

**UNITED NATIONS**  
United Nations Regional Office  
for Central Africa



**NATIONS UNIES**  
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pour l'Afrique Centrale

**UNOCA**

**STATEMENT BY**

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**FOR CENTRAL AFRICA**

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**HANDOVER CEREMONY OF THE UPDF AND SPLA**

**CONTINGENTS TO THE AFRICAN UNION**

**REGIONAL TASK FORCE**

**YAMBIO, SOUTH SUDAN, 18 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**African Union's Special Envoy for LRA,  
Honourable Ministers of Defence of Uganda and South  
Sudan,**

**The Governor of this beautiful state of Western  
Equatoria,**

**Her Excellency, the US Ambassador in South Sudan,**

**The EU Representative,**

**Distinguished Military Chiefs of Defence Staff,**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**1. Let me from the onset, state that the UN is very proud to be associated with this important milestone in our collective efforts to fight the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). I have no doubt that today's event will give added impetus to our shared concern: final defeat of the LRA.**

**2. UNOCA, in its capacity as the United Nations political focal point for LRA in the region, in close cooperation with all relevant United Nations presences on the ground, will continue facilitating coordination and information sharing among all stakeholders and partners.**

**3. I recall that at the request of the UN Security Council a strategy document was developed to guide efforts, led by the African Union, to eliminate the threat posed by the LRA in the four affected countries. The adoption and on-going efforts to operationalize the Regional Strategy underscores the commitment of the United Nations and its partners to find a lasting and sustainable solution to the LRA issue and to promote peace and sustainable development in the affected areas. As a**

reminder, there are six main objectives of the Strategy, which includes:

- **Support to the AU-led Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA ;**
- **Enhance efforts to promote the protection of civilians; and**
- **Promote a coordinated humanitarian response in all affected areas.**

**4. The UN, particularly through its peacekeeping missions in the affected countries (MONUSCO, UNMISS), is supporting national authorities in mounting a robust military response against the LRA. Peacekeepers have been offering military escorts to merchants transporting their goods. They are patrolling in and around villages and towns where LRA presence had been reported, thereby maintaining a level of security that has saved lives. In addition, UN peace operations and UNOAU are providing logistical and technical support to the AU-led Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA (RCI-**

**LRA). BINUCA in the CAR has also been providing logistical support and technical advice to the relevant CAR authorities and other stakeholders for the operationalization of the RCI.**

**5 As you all aware, the African Union's Special Envoy for LRA matters, Ambassador Francisco Madeira, and myself have, in recent months, carried out extensive tours to discuss the need for enhanced regional military cooperation as per the AU Regional Initiatives on LRA.**

**6. This handover ceremony of UPDF and SPLA contingents to the AU/RCI Regional Task Force is therefore the culmination of our collective efforts to give concrete expression to a critical mechanism to decisively deal with the LRA. The ultimate objective of that mechanism is to put an end to the activities of a renegade rebel movement that has become infamous**

over the years for the untold sufferings on the local populations of the affected countries.

7. In that regard, I seize the opportunity to thank and congratulate once again, Troop Contributing Countries for their efforts and commitment despite huge national priorities.

8. As recommended at the meeting of Chief of Defence Staff, held in Addis Ababa on 8 May 2012, there is a need for harmonisation of military and civilian relations within the theatre of operations to establish and strengthen the coordination and cooperation mechanism with the humanitarian actors and partners, taking advantage of the existing coordination structures and infrastructure on the ground. In the same vein, I would also advocate for efficient and effective coordination between the RTF and all stakeholders

including the UN Missions and offices (MONUSCO, UNMISS, BINUCA, UNAU and UNOCA) with a view to combating LRA and providing security to all innocent civilians.

9. In conclusion and as stated earlier, a multi-faceted, coordinated and sustained regional strategy against LRA is a key to our success. In addition to military operations, the establishment of effective police, judiciary and corrections structures to uphold the rule of law is essential to building sustainable peace in the LRA affected areas.

10. Lastly, allow me to express gratitude to all our humanitarian agencies, our partners, particularly the US and the EU, including national and International NGOs for the relentless contribution towards this initiative, and to our gallant soldiers. We thank you for your sacrifice. Together, we will succeed.

**Thank you for your attention.**