



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

18 November 1983

*Mr. Dr. President,*

I have seen a copy of your Government's appeal to the international community for help for those people who have in recent months been displaced from their homes in the area to the north and north-west of Kampala.

I wanted to let you know that I have every sympathy for the measures your authorities are taking to alleviate the hardships faced by these people. I am glad that British voluntary agencies have already been able to play a substantial part in the relief effort and hope that they will be able to give active help to your newly appointed Relief Co-ordinator in the areas concerned. I have asked my people to look into the possibility of providing more money for the important work that lies ahead.

We have followed with the closest interest and sympathy the efforts your Government and you personally have made to rebuild your country's security and prosperity. I look forward to seeing you at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in New Delhi next week.

With warm regards,

*Yours sincerely*  
*Raymond Dehnb*

His Excellency Dr. Apolo Milton Obote

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

21 November 1983

*The Prime Minister did  
not speak at any length  
to Mr. Obote.*

*A.J.C. 30.*

*John Taylor,*

CHOGM: Bilateral with President Obote of Uganda

The Prime Minister has sent a message to President Obote indicating her interest in meeting him at CHOGM and in having some bilateral discussion with him there. I enclose a speaking note.

The background to the displacement of civilians by the Uganda army's operations to the north and north-west of Kampala was described in my letter of 16 November. Notwithstanding the excesses involved in that operation, there has been a steady improvement both in the security situation generally and in the behaviour of the army. There is growing evidence that the army commanders are now more responsive to the President's instructions and more capable of enforcing a degree of discipline on their troops. Part of this improvement can be ascribed to the work of the Commonwealth Military Training Team in Uganda (CMTTU) (we supply half the personnel, including its commander), though there remains much room for improvement.

There has also been considerable progress in restoring the economy: Obote has conformed strictly to the harsh prescriptions of the IMF, allowing full play to market forces. British firms are bullish about the commercial prospects. But here again, as Obote realises, there is a long way to go, given the parlous state of the Ugandan administration and the country's substantial unpaid debts.

As the Amin years pass into history, public opinion is likely to become less tolerant of the methods used in Uganda to complete

/the government's

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the government's assertion of its political control. It could then become more difficult to justify the good relations with Obote which our interests require. The Prime Minister may therefore wish, while reassuring him of our support, to seek from him a greater readiness to take us into his confidence than he has shown in the past. The Prime Minister will also wish to mention the need for progress in meeting the claims of the expelled Asians for compensation (background in PMVE (83)C40).

I am copying this letter and its enclosure to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

*Yours*

*R B Bone*

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

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BILATERIAL WITH PRESIDENT OBOTE:

POINTS TO MAKE

1. Welcome continued progress in restoring Uganda's security and rehabilitating the economy with IMF and World Bank support.
2. Understand the desire to deal firmly with guerillas, but important also to protect civilians. Welcome recent relief measures. Glad to provide £250,000 additional to previous help.
3. British firms optimistic about economic prospects. Encouraged by this and by recent agreement with Moi and Nyerere to settle distribution of assets and liabilities of the former East African community. This help to the regional economy will contribute to the political stability we all want.
4. Will mandate of the CMTTU be extended?

[Depending on response]

Will need to consider what role is expected of us. The Commonwealth formula a good one.

5. We have resisted pressure to take up cases of expelled Asians on a government to government basis. Hope for assurance of early progress in processing the claims.

6. [Defensive]

We have made quite clear in Parliament our distaste for your political opponents in the UK who advocate further violence in Uganda. We have no dealings with them. But we cannot take legal

/action



action against them unless they break our laws. Ready to look into any evidence of illegal activity.

7. [Defensive]

Press and media criticism of Uganda. A matter to take up directly with the press, radio and television. BBC has complete editorial freedom.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

16 November 1983

*John Doe,*

Uganda: Displaced Persons

In mid-September, the Uganda Government issued an international appeal for assistance to alleviate the suffering caused to the civilian population in Buganda (particularly in the area to the north and north-west of Kampala) by an army operation against the guerrilla campaign being waged by the National Resistance Army (NRA).

The Ugandan army started its major military campaign against the NRA at the beginning of this year. The army's objective is understandable; and a directed coherent effort is in principle preferable to the uncoordinated vengeance with which the army previously responded to guerrilla attacks. But the campaign has resulted in the displacement of large numbers (up to 120,000) of civilians from their homes and farms. These civilians are now in camps supervised by the army. Conditions there are appalling; some reports estimate that 30% of the children in the camps are severely malnourished; there is harassment of young girls and women; overcrowding is severe; and disease is rife. We have played a major part in providing humanitarian assistance. Relief work in the camps has so far been carried out by (mainly British) voluntary agencies, who have until recently been tolerated but not much assisted by the Uganda Government. We have committed nearly £240,000 from ODA disaster relief funds to help the agencies. We have also taken the lead in urging the Uganda Government to accept its responsibilities towards the displaced persons.

Mr Rifkind pressed home our concern during his visit to Uganda in July. Now, in response to this pressure from ourselves and others, the Uganda Government has issued an appeal for assistance and has set up a relief administration committee which is being chaired by a British Technical Cooperation Officer with long experience of Uganda, Mr William Kirkham. We know that President Obote is personally responsible for this initiative. Other Western countries are making considerable contributions in response to this appeal and the Foreign Secretary has agreed that we should

/contribute



contribute £250,000 (£150,000 from Uganda's 1983/84 aid allocation; and a further £100,000 of emergency relief funds) for the rehabilitation of the displaced persons. We shall of course need to keep a close eye on how the money is spent.

Sir Geoffrey suggests that the Prime Minister might send President Obote a personal message in advance of CHOGM, reminding him of the support we have given him since he returned to power, paving the way for a discussion in the margins of CHOGM, during the course of which the Prime Minister might tell Obote of the additional aid now available. If the Prime Minister agrees, we will let you have an appropriate short supplementary brief for CHOGM.

I am copying this letter to Mike Power in Mr Raison's office and to Richard Hatfield in the Cabinet Office.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R B Bone', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street