

UPDFs Success in Somalia Hinged on Discipline
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President Yoweri Museveni has attributed the success of the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) in Somalia to the discipline on which the force was formed.

Mr. Museveni, on his third day visit to Sri Lanka at the invitation of his counterpart, President Mahinda Rajapakasa, was talking to the top brass of the Sri Lankan army, including the Army Commander, General Jagath Jayasooriya.

President Museveni is in Sri Lanka together with his wife, Mrs. Janet Museveni, who is also Karamoja Affairs Minister and MP for Ruhama. The First Lady had a parallel program which included meeting several senior government officials on matters related to her Ministry.

President Museveni told the officers, after watching the recorded video of the defeat of the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) forces, which terrorized the people of Sri Lanka for decades that discipline is very important in wars. He said that the UPDF has succeeded where big armies failed under hostile conditions because of this discipline.

"Discipline is very important as Mao pointed out that soldiers should not take a needle or thread from civilians. No soldier should steal anything or harass civilians", he stressed.

Another important factor, he said, is to distinguish between the misleaders and the misled. The two groups, he said, should be separated and dealt with differently. The President told the officers that soldiers must be well trained.

"They should learn to operate in small units", he noted, adding that some soldiers because of poor training, fear to operate in small groups preferring to move enmass believing that this instills fear into the enemy because of the large numbers.

He, however, explained that to defeat an insurgency, the army must deploy effectively to deny the insurgents a chance of infiltrating the liberated areas.

"It should be like football where the opponent team member is denied control over the ball; it is kicked away from the opponent", he explained. He criticized some of the developed countries who impose restrictions on countries facing insurgencies not to recruit enough soldiers to provide for both permanent zonal forces and the highly mobile units and defeat the enemy decisively.

"If the liberated areas are left open, they can be infested by the enemy. When this happens, Museveni said, the government soldiers dance on the tune of the enemy", he noted. He, therefore, asserted that although there is need for well trained personnel in form of Special Forces who can operate in small groups with good commanders and aim at high value targets, countries facing insurgencies must be allowed to recruit more people into the army. He pointed out that the war in Sri Lanka took a long time because previous leaders overlooked these important war tactics.

'I congratulate you upon your victory. The war wouldn't have lasted long because the rebel leader operated on poor strategies. If I was an examiner, I give him zero", he told the Sri Lanka army officers.

The President supported the Sri Lankan proposal of joint seminars and co-operation between the UPDF and the Sri Lankan Army and other countries to share experience and knowledge.

Mr. Museveni once again reiterated his stand that he wanted only serious investors not poor people to come and do business in Uganda because, he said, he has enough in Uganda.

His stand has already paid up dividends during the current visit to Sri Lanka because almost all the investors he met were serious and ready to commence their projects in Uganda within a very short time.

The Sri Lankan Consul General in Uganda, Mr. Velupillai Kananathan, reported he had ensured that only the rich and serious investors met the President.

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