniem@yahoo.com)

The Peace & Sports programme is taking place in northern Kenya, northeastern Uganda and Southern Sudan. The programme purpose is to reduce the violence that results from cattle raiding by youth warriors; it uses sports as means for peace building, reconciliation and conflict and social transformation. Six of IKV Pax Christi's partners participate in the Peace & Sports programme. In Sudan, the Catholic Dioceses of Torit (CDOT), Kuron Peace Village (HTPVK) of emeritus Bishop Taban and Pibor Development Access (PDA) in Boma lead the programme. In Kotido, Uganda the Kotido Peace Initiative (KOPEIN) and Dodoth Agropastoralist Development Organization (DADO) are responsible for carrying out the programme; in Kakuma, Kenya the Lokichoggio Oropoi Kakuma Development Organization (LOKADO) and the Diocese of Lodwar fulfil this role. Seeds of Peace Africa (SOPA) International, with office in Nairobi, are in charge of overall coordination and support for the programme in conjunction with Sara Ketelaar and Meindert Korevaar from IKV Pax Christi Netherlands. Intervida World Alliance (INWA) from Barcelona, Spain and IKV Pax Christi Netherlands support the Peace & Sports programme in 2007 and 2008.