



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Uganda - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 29 June 2010

Re: Information on treatment of Acholi tribe in Uganda.

In a section titled "The Situation in Northern Uganda" a *US Congressional Research Service* document states:

"While much of the country has remained stable since the NRM took power in 1986, civil war has ravaged northern Uganda for over 20 years. The situation has been characterized as one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, where civilians, particularly children, are the most affected, according to the United Nations and numerous reports by non-governmental organizations. The conflict and the humanitarian crisis in northern Uganda have killed tens of thousands of civilians due to deliberate targeting of children by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) (see below), although the actual number of those killed is unknown. According to a report by the Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU), a coalition of 50 Ugandan and international groups, more than two million civilians have been affected. An estimated 90% of the population in the northern region of Acholiland, particularly in the districts of Gulu, Kitigum, and Pader, have been displaced; and some estimate that 80% of the forces in the LRA are the abducted children from these areas. For the past two decades, the victims in this conflict have largely been civilians, although the conflict began as an effort to overthrow the Museveni regime. The victims reportedly were abused routinely by security forces and the government failed to provide adequate protection to civilians, particularly children in northern Uganda, according to several reports." (US Congressional Research Service (15 May 2009) *Uganda: Current Conditions and the Crisis in North Uganda*)

In a section titled "History of the LRA" a report published by the Catholic peace movement *Pax Christi* states:

"Many of the fighters of the LRA see themselves as fighters for their people, the Acholi, whom they believe to be marginalized, abused and excluded from Uganda's development by an oppressive regime. These issues are also mentioned in various LRA manifestos and also came to the fore during the peace negotiations in Juba. Despite the atrocities committed by the LRA still enjoy some support among the Acholi community and the Ugandan diaspora." (IKV Pax Christi (9 April 2009) *How EnLightning is the Thunder? Study on the Lord's Resistance Army in the border region of DR Congo, Sudan and Uganda*, p.4)

A report published by the *East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project* states:

"The prolonged conflict continues to have an immense impact on the social and economic structure of the Acholi society, consequences which are further accentuated by the continued violations of certain segments of this populations' right to food, health and housing due to the inability at times of

the government and the donor community to cater for the returnee and IDPs basic needs. Reparations for victims and survivors have been limited. Victims of rape and sexual violence continue to suffer immense physical and psychological consequences. The shortage of health care facilities in many parts of the region, notably counselling services, further hampers their recuperation. Those that have undergone rehabilitation programs often feel that these only offer short term assistance. The land issue is a significant problem as many of those displaced by the conflict have lost their land or seen their property destroyed.” (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (13 May 2009) *Overview of the Human Rights Situation in the East and Horn of Africa: Uganda*)

The 2009 *Minority Rights Group International* annual report on Uganda refers to the Acholi as follows:

“Smaller minority groups in Uganda, such as the Acholi, and other minorities such as the Alur, Kakwa, Lugbara and Madi in north-west Uganda, continue to be disproportionately disadvantaged. Many Acholi children have been abducted to serve as child soldiers and have missed out on education entirely. The Acholi used to enjoy among the highest per capita representation in Uganda’s higher education. Now, however, Acholi children lag behind the rest of the nation in all educational areas.” (Minority Rights Group International (16 July 2009) *State of the World’s Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2009 – Uganda*)

In a section titled “Violence & Life in the IDP Camps” a *Child Rights Information Network* report states:

“The IDP camps were established as a short term solution to provide security from raids by the LRA. However, this stop-gap measure became the conditions under which thousands of families lived for over ten years. The organization and way of life in the camps was basically at odds with Acholi culture and traditions. For example, most families were limited to one hut, a major departure from local habits where families had separate sleeping quarters for parents and children. This caused problems for privacy and a sense of the proper organization of domestic life.” (Child Rights Information Network (21 October 2009) *Uganda: Moving Towards Peace*)

This report also states:

“Acholi society has a proud culture whose traditions guide relationships between parents and children. This includes respect for elders, a rigid organization of gender roles and the assumption that parents have a strong say in their children’s lives and behaviour. It is a culture based on cooperation, a collective sense of responsibility for children and courtesy amongst neighbours and relatives. IDP camp life has undermined these practices. Jealousy and suspicion of others became prominent. The position of the male as head of the household was weakened as camp life had nothing to reinforce this role. In focus group discussions, many complained of the “I don’t care, do what you want, just don’t bother me” attitude that parents have adopted with their teenagers. Overwhelmed by depression and feelings of hopelessness, they lacked the energy to keep up with these responsibilities.” (ibid)

In a section titled "Transition" a *Forced Migration Review* article states:

"Considering the abject conditions of many Ugandan IDP camps, urban destinations may appear advantageous but the reality can be very different. For the displaced Acholi, Kampala represents a marked contrast to their northern homelands and former agrarian lifestyles, a contrast which is sharpened by often romanticised 'pre-conflict' memories of the north. Whereas livelihoods and material necessities were previously regarded as 'given' – intrinsically connected with one's land and subsistence activities – access to even the most essential of amenities is uncertain in Kampala. As one interviewee pointed out, 'Life is very, very difficult... everything needs money: rent, water, even toilets.'" (Forced Migration Review (18 February 2010) *Transition, connection and uncertainty: IDPs in Kampala*, p.34)

References:

Child Rights Information Network (21 October 2009) *Uganda: Moving Towards Peace*

http://www.crin.org/docs/FileManager/Vicious_Circles_Uganda.pdf

(Accessed 29 June 2010)

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (13 May 2009) *Overview of the Human Rights Situation in the East and Horn of Africa: Uganda*

[http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country/print.shtml?cmd\[113\]=x-113-265257](http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country/print.shtml?cmd[113]=x-113-265257)

(Accessed 29 June 2010)

This is a subscription database.

Forced Migration Review (18 February 2010) *Transition, connection and uncertainty: IDPs in Kampala*

<http://www.fmreview.org/urban-displacement/FMR34/34-35.pdf>

(Accessed 29 June 2010)

IKV Pax Christi (9 April 2009) *How EnLightning is the Thunder? Study on the Lord's Resistance Army in the border region of DR Congo, Sudan and Uganda*

[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2009.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/FJTC-7R4HPV-full_report.pdf/\\$File/full_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2009.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/FJTC-7R4HPV-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf)

(Accessed 29 June 2010)

Minority Rights Group International (16 July 2009) *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2009 – Uganda*

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=printdoc&docid=4a66d9a037>

(Accessed 28 June 2010)

US Congressional Research Service (15 May 2009) *Uganda: Current Conditions and the Crisis in North Uganda*

[http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country/print.shtml?cmd\[113\]=x-113-261247](http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country/print.shtml?cmd[113]=x-113-261247)

(Accessed 29 June 2010)

This is a subscription database.

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted:

Amnesty International
Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Google
Human Rights Watch
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
International Crisis Group
Lexis Nexis
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
UNHCR Refworld
United States Department of State