



Saleh and Atiak's son with visitors during a tour of the sugar plantation in Acholi region

Saleh hails Acholi over agriculture projects, unity

By Ahmed Mukiibi and Joshua Kato

Last month, Gen. Salim Saleh (Caleb Akandwanaho) held meetings in Acholi region.

Saleh toured and acquainted himself with the success story of agriculture in the area where farmers are adopting modern methods of farming.

Many years ago, Saleh used to camp in this same region, but for military purposes, as one of the top commanders of the Uganda People's Defence Forces.

The region, that suffered the brunt of the war, is now taking huge strides in the agricultural sector.

A tour of Amuru, Nwoya and Gulu districts shows expansive farms of cereal, some as large as 5,000 hectares.

Sugar project

However, sugar growing and processing had not been part of this development, until Atiak Sugar, owned by businesswoman, Amina Hersi was set up.

Located in Atiak, the project already has most of the infrastructure set up, however, it was affected by both land holding and financial issues.

Already, part of the sugar processing factory has been constructed.

"I came here to observe the progress of the sugar factory," Saleh, who is also the co-ordinator of Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) said.

Atiak Sugar is largely a partnership between the local community, the government and Hersi.

The project sits on over 12,000 hectares.

There are also plans for another 5,000 hectares for out growers.

Once completed, it has the

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capacity to process over 1.4 million tonnes of sugar per year. Saleh pointed out that the visit to Acholi came as a result of a meeting he had with a delegation of Acholi leaders.

Led by Democratic Party president Norbert Mao, the team also included MPs from the region and local opinion leaders.

"I am happy to see the work moving on smoothly after the local leaders and politicians put aside their differences. They have rallied the community to open up their fields to the project," Saleh said.

Amuru and Nwoya districts have since drawn the interest of many farmers because of the fertile soils.

"We want development that comes with the consent of the population here," Gilbert Olanya, the area MP Kilak South said.

"We discussed ways to avoid and mitigate future conflict around land issues taking into account customary rights in minimising displacements," he said.