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UGANDA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNS "CALLOUS AND CALCULATED"
KILLINGS BY UGANDAN REBELS

Following last week's slaughter of more than 115 Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda, Amnesty International today accused two armed opposition movements fighting the Ugandan Government of the callous and calculated abuse of human rights.

The attack on Achol Pii refugee camp on 12 and 13 July brings to more than 300 the number of Ugandan civilians and Sudanese refugees killed in deliberate attacks by the armed opposition Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) since March 1996.

"People were cruelly hacked to death with machetes or shot at point-blank range. We call on both movements to put an immediate end to such attacks -- no political conflict gives the right to massacre and maim," Amnesty International said.

Amnesty International utterly condemns the massacre at Achol Pii camp, the murder of more than 130 Ugandan civilians by the LRA in an ambush near Karuma in March, and attacks on refugees and civilians at Koboko and elsewhere by the WNBF.

At Achol Pii, home to more than 16,000 people fleeing the war zones of southern Sudan, refugees were shot at point-blank range or cruelly hacked to death with machetes. Food was looted and more than 300 huts burned down.

At least four Ugandans, including two policemen, were also abducted. Amnesty International is concerned about their safety and is calling on the LRA to free them immediately.

The LRA has denied responsibility for the attack on Achol Pii, and has tried to blame it on the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), an armed opposition movement fighting the Sudanese Government in the long-running civil war.

"Our information indicates that the LRA's denial of responsibility is just not credible," Amnesty International said. "These killings were by the LRA and were deliberate. They follow the pattern of extreme and arbitrary violence used by the LRA against unarmed civilians for several years."

Conflict in northern Uganda has intensified sharply over the past five months with incursions by the WNBF on the west bank of the Nile and by the LRA in Gulu and Kitgum Districts to the east. Both groups have made repeated attacks on Ugandan and international relief operations.

The LRA and WNBF are reported to operate from bases inside Sudan. Amnesty International is therefore calling on the Sudanese authorities to intervene to prevent further human rights abuses by both movements.

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