

Offensive

Artillery

Intelligence

Rebellion

By John B. Thawite

More than 100 Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels were killed during a long-range and artillery offensive mounted by the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) on the rebel bases in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The attack was carried out on Friday.

"Over 100 ADF were killed and their logistics stores destroyed in eight camps," the UPDF spokesperson, Brig. Richard Karemire, confirmed to *New Vision* on Sunday, explaining that "there are no UPDF boots (deaths) on the DRC ground".

Karemire said the rebels, numbering 700 to 900 at the time of the raids, were attacked in eight camps in the Eringeti areas of North Kivu Province, eastern DRC.

Describing the UPDF operation that used the air force and long-range artillery weapons as a "surgical attacks on ADF camps in eastern DRC", Karemire said it was a culmination of a process that had involved high-level Ugandan and DRC authorities.

The offensive came weeks after the rebels killed over a dozen UN peacekeepers and injured 50 in North Kivu province. Karemire said Friday's pre-emptive attack on ADF followed co-ordinated joint intelligence by the military in both Uganda and DRC. He said intelligence in Uganda and the DRC had established that the rebel group, which has terrorised Uganda and DRC since the 1990s, was planning to conduct hostile activities against Uganda. He said the army had learnt that ADF militants were planning

UPDF kills 100 ADF



President Yoweri Museveni visiting injured UN Tanzanian peacekeepers Vincent Raymond Soko (left) and Ibrahim Majiri on Sunday. The two are admitted to Nakasero Hospital in Kampala after surviving an attack by ADF rebels in DR Congo. Museveni is flanked by Brig. Gen. SS Makoma, the first secretary of the embassy of Tanzania. PPU photo

to enter Uganda through Bundibugyo.

He said: "The ADF terrorists have been bundling up in eastern DRC over years. They have been recruiting outside Uganda, training and carrying out radicalisation, even of women and children, while working with foreign jihadists."

"Of recent, there have been increased signals of intended active hostile activities against Uganda, necessitating the beefing up of security on the (Uganda-Congo) border," Karemire said.

The attack on ADF was the culmination of a process that had involved high-level Ugandan and DRC authorities

Support

Karemire said there is documentary evidence indicating that the ADF are being supported by Islamic Jihadist group, the Islamic

State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

Past atrocities

The ADF sprung up as an Islamic terror group that caused havoc in the Rwenzori

sub-region in western Uganda and eastern DRC before the UPDF defeated them on the Uganda side in 2001 and, with a nod from the Kinshasa regime, pursued the rebels into DRC.

"Over the years, they have massacred civilians, killed UN peacekeepers and attacked armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo," he said, adding that in Uganda, the ADF has instigated killings of Muslim clerics and some notable people.

Museveni, Kabila agree

"In light of these developments, President Museveni has been engaging President Kabila and other leaders in the region about the persistent threat of the ADF, not only to DRC, but also to Uganda and the need for a solution," Karemire said.

He added that the consultations have been going on through various bilateral and other regional mechanisms, such as the International Conference on Great Lakes Region.

"Recently, DRC authorities proposed that the two countries conduct limited joint operations against the growing terrorist threat in our neighbourhood," he said.

He said the operation was after senior military and intelligence command levels of the two countries began the work of flushing out the rebels. Karemire said using a combination of capabilities, the army raided and overran their camps in Eringeti.

Last week, high-level diplomatic and military delegations from Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and DRC held consultative meetings aimed at giving Ugandan troops leeway to pursue ADF rebels in the jungles of the DRC.

According to Okello Oryem, the state minister for international affairs, the other possibility that necessitated the consultative meetings between key East African states with DRC is the crafting of joint operations against the ADF.

"UPDF cannot engage ADF without consulting Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi and DRC. These are all stakeholders. So, we are still consulting with them, until we reach an agreement," he said.