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THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE

08th February 2022

Rt Honourable Speaker

Honourable Members



**FINDINGS OF THE REPORT ON THE RENEWED CLASHES IN
APAA/ZOKA AREAS IN ADJUMANI DISTRICT**

INTRODUCTION

1. A Joint Security Agencies investigation was sanctioned mid-August 2021 to inquire into the renewed clashes in Apaa/Zoka area. This area has been the subject of contention between Madi and Acholi Communities for quite some time.

2. Apaa village (LC) with an estimated population of 35,000 was until 2017 under Lubala Prarish, Pabo Sub-County, Kilak North County in Amuru District. However, following the demarcation of boundary between Amuru and Adjumani districts in 2017, Apaa village was placed under Mungula Parish, Itirikwa Sub-County, Adjumani East Constituency in Adjumani District. The area has experienced recurrent clashes between the Acholi and Madi communities that have inhabited the area for decades.

3. Since 2018, following the visit by H.E. The President, Apaa has been generally peaceful. However, there is

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resurgence of clashes between the Acholi and Madi communities with the most prominent incidents registered between June and August 2021.

PREVAILING SITUATION

4. Government has several times engaged stakeholders to have the issue solved amicably.

On 19th January 2022, Acholi community attacked Madi who had gone to the garden in Ngoro village. Mr. Moroga Alex was seriously injured and he later passed on. At the same time a one, Mr. Ambayo David went missing, unfortunately, his dead body was also recovered and buried on 26th January 2022. 07 suspects were arrested and taken to Adjumani Police station after the death of the two people and investigations are ongoing.

On 26th January 2022, separate meetings were held with both the Acholi and Madi cultural leaders to find a long term solution to the conflict.

5. The following are the findings:

a. Incitement by politicians following numerous promises they made in the recently concluded elections, including the promise that they would recover what is perceived as the Madi land that was taken by the Acholi.

b. Fear of the Madi and Acholi communities that large numbers either continue to pour into Apaa as settlers, an area that is already gazetted as a Game Reserve.

Therefore, every small matter between individuals is quickly escalated as a community versus community issue.

c. Other factors fuelling the conflict:

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- i. Varying perceptions by the two communities about the status of Apaa land.
- ii. Increased agitation by the Acholi in Apaa following the boundary demarcation in 2017, which has disrupted service delivery in the area, since neither Amuru nor Adjumani district, is providing services. On the other side, the placement of the boundary has intensified agitations by the Madi community to push the Acholi community out of Apaa on account that Government finally recognized the area as belonging to the Madi.
- iii. Economic imperatives of Apaa/Zoka land.

6. From the investigations conducted, some leaders have been indicated to be fuelling the clashes across all the levels of social and political strata.

7. The Apaa/Zoka area is currently secured by the UPDF and a Company of Uganda Police Force FFU deployed in five (05) detachments at Apaa and Zoka. The Forces are so far responding well to the emerging threats despite constant interference from politicians who demand release of suspects.

8. The Team observed the following:

a. The establishment of the boundary between Amuru and Adjumani in 2017 including the placement of a boundary mark at Omee, has emboldened the Madi to claim full ownership of the contested land, while it is highly contested by the Acholi with a counter claim that it is their ancestral land, with a historical boundary at Zoka river, thereby exacerbating the conflict.

b. The conflict in Apaa has been hijacked by politicians on either side to the disadvantage of the local cultural institutions through which land conflicts have always been resolved in this part of the country and where communities

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previously co-existed amicably underlying these communal tensions ,are self-interests of leaders for land and political capital.

c. Service delivery in Apaa has almost stopped since the area can no longer be serviced by neither Amuru district nor Adjumani district. The reluctance by the Apaa community to accept services from Adjumani district due to distrust further compounds the problem.

WAY FORWARD

9. The following are steps being taken:

a. The Government is to engaging and prevailing upon the national and local politicians who have been identified to be behind the renewed clashes to promote harmony.

b. The Government will consider resettlement of the Communities that occupy the area of Apaa that was re gazetted as a Game Reserve, with the following possible options.

- i. Compensation of verifiable families.
- ii. Resettlement on Government owned land or by acquisition.

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c. The Government should consider engaging the Acholi and Madi Cultural Institutions to promote dialogue between the two communities and as a mechanism to address the land conflict.

CONCLUSION

The land conflict in Apaa/Zoka areas has been protracted, continues to stoke deep rooted tensions and the renewed clashes point to the delay by the Government to find a lasting solution. The conflict has also stood in the way of

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development in the area and is likely to frustrate the social-transformation agenda of the NRM Government.

I submit, Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Members.



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