

UGANDA:

Returns outpace recovery planning

A profile of the internal displacement situation

19 August, 2009

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OVERVIEW

Uganda: Returns outpace recovery planning

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Since the signing of a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army in 2006, about two thirds of the 1.8 million IDPs who lived in camps at the height of the crisis have returned to their areas of origin.

However, much work remains to be done to ensure that these returns are sustainable. Basic infrastructure and services in the return areas are inadequate or non-existent. Lack of access to clean water poses a risk of epidemics, and clinics and schools struggle with a lack of facilities and qualified personnel. While returnees have begun to grow their own food, the food security situation of many is still fragile, particularly as low rainfall since April 2009 means that harvests are predicted to be more than 60 per cent lower than normal.

Significant numbers of those who remain in the camps are there not out of choice but because they are unable to return to their home areas. Some IDPs cannot return because land disputes prevent them from accessing land, while IDPs with special needs and vulnerabilities are unable to support themselves in the return areas. Returnee communities need assistance to reintegrate these vulnerable IDPs.

The government and its international partners in northern Uganda have struggled to manage the transition from humanitarian emergency assistance to recovery and development. The government is in the process of reasserting its authority in the north, and is formally in charge of coordination and the provision of planning frameworks. However, a lack of capacity at the local level means that government authorities frequently struggle to discharge their operational responsibilities.

Background: war and displacement in northern Uganda

The conflict in northern Uganda began in 1986. A history of antagonism and distrust between the Acholi people of northern Uganda and southern-based tribes dominating the government contributed to the formation of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in 1987, led by Joseph Kony. The LRA purportedly aimed to overthrow the government led by current president Yoweri Museveni, rebuild the Acholi nation and culture and rule Uganda in accordance with the biblical ten commandments (LIU, 30 October 2003, p.33; RLP, February 2004, p.5; CSOPNU, 10 December 2004, p.28). It has since been accused of widespread human rights violations including massacres and the systematic abduction of children to take part in hostilities.

In the period up to 1996, some people in the Acholi sub-region fled their villages as a direct result of LRA attacks, but the main cause of the subsequent large-scale displacement was the government's decision in 1996 to force civilians into IDP camps which it described as "protected villages". The displacement crisis worsened in October 2002, when the army, in the course of a large-scale offensive entitled "Operation Iron Fist", ordered all civilians remaining in "abandoned villages" to move to government camps. Around the same time, the area affected by displacement expanded as the LRA moved eastwards into the Lango and Teso sub-regions. Operation Iron Fist failed to defeat the LRA, and in March 2004 the army launched "Operation

Iron Fist II”, causing further massive displacement. By the end of 2005, a total of about 1.8 million people were living in IDP camps (Weeks, March 2002, p.2; RLP, February 2004, p.25; CSOPNU, 10 December 2004, p.6 and 31 December 2004, p.1; HRW, September 2005, p.10; Reuters, 21 February 2008).

The LRA repeatedly attacked IDP camps, although the army was deployed to protect them. The army’s failure to ensure security and the appalling humanitarian conditions in the camps further entrenched the Acholi people’s sense of political and social marginalisation (CSOPNU, 10 December 2004, p.2; RLP, February 2004, p.25; The Monitor, 26 August 2008).

An unknown number of people moved to towns and trading centres across northern Uganda instead of camps, while others moved further away to towns and cities such as Masindi, Jinja and Kampala. No comprehensive data has ever been collected on urban IDPs in Uganda; estimates of their number range from 300,000 to 600,000 (RLP, 17 December 2007; Protection Cluster, 16 July 2009).

Peace negotiations stall at final hurdle

A third attempt at peace talks began in July 2006, and the next month the government and the LRA signed the landmark Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CHA), which resulted in substantial improvements in security conditions and in humanitarian access to affected populations. The signing of the CHA paved the way for further negotiations, and between May 2007 and February 2008 the parties signed a total of seven agreements (ICG, 14 September 2007).

However, Kony failed to show up to sign a final peace agreement in April 2008, and successive attempts to obtain Kony’s signature have all since failed (Chief Mediator Riek Machar, 11 September 2008). The LRA has maintained that it is committed to the peace process, but views the July 2005 International Criminal Court indictments of Kony and four other LRA commanders as the major obstacle to signing the final peace agreement (Sudan Tribune, 17 September 2008; OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.6; ICC, 14 October 2005). Given the improbability of further progress at this time, the UN Secretary-General suspended the mandate of his Special Envoy for the LRA-affected areas in June 2009 (Security Council Report, 22 June 2009).

While the security situation in northern Uganda has improved significantly since the signing of the CHA in 2006, the LRA has increasingly presented a regional security threat. Since September 2008 the LRA has attacked villages in the Central African Republic (CAR), Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), killing more than 1,000 civilians, abducting close to 2,000, and forcing more than 300,000 people to flee their homes. A regional military offensive launched in December 2008, “Operation Lightning Thunder”, failed to end atrocities by the LRA, which carried out further attacks against local communities (Resolve Uganda, July 2009; OCHA, 21 July 2009, p.7; UNHCR, 7 August 2009). There is no consensus about a viable strategy to protect civilians in the region from further LRA violence.

Patterns of return

As of May 2009, 378,000 IDPs remained in camps (about 20 per cent of the peak IDP population of 1.8 million); a further 244,000 had moved from camps to “transit sites” closer to their land, while the remainder had returned to their home villages. However, there were substantial regional variations: in Amuru district only 23 per cent of the original camp population had returned to their home villages, while for Gulu and Pader districts it was 68 and 70 per cent respectively (IASC, May 2009).

In May 2008 the government issued *Camp Phase-Out Guidelines* (OPM, May 2008), which were followed in June 2008 by *Guidelines for the Demolition of Abandoned Structures* (Camp

Coordination and Camp Management Cluster, June 2008). In the Lango sub-region all of the 61 IDP camps had officially been “phased out” by the end of March 2008, although OCHA noted at the time that “several thousand” IDPs remained in the former camps, including about 700 people with specific needs who remained there without family or community support (OHCHR et al., 24 June 2008; OCHA, 31 March 2008 and 16 July 2008, p.10).

In the Acholi sub-region, 60 out of a total of 121 camps had been assessed for phase-out by July 2009, but none had been closed officially (Protection Cluster, 16 July 2009). However, in practice, support was being progressively withdrawn in many camps, and more than 15,000 abandoned huts had already been demolished (OCHA, 21 July 2009, p.14).

The remaining camp population largely consists of four groups. Specific sets of obstacles, discussed in more detail below, have blocked the return of three of these four groups: firstly, so-called “extremely vulnerable individuals” (EVIs) and other people with special needs (sometimes referred to as EVIs and PSNs respectively); secondly, people who cannot go back to their areas of origin because of land disputes; and thirdly, young people who have been left behind by their family so they can access services in the camps, primarily education but also health care.

The fourth group of people in the camps are those who do not intend to return, because of the economic opportunities (typically petty trade) in and near the camps. The government has not responded to the needs of this group, instead focusing almost exclusively on returns, despite the fact that Uganda’s National IDP Policy and the *Camp Phase-Out Guidelines* emphasise IDPs’ right to make a free and informed choice between return, local integration and settlement elsewhere in the country (Government of Uganda, 22 July 2009; see also Oxfam, September 2008, pp.13-17; The New Vision, 13 August 2008). The mid-year review of the 2009 Consolidated Appeal for Uganda noted that “the third ‘durable solution’ – those who wish to remain where they are – continues to be an under-attended area of policy” (OCHA, 21 July 2009, p.7). The government’s plans to promote durable solutions other than return have not been sufficiently developed to address land disputes in the camps and in the return areas (see the discussion below), help IDPs obtain land in the former camp areas, or support the transformation of some camps and transit sites into towns and trading centres.

The government and international agencies have made initial preparations to assess the needs of Uganda’s urban IDP population and to plan for durable solutions, including support for return and reintegration, but as of August 2009 no such assessments have been carried out (Protection Cluster, 16 July 2009; RLP, October 2008, July 2008, March 2008 and December 2007; The Monitor, 12 and 17 December 2007).

Obstacles to return

IDPs with particular vulnerabilities

The most vulnerable IDPs (EVIs and PSNs) include people with disabilities, severely traumatised people, female-headed households, orphans and child-headed households, and elderly people without family support. Some of them are presently struggling to survive, especially in those camps where the World Food Programme (WFP) has stopped food distributions, due to a lack of funding (Geneva briefing by the UN RSG on the human rights of IDPs, 29 July 2009).

For the majority of these people local integration is not likely to provide a durable solution: they would remain dependent on humanitarian assistance indefinitely. While many of them, and the elderly people among them in particular, would prefer to return to their places of origin (UNHCR and HelpAge, June 2008), communities there are unlikely to be able to take sole responsibility for them in light of the difficult conditions they face. Viable strategies are needed for the reintegration of EVIs and PSNs, the development of which will require dialogue with receiving communities. One possibility, suggested by the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the human

rights of IDPs, would be to provide EVIs and PSNs with agricultural tools or oxen, which they could then lend to the community in return for food and other forms of assistance.

Land disputes

As IDPs have returned, the number of land disputes in return areas has risen (OCHA, 21 July 2009, p.7; IRIN, 1 October 2008; Oxfam, September 2008, p.12; World Bank, February 2008, p.ii). 93 per cent of land in northern Uganda is held under customary law with no registration of land boundaries (OHCHR, 8 July 2009), and many returnees have been unable to recall or agree on the exact boundaries of their land. The means to resolve these disputes are limited, as land administration and adjudication mechanisms are not functional in northern Uganda, especially the Land Committees and Land Tribunals (OHCHR, 8 July 2009). Some early returnees have taken advantage of the fact that former neighbours have not yet returned by moving the boundaries of their land, something which is likely to further disadvantage vulnerable IDPs who have not yet returned.

The customary ownership system has not stopped some people in northern Uganda becoming landless. Households headed by women (23 per cent of all households in 2007 according to UNDP, December 2007, p.12) are at particular risk of being denied access to land by their relatives, as are orphans and other child-headed households (Protection Cluster, 16 July 2009; The Monitor, 18 September 2008). Traditional institutions involved in the mediation of land disputes have not in all cases paid due regard to national and international human rights norms, in particular with respect to age and gender equality.

IDPs who have remained in the camps are facing increasing pressure to leave from the owners of the land the camps have been situated on. The majority lack the resources to buy or rent land, and reports of forcible evictions have become more frequent (Daily Monitor, 24 July 2009). The problem is likely to become even more acute as camp closures get under way in the Acholi districts.

Challenges in return areas

Food security

While returnees have begun to grow their own food, many are at risk of becoming food-insecure again in future. Currently only 34 per cent of available land in the Acholi districts is being cultivated, mainly due to the difficulties of clearing overgrown land (including fears about remaining land mines); the uncertainties involved in planting on disputed land or even arising from fears about the possible return of the LRA to northern Uganda; and inadequate access to agricultural tools, seed and fertiliser. Although returnees need continued support to overcome these constraints and achieve sustainable food security, interventions aimed at expanding land access and use have so far failed to meet needs in the return areas (OCHA, 21 July 2009, pp.1,7).

The lack of contingency planning by the government and reductions in food distribution by WFP have combined with changing rainfall patterns in northern Uganda to further undermine the fragile food security of IDPs and recent returnees. Prospects for the 2009 harvest are poor due to the late onset of the first season rains and the low overall rainfall since April: current predictions are that harvests will probably be under 40 per cent of normal yields. This outcome is likely to lead to an increase in food prices, which are already very high, presenting a further obstacle to food security for returnee households who are unable to grow all their own food (FEWSNET, June 2009, p.2).

In March 2009, WFP planned to distribute food to 750,000 IDPs and returnees. However, by May 2009 a lack of funding had forced WFP to stop distributing to most IDPs, with only about 99,000

EVIs continuing to receive food. Since then, WFP has had to stop distributing food to some camps, even for remaining EVIs (OCHA, 21 July 2009, pp.7, 12; FEWSNET, June 2009, pp.2-3).

Lack of services

The government has thus far failed to plan effectively for the restoration of services in return areas. The mid-year review of the 2008 Consolidated Appeal for Uganda noted “an appalling lack of basic services in transit sites and return areas” (OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.7). A year later, the mid-year review of the 2009 Appeal observed that “inadequate or non-existent basic infrastructure and services in return areas remains of serious concern and is believed to partially account for the reduced pace of return” (OCHA, 21 July 2009, p.7).

Schools in the return areas lack facilities such as housing for teachers, classroom facilities, latrines and water points. The shortage of qualified teachers is compounded by high levels of absenteeism among teachers. As a result of the poor quality of education on offer, absenteeism among pupils and drop-out levels are high (OCHA, 21 July 2009, p.11). Over 40 per cent of returning households have left children behind in the camps because of better access to education or health care there (Protection Cluster, 16 July 2009).

Fewer than 30 per cent of returnees have access to clean drinking water. In some transit sites and return villages, people have access to at least 15 litres of water per day in line with the SPHERE standards, but the distribution of water access points is uneven and some return villages lack access to safe water within a distance of 1.5 kilometres (OCHA, 21 July 2009, p.16).

Overstretched services are failing to meet the demands of returning populations. There are shortages of clinics, qualified personnel, and medication. Absenteeism amongst health workers poses a further problem. Health authorities are still struggling to control an outbreak of Hepatitis E, 18 months after the first cases were reported. Access to reproductive health services is inadequate.

The lack of services including health care, justice, security and social support has created particular problems for victims of gender-based violence (GBV). GBV, including domestic violence, rape, and early and forced marriage, is still widespread in northern Uganda, (Protection Cluster, 16 July 2009). Food insecurity has heightened women’s vulnerability to GBV, but the percentage of female-headed households benefiting from livelihoods support has decreased due to the closure or reduction of humanitarian activities in the Acholi sub-region (OCHA, 21 July 2009, p.15).

National response

In 2004, Uganda adopted the National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons, making it one of the first countries in the world to have an IDP policy. The Policy guarantees IDPs’ right to make a free and informed choice between return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country (Office of the Prime Minister, August 2004, section 3.4).

On 15 October 2007, after repeated delays, the government launched the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for Northern Uganda, including Acholi, Lango, Teso, West Nile, Karamoja, and Elgon sub-regions. The PRDP provides a development framework aimed at bringing socio-economic indicators in areas affected by conflict and breakdown in law and order into line with national standards. It has four strategic objectives: consolidation of state authority, rebuilding and empowering communities, revitalisation of the economy, and peace building and reconciliation.

Although the PRDP focuses mostly on “hardware” (buildings, infrastructure) at the expense of developing the human capacity of the education, health care, local government, security and

justice sectors, its full implementation would significantly help to counter the real and perceived neglect and marginalisation at the root of the conflict. However, the planning of PRDP-related activities in the northern districts has remained separate from existing national and district planning cycles, and the recovery component of the existing district development plans needs to be strengthened (Geneva briefing by the UN RSG on the human rights of IDPs, 29 July 2009; see also UN RSG, 17 July 2009). The ongoing process of subdividing existing districts has created further problems, with newly-created districts lacking the capacity to discharge their responsibilities (Beyond Juba, June 2009).

Moreover, a lack of clarity about funding and oversight mechanisms has meant that the implementation of the PRDP only began with the start of the 2009-2010 financial year on 1 July 2009. The estimated three-year budget of the PRDP was \$606 million (Government of Uganda, September 2007, pp.vi-ix), but the government recently stated that “this figure has since been overtaken by economic trends” (Government of Uganda, 22 July 2009). The government has committed to fund 30 per cent of the PRDP’s overall cost, and has requested the international community to fund the remaining 70 per cent.

International response

As of 28 July 2009, the Consolidated Appeal for Uganda for 2009 was 45 per cent funded, with three sectors having received no funds at all (education, mine action, and shelter and non-food items), and the health sector having received only 11 per cent of the funds requested (OCHA, 28 July 2009). The Consolidated Appeal for 2010 is expected to be the last in relation to the crisis in northern Uganda.

In June 2009, the UN launched its three-year Peace Building and Recovery Assistance Programme for Northern Uganda (UNPRAP) (UN, 22 June 2009), which sets out a strategy for “aligning UN interventions with the PRDP and other government frameworks for northern Uganda” (UNPRAP, p.4).

The phasing out of humanitarian activities has not been properly synchronised with the establishment of recovery and development activities. Following the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in 2006, the transition from humanitarian relief to development support has been characterised by “institutional confusion and weak leadership” (Oxfam, September 2008, p.17; see also Resolve Uganda, September 2008). To date, the impact of development interventions in the Acholi districts has been insufficiently visible, because of the long time frames of most development planning. In the short and medium terms, there is a risk that people in return areas may end up worse off than they were in the camps, with obvious implications for peace and stability in the region.

Moreover, there are concerns that humanitarian actors are closing down operations in the Acholi districts too early, in order to start programmes in neighbouring Karamoja. While the humanitarian needs in Karamoja (arising mostly from prolonged drought and ongoing communal violence) indeed require urgent attention, donors and humanitarian actors should be encouraged to integrate their responses in the Acholi and Karamoja sub-regions (Geneva briefing by the UN RSG on the human rights of IDPs, 29 July 2009).

Uganda was one of the pilot countries for the implementation of the cluster approach under the humanitarian reform process. While the introduction of the cluster approach in Uganda led to some improvements in coordination, initially there was insufficient recognition of the need for the clusters to adopt a participatory approach, and respect and reflect the priorities set by communities as well as by local and national government bodies (UNHCR, August 2007, p.4; NRC, December 2007). The second phase of the global cluster evaluation in Uganda and other countries is now under way.

In late 2008, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in Uganda approved the “Adaptation of Clusters” policy, instructing the clusters to merge with national sectoral coordination mechanisms by September 2009. More progress has been made in this regard at the district level than the national level (OCHA, 21 July 2009, p.10).

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND

Background to the conflict in Acholiland

A Chronology of events in the northern Uganda conflict (June 2005)

IRIN, 9 June 2005:

"1986

- Remnants of the Uganda National Liberation Front/Army – the national army of the government toppled in January by President Yoweri Museveni's guerrilla National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) reorganise themselves to form the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA).
- UPDA launches a bush war against the NRA, with the first significant attack in Gulu on 20 August.
- By the end of 1986, many schools and dispensaries in rural areas of northern Uganda are closed, and some roads blocked.

1987

- A self-proclaimed Acholi priestess, Alice Lakwena, mobilises uneducated youths and links up with UPDA to form the Holy Spirit Movement.

1988

- Lakwena's movement advances across northern and eastern Uganda and finally is defeated near Jinja. She flees to neighbouring Kenya.
- Remnants of the Holy Spirit Movement regroup under the command of Joseph Kony, Lakwena's nephew, in Gulu, and her father, Severino Lokoya, in Kitgum.

1989 - 1990

- Lokoya is arrested by the NRA and imprisoned.
- Joseph Kony's group starts ambushing and looting civilians and burning schools.
- An Italian priest, Fr Egidio Biscaro, is killed in a rebel ambush.

1991

- NRA launches a military campaign led by Maj Gen David Tiniefuza. From April to August it seals off the northern districts of Apac, Lira, Gulu and Kitgum from the rest of Uganda.
- The rebels begin the practice of maiming and mutilating civilians, including cutting off lips, ears, breasts and hands.
- Tension between Sudan and Uganda increases after the Ugandan town of Moyo is bombed a number of times, reportedly by Sudanese government aircrafts, and rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) officials - including leader John Garang – are seen in Gulu and Kitgum.

1993

- Pope John Paul II visits Gulu on 6 February. A lull in rebel activities follows until August, when groups of heavily armed insurgents come from Sudan under the new name of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and launch attacks on Ugandan army units.
- Towards the end of the year, peace talks between the government and the LRA are initiated under the leadership of the minister for the pacification of the north, Betty Bigombe.

1994

- Peace talks continue until the beginning of February, when the rebels reject President Museveni's seven-day ultimatum to surrender.
- The LRA responds by launching armed attacks, especially on roads. Reportedly supported by the Sudanese government, which accuses Uganda of helping the SPLM/A, the LRA plants landmines on main roads and footpaths.

1995

- Violence escalates. In April, the LRA kills more than 200 people in Atyak.
- Uganda and Sudan cut diplomatic ties.
- In August, the LRA invades Kitgum district and carries out the first large-scale abduction of children to beef up their forces. During a retreat towards the Sudanese border they are bombed by an army helicopter, leaving dozens of rebels and abductees dead.
- The new constitution is introduced in October 1995, and the NRA is renamed the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF).
- From October, a joint offensive by the SPLM/A and UPDF dislodges the LRA from its base in Palotaka in southern Sudan. The fighting continues well inside Sudan.

1996

- Presidential and parliamentary elections are held. Over 90 percent of the Acholi people vote for opposition leader Paul Ssemogerere.
- In February the LRA makes a violent comeback, laying ambushes, planting landmines and abducting children.
- The year sees some of the worst atrocities committed by the rebels, who line up the bodies of their murdered victims along the Gulu-Kampala Road.
- Mass displacement begins and the government begins a policy of moving people into "protected villages" in Gulu – Pabbo camp for the internally displaced is opened in Gulu.
- In July, the LRA attack a refugee camp at Acholpii, in Kitgum district, killing 115 Sudanese refugees. Two elders who attempt to go on a peace mission to talk to the rebels are murdered on arrival at the venue.
- In August, the rebels kill 20 civilians in a market in Cwero.
- In October, 139 schoolgirls are abducted from St Mary's College at Aboke in Lira District. Most of them are released after the deputy headmistress, Sr Rachelle Fraser, follows the rebels and pleads for the girls, managing to get most of them released. More students are abducted from Sir Samuel Baker Secondary School in Gulu.

1997

- The new year starts with a five-day killing spree in Lamwo county and Kitgum district, with the LRA killing 400 people killed and displacing thousands more.
- Later in January, a parliamentary commission of inquiry about the war in the north passes a recommendation to pursue a military solution and not engage in peace talks with the rebels.
- In April, another joint offensive by the SPLM/A and the UPDF inside Sudan forces the LRA to move its camp further north from Aruu to Jebelein.
- Catholic, Protestant and Muslim religious leaders begin local peace initiatives.

1998

- Kitgum's assistant resident district commissioner, James Canogura, is shot dead in an ambush on the Kalongo-Kitgum Road. Thirty girls are abducted from a secondary school in Kalongo.
- The Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative is formed.

1999

- Seventy LRA rebels are killed in a battle with Karimojong warriors near Morulem, Kotido.
- Rebels abduct more than 70 children and youths from Omiya Anyima, Kitgum.

- In February, rebels retreat to Sudan, and for about 10 months, there is almost complete peace. Many people attempt to leave the IDP camps to go back to their homes.
- Uganda and Sudan sign a peace accord on 8 December. The return of all abductees and the restoration of diplomatic relations are pledged.
- Uganda's parliament passes an amnesty bill that offers immunity from prosecution to rebels who denounce the rebellion and voluntarily surrender to the government.
- Hopes for peace collapse as LRA attacks Gulu at the end of December.

2000

- Rebels attack Padibe IDP camp, Kitgum district, in March, leaving 12 people dead.
- Kitgum's resident district commissioner, John Baptist Ocaya, dies after being ambushed on the Kitgum-Gulu Road in June.
- A second peace deal between Uganda and Sudan, brokered by Former US President Jimmy Carter's peace programme, the Carter Centre, is signed in September.
- A Catholic priest, Fr Raffaele di Bari, is shot dead in an ambush near his mission in Pajule on 1 October.

2001

- Presidential elections are held in March. Again, the majority of the Acholi people vote against Museveni. Twelve people, including 11 students from a catering college, are killed by the LRA near Paraa Lodge, in Masindi district in northwestern Uganda.

2002

- In March, Museveni sets up camp in Gulu to personally oversee operations against the rebels. Army commander James Kazini vows to resign if Kony is not captured or killed by 31 December.
- The LRA sets up Richard Matsanga, a.k.a. David Nyekorach, as its spokesman in London.
- In June, LRA field commander Vincent Otti sends a letter to the government seeking peace talks.

2003

- In January, a newly created presidential peace team gives the LRA hotlines on which to conduct peace talks.
- In February, Uganda says it has ended its support of the SPLM/A, and Sudan allows the Ugandan army to pursue Kony inside Sudanese territory.
- In April, the LRA abduct 290 people in Lira. In June, it launches attacks in the eastern region, hitting Katakwi and then Soroti districts, causing the displacement of thousands.

2004

- In February, nearly 30,000 people are displaced and 4,000 huts burned in Pabbo IDP camp.
- Later in February, the LRA attack Barlonyo IDP camp in Lira, killing over 200 civilians. Street protests follow the killings, with mobs hunting suspects from Acholi and demanding that Museveni resign.
- In July, the army captures Kony's training commander, Brig Kenneth Banya. He is the first high-profile rebel captured by the army since the rebellion started.
- The Uganda army claims to have the upper hand in the conflict.
- Betty Bigombe begins a fresh peace initiative in November. A government ceasefire ends unsuccessfully when the LRA refuses to sign the government's draft peace agreement.

2005

- In January, north and south Sudan sign a comprehensive peace agreement - both sides pledge to help the Ugandan government defeat Kony.
- In February, the government declares an 18-day truce to enable LRA soldiers to come out of the bush and seek amnesty. Brig Sam Kolo, LRA spokesman, becomes the highest-ranking rebel so far to surrender to the UPDF.

- In March, the LRA intensifies its attacks on civilians, killing and maiming several IDPs in Kitgum, Gulu and Pader districts.
- In May, the UN puts pressure on the government to seek a peaceful solution to the war. Bigombe says she is in regular contact with Kony and negotiations are "on course".
- In May, the UPDF kill the LRA's chief of operations, Brig Sam Okullu, near Gulu.
- In June, the rebels kill eight people in Kitgum, lining their bodies up on the road 10 km out of Kitgum town.
- In June, Museveni says Kony will benefit from the amnesty if he surrenders, in contrast to his previous statement that the LRA leadership should not be eligible for the amnesty."

History of the conflict (December 2004)

- Colonial rule followed the classic 'divide and rule' pattern
- Under the British, the North was considered a labour reserve for southern plantations, and as a source of army recruits
- Many Ugandans have come to identify themselves with their ethnic group rather than with citizenship of the Ugandan nation state
- Following Uganda's independence, power in government was progressively consolidated among politicians of northern origin
- Idi Amin, with the tacit support of the UK, US and Israeli governments toppled northern led government led by Milton Obote in 1971
- In recent times the Movement system led by Museveni has come increasingly under attack as monopolising political space, and centralising political power

CSOPNU, 10 December 2004, pp. 26-28:

"British rule in Uganda followed the classic 'divide and rule' pattern, accentuating the pre-existing ethnic divisions in the Protectorate with several large, and many smaller ethnic groups. Uganda is often conveniently divided into the 'North', dominated by Luo and Nilotics; the 'Centre' dominated by a balance of power between the Bantu-speaking Baganda and Banyoro; and the 'Southwest' dominated by the Bantu-speaking Banyakole and related groups. Under the British, the North was considered a labour reserve for southern plantations, and as a source of army recruits, and was marginalised in economic development plans, with most investment and planning favouring the Baganda region around Kampala. These ethnic and regional divisions laid down by the British sowed the seeds for a series of national crises since independence, in that many Ugandans have come to identify themselves with their ethnic group rather than with citizenship of the Ugandan nation state. They also served to entrench a series of damaging ethnic stereotypes (particularly relating to the Acholi as dangerous, militaristic, aggressive barbarians), which have fuelled ethnic tension and produced fear among Ugandans over the past 50 years.

Independence

Following Uganda's independence, power in government was progressively consolidated among politicians of northern origin led by Milton Obote, a Lango from Lira. Obote came to power via democratic means, leading the protestant based Uganda People's Congress (UPC). Unfortunately, during the following years, he progressively marginalised other political representation, including the Catholic Church linked Democratic Party (DP), and non-northern ethnic groups. He also built links with the USSR, and flirted with Marxism, a move which was to prove his downfall when in 1971 he was toppled by his army chief Idi Amin, with the tacit support of the UK, US and Israeli governments.

Initially, Amin was content to implement policies suggested by his foreign backers, and to represent the interests of the Sudanic speaking peoples from his region in the North-west of Uganda. Unfortunately Amin's rule degenerated into an anarchic misrule, and in 1979, he was finally toppled by an invading army of Tanzanian "liberators". Obote, a personal ally of Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, was then returned to power amid accusations of fraud and rigged elections, and true to the tradition of Ugandan politics, set about swiftly reorganizing the army, returning Langi and Acholi officers to prominent positions, as well as reorienting the government to reflect his northern constituency. The army's name was changed to the Ugandan National Liberation Army (UNLA) and it quickly embarked upon an operation of trying to quell the rebel insurgencies that had sprung up over the previous years, including that of Yoweri Museveni, the National Resistance Army (NRA). In this process, the Obote regime waged a military campaign against both rebel groups and the civilian populations that they were affiliated with, thereby wielding state terror as an instrument of war. Of particular importance was the battle fought between the UNLA and the NRA in the area of Luwero in Central Uganda.

Museveni and the Movement

The NRA was constituted mainly by soldiers from Museveni's home area of Ankole in south-western Uganda, but was supported by ethnic Tutsi soldiers from Rwanda. The Rwandan connection emerged from the close ethnic ties between the two groups along the Rwanda/Uganda border, and also from the fact that Museveni had developed a strong friendship with Paul Kagame, a Rwandan Tutsi, while the two had been resident in Dar es Salaam. Their rebellion began in the southwest, but quickly moved up into the central region and into Luwero specifically, where for the next five years a brutal war was waged between the NRA and the UNLA on territory which is home to the Buganda people.

Museveni's motivation for beginning this conflict with the government was ostensibly to challenge Obote's legitimacy following what he claimed to have been rigged elections in 1980. He also sought to redress the balance of power in Uganda, this time in favour of his own people in the southwest region of the country, and to revenge the wrongs that he felt had been visited upon Bantu Ugandans in the south and southwest during the 18 years of northern rule.

Other groups – many representing particular ethnic groups or regional interests, including a faction of Amin's army – subsequently joined this campaign, united mainly by their opposition to Obote, rather than by a common ideology. Many atrocities against civilians were committed by the armed forces at this time, particularly in the Luwero triangle, and rebels fighting to topple the government were also known to target civilians perceived to be UPC sympathisers.

In 1985, Milton Obote was toppled once again, this time by his Acholi generals, however they were unable to resist Museveni's continuing rebellion, and in January 1986, following a breach of the Nairobi peace accord, the National Resistance Army (NRA) entered Kampala and seized control.

In the years that followed, the NRA succeeded in pacifying much of the country, and large parts of Uganda have since enjoyed the fruits of stability, economic recovery and the rise of the home-grown Movement system. This system notes the sharp vertical divisions in Ugandan society through religious and ethnic difference, and assumes that political parties would inevitably become defined by allegiance to such groupings. As a result no active political parties have been allowed for most of the past 18 years, and all Ugandan citizens are said to belong to the *Movement*.

In recent times however, the Movement system has come increasingly under attack as monopolising political space, and centralising political power, while operating as a de facto political party. This has spurred agitation for the opening up of a political space in which other

parties, including the UPC and DP, might operate freely. In the lead up to the elections due in 2006 the GoU has finally permitted the establishment of political parties.

A clear failure of the Movement has been to develop a mechanism for national reconciliation. In spite of the fact that the Commission of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights published a comprehensive report on rights abuses to 1986 in report in 1994, and that the Uganda Human Rights Commission was established in the following year, few legal cases have been brought against those who have committed human rights abuses under past regimes. Approaches to human rights abuses have so far been focused only on punishment rather than on healing, and there has been no proxy for a 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' as part of the process. Instead, past wrongs have generally been blamed on current members of ethnic groups associated with particular institutions.

Thus many Ugandan citizens actively believe the Acholi people to be directly responsible for the wrongs perpetrated against civilians during the Obote II regime. They believe this because of the generally held stereotype that the national army at that time was an Acholi army, even though the Langi dominated the regime. This attitude goes some way to explaining the indifference toward, or even support for the suffering that Acholis in northern Uganda currently experience. Similarly, many Acholi see their experience in a highly polarised way, and are convinced that the government and people from the West are seeking revenge against them in a systematic manner. Some Acholi even speak of other Ugandans as foreigners, and talk of a plot among other Ugandans to persecute and destroy the Acholi.

Northern Resistance and the LRA

In spite of the pacification that took place in much of the rest of Uganda, peace has not yet settled in Acholiland. Since 1986 five rebel movements have waged a low level war against the GoU in the region. In 1986, the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA) began a rebellion in response to Museveni's rise to the Presidency. The UPDA was largely comprised of remnants of the defeated UNLA who were predominantly northerners, and they continued fighting against the new government until 1988 when a peace accord was brokered between them and the GoU (the Pece Accord).

While some UPDA leaders were successfully integrated into the army and into the ruling party, mutual suspicion remained between the Movement and the Acholi people, and this continued to inform relations between the GoU and the North. In late 1986, these suspicions were reflected in the appearance of a popular Acholi uprising known as the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), led by a spiritualist named Alice Lakwena. In 1986, Lakwena succeeded in building a substantial force, partly consisting of old UPDA, which had some success until it was routed in Jinja. Lakwena fled into exile, but the struggle was carried on first by her father Severino Lukoya, and since 1989 by a cousin named Joseph Kony. His Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continues to fight a low-level guerrilla war with the GoU to this day, ostensibly in a desire to overthrow President Museveni, to restore order and legitimacy to the state of Uganda, to cleanse the nation through the establishment of a government that will rule in accordance with the 'Ten Commandments'

The fiercest period of fighting in northern Uganda prior to 2002 was in the mid-1990s when many Acholi were gathered into IDP camps by the GoU and UPDF for their own 'protection'. Since that time the conflict has fluctuated on a more or less cyclical basis."

Four main characteristics of the conflict (April 2004)

- Four main characteristics of the conflict;
- 1) It is a struggle between the government and the LRA

- 2) It is a struggle between the predominantly Acholi LRA and the wider Acholi population
- 3) It is a struggle fuelled by animosity between Uganda and Sudan
- 4) The struggle continues the North-South conflict that has marked Ugandan politics and society since independence
- The LRA insurgency lacks any clear (and negotiable) political objective
- President Museveni pursues a military solution in part to justify the unreformed army that is a key pillar of his regime
- As long as the situation in the North is dominated by security matters, the monopolisation of power and wealth by Southerners is not put into question
- Without the active support of the Acholi, however, the government is unlikely ever to defeat the LRA
- A main vulnerability of the LRA is that Joseph Kony is central not only to its organisation and tactics but also to its very purpose
- Most discussion of how to end the conflict centres on the false dichotomy of a military versus a negotiated solution

ICG, 14 April, p. ii:

“The conflict has four main characteristics. First, it is a struggle between the government and the LRA. Secondly, it is between the predominantly Acholi LRA and the wider Acholi population, who bear the brunt of violence that includes indiscriminate killings and the abduction of children to become fighters, auxiliaries, and sex slaves. This violence is aimed at cowering the Acholi and discrediting the government. Thirdly, it is fuelled by animosity between Uganda and Sudan, who support rebellions on each other’s territory. Finally, the LRA insurgency lacks any clear (and negotiable) political objective. Its claim to represent the grievances of the Acholi people is at odds with its methods. Because LRA actions are difficult to place within a coherent strategy aimed at achieving an identifiable political outcome, it is also difficult to develop an effective counter strategy. LRA targeting of the Acholi has created a self-perpetuating cycle of loss, resentment and hopelessness that feeds the conflict but also widens the gap between the government and local populations.

President Museveni pursues a military solution in part to justify the unreformed army that is a key pillar of his regime. Indeed, the war helps him justify and maintain the status quo in Ugandan politics, denying his opposition a power base and offering numerous opportunities for curtailing freedom of expression and association in the name of “the war against terrorism”. As long as the situation in the North is dominated by security matters, the monopolisation of power and wealth by Southerners is not put into question.

Without the active support of the Acholi, however, the government is unlikely ever to defeat the LRA. While the political and security configurations of the conflict need to be changed, Museveni’s response to international pressure and proposals for negotiation such as Washington’s Northern Uganda Peace Initiative (NUPI) has been sceptical at best. Although the LRA’s desire for genuine dialogue appears minimal, the government has rarely acted in good faith when a variety of actors have sought to promote a settlement. The small likelihood that the LRA will respond to a concerted effort to negotiate does not remove the onus from the government to make the attempt. That would signal to both its opponents and supporters – and to the people of Northern Uganda – that it is genuinely pursuing all options. The Khartoum government, the LRA’s only known external supporter, should also be drawn into a negotiating strategy.

Most discussion of how to end the conflict centres on the false dichotomy of a military versus a negotiated solution. Elements of both approaches will be required, along with recognition of the limitations of each. A purely military solution could conceivably deal with the immediate manifestation of Uganda's northern problem, the LRA, but would make solving the North-South divide and achieving national reconciliation even more unlikely. The army's operational deficiencies in any event make such a solution unlikely. Similarly, there are limitations to negotiations, which can be manipulated by the belligerents for battlefield advantage, leading to more violence.

A main vulnerability of the LRA is that Joseph Kony is central not only to its organisation and tactics but also to its very purpose. Reported leadership tensions, particularly in a deteriorating military and political environment, may provide an opportunity to split the insurgency by isolating or removing him.

Another major element of any successful strategy will have to be a genuine effort to address Northerners' grievances. The Acholi must be made to feel more a part of Ugandan society. The NRM simply has not unified the country after the turmoil created by colonial policies of ethnic division and decades of armed conflict. Rectifying this will require specific political, economic and social initiatives aimed at building the North's stake in the central government and enhancing local decision-making. It is in the interest of Acholi leaders to develop mechanisms for articulating the views of their people, and it is in the interest of Museveni and the NRM to promote the emergence of effective and credible Acholi leaders.

There is not yet enough pressure on the LRA to make a political opening possible. While Museveni's government should make an honest, unconditional attempt at negotiations, the nature of the LRA is such that creating an environment conducive to negotiations should not mean renunciation of military and political pressure on the insurgency, including by invoking the help of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Sudanese government.

The role of the international community has been central to the conflict and will be central to achieving a resolution. The government needs to be attentive to the advice of donors, from whom it receives approximately half its budget. It has a good record on a number of issues, such as AIDS prevention, which disposes the international community positively towards it, but the conflict in the North undoes much of this goodwill. Uganda's friends have an interest and a right to pressure it on the humanitarian disaster produced by the continuation of the LRA insurgency. The U.S. initiative, however, would have greater promise if Washington also worked more closely with would-be European partners."

Ethnic tension: myth or reality? (February 2004)

- Anti-Acholi sentiments have been breeding quietly, mainly in Lira district
- Over 560 people have been killed by the LRA since November 2003
- Since most LRA fighters are Acholi, many Langi find it easy to vent their anger and frustration at the whole tribe
- One politician recently urged people living in Teso sub-region to "kill all Acholi above the age of 18"
- The LRA is extremely unpopular among the Acholi
- Sense of social alienation, political isolation and economic marginalisation on the part of many people in the Acholi sub-region
- The situation has only been made more precarious by the arming of ethnic-based militia

RLP, 27 February 2004:

"Since last year's LRA raids in Lango anti-Acholi sentiments have been breeding quietly, mainly in Lira district. According to Church sources there over 560 people have been killed by the LRA since November 2003 to the end of February 2004. Most of these killings have taken place in unofficial displaced persons camps North and East of Lira where conditions are appalling. Also according to the same sources, 48 people have died of hunger in Barapwo camp and 38 in Erute camp since January. Since most LRA fighters are Acholi, many Langi find it easy to vent their anger and frustration at the whole tribe. A march of protest in Lira on the 25th February degenerated into rioting and five people were killed. It turned out that only one of them was an Acholi and the other four died when the Police fired shots as they were harrassed by angry crowds. Sadly, this provoked a revenge reaction by some gangs of youth in Gulu town. Thankfully, this was swiftly brought under control by the Police.

The ethnic tension is likely not as serious as some segments of the national and international media report, but the issue is not trivial either and these incidents serve as an early warning of what could develop if the situation is not handled wisely. Reports of Amuka Lango militia present at some displaced camps in Acholi are causing fear. The religious leaders from Acholi, Lango and Teso met in Kampala on the 2nd of March and in Lira on 23rd – 24th March. The MPs from the same sub-regions met too on the 11th. These initiatives are commendable and should play a significant role in putting out potential fires of inter-ethnic hatred before is too late." (CSPNU, 13 April 2004)

" On the 25th February 2004, there were reports of violent attacks against members of the Acholi community living in Lira. The attacks followed a march that began as a peaceful demonstration against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the government's failure to protect the people, following Saturday's massacre of approximately 200 civilians in Barlonyo IDP camp. This development has further resulted in retaliatory attacks against members of the Langi community resident in Gulu district.

The Refugee Law Project (RLP) of the Faculty of Law, Makerere University, notes with the gravest concern that the above events represent a development in the conflict that, if not addressed immediately, could both increase and spread to other parts of the country. Indeed, there can be little doubt that the recent violence is the result of ongoing ethnic articulations of the LRA conflict by government, the media, and other voices. As the RLP notes in its recently published report, *Behind the Violence: Causes, Consequences and the Search for Solutions to the War in Northern Uganda*, this ethnic representation of the conflict has had three results.

First, it has generated a perception that all Acholi are LRA supporters, thereby fuelling intense hatred for the former among many Ugandans, especially those living in the Lango and Teso sub-regions. For example, one politician recently urged people living in Teso sub-region to "kill all Acholi above the age of 18." Extensive RLP interviews across northern Uganda, however, revealed that the LRA is extremely unpopular among the Acholi.

Second, the articulation of the conflict along ethnic lines has resulted in a sense of social alienation, political isolation and economic marginalisation on the part of many people in the Acholi sub-region, a feeling reinforced by the government's seeming lack of commitment to peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Third, and most dangerously, the situation has only been made more precarious by the arming of ethnic-based militias (Arrow Group, Amuka and Frontier Guards). Rather than relying on a professionally trained national army, the use of regional militias has served to increase tensions between different ethnic groups.

Furthermore, the RLP firmly believes that the recent violence is generated not only by the ongoing attacks by the LRA but is also underpinned by factors that run deep within Uganda's socio-political history. As such, while the deployment of police and the army to quell the violence

may offer a degree of short term stability, nothing short of a process that addresses the above ethnic animosities in a genuine and holistic way will forestall future ethnic clashes."

Acholi lack confidence in the government (July 2003)

- Higher rates of military service by northern populations in the volunteer army after independence
- No ethnic group is in the majority in Uganda's 24.6 million population
- The Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA), drew heavily from the impoverished northern Ugandan Acholi population
- The National Resistance Army (NRA) took up positions and bases in the area known as the Luwero triangle to the north of the capital, Kampala
- Yoweri Museveni created the National Resistance Army and Movement in 1980 that took up arms to overthrow the government
- In an effort to crush local support of the NRA, the UNLA (including its Acholi soldiers) committed gross human rights violations, in the Luwero triangle

HRW, 15 July 2003:

"The current conflict in northern Uganda has its immediate roots in the troubled times after Ugandan independence in 1962, when military groups of different ethnic and ideological composition aspired to and often succeeded in overthrowing a succession of Ugandan governments. Colonial preference to development of the southern regions and neglect of the north led to an economic imbalance and hence to higher rates of military service by northern populations in the volunteer army. No ethnic group is in the majority in Uganda's 24.6 million population; they inhabit an area of 242,554 square kilometers, a dense population for an African country with an agricultural economy. The first prime minister, Milton Obote, was ousted by his army commander, Colonel Idi Amin, in 1971. Within Amin's army, his kinsmen from the West Nile (northwest) region began killing Langi and Acholi soldiers. Amin was overthrown by rebel Ugandan soldiers and the invading army of Tanzania in 1979. Contested national elections were held and Milton Obote returned to power in 1980. As was the case under the first rule of Obote, the national army, then known as the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA), drew heavily from the impoverished northern Ugandan Acholi population.

In part because of the election fraud that brought Obote back to power, Yoweri Museveni created the National Resistance Army (NRA) and Movement in 1980 that took up arms to overthrow the government. The NRA took up positions and bases in the area known as the Luwero triangle to the north of the capital, Kampala. In an effort to crush local support of the NRA, the UNLA (including its Acholi soldiers) committed gross human rights violations, in this area, including the mass killing of thousands of civilians, the looting of property and goods, and the destruction of government buildings and homes; the UNLA sustained heavy casualties itself. Many Acholi believe that, dating from these events, the incumbent (1986-present) government of Yoweri Museveni has written the Acholi and their northern region off, which the government denies."

One outline of the causes of the conflict in Acholiland (Dec 2002)

- Contemporary violent conflicts in the country are directly related to the profound crisis of legitimacy of the state, its institutions and their political incumbents
- This crisis reflects the way the state was constructed through European expansionist violence, manipulation of pre-existing differences, administrative policies of divide and rule and economic policies that further fractured the colonial entity

- Conflicts in the colonial state were exacerbated by the partition of the country into economic zones
- The post-colonial regime inherited a fractured state
- In April 1979, the exiled rebels, who were overwhelmingly from Acholi and Langi, assisted by the Tanzanian army and Yoweri Museveni's Front for National Salvation (FRONASA), overthrew the Amin regime
- The new administration organized general elections in December 1980, which were won by Milton Obote and his Uganda People's Congress
- The main challenger, the Democratic Party (DP), rejected Obote's victory. Museveni also rejected the results
- The war in Acholi has become an extension of regional and international power struggles

Accord, 31 December 2002:

"The roots of the current war between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Acholiland are entwined with the history of conflicts in Uganda and the rise to power of the National Resistance Movement/National Resistance Army (NRM/A). The conflict has persisted because of fragmented and divisive national politics, strategies and tactics adopted by the armed protagonists, and regional and international interests. The harrowing war has claimed many innocent civilian lives, forcefully displaced over 400,000 people and destroyed schools and health centres. In addition, the war has been characterized by widespread and systematic violations of human rights, including rapes, abductions of men, women and children, torture, increased economic decay, and national and regional insecurity.

Uganda: land and people

Uganda lies along the Equator, between the great East African Rift Valleys. It is a landlocked country, bordered by Sudan in the north, Kenya in the east, Tanzania in the south, Rwanda in the southwest and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west. With a landmass of 241,139 square kilometres, its population is about 20 million. Its territory includes Lake Victoria, Lake Albert, Lake Edward and Lake Kyoga. These lakes, together with several elaborate networks of river drainage, constitute the headwaters of the River Nile. The country's economy is primarily agrarian, comprised mostly of smallholdings though pastoralism is dominant in Karamoja and Ankole.

Lake Kyoga forms both a physical and linguistic marker. South of Kyoga is the so-called Bantu region, with the centralized pre-colonial states of Buganda, Toro, Ankole (Nkore) and Bunyoro the dominant territories. North and east of Kyoga are the non-Bantu territories of the Acholi, Alur, Langi, Iteso and Karamojong. The Acholi inhabit present-day northern Uganda and southern Sudan, where, in the pre-colonial era, they constructed decentralized states. In the 1970s, the Acholi district of northern Uganda was divided into Gulu and Kitgum districts. In 2001, Kitgum was subdivided to create a third district of Pader. The three districts constitute an area commonly referred to as Acholiland.

Conflicts and fragmentation in colonial Uganda

Contemporary violent conflicts in the country are directly related to the profound crisis of legitimacy of the state, its institutions and their political incumbents. This crisis, in part, reflects the way the state was constructed through European expansionist violence, manipulation of pre-existing differences, administrative policies of divide and rule and economic policies that further

fractured the colonial entity. These policies did not only undermine the faltering legitimacy of the state, but also impeded the emergence of a Ugandan nationalism and generated ethnic, religious and regional divisions that were to contribute in later years to instability and political violence.

One significant divide was along the lines of religious affiliation, which can be traced back to the arrival of Islam, Protestantism and Catholicism in Buganda. These religious groups engaged in a ferocious conflict for dominance, and the Protestant faction emerged victorious after the Imperial British East Africa Company intervened in their favour. Anglicans were to later dominate the top positions in the civil service, and this structural inequality was maintained after the colonial era. Consequently, religious beliefs and political party affiliations were to become entangled.

Conflicts in the colonial state were exacerbated by the partition of the country into economic zones. For example, while a large portion of the territory south of Lake Kyoga was designated as cash crop growing and industrial zones, the territory north of Lake Kyoga was designated as a labour reserve. This partition, which was not dictated by development potentials, led to economic disparities between the south and the north. The fragmentation of the society was compounded by the economic-cum-administrative policy that left the civil service largely in the hands of Baganda and the army largely in the hands of the Acholi and other northern ethnic groups. These policies also widened the gulf between the socio-political south and the socio-political north. This was further sustained by the administrative policy that relied on the Baganda as colonial agents in other parts of the country. The policy of divide and rule, which rested on so-called 'indirect rule', led to widespread anti-Buganda sentiment.

Conflicts and fragmentation in post-independent Uganda

The post-colonial regime inherited a fractured state. Milton Obote responded to this crisis of legitimacy by forming an alliance between his political party, the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) and the Buganda monarchy party (Kabaka Yekka). With this marriage of convenience, Obote became the Executive Prime Minister and Kabaka Mutesa II became the President and Head of State. However, the alliance collapsed over a conflict over land (the 'lost counties') between Bunyoro and Buganda. The 'divorce' led to widespread violence in Buganda. Obote responded by detaining five government ministers from the Bantu region, dismissing the President and Vice President and forcing President Mutesa into exile and suspending the 1962 constitution. The government also imposed a state of emergency in Buganda, occupied Buganda's palace, following the flight of the Kabaka to England, and introduced a republican constitution. Some Bantu-speaking groups perceived this struggle for legitimacy and power as a conflict between the Bantu south and the non-Bantu (Nilotic) north.

These difficulties overlapped with the instability generated in the region by the superpowers' quest for hegemony during the Cold War. These crises were compounded by a conflict between Obote and his army commander, General Idi Amin. In 1971, Amin seized power. Immediately after he came to power, Amin ordered Acholi and Langi soldiers, who constituted the backbone of the army, to surrender their arms. The overwhelming majority of them did so. However, many were subsequently killed. The government extended its conflict with the Acholi and Langi by arresting, detaining and killing highly educated and influential members of the ethnic groups. Over time, Amin began to target people he perceived as disloyal from other parts of the country. To protect the regime which lacked political legitimacy in the country, Amin recruited new soldiers into the national army from West Nile. In addition, he appointed prominent Bantu to important positions in his government. The regime however largely maintained the dominance of southerners in the civil service and commerce, while the northerners largely controlled the government and army.

In April 1979, the exiled rebels, who were overwhelmingly from Acholi and Langi, assisted by the Tanzanian army and Yoweri Museveni's Front for National Salvation (FRONASA), overthrew the

Amin regime. Yusuf Lule assumed power. However, ideological and ethnic conflicts within the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) and the national army led to the collapse of the Lule administration within months. Godfrey Binaisa took over, but was himself deposed in May 1980 by Paulo Muwanga and his deputy Yoweri Museveni.

The new administration organized general elections in December 1980, which were won by Milton Obote and his Uganda People's Congress. But widespread irregularities and political violence undermined the legitimacy of the elections. The main challenger, the Democratic Party (DP), rejected Obote's victory. Museveni also rejected the results. Thereafter, a number of armed groups, including Lule's Uganda Freedom Fighters, Museveni's Popular Resistance Army (later they were to merge to form the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A), and Dr Andrew Kayira's Uganda Freedom Movement/Army (UFM/A), declared war against the Obote government. In West Nile, Brigadier Moses Ali's Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF) and General Lumago's Former Uganda National Army (FUNA) also engaged the army and the UPC in bitter armed opposition.

Fighting was particularly intense in the Luwero triangle, where the mostly Baganda population was targeted for their perceived support of rebel groups. Many innocent civilians were tortured and murdered by the UNLA. Although the UNLA was a national and multi-ethnic army, the NRM/A held the Acholi exclusively responsible for the atrocities committed, and this disputed perception was to shape subsequent attitudes toward the conflict.

In July 1985, conflict between some Langi and Acholi soldiers led to the overthrow of the Obote regime. The coup, which brought General Tito Okello to power, shattered the military alliance between the Acholi and Langi and escalated ethnic violence. The Okello regime invited all fighting groups and political parties to join the military government. Every armed group and political party, with the exception of the NRA, joined the administration. The NRA, however, engaged the regime in protracted peace negotiations held in Nairobi. In December 1985, the Nairobi Agreement was signed under the chairmanship of President Moi of Kenya. However, the Agreement was never implemented and Museveni seized power on the 25th January 1986.

The NRA's seizure of power effectively meant that for the first time, socio-economic, political and military powers were all concentrated in the south. The new administration, which absorbed political and military groups from the south and Moses Ali's UNRF group, engaged in intensive anti-northern propaganda. The administration also discriminated against groups from eastern Uganda and West Nile. This severe alienation and marginalization led to armed conflicts in Teso and West Nile. After much destruction and displacement of the population in Teso, the government negotiated an end to the conflict in the east.

Emergence of the conflict in Acholiland

By April 1986, the Acholi had largely come to terms with the NRA victory. The majority of former UNLA soldiers also heeded the appeal made by the government to hand over their arms and demobilize. The response by the Acholi ended the armed engagement in the territory. However, after months of relative calm, anxieties escalated when the NRA began to commit human rights abuses in the name of crushing a nascent rebellion. Over time NRA soldiers plundered the area and committed atrocities, including rape, abductions, confiscation of livestock, killing of unarmed civilians, and the destruction of granaries, schools, hospitals and bore holes escalated. These atrocities in Acholiland were justified by some as revenge for the 'skulls of Luwero'.

Against this background of mistrust and violence, in May 1986 the government ordered all former UNLA soldiers to report to barracks. The order was met with deep suspicion, in part, because it was reminiscent of Amin's edict that led to the 1971 massacre of Acholi soldiers. Some ex-UNLA soldiers went into hiding; others fled to Sudan and some decided to take up arms. Soon, these

ex-soldiers were joined by a stream of youths fleeing from NRA operations. During this period, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which was perceived by Acholi refugees as an ally of the Museveni government, attacked a refugee camp in southern Sudan. On August 20, 1986, some Acholi refugee combatants, led by Brigadier Odong Latek, attacked the NRA. This armed group, known as the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA), was later joined by the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces / Movement (HSMF/HSM), Severino Lukoya's Lord's Army, ultimately to be followed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Why the war has persisted

The war has lasted for nearly sixteen years because of a number of interrelated factors. To begin with, the war in Acholi has become an extension of regional and international power struggles. On the regional front, Uganda provided military hardware and sanctuary to the SPLA. In retaliation, the Sudan government provided sanctuary and military hardware to the LRA. On the international front, both the Uganda government and the SPLA received military and political support from the US, in part to curtail the influence of the Islamic government in Khartoum. Another factor perpetuating the conflict has been that the war has become a lucrative source and cover for clandestine income for high-ranking military and government officials and other profiteers. In addition, the unwillingness of the government and the LRA to genuinely pursue a negotiated settlement has sustained the war. Lastly, atrocities committed by the LRA against unarmed civilians and the unwillingness of the rebel group to accept alternative political views on the conflict have prolonged the war."

The leader of Lord's Resistance Army broke away with allies in Obote II Army, 1988

- Ugandan People's Democratic Army signed a peace accord with the NRM [National Resistance Army]
- Those who had little education, stood little chance of significant gain, and had already committed atrocities remained in the bush

Westbrook June 2000, sects. III, VI:

" In 1988, however, the UPDA[Ugandan People's Democratic Army] signed a peace accord with the NRM [National Resistance Army] Many of those in the UPDA leadership were given positions in the government. It is said by some that those with the most to gain by coming back into the country mainstream and, thus, the most to lose by staying in the bush were the people who accepted the peace accord. Those who had little education, stood little chance of significant gain, and had already committed atrocities remained in the bush. According to Charles Alai, a founding member of the UPDA, who was, in 1996, Uganda's Minister of State for Public Services, '...by 1988 when we negotiated with the NRM government, Kony had already broken away from UPDA. When we came out, we had already disagreed with Kony and he took the most deadly and primitive officers with him.' Thus, at the conclusion of the 1988 peace accords, a rather large contingent of the disenfranchised stayed in the bush.

Though Kony adopted many of the methods of his supposed cousin Lakwena he never gleaned the popular support she had. His movement, known in 1988 as the Uganda Peoples Democratic Christian Army (UPDCA) and later as the LRA, has had something more of a schizophrenic or disjointed nature about it. Kony has vacillated from near full adoption of Lakwena's beliefs,

including the Christian components denouncing witch doctors and diviners, to denying any links with Christian doctrine to incorporating many Muslim rituals and beliefs."

The Holy Spirit Movement Front and Alice Auma 'Lakwena', 1986-1987

- The Holy Spirit Movement Front closest to succeeding in overthrowing the NRM [National Resistance Movement] of any movement
- The movement's leader, Lakwena, rather than the UPDA, [Uganda People's Democratic Army] provided the greatest inspiration for Joseph Kony
- The HSMF promised redemption to a people who felt they were being punished for atrocities committed by Acholi soldiers fighting the NRA under Obote II and Lutwa

Westbrook June 2000, sections. III, VI:

"In late 1986, a temporary but significant figure emerged on this conflict scene in the form of Alice Auma 'Lakwena.' Lakwena is significant for several reasons: her movement, the Holy Spirit Movement Front (HSMF), came the closest to succeeding in overthrowing the NRM of any movement to date; Lakwena, through the HSMF, was the only early resistance to the NRA/M to claim moral and religious grounds to attempt to influence the conflict; and it seems that Lakwena, rather than the UPDA, provided the greatest inspiration for Joseph Kony, though he fought with the UPDA. Auma claimed to be possessed by the spirit of a dead Italian soldier named Lakwena. To a people who felt they were being punished for atrocities committed by Acholi soldiers fighting the NRA under Obote II and Lutwa, the HSMF promised redemption. In order to join HSMF, one had to undergo ritual purification to cleanse themselves of past sins. According to HSMF doctrine, only an impure soldier could die in battle. There can be little doubt that the success of the HSMF was due, in part, to the beliefs in magic and spirit powers that are a part of the Acholi culture and, in part, due to the early successes of the HSMF.

In October of 1987, a mere 80 km from Kampala, the NRA finally and resolutely defeated the HSMF. Lakwena is said to have escaped to Nairobi, but she has not made an overt gesture toward overthrowing the NRM since."

The National Resistance Army's armed insurgency, 1981-1986

- The NRA was comprised primarily of Banyankole, Baganda and Banyarwanda combatants from southern and central Uganda
- UNLA forces in Luwero were often referred to as "the Acholis" and were blamed for the deaths of 100,000 civilians
- Fearing revenge, the ex-UNLA Acholi forces fled to Sudan where they organised themselves into an armed insurgency against the NRA

UN November 2001, p.13:

"In 1981, the National Resistance Army (NRA) under Yoweri Museveni began an armed insurgency. The NRA was comprised primarily of Banyankole, Baganda and Banyarwanda combatants from southern and central Uganda, including Luwero District where in 1984, Obote forces carried out extensive reprisals against unarmed Baganda civilians. UNLA forces in Luwero were often referred to as "the Acholis" and were and blamed for the deaths of 100,000 civilians. In 1985, Acholi elements in the UNLA overthrew the Obote government, expelled other ethnic groups from the military, and put a predominately Acholi government in power under General Tito Okello Lutwa. This was followed by authoritative and well documented reports of looting

throughout the country by primarily Acholi officers and enlisted men. Following a short-lived power-sharing treaty between the UNLA and NRA, the NRA overthrew the government and took power. Fearing revenge, the ex-UNLA Acholi forces fled to Sudan where they organised themselves into an armed insurgency against the NRA."

Gersony, Section 1, 1997, "Advent of the NRA":

"As the Acholi UNLA forces crossed Acholiland, they warned Acholi civilians that the NRA would exact revenge - and in fact kill many of them - when it arrived in Gulu and Kitgum. They urged civilians to follow them across the border to Sudan, and many did. The rest remained at home and held their breath, awaiting developments."

Gersony 1997, Section 1, "Phase I UPDA":

"Most of the former Acholi UNLA soldiers who retreated from Kampala (fighting the NRA as they withdrew) continued north during March 1986 and finally crossed the international border into Sudan. Sudan provided refuge and a base from which to re-reorganize but, according to most reports, did not provide military assistance. Several Acholi asserted that, in fact, Sudanese authorities confiscated their weapons when they entered Sudan and returned them when they crossed back into Uganda."

Displacements in Acholiland

Strategic Use of Civilians by Both Sides (March 2002)

- Forced displacement of civilian population used as a tactic by both the LRA and the UPDF.

Weeks, March 2002, p.9:

"From the beginning, the LRA's principal tactic has been to target the civilian population of Acholiland, terrorizing the community and creating paralyzing despondency. In its attacks, it characteristically kills, maims, rapes, loots, burns homes, destroys crops, and – most traumatically – abducts civilians, especially children. Kony is said to believe (or to have been told by his spirits) that the Acholi are to be punished for their lack of support to his cause."

WFP, September 1999, pp. 6-7:

"[I]t was from 1995 onwards that the scale of violence, displacement and child abductions by the LRA increased dramatically.

[...]

A common theme throughout this devastating period of Acholi history has been the strategic use of civilians by both sides, including the calculated enforcement of displacement. In February 1996 the LRA issued an edict banning settlement within four kilometres of roads and prohibiting the use of bicycles. Their intention was the tight control of a population inaccessible to government troops which would provide cover and supplies for the rebels. To enforce the edict, hundreds of people were killed, villages and food stocks were burned and thousands drifted towards the relative safety of Gulu town. By September 1996 the Gulu District Council announced that 100,000 people in the district were now displaced.

Meanwhile, the government's Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) shelled villages they suspected of containing LRA units, discouraged the return of IDPs from the towns and conducted a number of 'clearances', particularly from Aswa and Kilak counties in northern Gulu District. By November 1996, the Gulu District Council estimated that IDP figures had doubled to 200,000.

Three months later, the figure was again upwardly revised to 270,000 as the policy of creating camps (introduced in October 1996) intensified. Tens of thousands of people had swelled the towns (particularly Gulu), trading centres and areas around army barracks. By mid-1998 the majority of IDPs were in 20 official camps."

Voluntary displacement or displacement ordered by the government? 1999-2004

- Some IDPs moved to camps spontaneously, but others felt that the authorities left them no choice, and yet others were physically forced by the UDFP.
- In 1996, governmental forces embarked on a strategy of displacing the local population into 'protected villages'.

MSF, 1 December 2004, p.7:

"Pader District was created in 2001. Kitgum District was split in two, and two of the counties in the lower part of the district became Pader. Created in the midst of the conflict, Pader has always been "a new district that never got what it needed", as described by one camp dweller. Pader has been affected by LRA presence and attacks for many years. In the beginning, people often spent the night in the bush outside their homesteads in order to avoid violence and abduction during nightly attacks on their villages. Massive displacement occurred in September 2002 when, in a radio-transmitted message, the government army instructed the population to leave their homes and move into protected villages within forty-eight hours. People who later returned to their abandoned homes reported them looted, with granaries plundered and crops destroyed. By 2004, twenty-four camps had been established, hosting a total of 290,000 people, almost the entire population of the district."

HRW, 15 July 2003, pp. 61-62:

"The oral army order of October 2, 2002, displacing some 300,000 people, together with those 500,000 previously displaced, resulted in approximately 800,000 displaced and needy persons originating in the three northern districts, according to the WFP-a total of 70 percent of their population-an astoundingly high percentage. Most of adults in this population are capable of economic self-sufficiency through small farming for themselves and their families-but now they are dependent on international relief to survive.

Article 17 (1) of Protocol II [Additional Protocol II of 1997 to the 1949 Geneva Conventions] states in part: '1. The displacement of the civilian population shall not be ordered for reasons related to the conflict unless the security of the civilians involved or imperative military reasons so demand.' The term 'imperative military reasons' usually refers to evacuation because of imminent military operations. The provisional measure of evacuation is appropriate for example if an area is in danger as a result of military operations or is liable to be subjected to intense bombing or other military action. It may also be permitted when the presence of protected persons in an area hampers military operations. The prompt return of the evacuees to their homes as soon as hostilities in the area have ceased is implied in the article.

Displacement or capture of civilians solely to deny a social base to the enemy has nothing to do with the security of the civilians. Nor is it justified by 'imperative military reasons," which require 'the most meticulous assessment of the circumstances' because such reasons are so capable of abuse. One authority has stated:

Clearly, imperative military reasons cannot be justified by political motives. For example, it would be prohibited to move a population in order to exercise more effective control over a dissident ethnic group.

The U.N. Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement state that, 'prior to any decision requiring the displacement of persons, the authorities concerned shall ensure that all feasible alternatives are explored in order to avoid displacement altogether.' The principles state that states are under

'a particular obligation to protect against the displacement of . . . peasants, pastoralists, and other groups with a special dependency on and attachment to their lands.'

The commander of the Fourth Division, Brig. Aronda Nyakairima, handing down the oral army evacuation order to the people of northern Uganda of October 2, 2002, stated:

'This announcement goes to all law-abiding citizens in the abandoned villages of Gulu, Pader and Kitgum districts to vacate with immediate effect. . . . This is because we have discovered that the LRA terrorists when pursued by the UPDF hide in huts located in these villages. . . . Get out of these villages in order not to get caught in cross fire.'

This order suggests both 'imperative military reasons' and the security of the population.

Forty-eight hours after this order was issued, the UPDF began shelling, bombing, and using helicopter gun ships to attack the areas around the camps. The government, interpreting the order broadly, reasoned that after the forty-eight hour ultimatum, everyone found outside the 'protected villages' or IDP camps would be a rebel or a rebel collaborator----therefore converting almost the entire northern Uganda into a military operational zone in which civilian movement is sharply limited. This order, together with the LRA military campaign, has further crippled the rural economy of northern Uganda.

Whether the security of the civilians or 'imperative military reasons' justify such massive disruption of life and the economy is a hotly contested issue. It remains to be established what the imperative military reasons are that would warrant forced displacement of 70 percent of the population for such a long period--some have been displaced since 1996. Nor is it clear why the government is unable to provide for the security of the civilians in any way other than such forced displacement, which is so drastic for the affected population that it should be the last resort. Because these facts are exclusively within government knowledge, the burden is upon the government to establish that its actions comply with international legal standards and its own policy on displacement."

Weeks, March 2002, p.2

"In Gulu district, the establishment of the villages followed a decision by the military authorities in 1996; most of the villages appear to have been established between August and October of that year. The population was ordered into the villages on short notice; those who remained outside them were subject to army attack. In Kitgum/Pader, the villages were more often established as a result of the flight by rural residents following LRA attacks in 1995-97; these villages evolved more spontaneously, with people moving near trading centres and military cantonments in search of security; there has been more movement back and forth from people's original homes than is the case in Gulu."**OCHA 23 May 2001, "Lessons learned":**

"Under the Geneva Convention, the GoU has the right to move or contain people if, for reasons of insecurity, such relocation is in the people's best interest. In the majority of cases, it would appear as if displaced Ugandans have been able to exercise their right to residence and movement and that their choice of location/abode has generally been voluntary."

US DOS February 2001, sect.1f:

"Although fighting between government forces and the LRA continued, there were no reports during the year that government forces used threats to compel citizens to leave their homes because of the conflict."

AI 17 March 1999, "Introduction"

"Many people have moved to camps "spontaneously", fleeing from the LRA. Others feel that the authorities gave them no choice about leaving their farms and livelihoods. Yet others were physically forced by government soldiers. Few people are happy to be in camps, which appear to have become semi-permanent, regarding them as punitive. However, the extreme violence of the LRA poses a real dilemma. Returning to the countryside may provide more opportunities (for example, for education) but may increase the risk of being killed, either by the LRA or by patrolling government soldiers."

AI 17 March 1999, para. 2.1

"In response to the evolution in LRA tactics, UPDF tactics in Gulu included, by September 1996, the creation of camps and the removal of people from strategically important areas or places where the army was unable to prevent LRA activity. The decision to create camps was taken at the highest level. On 27 September 1996 President Yoweri Museveni informed members of the Parliamentary Committee on the Offices of the President, Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs that the authorities were going to establish "protected villages". However, from interviews with villagers and others, it appears to Amnesty International that some UPDF units were already moving people out of their homes a number of weeks before the top-level decision to create camps was communicated to the Parliamentary Committee."

WFP September 1999, p.8

"Initially, in 1997, there were about 50 settlements where IDPs were grouped either spontaneously or under army supervision. The district authorities could not manage such a widely dispersed group of people. Following a needs assessment undertaken by WFP, the camps in Gulu District were merged into 23 officially designated sites where 270,000 people would be provided with continuing assistance. In October 1998, three of these camps were found to have sufficient access to land for cultivation (though they were still served through food-for-work (FFW) projects by WFP). This effectively brought the camp total in Gulu to 20 where humanitarian assistance was (and still is) given. In Kitgum the IDP population was about 80,000 in five official camps."

Displacements in the Lango and Teso regions

Causes of displacement in Teso region, 1985-2005 (June 2005)

- Karamajong warriors have caused small-scale displacement for decades
- Confrontations between the LRA and the government army in 2003 caused the displacement of more than 200,000 people
- By late 2003 the majority of the LRA left Teso region and moved into Lira district

GoU, 1 July 2005

"Katakwi District was carved out from Soroti District in 1997. It lies in the North Eastern region of Uganda. Katakwi constitutes part of the Teso Region, which comprises three other districts of Kumi, Kaberamaido and Soroti. In June 2003, the LRA penetrated into Teso Region through Katakwi District. The LRA attacks [in 2003] caused massive displacement of over 200,000 people, which constitutes to about 75 % of the people in Katakwi District thus disrupting peace and delivery of social services. The district was thrown into a state of emergency. There was increased demand for humanitarian response especially for IDPs in camps. In 2004, LRA attacks started to decline in Teso Region. However, the borders of Katakwi with Kaberamaido and Lira continued to experience intermittent security incidences. Meanwhile the Karamajong malpractice of stealing cattle, killing people and destroying food crops in gardens was still going on along the borders of Katakwi and Karamoja region.

In November 2004, Inter Agency assessment was carried out for Teso Region. The assessment findings, among others, revealed that the LRA induced camps were receiving more attention while the Karamajong affected camps were not. For the past three decades, Katakwi has borne the greatest brunt of the Karamajong raids.

Cattle rustling in Teso Region have existed since the 1940s. In the beginning, the cattle rustlers used spears and later locally made guns called "Amatida". This low capacity limited cattle rustling activities to the borderline areas of Karamoja and the then Soroti District. Cattle rustling reached its peak between 1986 and 1990 when the Karamojong warriors overran the whole of Teso region. This was at the time when there was rebellion in Teso against the government and delivery of social services including security broke down. The affected people moved into government facilities like sub county H/Q, dispensaries, schools which later became camps where government provided security through the local militia and soldiers. Today there are over 74 Karamojong induced camps hosting about 176,911 people in Katakwi district."

MSF, 1 December 2004, p.10

"Small scale displacement caused by neighbouring Karamajong cattle rustlers in the Teso region has occurred for more than two decades ago, and has resulted in several camps in Katakwi district. The Teso rebellion in 1985 also resulted in large scale displacement when people were forced into a "protected" camp by the government in 1990. When the LRA entered the Teso region in June 2003, its confrontation with the government and locally formed militias caused an escalation in violence that displaced approximately 250,000 people, mostly in Katakwi, Kabermaido and Soroti districts. Mass killings, looting and burning of houses and land, and abductions of children became common.

Tens of thousands of people from villages in Soroti and Katakwi district poured into Soroti town in search of safety. Kabermaido residents mostly fled to nearby village camps or trading centres, surviving without any assistance and facing severe shortages of food and water. [...]

By late 2003 the majority of the LRA left Teso region and moved into Lira district. A few months later, some of those who had sought refuge in Soroti town started to return home to rebuild their homes. The return process has been slow, and will take many more months. Many people still fear that the LRA or the Karamajong will return and destroy everything once again."

Massive displacement in Lira District, 2003-2004

- The majority of the violence and subsequent displacement took place in 2003 and 2004
- The LRA entered Lira district with a vengeance in November 2003
- In less than a month, the numbers of IDPs grew from 65,000 to more than 200,000
- There was a second peak of terror, including the Barlonyo massacre, which took place in February 2004, after the creation of a local militia meant to provide protection

MSF, 1 December 2004, pp, 11-12:

"Although Lira had experienced hit and run raids by the LRA throughout 2002, the majority of the violence and subsequent displacement took place in 2003 and 2004. The LRA entered Lira district with a vengeance in November 2003 causing massive population movements from rural villages to Lira town and trading centres throughout the district. Overcrowded and unprotected, the camps have proven to be death traps. Populations have been cut off from their livelihoods, and are barely surviving with little water, deplorable sanitation, and no health services, in some cases, for more than a year. This has contributed to emergency high death rates, widespread disease, fear and trauma.

By early November 2003, as many as 65,000 people had already fled into Lira town. In less than a month, the numbers grew to more than 200,000. People were scattered throughout the city. Some were living in makeshift camps while others sought shelter in an abandoned factory, in the railway station, under verandas or in the street. "People were everywhere and anywhere they

could find a place to lay their head. And still at night the population ballooned as, mostly children, funnelled into town in search of safety.

There was a second peak of terror in February 2004, just after the creation of a local militia, the Amuka boys. The LRA, having been attacked by the militia, sought revenge and brutally massacred hundreds of people in two horrific attacks. More than fifty people were killed in Abyia, on 4 February, when the LRA, disguised as Amuka boys, entered the camp in broad daylight and started shooting. The second attack, and one that caught the world's attention, took place in Barlonyo on 21 February 2004. More than 300 people, mostly women and children were killed. Many died as they were forced to stay in their huts as the rebels set fire to them and burned whole families alive. In addition to the heavy death toll, these attacks left many physically wounded, and the whole district mentally scarred."

The war is spreading east (March 2004)

- The year 2003 saw what appears to have been a deliberate and well coordinated spread of the war
- Movement of the LRA into Teso and Lango districts
- Teso is known as a fertile farming region that supplies beef, chicken and potatoes
- The LRA appears to have believed it could gain support from these areas
- The incursion could be an attempt to punish the Iteso for their continued support of the National Resistance Movement of president Museveni
- The conflict increasingly seen within a national historical context

ISS, 31 March 2004 chapter 5:

"Apart from attacks in West Nile and Lango since the early 1990s, the LRA conflict has been felt most intensely in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader. The year 2003, however, saw what appears to have been a deliberate and well coordinated spread of the war, to the east in particular. In May 2003, the LRA ambushed a bus along Pakwach-Karuma road in Gulu District. This was followed on 15 June 2003 by simultaneous attacks in the districts of Lira, Apac and Katakwi, in what some in Teso have called their "September 11th ". Three days later, the LRA attacked Adjumani town for the first time in fourteen years. These attacks were soon followed by others of greater frequency and intensity in the districts of Kaberamaido and Katakwi in Teso region. On 24 June, the LRA attacked Soroti town, resulting in at least 200 deaths and the abduction of hundreds more children, including 100 schoolgirls. A group of IDPs in Lira described this sequence of events: "The attacks were gradual. We knew the rebels were camped at a certain place, but they did not attack for a long time, so we waited . We told the UPDF but they did not respond. So we waited , and suddenly places were attacked and because they didn't protect us, we had to run." Thus, LRA attacks have not only continued with intensity across the Acholi sub-region, but have also spread to several other areas.

On 26 June, it was reported that more than 2 000 veterans of the defunct Teso-based rebel Uganda People's Army (UPA) led by Musa Eweru, then Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Kasese, and local MP John Eresu, had joined the UPDF to fight the rebels in Teso. This development was later opposed by a group of northern parliamentarians, who viewed the deployment of paramilitary groups as unconstitutional.

The movement of the LRA into Teso and Lango appears to have occurred for several reasons. First, many believe that the LRA were running short of food and other logistical supplies, having thoroughly looted Gulu, Kitgum and Pader for the past 17 years. With more than 80% of the population in these districts displaced in IDP camps, most of the land currently lies fallow. Given

the fact that the LRA relies chiefly on plundering agricultural stocks to resupply its food needs, and that many planting seasons have been missed in these districts, there are few crops left to loot. Teso, on the other hand, is known as a fertile farming region that supplies beef, chicken and potatoes to other regions of Uganda . It was thus a key target area to attack when foodstuffs were in short supply in the usual operational area.

Second, the LRA appears to have believed it could gain support from these areas, particularly among former rebels from Teso and Tororo/Busia. As an official in Soroti commented , [Kony] thought that since we had a rebellion here, he could find potential allies. They thought they could then proceed to fight the government until Kampala . They wanted to spread their area of influence. The UPDF is taking over Gulu and Kitgum, so they came here. But the people of Teso have not joined them; we have the Arrows. 214

Our interviews reveal that the LRA first spent several days in both areas without attacking. According to local residents in Obalanga (Katakwi District, part of Teso region), the rebels were initially very friendly – playing football, watching videos, and generally interacting freely with the population. 215 Informants also reported that the LRA came with a list of names of former UPA rebels who had fought against the government from 1987 to 1992. They wanted to know the locations of these ex-fighters so as to activate them to fight the “dictatorial” Museveni government. A similar thing appears to have occurred in Tororo and Busia in September and October 2003, with the LRA allegedly sending six scouts in search of fighters from the former 9 October Movement. 216 Kony appears to be following in the footsteps of UPDA fighters from Gulu, who in 1988 attempted to join UPA rebels in Teso against the government. 217 The move to Lango (Lira and Apac districts) came later in September, and appears to have been in part a reaction to being pushed back from Teso. 218

The drive to activate former fighters in the east may have been an attempt by the LRA to reorganise itself in a time of uncertainty, given the potential implications of the Sudan peace process, which brought the LRA’s key supply line increasingly under threat. In the past, Kony had shown his ability to adapt to changing circumstances. For instance, during the 1994 negotiations he evidently took advantage of a lull in the fighting to abduct more children and go to Sudan for arms and ammunition. 219 With reports that the LRA command structure had been reshuffled in recent weeks, 220 something similar may have been taking place.

Another explanation for the war’s spread was that it was an attempt to punish the Iteso for their continued support of the NRM. As one informant in Soroti said, “They say the Iteso are the strongest supporters of the Movement in the north, so they must be punished for it.” 221 Others claimed that it was a deliberate attempt by Kony to prove that, after Operation Iron Fist, the LRA was still a force to be reckoned with, giving the lie to claims that the LRA was about to be finished off once and for all. For instance, Museveni wrote in a letter to the *New Vision* in August 2002, “You can be sure this conflict will be over, latest by February, when the grass will have been burnt, if it goes that far.” 222 As a religious leader said, “Kony wants to prove that he is alive and well after Operation Iron Fist, which is supposed to have finished him. So to show that it was a failure, the best way is to spread.” 223

Some interviewees believed that the LRA attacked Soroti because they were seeking revenge for Acholi UNLA soldiers who were killed in Teso in 1986: “During the withdrawal of UNLA, as they were running north, they were intercepted in Teso and killed. This was in 1986. The Iteso pretended to entertain them, but they killed them at night. Some people are coming to revenge these killings.” 224 Others speculated that ex-UPA rebels who had joined the LRA in the 1980s, invited the LRA to enter their district: “We have heard of the invitation sent by the rebels to come here by many rebels, especially the ex-UPA ones who did not surrender. These ones are with the rebels and they are the ones directing them in this region.” 225

Whatever the reasons for the LRA extending its geographical focus, it has radically changed perceptions of the conflict. The extent to which the conflict is being seen increasingly within a national historical context is symptomatic of this change of opinion. In addition, and in response to such wider interpretations of the war, there has been an increase in pressure for the war to end both by those directly affected by the war, and by those increasingly aware of its protracted nature."

Peace-efforts

Juba peace talks stall at final hurdle (May 2008)

- Joseph Kony failed to sign the Final Peace Agreement between the Government of Uganda and the LRA on 10 April 2008.
- The Juba peace process has since been thrown into disarray. While LRA negotiators insist that the LRA is still interested in signing a peace agreement, it is not clear whether they speak on behalf of Kony.

Reuters, 14 April 2008

"President Yoweri Museveni yesterday accused Joseph Kony, the leader of the rebel LRA, of not being serious about peace talks and hinted his forces could resume operations against the rebels.

Prospects of an end to the 21-year rebel insurgency were dashed last week after Kony, commander of the Lord's Resistance Army, failed to attend a signing ceremony on the Sudan-Congo border, stalling nearly two years of intricate negotiations.

"You have been able to persist until it is clear that it's Kony who is not serious," Mr Museveni told South Sudanese mediators during a visit to the southern capital, Juba.

He accused LRA fighters of continuing to kidnap villagers from South Sudan, Congo and the Central African Republic and then forcing them into the rebel ranks.

"The people of South Sudan should know we stand with them and we have the means to work together with them to solve some of these problems," Mr Museveni told reporters.

Uganda's military fought the LRA across South Sudan, but these clashes largely stopped in mid-2006 after peace talks began in Juba. The UN envoy to the conflict told journalists earlier on the Congo border that the negotiations with Kony were not dead, despite rebel infighting that apparently killed a fugitive commander and delayed the final signing.

Mr Joaquim Chissano, a former Mozambican president and UN special envoy, blamed a breakdown in communication with the elusive guerrilla boss. "The peace process is not dead. There is a lack of effective communication, and that's what the LRA leader wants," he said.

"There are people who are assisting in establishing that effective communication, and once that clarification is made the peace process will be back on the road."

Mr Chissano was expected to meet Mr Museveni later in Juba. However, hopes of reviving the peace process were fading yesterday as Kony continued to rebuff requests to contact the Chief Mediator and South Sudan Vice President, Dr Riek Machar, who has camped at Nabanga until the truce expires today.

The 22-year civil war has killed tens of thousands of people and uprooted two million more in northern Uganda alone. It has also destabilised neighbouring parts of Sudan's oil-producing south and eastern Congo, which has large mineral wealth.

Kony, who is wanted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court in The Hague, had been expected to sign a final agreement in Ri-Kwangba on Thursday [10 April]. But he failed to show up."

Enough, May 2008

"Lord's Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony's failure to sign a peace deal in April drove a nail into the coffin of the Juba peace process—a process that is grinding to an unsuccessful end.¹ The talks have certainly contributed to northern Uganda's current state of relative peace and created

a mechanism to address tensions between the people in the North and the southern-dominated government in Kampala. But without real leverage and without a direct channel of negotiations to Kony himself, the LRA leader has exploited this last year of negotiations to stave off international pressure, collect food and money from the mediators and donors, and buy time to abduct, train, and equip new combatants. Another meeting with the LRA high command and the mediators set for May 10 looks like it will just be more of the same.

[...]

With hopes of a peace agreement dashed by Kony's intransigence, it is time for a new approach. While the Juba peace process did have certain benefits, it no longer makes sense for the mediators to attempt to appease an LRA that is intent upon spreading its terror across the region, and no longer worth delaying justice for the 1.5 million Ugandans who remain in the displaced persons camps created out of Kony's horrors in northern Uganda. Some religious and cultural leaders from the North continue to reach out to Kony in the hopes of re-energizing the peace process. While their efforts are commendable, it has become clear that Kony is not interested in signing this agreement.³ Talks therefore must come to a close.

What is needed now is a two-track strategy that will both enable northern Uganda to consolidate its relative peace, and will address the regional threat that Kony now poses."

ICC arrest warrants for top LRA commanders complicate peace efforts (April 2008)

- The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for five LRA commanders, including Joseph Kony.
- Three of the five LRA commanders have since died: Raska Lukwiya was killed by the UPDF in August 2006, while Vincent Otti and Okot Odhiambo were reported to have been killed by Kony.
- The LRA has frequently referred to the ICC arrest warrants as an obstacle to the LRA's signing of the Final Peace Agreement between the Government of Uganda and the LRA.

Reuters, 14 April 2008

"Kony, who is wanted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court in The Hague, had been expected to sign a final agreement in Ri-Kwangba on Thursday. But he failed to show up.

An LRA spokesman said the rebel is ready to sign, but wants guarantees for his safety and financial security. Then on Sunday, rebel sources said disputes within the LRA over the proposed deal triggered gun battles last week that killed at least nine people - including Okot Odhiambo, a top commander who is also wanted by international prosecutors.

Kony, Odhiambo and a third senior rebel, Dominic Ongwen, were accused by the ICC in 2005 of offences including rape, murder and the abduction of thousands of children who were forced to serve the group as fighters, porters and sex slaves.

If confirmed, Odhiambo would become the third of five LRA suspects named by the ICC who have since died. Kony executed his deputy Vincent Otti last October after accusing him of being a government spy, while fifth indictee Raska Lukwiya was killed by the Ugandan military in August 2006.

Even if Kony does sign a peace agreement, the LRA says it will not disarm until the ICC indictments are scrapped. The Ugandan government has said it will only call for the warrants to be lifted after a final deal has been reached.

The world court says its warrants remain active, and that Uganda has a legal obligation to arrest the targets."

Security Council Report, 11 April 2008

"On 19 February [2008], the two sides signed a significant agreement on accountability and reconciliation, which is an annex to an earlier agreement, signed on 29 June 2007 that articulated principles on the same matters. The annex agreement envisions the setting up of a special division of the Uganda High Court to try those accused of planning or carrying out war crimes and other widespread attacks on civilians during the conflict. It also contemplates some use of reconciliation rituals known in Uganda as traditional justice. While the agreement does not specify exactly who would be subject only to traditional justice measures and not trials, those close to the talks have suggested that higher level persons bearing greater responsibility for serious crimes would be subject to trials before the Ugandan courts, while those implicated in more minor abuses, including child soldiers who had been abducted by the LRA, would be subject to traditional justice.

Reaching agreement in the final peace agreement on justice and accountability has been a major obstacle. LRA leaders had initially called for "dropping" the ICC's cases against them. (The ICC has jurisdiction because of a formal request by Uganda in January 2004.) In October 2005, the ICC announced arrest warrants for five LRA commanders, including its leader Joseph Kony. (Two of the accused have since died; it is believed one died in battle and one was killed by Kony.) Given that no "dropping" or "withdrawal" of arrest warrants by the Ugandan government is possible under the Rome Statute, the parties turned to the possibility of national prosecutions in lieu of ICC prosecutions. Under the ICC Statute, this is a possible option under article 19. However, the ICC judges would have to determine the sufficiency of national trials as an alternative to ICC jurisdiction.

On 29 February [2008], the parties concluded an additional agreement in which the Ugandan government agreed to make a request during a transitional period following the signing of a final peace agreement that the Security Council would decide to defer the ICC's investigation and prosecution and that the request would be made after the Ugandan government had begun preparation for national trials. (It is unclear how the 12 March statement by President Yoweri Museveni during a visit to London that the prevailing view in his country was a preference for pursuing alternative traditional justice which was a "compensatory rather than a retributive system" rather than trials by the ICC in The Hague is to be reconciled with the 29 February agreement.)"

IRIN, 17 October 2005

"The decision by the International Criminal Court's (ICC) to issue arrest warrants for the leaders of the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has changed the dynamics of ongoing peace talks between the Uganda government and the rebels, the mediator said.

"You can no longer talk to the LRA as before, the dynamics have changed. The situation is different and I would not like to talk to the LRA now because the ICC has not yet given me details of the warrant," Betty Bigombe told IRIN on Monday."

[...]

"The head of the Uganda Amnesty Commission (UAC), a statutory body set up by the government to give a blanket amnesty to surrendering rebels, also said the decision by the international court had left their work in "total confusion".

Since the commission started its work, we have based our sensitisation on the blanket amnesty and the impact has been tremendous. But now the issue has changed and we also have to deal with the uncertainty the ICC warrants have brought about," Peter Onega, the UAC chairman, told IRIN on Monday.

Onega said the warrants would scare away willing rebels and frustrate the commission's efforts to negotiate for ex-rebels' return.

"It means we have to start afresh to sensitise them [the rebels] that the warrant is only for a few people and the rest are free to come back home," he said.

"The statute establishing the ICC overrides the national laws and the court may decide to issue other warrants of arrest for people we have even issued amnesty to. Where does this leave the amnesty statute, where we derive our mandate?" he added" (IRIN, 10 October 2005).

"The EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, called on countries in the region to cooperate with the court to take its first ever indictments off the ground.

"I welcome this historic decision - the first ICC indictments ever - which expresses the Court's wish to put an end to the impunity in a region that suffered so much from grave human rights violations," Solana said in a statement on Friday.

"The EU has supported the ICC since its early beginnings. I call upon all countries in the region to cooperate with the ICC in the execution of this decision," he added.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the indictments would "send a powerful signal around the world that those responsible for such crimes will be held accountable for their actions."

"The Secretary-General calls on all states, particularly those in the region concerned, to extend their full cooperation to the ICC, including by acting expeditiously to execute the arrest warrants against the suspects, while taking seriously their responsibility to protect civilians, particularly women and children," a UN statement said on Friday."

The Juba peace process (March 2008)

International Crisis Group, 14 September 2007

"Strong regional and wider international support has spurred a flurry of recent activity. The Juba peace talks resumed on 26 April 2007, after UN Special Envoy Chissano and his team brokered a deal that ended the LRA's three-month withdrawal. Over the next two months the parties reached basic agreements on comprehensive solutions and on reconciliation and accountability. Newly-added regional observers from Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Congo and South Africa acted as informal facilitators to promote communication, confidence and compromise. Security in southern Sudan improved as LRA combatants, who had been destabilising Eastern Equatoria, crossed the Nile and assembled with the bulk of the rebels west of Garamba National Park in Congo, near the Sudan border.

But neither agreement has been implemented or even fully concluded. Disagreements over consultations called for in the reconciliation and accountability agreement have revived questions about LRA motives and demonstrated difficulties ahead. The LRA is safer and stronger than when the peace process began and is developing more options."

Voice of America, 27 March 2008

"Ugandan officials said Wednesday that the final peace agreement between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army LRA rebels will now be signed on April fifth. The signing could end more than 20 years of war in northern Uganda, one of Africa's longest running conflicts. The agreement was supposed to have been signed March 28. But the rebels have said they will not sign a final peace deal with the Ugandan government unless indictments against top rebel leaders by the International Criminal Court (ICC) are dropped.

Uganda has said that once LRA leader Joseph Kony signs a final deal, it will call on the ICC to drop its indictments."

IDPs prefer peace before justice (July 2005)

- International justice may hamper national peace efforts
- Representatives from Lango, Acholi, Iteso and Madi community leaders have requested the International Criminal Court (ICC) to reconsider its investigations against rebel leaders
- The conflict is still ongoing and the ICC has no special powers of arrest
- Pro-government politicians favour combining the peace and ICC processes
- Fear that the LRA will have no incentive to dialogue with the Government if they face arrest and detention by the ICC

"In response to numerous failed military attempts at resolving the conflict – with disastrous consequences for civilians – the government, under pressure from civil society, enacted an Amnesty Act in 2000, which allows rebels to receive amnesty if they voluntarily come out of the bush and renounce rebellion. Seen primarily as a tool for ending the war, it has allowed a significant number of combatants to escape from the rebels and, in theory, return to their communities. It must be noted that this conception of amnesty is very different than amnesties that have been implemented in other situations of transitional justice. The amnesty granted in Chile, for example, was granted to military personnel after the conflict was finished, and in blanket form, to keep them from being prosecuted in the trials that would come after. The amnesty granted in South Africa as part of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process was granted on an ad hoc basis in exchange for testimony. The amnesty in Uganda has been declared before the end of the conflict. While people in Uganda appear to perceive of the amnesty as having been very much a tool to end the war, there is less clarity over the consequences it might have afterward.

At the same time, the [International Criminal Court \(ICC\)](#) was asked by President Museveni in December 2003 to investigate the actions of the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda. The ICC has now determined that there is enough evidence to begin an investigation. What this means, of course, is that those found guilty of crimes, including crimes against humanity and war crimes, all of which have almost certainly been committed in the long-running conflict, will be sentenced and imprisoned according to the penalties set out in the Rome Statute, the legislation upon which the ICC is based.

As a result, there appears to be a contradiction between the Amnesty Act, seen by many as an alternative to punishment, and the investigations and subsequent punishment by the ICC.

Indeed, several delegations of Lango, Acholi, Iteso and Madi community leaders have prevailed upon the ICC to reconsider or at least to carefully consider its actions in light of the fact that the conflict is still ongoing and the ICC has no special powers of arrest. In other words, people want the amnesty to take precedence at the moment, even though the granting of amnesty to senior members of the LRA is not necessarily a final measure in the minds of many; certain individuals could still face prosecution by the ICC. It also raises the question as to just how far down the chain of command such prosecutions will reach – at what "rank" or number of crimes against humanity or war crimes committed will the prosecutors cap their investigations? Yet another question is the perceived adequacy of any punishment that the ICC can offer, since internationally-conceived prison conditions are vastly different than what prisoners could expect in Uganda. Numerous additional logistical and legal questions surround the whole viability of the process. Ultimately, however, the people living in the war-affected region will have to live with the decisions that are being made."

OCHA, 22 June 2005

"Another issue that complicates the search for peace in northern Uganda is the continuation of the investigation of senior LRA commanders, by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity committed during the insurgency. While civil society organisations, religious, traditional, and some political leaders from northern Uganda believe that the investigations and the potential issuance of arrest warrants against top LRA commanders do not serve the cause of peace in northern Uganda. Pro-government politicians favour combining the peace and ICC processes to put pressure on the LRA."

LIU Institute, May 2005

"The initiation of an investigation by the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Northern and Eastern Uganda has sparked intense debate on its impact on the prospects for peace in the region. On one side of the debate, it is argued that the Chief Prosecutor's timing negatively impacts the efforts of Betty Bigombe, chief mediator between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), to re-initiate talks. The fear is that the LRA will have no incentive to dialogue with the Government if they face arrest and detention. Second, the investigation provides a disincentive for rebel commanders to come out under the provision of the Ugandan Amnesty Act (2000). Third, the investigation undermines the efforts of locally-based civil society groups to support the peaceful return and reintegration of combatants under the Amnesty. On the other side, the Chief Prosecutor, Luis Moreno Ocampo's investigation has had a positive impact, facilitating prospects for realizing sustainable peace, primarily by drawing greater international attention to the conflict and pressuring conflicting parties to resolve it.

This Human Security Update examines the origins and evolution of the two sides of the debate on 'peace vs. justice' and attempts to bring them into conversation. Recent efforts to exchange information and views on this topic may provide an entry point for finding a balanced approach between international and local initiatives. Both approaches have relative merits and limitations. Neither are a stand-alone solution, but a well-planned, long-term, coordinated and transparent approach could stimulate both peace and justice in the region.

The origins and evolution of the debate

The current debate surrounding the ICC's investigation does not revolve around the necessity of an international criminal justice system, nor the concept of the International Criminal Court; the issue is timing. As His Highness Rwot David Onen Acana II, Paramount Chief of the Acholi, explains: "we all need justice. Peace and justice go together, but let's work on the peace first and the justice later on".¹ Bryn Higgs, Uganda Programme Development Officer for Conciliation Resources, further explains the position: "to start war crimes investigations for the sake of justice at a time when northern Uganda sees the most promising signs for a negotiated settlement of the violence risks having in the end neither justice nor peace delivered".² This view should not, however, be seen as the population's support for either LRA leader Joseph Kony or impunity.³ Nor is the ICC viewed as an irrelevant or anti-conflict resolution institution; its inception will have a tremendous impact on the future protection of human rights and justice of those committing genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression."

Anti-terrorism laws undermine Amnesty Act of 2000 (May 2004)

- The Amnesty act was intended to grant any combatant who surrendered voluntarily immunity from prosecution
- It initially ran for six months, but has been extended six times – most recently on 17 January 2004 for an additional three months
- While the Amnesty Act grants amnesty for those engaged in 'war or armed rebellion', the Anti-Terrorism Act provides for the death sentence for someone 'influencing the government or influencing the public... for a political, religious, social or economic aim
- The amnesty does not apply to the top LRA commanders
- Very few LRA rebels – only 3,848 – have taken advantage of the amnesty law and been resettled

Christian Aid, 10 May 2004

"The Ugandan government's Amnesty Act of 2000 has been completely undermined by the War on Terror. The act was passed as a result of pressure from non-governmental organisations, many supported by Christian Aid, which were concerned about the plight of the conflict's victims. Many of them are also the perpetrators. The act was intended to grant any combatant who surrendered voluntarily immunity from prosecution.

It initially ran for six months, but has been extended six times – most recently on 17 January 2004 for an additional three months. The whole process, however, has been plagued by a lack of resources for adequate resettlement packages. The World Bank has promised US\$3.6 million to help resettle 15,000 former rebels. But, according to Justice Peter Onega, the chairman of the Uganda Amnesty Commission, it is demanding proof of the government's commitment: 'One of the conditions of the World Bank is that the commission must be in existence at least for the next two years.'

Of more concern to those involved in the amnesty process is the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2002 – another of the Ugandan government's moves following September 11, 2001. While the Amnesty Act grants amnesty for those engaged in 'war or armed rebellion', the Anti-Terrorism Act provides for the death sentence for someone 'influencing the government or influencing the public... for a political, religious, social or economic aim'. Furthermore, the Anti-Terrorism Act designated the LRA a terrorist organisation, membership of which is a criminal offence.

Thus, anyone attempting to establish a dialogue with the LRA is immediately branded a collaborator. This has particularly affected the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARPLI), a multi-religious organisation, which advocates communication with the LRA. Members of ARPLI, which is a Christian Aid partner, are under surveillance and have been threatened by the military.

Loud public statements by the government advocate a military end to the war and so directly contradict the concept of amnesty. President Museveni has repeatedly said that the amnesty does not apply to the top LRA commanders. As one man in a camp for displaced people in Kitgum asked, 'Museveni has agreed [to] the amnesty, but then he starts to talk of killing the rebels, of wiping them out. How can Kony know which one is true?'

Predictably, very few LRA rebels – only 3,848 – have taken advantage of the amnesty law and been resettled. Peter Olowa, in the Kitgum office of the Uganda Amnesty Commission, says that without money the whole amnesty process is doomed to failure."

Premature peace hopes, 1994-2005

- Tight limitations on February 2005 ceasefire risk undermining it as soon as it starts
- Glimmer of hopes for peace in January 2005
- Hopes for peace and return shattered in March 2003
- Hopes for return shattered in February 2002
- Hopes for gradual return shattered in November 2001
- Peace talks ended in 1994 when President Museveni gave the LRA seven days to put down their weapons and turn themselves over to the government

Oxfam, 4 February 2005

"The new ceasefire between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda, which takes effect today, has been welcomed, but Oxfam warns that 18 years of conflict cannot be ended in 18 days.

The Government of Uganda has today announced a renewed but limited ceasefire with the LRA. The ceasefire will last for only 18 days and cover an area of only 50 square kilometres.

"This is a desperate situation and any step towards peace is a step in the right direction. The LRA needs to respond to this ceasefire positively. At the same time, we are worried that the tight limitations on this ceasefire risk undermining it as soon as it starts. Attacks by both sides have led to a break down in trust that has to be rebuilt. We think that more time and patience is needed to rebuild confidence in the process and get down to real discussion about how to end this war. 18 years of conflict cannot be ended in 18 days," said Emma Naylor, Head of Oxfam Uganda.

The conflict has already had dire humanitarian consequences for the lives of 1.6 million people.

Oxfam is calling for the international community to use its influence to end the suffering and support the peace process. The United Nations Security Council met last week in New York. The council offered nothing more than a few remarks to the press and failed to take any substantive action.

"We must ensure a supportive environment for these talks. We urge the Ugandan government and the LRA to give this process their full commitment, whatever setbacks may occur along the way. We also call upon the international community to support these talks. We must make this peace process work and end the suffering of millions of people hanging in the balance," added Emma Naylor, Head of Oxfam Uganda."

ARLPI, 31 May 2004

"Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said on Wednesday [January 2005] his army had defeated the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels, whom he advised to surrender, saying no retribution awaited them.

In an address to the nation marking the 19th anniversary of his rise to power, Museveni made no reference to on-going peace efforts aimed at ending the 18-year war between the military and the LRA, which has displaced hundreds of thousands of people in northern Uganda.

There had been a glimmer of hope on Tuesday that the peace process might be moving ahead when the chief mediator, former Ugandan minister Betty Bigombe, announced that "by the end of the week, both sides will have agreed on a date when to sign a ceasefire agreement".

Museveni said: "Kony's group has been completely defeated and its remnants are simply fugitives whom we are capturing day by day [...] Those still remaining in the bush should come out now, because they have nothing to fear."

Museveni took power on January 26, 1986 after a five-year bush war. A few months later, armed men - mostly from the defeated government army - began a rebellion in the north of the country.

In 1987, an agreement was reached between Museveni's government and the main rebel Uganda People's Defence Army. However, some of the rebels joined a new group, the Holy Spirit Movement led by Priestess Alice Lakwena, which later gave rise to the LRA."(IRIN, 27 January 2005).

"Has anything changed in Northern Uganda during the last few months? [...]"

Judging things from the ground, experience has taught us that in the Northern Uganda war things need to be taken cautiously avoiding being over-optimistic. During the 18-year old war there have been some other similar moments. The much-repeated statements that “the war is almost over” or that “it is generally calm” are not new to our ears. There are moments in which we think that the violence is scaling down, only to be taken by surprise by another massacre, as it happened in Odek on April 29 (see chronology attached). The situation continues to be very serious, and so far the supposed wearing out of the LRA is not having much effect in having any significant impact in changing in the lives of the at least 1.6 million displaced persons staying in the camps. Abductions, although generally unreported in the Press these days, continue almost on a daily basis and a good number of them end up being killed in armed clashes and reported as “rebels killed”.

Is an outright victory by the UPDF possible? Supporters of this view often refer to the defeat of the ADF in Western Uganda as an example. Whether this is possible or not, ARLPI’s view has always been that peace achieved by military means on the long run is not as sustainable as peace achieved by dialogue. The thousands of parents whose children were abducted and who have lost them during armed clashes may remain with a bitterness that will not go away easily.

Moreover, even with the scenario of a weakened LRA without support from Sudan the chronic insecurity might not stop at once. The LRA violence may continue even without any military assistance from Sudan. In order to get a comprehensive solution that will last we need to keep working on a peaceful settlement that will end with a general demobilisation of the LRA. This is the main challenge still lying ahead of us.

In this respect, President Museveni’s public statement on April 15 [2004] that he was ready to talk to the rebel leaders either directly or through mediators is surely a step in the right direction. The UPDF new top command is also more positive about peace dialogue with the rebels. Although there is not yet a clear response from the LRA –whose second-in-command Vincent Ottii rings people here and there every now and then but so far with no concrete proposals- all these new developments open a glimpse of hope for the near future, even if we may not go beyond a cautious and moderate optimism.

Announcements about the intended amendment of the Amnesty Law (which expires on May 17th) and the International Criminal Court’s possible prosecution of the LRA top leadership have had an adverse effect in making the scenario of peace talks easy."

OCHA, 2 October 2002

Apart from the Ugandan army's troubled campaign against Kony, there have been some, so far unsuccessful, attempts to bring a peaceful end to the war. These peace initiatives have included a presidential peace team, which was established by Museveni with a view to starting serious negotiations.

However, the initiative has floundered after a ceasefire agreement was dishonoured, and it is now a widely held view in the north that the Ugandan government is primarily interested in wiping out the LRA by force, rather than reaching a settlement through dialogue.

Some civil society groups, most notably the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARPLI), have tried to fill the vacuum left by the failure of government-led initiatives. However, members of this team have also been frustrated by an apparent unwillingness on the part of the rebels to

come out of the bush to negotiate, and by the difficulties in talking peace while war is still being waged.

Fr. Carlos Rodriguez, a high-profile member of the ARPLI, says the time has come for international mediation to resolve the conflict, and that the LRA would also respond positively to such engagement.

This is a sentiment shared by Baker Ochola, the retired Bishop of Kitgum. 'Those being targeted are the children, women and the elderly. This is why we feel there is a need for the international community to put pressure on the Ugandan government and Sudan in order to give a break to the people,' he told IRIN." (UN OCHA, 15 September 2003)

"Following recent peace moves by the Ugandan government and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army(LRA), there is hope that finally an end may be in sight to the bloody insurrection in the north of the country" (IRIN 12 March 2003)

"The government is estimating that peace will have returned to the north of the country by February 2003 and resettlement of displaced populations to have taken place in March. However it has not put forward any timetable for peace talks with rebels."

Government hoped that IDPs would be able to return to their homes by early April 2002

OCHA 28 February 2002, pp.31-33

"As Kony's position is weakened and the UPDF estimates LRA numbers in Uganda at only 100 with a further 300 in southern Sudan, Museveni appears confident that there will be a direct, and positive, impact on the situation for IDPs in the north and he has expressed a hope that IDPs will be able to return to their homes by early April. While there continue to be a small number of attacks and ambushes on roads, these are often attributable to banditry and incidences of abduction have decreased. In response, IDPs have begun to venture out of the camps to work in their gardens and travel to their villages, a trend that had already been noticed in Kitgum over the last six months, and is now apparent in Gulu where 25% of the IDP population are estimated to be accessing their gardens."

Hopes for gradual return of the civilian population to their homesteads or villages of origin(2002)

UN Uganda, 30 November 2001

"The North (Gulu, Pader, Kitgum):_Most Likely Scenario: it is assumed that the Amnesty Act (Section 1.2), with its option for active combatants to report for their Amnesty Certificate and return to normal life, will weaken the strength of the LRA and its impact on the civilian population. Additional efforts will be made by Khartoum and Kampala to bring an end to the meaningless attacks on the civilian populations. LRA rebel activity will consequently decline, including looting, abductions and sporadic attacks, as was experienced during 2001. This will result in a gradual return of the civilian population to their homesteads or villages of origin."

Increasing isolation of LRA facilitated return(First half of 2002-before military offensive)

IRIN, 11 January 2002

"Improvements in security in the north and increasing isolation of the LRA in recent months had facilitated the spontaneous return of several thousand IDPs to their home areas, humanitarian sources told IRIN on Thursday, 10 January 2002.

'It is happening in a fairly ad hoc manner. It is pretty slow but it is going in the right direction,' they said.

The population of one of the largest camps at Pabbo, Gulu District, had fallen by around 5,000 and was now estimated at 41,000 people, sources added.

The president assuring IDP that they would be able to return during 2002

IRIN, 11 January 2002

"Although the Ugandan government has no clear policy on tackling internal displacement, Museveni said in his end of year address that the security status of the northern and western Uganda would improve enough to allow the IDP camps to be dismantled.

"I would like to assure those Ugandans that are still in those camps that they will be able to go back to their homes this year," he said on Radio Uganda on 31 December."

Political changes may result in the resolution of the long-running LRA rebellion (2001)

UN November 2001, p.6

"Events that have contributed to the comparative quiet include:

The ongoing Amnesty;

A number of community based peace initiatives such as the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI);

Government's efforts to dialogue with the LRA rebels, spearheaded by the Gulu LCV Chairperson's meeting with several LRA Commanders on June 4th; and

Improved relations between the governments of Sudan and Uganda, which led to Sudan Government's formal decision to cut support to the LRA on August 20th.

Further, as part of the peace overtures to restore diplomatic relations (broken in 1995), Sudan reopened its embassy in Kampala August 2001, with Uganda doing the same in Khartoum a month later. These political changes may result in the resolution of the long-running LRA rebellion. Gulu district officials are already reviewing the possibility of resettling IDPs in camps nearer to their homes."

Peace talks ended when President Museveni gave the Lord's Resistance Army seven days to lay down weapons in 1994

Westbrook June 2000, sects. III, VI

"By 1994, things had once again reached a state where the government felt it needed to attempt to bring peace to the north. Thus, in 1994, peace talks were held between Kony and the NRM. These talks were facilitated by Betty Bigombe. Bigombe, herself an Acholi, was then the Minister for Pacification of the North. Bigombe's efforts very nearly came to fruition. It is said that, at the time, LRA soldiers were staying freely in the trading centers and that a cease-fire existed. These talks ended badly when President Museveni suddenly announced that he was giving the LRA seven days to put down their weapons and turn themselves over to the government. Within three days of this announcement, the LRA had once again begun attacking.

After the breakdown of the 1994 talks, any support that the LRA had enjoyed from the Acholi people dried up. Thus, the mass abduction of children began in early 1995.

[...]

Clearly, the people of Acholi-land have little stomach for a movement that has inflicted so much harm and contributed so greatly to the destruction of their culture and people. Whatever support the LRA has enjoyed in the past in Acholi-land has long since dissipated."

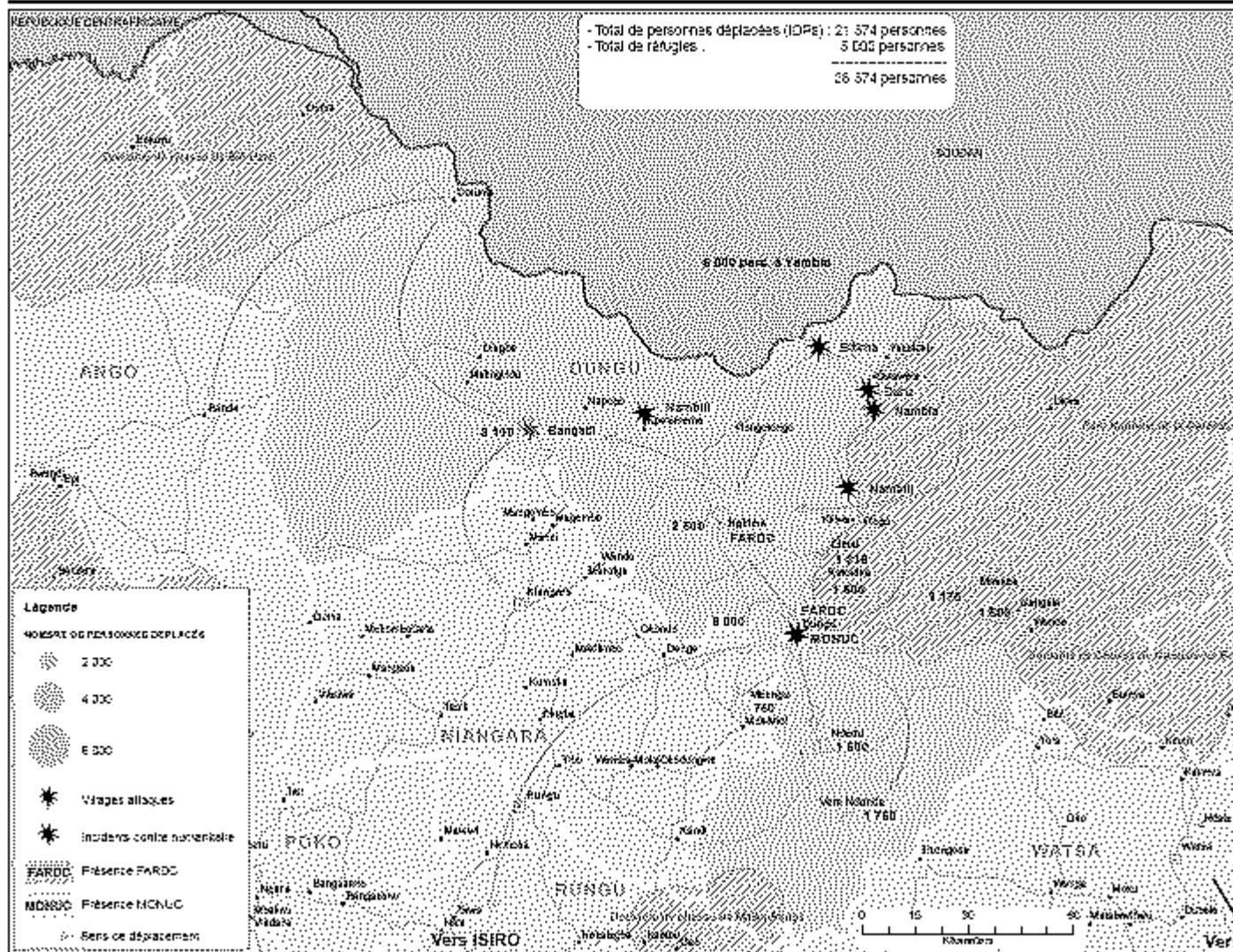
OCHA 23 May 2001, "Historical Backdrop"

"The Ugandan People's Defence Forces (UPDF) deployed in all main trading centres throughout Gulu, Kitgum and Pader Districts and continued to engage in low-intensity battles with the LRA until February 1996, when the later, buttressed by alleged arms and logistical from Khartoum, escalated its attacks against Acholi communities. By July 1996, the LRA had attacked numerous locations throughout Gulu in what appeared to be a campaign to breed fear amongst the population and to force the UPDF to respond in a more forceful and imprecise manner. There followed numerous incidents of Acholi citizens being caught up in "friendly fire" or of being brutally interrogated and accused of being LRA collaborators."

Regional aspects: Sudan, DRC, CAR

LRA attacks CAR and Sudan: thousands flee (October 2008)

OCHA, 22 October 2008:



BBC, 25 September 2008

"Some 75,000 people have fled attacks by Ugandan rebels in northern Democratic Republic of Congo, the Catholic aid agency Caritas has said.

Fighters from the Lord's Resistance Army are reported to have killed villagers and abducted children during recent attacks.

The rebels have moved from their original bases in Uganda to north-eastern DR Congo and South Sudan.

Those displaced have sought refuge in Dungu, where the army has a base.

UN troops are providing transport and military support to the Congolese army.

The LRA has led a rebellion for more than 20 years which has left some two million people displaced.

Last week, rebels launched surprise attacks on a military base in South Sudan and villages over the border in DR Congo.

The UN has said that rebels kidnapped 90 children during the raids on the villages of Duru, Nambia and Kiliwa.

LRA leader Joseph Kony refused to sign a peace deal agreed by his representatives earlier this year.

The LRA has said it is willing to sign an agreement, but will not disarm until the International Criminal Court (ICC) lifts arrest warrants against Mr Kony."



Involvement of CAR and Sudan (April 2008)

- LRA fighters reported to have moved from from their hide-out in the DRC to CAR

In August 2007 the president of the Central African Republic (CAR), General Francois Bozize, visited Uganda. Commentators saw the renewed contact between the two countries, which last had official dealings in the 1970s, as an attempt by Museveni to win support from Bozize to pursue the LRA militarily should it seek to relocate from its hide-out in the DRC to CAR.

Reuters, 2 April 2008

"Officials in the Sudanese military say Kony's fighters have been seen crossing the porous border area between Congo, Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR).

That has fuelled speculation among diplomats that the LRA may have forged links with Sudan-backed rebels there.

Khartoum backed the LRA in a proxy war with Uganda in the 1990s, in retaliation for Uganda's supporting south Sudanese rebels. But a peace deal in Sudan in 2005 removed Kony's safe haven in its south, forcing him to relocate to eastern Congo."

The Khartoum government backed the LRA in the 1990s, in retaliation for Uganda's support for separatist rebels in southern Sudan, and some commentators have expressed concerns that the Sudanese government might have an interest in ensuring that the LRA survives, so that it is available as a proxy militia in Southern Sudan should the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the government of Sudan and the southern Sudanese collapse:

ICG, 14 September 2007, p. 6

"Safer, well-supplied and stronger, the LRA also retains a relationship with the Sudanese government. Its leaders have told people close to the peace process they continue to talk to officials but insist Khartoum has no real influence. In March in Garamba, however, Otti told visitors that, "we are in Congo because [Sudanese President Omar] Bashir told us to come here, and we will stay in Congo until Bashir tells us to leave". There have been credible reports that elements within the Khartoum government have sent supplies to the LRA in CAR. But any support is small and difficult to trace. Khartoum is mainly interested in ensuring that the LRA can survive the next few years so it is available if needed as a proxy in southern Sudan if the troubled CPA collapses."

Agreement Between the Governments of Sudan and Uganda, 8 December 1999

United States Insitute for Peace, 8 December 1999

"In order to enhance relations between our two countries and to promote peace in the regions, we make the following commitments:

Each of us will respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each other, in accordance with the charters of the United Nations and the Organization for African Unity.

We renounce the use of force to resolve differences, and will take steps to prevent any hostile acts against each other.

We will make every effort to disband and disarm terrorist groups and to prevent any acts of terrorism or hostile actions that might originate in our territory that might endanger the security of the other nation.

We agree not to harbor, sponsor, or give military or logistical support to any rebel groups, opposition groups, or hostile elements from each others' territories.

We will join in a common effort to promote regional peace, both on our own initiative and in full support and in no way to prejudice or interfere with IGAD's role in bringing an end to the civil war in Sudan.

We will refrain from hostile and negative propaganda campaigns against each other.

We will return all prisoners of war to their respective nations.

We especially condemn any abuse or injury of innocent citizens, and will make a special effort to locate any abductees, especially children, who have been abducted in the past and return them to their families. All information about such cases will be shared with The Carter Center, UNICEF, and other international organizations and we will cooperate fully in the search and rescue of these victims, beginning immediately with those who can be identified.

We will honor international laws governing refugees, NGO activities, and cross-border transportation, and facilitate the return or resettlement of refugees in accordance with UNHCR regulations.

We will offer amnesty and reintegration assistance to all former combatants who renounce the use of force.

If all other terms of this agreement are honored satisfactorily, we desire to reestablish normal relations between our two countries. Within a month of this date, we will open offices in both capital cities and assign junior diplomatic personnel for service. By the end of February 2000, ambassadors will be exchanged and full diplomatic relations restored.

In order to implement this agreement, designated members of our contact groups will act as an interim committee. As soon as practical, a joint ministerial committee will be established with at least three sub committees, to deal with political, security, and humanitarian issues.

We understand that, when requested, the Carter Center will publicize this agreement and continue to play a role in its implementation."

Background to the conflict in the Karamajong affected area

Complex causes of conflict result in displacement within Karamoja (August 2005)

- No single cause to account for frequent, unpredictable and intermittent conflict amongst Karamojong
- Peace building initiatives have been unable to bring about resolution, due to complexity of cause-effect relationship
- A web of social-cultural, economic, political and environmental factors have led to intensified conflict
- Conflict and displacement contribute to poverty levels

USAID, August 2005, Pg: 10-11:

"Pastoralist conflicts in the region are very complex and take place within several levels of the Cluster:

1. Intra-clan conflicts, the most common type, are characterized by sections of one community (clan) or one Sub-county (Sub division) fighting with one another. The Tepeth and Matheniko have long been in conflict, and the Dodoth and the Ik (Teuso) have sometimes

clashed over suspicion that the Ik give protection to the Turkana. Intra-clan conflicts increased in scale in 1980s. Myth in Matheniko holds that raiding began in Karamoja as a curse from the most prominent elder, Lokolimoi. Inter-clan conflict brings the different clan of Karamoja against each other, for instances, Pokot versus Matheniko, Jie versus Bokora, Turkana versus Pokot, or Pian versus Bokora. Since 1987, inter-clan clashes have become more violent and regular and involve all different clans of Karamoja confronting each other.

2. Inter district conflicts bring the Karamajong against other tribes/ communities living in the districts neighboring the Cluster, possibly within the same country.

3. Cross border conflicts take place across the international borders of the Karamajong cluster groups where conflict exists between one tribe in one country against another tribe in the neighboring country. For example, the Karamajong of Uganda fighting the Turkana of Kenya or the Toposa of Sudan, or the Turkana of Kenya fighting the Merile of Ethiopia. Due to their complexity, cross border conflicts between the Turkana and the Karamajong pose a challenge to conflict analysis and management. Conflicts do not involve an entire group within either country, but one particular clan of Karamoja in Uganda against one particular section of the Turkana of Kenya. It may at any one time be the Jie against Kwatela, the Dodoth against the Lukmong, the Matheniko against the Woyakwara, or the Ngisonyoka against the Pokot. Each of these paired sections share frontiers.”

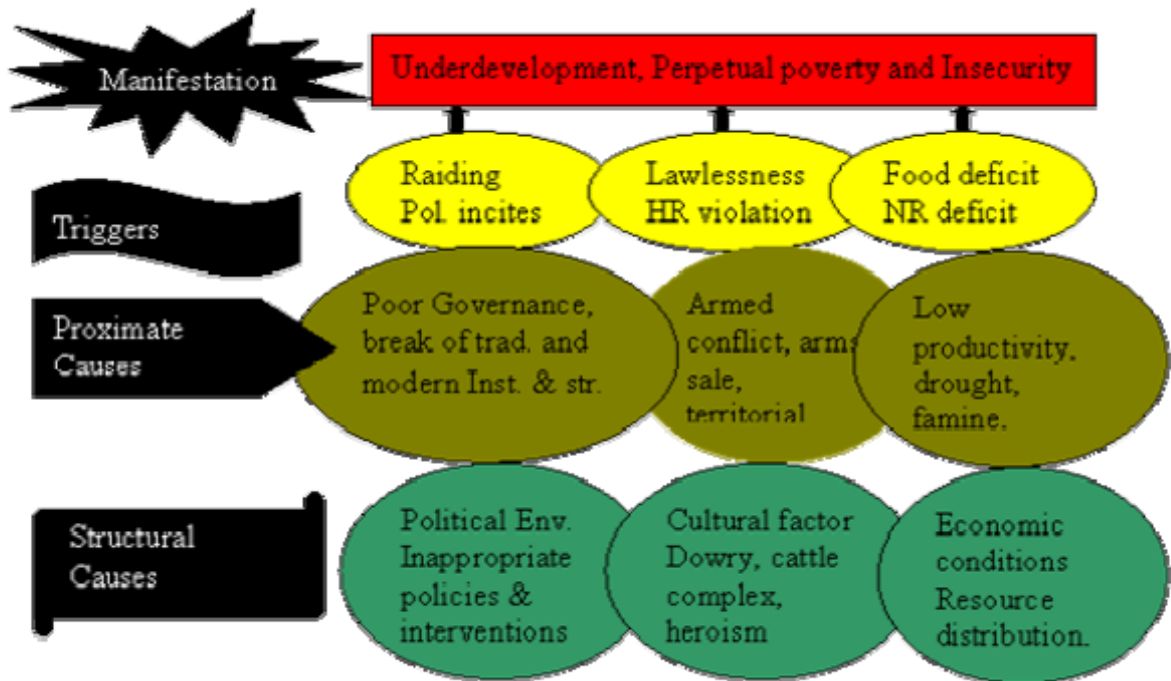
USAID, August 2005, Pg. 12 and 30:

“The causes of conflict in Karamajong cluster are varied and complex. There is no single cause to account for the frequent, unpredictable, and intermittent conflict in the Cluster.

There is no clear distinction either between the causes and outcomes of conflict in the region. At the far end of the continuum, the two appear to merge i.e. what appears to be a cause appears as a consequence too. Some issues emerging as causes as well as results pose a challenge to processes analysis and to the design of strategies and program to address them. The complexity of cause-effect relationship is probably one of the main reasons why peace building initiatives are not able to bring an end to conflict in the region.

A web of socio-cultural, economic, political, and environmental factors has led to intensification of conflict in the region. There is general agreement by respondents on a number of factors leading to conflicts in the Cluster. However, different people give differing emphasis and significance on varied causes. The main causes of conflict identified in the Cluster are summarized in the model below.”

Figure 1: Main causes of conflict in the Cluster



“Although conflict and poverty influence each other, conflict is one of the major causes of the poverty prevalent in the Cluster. Conflicts within the Cluster are reportedly responsible for the pastoralists’ under development. The unrelenting skirmishes are blamed for the displacements of whole settlements and for destitution in the region. In Todonyang village (Lapur division, Turkana District) for instance, frequent raids from neighboring Dassenech forced the relocation of the entire village to Lowareng’ak, twenty-three kilometers away. The attendant poverty and destitution is visible in the kind of livelihood activities undertaken by the newly displaced. These activities include fishing, basketry, and small scale retail trade. In such areas, pastoralism as a livelihood activity is itself threatened since very few pastoralist respondents are willing to take up the activity again because of lack of initial capital and the prevailing insecurity.”

Inter and extra communal violence among the Karamajong (July 2005)

- Two days of clashes between local warriors and soldiers killing at least 19 people (July 2005)
- At least 65 people have been killed in sub-counties of Agago county (Pader district) by Karimojong armed herdsmen (February 2003)
- Karamojong raids perpetuate displacement in Kalongo township (April 2003)
- The Karamojong tribes Pian and Bokora clashed (February 2003)
- Kenyan cattle rustlers attacked two villages in Karamoja killing ten stealing 700 cattle (February 2003)

IRIN, 18 July 2005

"At least 19 people, including seven government soldiers, were killed during two days of clashes between local warriors and soldiers over control of livestock in the Karamoja region of northeastern Uganda, a military spokesman said on Monday.

Lt Gabriel Lomongin said trouble began when Pian warriors raided cattle from the rival Bokora ethnic group early last week. After soldiers recovered the cattle on Thursday, the Pian ambushed the army and a battle ensued. The attack was unprecedented because these people have always run to us whenever their herds are raided and we recover the animals, but this time the Pian clan from Amulek Kraal in Nakapiripirit district decided to attack our forces," the spokesman told IRIN.

Politicians from the area said several civilians were killed in crossfire and others were injured.

Paul Lokeris, MP, said more than 50 civilians were killed. Lomongin denied this, saying the fighting was not in the more highly populated areas of the district.

A humanitarian source in the region told IRIN no relief had so far reached those injured in the clashes, most of whom were too poor to afford medical treatment for their injuries. Many of them had lost their homes and all their property in the battle.

Lokeris blamed the army for the clashes: "Very many people were killed and so many were injured. About 200 huts and 400 granaries were torched by the army and property looted; about 800 people are homeless now," he said.

Following the fight the army launched an operation in Nabilatuk, the area where the clashes took place, to forcibly recover illegal guns.

"We have decided that whenever they fire at us, we will confiscate their animals and ask them to surrender their weapons," Lomongin said. "We want to pinch them where it hurts, and that is when you touch a goat, a sheep and a cow of the Karamojong."

Asked about the upsurge in these incidents, he said the rainy season had resulted in overgrown grass and shrubs that the warriors were using as cover to stage attacks.

The Ugandan army carried out a disarmament exercise in Karamoja in 2001, but it was effectively abandoned in 2002 when soldiers were redeployed to deal with the long-running conflict in northern Uganda against the rebel Lord's Resistance Army.

The Karamojong, for whom rustling is a cultural habit, formerly employed rudimentary tools such as spears, bows and arrows in their raids. Now they use guns. There have also been cross-border raids between communities living on the Uganda-Kenya border."

OCHA, April 2003

"The Joint Communication Centre must be strengthened to allow more efficient information exchange between UPDF and district authorities on security issues

A report by the Kalongo peace committee of Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (ARLPI), released early April, indicates that at least 65 people have been killed in sub-counties of Agago county (Pader district) by Karimojong armed herdsmen during the months of February and March.2003

The report also indicated that 68,000 people have been displaced in Kalongo Township due to continuous acts of violence perpetrated by LRA rebels, Karimojong warriors and undisciplined UPDF soldiers. It also listed a total of 150 huts and hundreds of granaries allegedly burnt down in UPDF arson attacks aimed at forcing people into IDP camps."

USAID, 4 Feb 2003

"According to a UPDF spokesman, an estimated 30 people died in northeastern Karamoja Region in mid-January following clashes between two rival clans of the Karamojong tribe, the Pian and the Bokora. The dry season has led to clans moving with their livestock in search of pasture and water, prompting conflicts over limited resources. In an unrelated event, a group of suspected Kenyan cattle rustlers attacked two villages in Karamoja at the beginning of January, resulting in ten deaths and more than 700 cattle taken."

Historical complicity between the government and Karamajong warriors (June 2005)**Government of Uganda, 15 June 2005**

"Cattle rustling in Teso Region have existed since the 1940s. In the beginning, the cattle rustlers used spears and later locally made guns called "Amatida". This low capacity limited cattle rustling activities to the borderline areas of Karamoja and the then Soroti District. Cattle rustling reached its peak between 1986 and 1990 when the Karamojong warriors overran the whole of Teso region. This was at the time when there was rebellion in Teso against the government and delivery of social services including security broke down. The affected people moved into government facilities like sub county H/Q, dispensaries, schools which later became camps where government provided security through the local militia and soldiers. Today there are over 74 Karamojong induced camps hosting about 176,911 people in Katakwi district."

Competition for natural resources (December 2001)

- Introduction of modern weapons removed relevance of elders as a stabilizing element within the Karamajong communities
- The "so-called "Karamajong problem" arose partly because the colonial government adopted a policy to maintain Karamajo's natural heritage for tourism purposes
- In line with this colonial policy, the Obote I government Created Kidepo National Park thus destroying the Karamajong's access to grazing and watering points
- Endemic mistrust also developed, which furthered repressive policies, such as the use of heavy artillery and tanks in the region.
- Collapse of pastoral economy and lucrative arms trade has created vicious circle of violence
- The Sahara desert has continued to move southwards

Minority Rights Group International, December 2001, pp. 6, 14, 19

"The so-called Karamoja problem arose because the colonial government adopted a policy to maintain Karamajo's natural heritage for tourism purposes, a policy that never took of due to a break-down of law an order after Uganda gained independence. Successive post-independence have dealt with the 'Karamajo problem' as a problem of refusal to change and integrate, i.e. as a 'social deviance' problem. Government policies, as reflected in the wording of relevant laws and decrees, for example the Pacification of Karamoja Decree, deny the Karamajong any meaningful participation in their own social-cultural reforms. Extremes of post-independence policy came under in the mid-1970s. The government sought to 'civilise' the Karamajong using heavy artillery, including tanks, to stop Karamajong cattle raids in neighbouring areas. This lead to a very heavy death toll that Amin billed as a 'final solution to the Karamajong problem'. However, after the fall of Amin, the Karamajong renewed their resistance to government pressure to abandon their pastoral lifestyle.

During the 1960s, the Turkana from the West and the Toposa from the North with modern firearms and especially high-powered rifles-began frequent incursions into Karamoja, raiding for cattle and whatever else they could take. The armed police of the Ugandan government who were stationed in Karamoja were ineffectual in responding to these raids. This predicament continued until the coup by Amin in 1971 brought a different armed force into the district. While Amin's Army was more brutally efficient in stopping the raiders, the recovered livestock was stolen by the soldiers and sold to local cattle traders. This caused the Karamajong to distrust all formal government initiatives and to increasingly resort to self-help, creating a vigilant culture in addition to traditional cattle raiding.

[...]

Competition for scarce resources, particularly water and pasture, and the high value placed on cattle have produced a culture of raiding and warfare within which men are noted for their bravery and their wealth. This practice leads to a vicious circle in which the Matheniko raid the Bokora, Jie and Labwor; and the Bokora and the Jie raid the Matheniko. The Dodoth and Matheniko seem to have a permanent peace treaty, but the Dodoth raid the Jie and Turkana of Kneya. The Bokora, Dodoth, Jie and Matheniko all raid Labwor. This complicated cycle is underlain by the fact that men need cattle to marry. Young men have a powerful incentive to establish their reputation and build their own herds through mounting raids on other pastoral groups. [...]

Since colonial times, the Ugandan government has pursued legislative and taxation policies which, in practice, have led to only wild animals being allowed to live inside the national parks and reserves. The establishment of given areas as game parks and reserves has, since its inception in colonial times, caused affected minority groups to be totally uprooted and dispossessed. ... One enduring example is the British colonial government-originated 'conservation of Karamoja for tourist purposes' project.

[...]

This 'human reserve'-type scheme harmed and stigmatized the Karamajong, and reinforced false and offensive images of their being 'primitive' or 'backward'. In the 1960s, the Obote I government followed this policy and created Kidepo national Park. The creation of this park destroyed the Karamajong's access to grazing and watering points during the dry seasons. This has resulted in conflict between the Karamajong (in search of water and pasture) and their neighbours during the dry seasons. The fact that the Sahara desert has continued to move south and has therefore prolonged the droughts-sometimes lasting for a year at a time-has also prolonged the Karamajong's search for water. This has led to an intensification of conflict, mainly with their southern neighbours, the Itesot. Most governments have failed to understand this process.: instead they have often sanctioned fighting the army to attack and kill the Karamajong, frequently in large numbers, or have sanctioned fighting between rival groups."

The role of small arms in Karamoja (2000)

- Widespread availability of small arms amongst the Karamojong pastoralists and cattle raiding a tradition in the area
- Museveni allowed the Karamojong to retain their arms in order to protect themselves from external raids by the Turkana and Pokot in neighbouring Kenya.
- Drought ignited raiding by the Karimojong and displacement in the districts of Katakwi, Lira, Kitgum, Soroti and Kumi during first half of 2000
- Normalised security situation facilitated return by mid-2000
- During 2001 there were reports of over 55 recorded violent attacks by Karamojong cattle raiders/rustlers on neighbouring Katakwi District – causing new displacement
- During 2002 Karimojong attacks were reduced to thefts resulting in slight decrease of displacements and improved access to gardens

EPCPT December 2000

"The north-east of the country is inhabited by the Karamojong pastoralists, a marginalised minority of about 100,000 people. Since the Karamojong acquired automatic weapons the region has become a virtual no-go area. The area is suffering from environmental degradation and is periodically struck by famine. The military has been involved in regular punishment expeditions in the fight against cattle-raiding. Vigilantes have taken the law into their own hands, resulting in a breakdown of law and order. Guns are plentiful and gangs have terrorised the local population. An estimated 30,000 illegal weapons are in circulation which are used to rustle cattle and ambush and raid vehicles. These raids extend across the borders into Kenya and Sudan and on numerous occasions have provoked serious incidents with neighbouring countries."



IRIN, 22 March 2000

"The issue of the Karamojong warriors has been a thorn in the side of all Ugandan governments since independence. The current government of President Yoweri Museveni allowed the Karamojong to retain their arms in order to protect themselves from external raids by the Turkana and Pokot in neighbouring Kenya.

[...]

The Karamojong have maintained their armouries by buying guns cheaply from the SPLA [Sudan People's Liberation Army], and other sources in Somalia and northwestern Kenya," Wairagala Wakabi, a journalist with 'The EastAfrican' who specialises in the movement of small arms in the region told IRIN. "They have the option of barter trade where they exchange animals for guns."

ADF-induced displacement

The threat from Allied Democratic Forces reduced (2003)

- Relative calm in southwestern and west Nile region (2002-03)
- A team of defence attaches declared Rwenzori Districts of Kabarole, Kasese and Bundibugyo safe from rebel infiltrators (April 2002)
- Numbers of IDP decreasing steadily (2002-03)
- Improved security further to "decisive action" (2001)

UN, November 2002, p.6

"Developments in the situation in southwestern Uganda are more positive. The threat from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) appears to have reduced significantly and the Amnesty Commission and Mission d'Observation des Nations Unies au Congo (MONUC) are currently approaching donors in Uganda for the repatriation and rehabilitation of the ADF as stipulated by

the Amnesty Act (2000). As a result, the situation in the Rwenzori region, particularly Bundibugyo District, is much calmer. As a direct result, an increasing number of IDPs are in the process of returning to their original homes or to smaller settlements near their places of origin. While there has been no recent verification of the numbers in IDP camps in Bundibugyo (last established in February 2002 at 87,000), there are indications that up to 40,000 people have since left the camps. Similar returns has taken place in Kasese and Kabarole, where all IDPs have either returned home or integrated in the community.

[...]

Other areas previously affected by conflict (southwestern Uganda and most of West Nile region) continue to experience relative calm. In these areas, transition and rehabilitation efforts, the second focus of the 2003 CAP, can be pursued."

OCHA, July/August 2002

"Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) attacks beginning in 1996 up to mid-2001 caused displacement of local populations, limited access to land, insecurity, collapse in purchasing power, family income/assets and morals. Bundibugyo District bore the brunt of the ADF attacks and had the largest number of IDPs in the region, which peaked at 120,000 in the year 2000. To date Bundibugyo is reported as the only district with IDPs in Southwestern or Rwenzori region. Though no comprehensive assessment has been undertaken, most IDPs in Kasese and Kabarole districts either returned home or integrated into the community."

OCHA, April/May 2002

"A team of defence attaches from America, UK, France, Kenya and South Africa have declared the Rwenzori Districts of Kabarole, Kasese and Bundibugyo safe from rebel infiltrators. The team, led by Richard Orth, the American defence attaché and dean to all defence attaches in Uganda, was on a fact-finding mission in the region during the week beginning 6th May 2002. This comes in the wake of over twelve months of calm in the Rwenzori region, which has seen several IDPs voluntarily return nearer to their homes. Further, UPDF second division commander, Col. Poteli Kivuna, reportedly said the displaced were free to go back to their homes."

But signs of a safer situation by end-2001

UN November 2001, p.6

"ADF attacks have decreased in number and magnitude since the year began. Save for the March 17th attack on Kasese, where unknown terrorists were involved, calm has reigned in the region, with very few Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) attacks reported. With hope that this quiet is more than a lull in the storm, IDPs in Bundibugyo now have access to more garden areas during the day while still seeking the safety of camps at night. Approximately 20% have boldly resettled in four new camps nearer to their homes with the aim of increasing their food production. Consequently, the district is providing security to the new camps and humanitarian agencies are exploring ways of aiding IDPs resettlement in both Bundibugyo and Kabarole."

Rebel activities continues unabated (first half of 2001)

OCHA, 30 April 2001, p.31

"In the Southwest, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) activity continues unabated. Although the Kasese attack on 17 March was not linked to the ADF, on March 28 heavily armed ADF rebels attacked Hamukungu fishing village – about 30km southwest of Kasese town – reportedly killing three and abducting four. In early April, the UPDF claimed, however, to have reduced the force to 'less than 100' and to have overrun a local commander's headquarters. President Museveni has also declared a departure from the 'softer approach' implied in the initial amnesty offer and decreed decisive action to bring the terrorist threat to an end through strengthened UPDF

measures against them. IDPs in the Southwest remain hesitant about returning to the homes, due to continuing fear of attack by remnant rebels, although Kasese district is advocating for their resettlement."

Further escalation of ADF activities occurred during the second half of 1999:

UNHCU, 18 February 2000

"The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) substantially increased attacks in mid-December 1999 and these attacks have continued without abatement for the past two months in Bundibugyo and Kabarole Districts. President Museveni is currently in the Rwenzori Region leading operations against the rebels. Even with the President in the area, the ADF continues to attack IDP camps. There have been daily attacks, gun battles and/or ambushes occurring in parts of the District during the day and at night. Since the start of the year, there have been 28 separate ADF attacks and ambushes reported in the Monitor and New Vision newspapers. These attacks have left several dozen civilians dead. During his visit, the President is reported to have encouraged people to return to their homes and leave the IDP camps."

One report gives the following outline of the ADF atrocities in 1998:

US DOS March 1999, sect. 1c

"In the west and southwest, the rebel Allied Democratic Forces significantly heightened their activities [in 1998], which included repeated attacks on civilian targets, trading centers, and private homes, resulting in hundreds of deaths and abductions. The ADF continued to plant land mines extensively and increased its attacks on both rural and urban civilian targets, police outposts, and UPDF encampments. In February 30 students were abducted by ADF rebels from Mitandi Seventh Day Adventist College in Kasese. In April rebels attacked a woman in Bundibugyo district and cut off her ears and nose. The ADF forces hacked two civilian women to death in Kasese district in May. The ADF's deadliest attack of the year occurred on June 8, when rebels killed 80 students of Kichwamba Technical College in Kabarole district by setting locked dormitories on fire. An additional 80 students were abducted in the raid. Also in June, ADF rebels abducted over 100 school children from a school in Hoima district. ADF conducted dozens of small-scale raids that resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths. An ADF-affiliated group, the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda claimed responsibility for three bus bomb attacks in August that killed 30 persons."

Displacements related to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in the west and southwest (1998-2003)

- Relative calm in southwestern and west Nile region (2002-03)
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Background of the Alliance for Democratic Forces, 1996-1999

- The ADF emerged in western Uganda late 1996
- ADF has few links with western Uganda - its leaders come from areas in central Uganda with strong Islamic ties
- Because of the war in DRC borders with Sudan and DRC have been secured thus depriving the ADF of its supplies (November 1999)

USCR, 1997, p. 102:

"A new rebel insurgency emerged in western Uganda in late 1996. The Alliance for Democratic Forces (ADF), using bases in Zaire, attacked in November and abducted 300 civilians. Tens of thousands of persons - some suffering severe wounds - fled heavy fighting between the rebels and Ugandan troops. They sought refuge on church properties, in school buildings, and in private residences of friends."

IRIN, 8 December 1999:

"A 'rebellion without a cause'. This is the description most often attributed to rebels of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) who have been sowing terror and destruction in western Uganda for the last three years.

[...]

The ADF, which decided to adopt Islam as its ideology, was born from a core group of puritanical Moslems from the Tabliq sect whose members portray themselves as "Moslem evangelists". In Uganda, the Tabliqs claimed Moslems were being marginalised by the government.

Together with the obscure and largely defunct National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), the Tabliqs moved to western Uganda to start the rebellion under the ADF umbrella. They set up rear bases in neighbouring Congo where they began recruiting and training fighters with the promise of money and education. It was easier to recruit in Congo where the people were not hostile to the ADF.

The ADF has few links with western Uganda - its leaders come from areas in central Uganda with strong Islamic ties such as Iganga, Masaka and Kampala itself. A former Catholic, Jamil Mukulu, is said to be the driving force of the ADF. The group also includes some ex-commanders of former president Idi Amin's army.

Military sources told IRIN there were three main reasons why the rebels adopted western Uganda as their theatre of operations: the mountainous terrain, the proximity to Congo and the ability to exploit an existing ethnic conflict in the area. They coerced some local people to help them, especially the Bakonjo people with their extensive knowledge of the mountains.

Using leaflets and a mobile radio in Congo (now dismantled), they tried to turn the population against the government by propaganda attacks against its policies. One such statement in 1998, signed by the ADF "chairman" Frank Kithasamba, warned that the group would "crack down" on those responsible for the deaths of its members and urged local people "to be on the lookout for politicians who kill and intimidate opponents and voters for their own interests".

There is little evidence of the ADF's Islamic claims. 'They attack indiscriminately, just to kill,' said David Magado Katesigwa, the assistant Resident District Commissioner (RDC) for Bundibugyo district. 'They hit soft targets, such as the IDPs [internally displaced people]'.

Government workers and humanitarian officials alike are unable to explain the ADF's continued senseless killing, other than that the rebels are now on the run with nowhere to go. 'They carry out revenge attacks because the local people refuse to support them,' Katesigwa told IRIN.

The ADF problem exploded in 1997. Prior to that there had been sporadic attacks which did not appear to concern the government too much. President Yoweri Museveni, in his book 'Sowing the Mustard Seed' published in 1996, makes no mention of the insurgency in the west. But in 1997, the ADF launched a surprise attack on Ugandan soldiers at Mpondwe on the border with Congo in Kasese district. Attacks and atrocities escalated the following year with the army apparently unable to contain them, one of its problems being the lack of an adequate alpine force.

[...]

Sources say that due to the war in DRC and Uganda's collaboration with Congolese rebel groups in northwest and northeast DRC, the borders with Sudan and DRC have been secured, thus depriving the ADF of its supplies. Other measures, such as posting soldiers at intervals along the Fort Portal-Bundibugyo road, have also been taken and there is a noticeable military presence in the whole area."

For information about displacement caused by ADF see:

[Displacements related to the Allied Democratic Forces \(ADF\) in the west and southwest \(1998-2000\)](#)

Background to the conflict in West Nile

Background of the conflict in the West Nile and the WNUF, 1971-2002

- Conflict in the West Nile different from the war in Acholi region
- West Nilers in the Idi Amin Army are believed to have participated in massacres of Acholi and Langi officers
- West Nile pacified by Tanzanian army forces mid-1979
- The Museveni force NRA reached the West Nile in March 1986 and relative peace followed
- Disruption of nine years of peace by the emergence of the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) in 1995
- WNBF's military strength diminished during 1997 following demobilization of the rebels
- Most displaced people from the north-west returned to their homes during 1999

Gersony 1997, Section 2 "Amin overthrown - 1979":

"The conflict in the West Nile has been strikingly distinct from the war in Gulu/Kitgum in most essential respects. These include its duration, the level of motivation of rebel combatants, its intensity and degree of brutality, the magnitude of casualties and civilian displacement, and its economic impact.

[...]

Unlike the ethnically homogeneous area of Gulu and Kitgum, the West Nile is home to a number of distinct groups, including the Kakwa and the Aringa (mainly Lugbara-speaking Muslim) people of northern Arua's Koboko and Aringa counties. The overwhelming majority of Moyo District residents - except in its western Obongi County - are of the predominantly Christian Madi group, which has participated in neither the West Nile conflict nor in the war in Acholi, with which it also shares a border.

[...]

Like the Acholi people but in reduced proportion, West Nilers were prominently represented in the Obote I army. Muslims in northern Arua were considered to be strong supporters of President Obote's Uganda People's Congress (UPC) party. When Army Commander Idi Amin - an ethnic Kakwa (who was also a Muslim) and who claimed Koboko County as his birthplace - overthrew the Obote Government in January 1971, the prominence of West Nilers in the Ugandan army increased. It is believed that West Nile soldiers participated in the large-scale massacres of Acholi and Langi officers [...]" (Gersony 1997, Section 2, "Background" & "The Amin regime")

"Tanzanian army forces were responsible for pacification of the West Nile, which they achieved in mid-1979. According to all accounts, their conduct towards West Nile civilians was restrained and correct. In this environment, West Nilers began to trickle back from southern Sudan. Once the invading coalition had consolidated its control of Uganda, the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) was reconstituted, with prominent participation of Acholi and Lango elements.

When during 1980 the UNLA replaced Tanzanian occupying forces in the West Nile, it engaged in brutal reprisals against the local civilian population. In late 1980, ex-Amin forces invaded from southern Sudan and forced some UNLA units out of the West Nile region. They were organized into two main groups:

the Uganda National Rescue Front (**UNRF**), based principally among the Aringa people of northeast Arua; and

the Former Uganda National Army (**FUNA**) forces, based mainly among the Kakwa people of northwest Arua.

After it regained control of the area from the ex-Amin forces, the UNLA engaged in further reprisals and large-scale destruction of property in both Arua and Moyo. One UNLA massacre on 19 June 1981 gained international prominence: hundreds of displaced civilians had taken refuge in the Comboni (Verona) Fathers Catholic Mission, over which the flag of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was flying. UNLA soldiers entered the mission, located at Ombachi just outside Arua town, searching for ex-Amin guerrillas and in the process killed more

than fifty of the civilians, many of them children. As a result of such incidents, as many as 500,000 West Nile civilians fled to Sudan for refuge."

Period of relative calm between 1986 and 1994 interrupted in 1995 by the emergence of the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF):

Gersony, Section 2, 1997, "Advent of NRA":

"In late-March 1986, the NRA [Museveni's National Resistance Army] reached the West Nile, meeting no resistance within the region. The conduct of NRA forces was generally reported as positive. President Museveni visited Arua during the following month and consulted with the elders on his plans. The UNRF forces, led by Brigadier Moses Ali, joined the Museveni government. For almost a decade thereafter, the West Nile enjoyed relative peace. "

Gersony, Section 2, 1997, " The Sudan factor":

"A turning point in the West Nile occurred in 1994, when Sudanese Government forces recaptured from the SPLA the strategic town of Kajo Keji in southern Sudan, and consolidated their control of the Sudan/Uganda border west of the Nile. [This was the same year in which Sudan's assistance to Joseph Kony's LRA began.] With Sudan's assistance, former Amin Foreign Minister, Juma Oris, a Muslim and, at that time, resident of Juba, organized what became known as the West Nile Bank Front. Interviews in the West Nile suggest that WNBF officials offered the equivalent of a US\$300 recruitment bonus to former soldiers and young men to join the rebel organization. Recruiters reportedly predicted a rapid defeat of the Museveni government and attractive employment in a future government in which the WNBF would be a powerful force. It appears that some recruiters appealed to the Muslim religious background common to the WNBF's Sudanese sponsors and residents of northern Arua.

WNBF activities began to affect the West Nile in 1995 and intensified in 1996. In 1995, the WNBF (and Kony's LRA) began to use land mines apparently provided by Sudan. In September 1996, Moyo town was bombed by aircraft, which appeared to originate in Sudan. WNBF activities were based along the Uganda/Sudan border as well as in the towns of Aru and Mahagi in northeastern Zaire, from which it pursued its insurgency.

However, in comparison with the eleven years of Acholi insurgency, WNBF attacks were intermittent, uneven and less effective. Although their activities ranged from time to time throughout Arua and western Moyo - and even marginally in eastern Nebbi - to an outside observer, it appeared that the motivation of WNBF forces was lower than their LRA counterparts, even in some respects half-hearted.

During 1997, the WNBF's strategic capabilities were critically diminished. Banyamulenge operations in northeastern Zaire deprived the WNBF of its refuge along the Zaire/Uganda border. Military operations led by the SPLA recaptured control of most of the Sudan/Uganda border. Both military offensives were reportedly supported directly by UPDF forces. Significant numbers of WNBF leaders and combatants were captured and returned to Uganda. WNBF activity diminished considerably."

UN December 1998, p.8:

"The defeat and demobilization of the West-Nile Bank Front (WNBF) rebels in 1997 have brought increased security to Nebbi and parts of Arua. However, there are now concerns that some of the demobilized WNBF soldiers are returning to their arms after their hopes for a better life remains unfulfilled – this, despite distributions of seeds and tools by UNHCR and FAO aimed specifically at ensuring their successful reintegration."

US DOS March 1999, sect.1g:

"WNBF attacks resumed during the year [1998] in northwestern region bordering Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and more than 100 abductions in Arua district. The majority of

those taken in subsequent raids over a week-long period later escaped and returned to their homes. In November WNBF rebels killed and decapitated a Muslim religious leader in Arua, reportedly in retaliation for his son's defection from the WNBF ranks. The Uganda Salvation Front/Army carried out an attack on a police station and prison facility near Tororo in the east in August in which it abducted 110 prisoners. Members of the Uganda National Rescue Front II (UNRF--II) also carried out a number of abductions and killings in the northwest. The UNRF-- II attacked a WFP vehicle in Moyo and killed a WFP driver in September."

ICRC 31 August 2000:

"The plight of Ugandans living in the West Nile region improved in 1999 as a result of peace negotiations between the government and the UNRF II. Most displaced people from the north-west were able to return to their homes and take steps towards resuming a normal life."

Ceasefire agreement reached between UNRF-II and GoU:

IRIN 19 June 2002:

"The government of Uganda and the rebel Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF-II) signed a formal ceasefire agreement in Kuru sub-county, Yumbe District, northwestern Uganda on Saturday, with the aim of paving the way for political dialogue in the West Nile region.

[...]

The UNRF-II rebels had taken the chance to return when they realised that the UPDF was serious in its campaign against the LRA in southern Sudan (an operation it is undertaking with the blessing of the Sudanese government) and would hardly be likely to leave another rebel force operating in Sudan, according to Ugandan military sources.

[...]

The challenge now, according to humanitarian workers, will be to set up rehabilitation centres in the north and west to help resettle those rebels who return, and to ensure at least some measure of social and economic development for these marginalised areas."

POPULATION FIGURES AND PROFILE

Global figures

622,000 IDPs in northern Uganda (May 2009)

- There are 622,000 IDPs in Northern Uganda as of May 2009 (IDPs in camps plus transit sites), down from 710,000 in February 2009 (and compared to 869,000 IDPs in November 2008; 915,000 IDPs in October 2008).
- In addition, there are a total of 823,000 returnees in villages of origin in the sub-regions of Acholi, West Nile, Toro-Bunyoro and Teso. Many of these returnees have ongoing protection and assistance needs.
- There are a further 466,000 returnees in the Lango sub-region, all of whom were deemed by the IASC to have found a durable solution by 2008.
- The above figures do not include IDPs in urban areas.

IASC Working Group

Inter Agency Standing Committee in Uganda

Update on IDPs movement		
Region	District	Estimated original camp population - end 2005
Acholi Source WFP	Amuru	204,000
	Gulu	257,000
	Kitgum	310,140
	Pader	339,000
	Total Acholi	1,110,140

West Nile Source DDMC	Adjumani	54,460
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Toro - Bunyoro* Source IOM	Masindi	67,000
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Teso	Katakwi	71,000
	Amuria	72,000
	Total Teso	143,000
Gran tot.		1,374,600

May-09					
Estimated Camp population source: Protection Cluster		Estimated IDPs in transit sites/areas source: Protection Cluster		Estimated returnees in villages of origin source: Protection Cluster	
75,000	37%	44,000	22%	46,000	23%
45,000	18%	20,000	8%	176,000	68%
120,000	39%	88,000	28%	164,000	53%
42,000	12%	89,000	26%	236,000	70%
282,000	25%	241,000	22%	622,000	56%

27,000	50%	-		27,000	50%
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55,000	82%	-		12,000	18%
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5,000	7%	-	0%	56,000	79%
9,000	13%	3,000	4%	106,000	14%
14,000	10%	3,000	2%	162,000	11%
378,000	27%	244,000	18%	823,000	60%

(Figures are rounded in 500)

*Please note that in Masindi IDPs are not in camps but in settlements

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*Please note that in Masindi IDPs are not in camps but in settlements

Feb-09					
Estimated Camp population		Estimated IDPs in transit sites/areas source: Protection Cluster		Estimated returnees in villages of origin source: Protection Cluster	
88,000	43%	70,000	34%	46,000	23%
61,000	24%	20,000	8%	176,000	68%
102,000	33%	62,000	20%	154,000	50%
78,000	23%	128,000	38%	162,000	48%
329,000	30%	280,000	25%	538,000	48%

27,000	50%	-		27,000	50%
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55,000	82%	-		1,000	1%
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7,000	10%	-	0%	55,000	77%
9,000	13%	3,000	4%	60,000	83%
16,000	11%	3,000	2%	115,000	80%
427,000	31%	283,000	21%	681,000	50%

IASC Working Group

Inter Agency Standing Committee Working Group in Uganda

Update on IDPs movement		
Region	District	Original N. of Camps (2005)
Achoi	Gulu/Amuru	54
	Kitgum	24
	Pader	34
	Sub Total	112
	Lango	Lira
Oyam/Apac		20
Sub Total		61
West Nile	Adjumani	8
Toro - Bunyoro	Masindi	
Teso	Katakwi	44
	Amuria	17
	Sub Total	61
Total		476

Feb-09	
Original camps	Transit areas
54	281
24	682
31	511
109	1,474
7	-
4	-
11	-
8	8
N/A	N/A
44	14
17	13
61	27
370	1509

IASC Working Group

Inter Agency Standing Committee in Uganda

Update on IDPs movement			November 2008					
A			B		C		D	
Region	District	Estimated original camp population - end 2005	Estimated Camp population	%	estimated IDPS in transit Sites	%	Estimated returnees in villages of origin <small>source: Protection Cluster</small>	%
Acholi <small>Source WFP</small>	Amuru	204,000	104,000	51%	79,000	39%	21,000	10%
	Gulu	257,000	153,000	60%	70,000	27%	141,000	55%
	Kitgum	310,000	102,000	33%	62,000	20%	154,000	50%
	Pader*****	339,000	78,000	23%	118,000	35%	143,000	42%
	Total Acholi	1,110,000	437,000	39%	329,000	30%	459,000	41%
West Nile <small>Source DDMC</small>	Adjumani****	54,000	27,000	50%			27,000	50%
Toro - Bunyoro*** <small>Source IOM</small>	Masindi *****	67,000	55,000	82%			1,000	1%
Teso**** <small>Source OCHA</small>	Katakwi	71,000	7,000	10%	-	0%	58,000	82%
	Amuria	72,000	11,000	15%	3,000	4%	58,000	81%
	Total Teso	143,000	18,000	13%	3,000	2%	116,000	81%
Grand Total		1,374,000	537,000	39%	332,000	24%	603,000	44%

(Figures are rounded in 500)

* Please note that 18 decongestion sites (55,000 IDPs) in Gulu/Amuru previously considered as transit sites, are now counted as camps under the request of local authorities

***Please note that in Masindi IDPs are not in camps but in settlements

**** Data for Teso do not cover all the region.

*****Those IDPs who have returned from other districts to the villages of origin in Amuria are not included here.

***** November figure for Pader is not available

IASC Working Group

Inter Agency Standing Committee Working Group in Uganda

Update on IDPs movement			November 2008	
Region	District	Original N. of Camps (2005)	Original camps	Transit areas
Acholi	Gulu/Amuru	54	54	281
	Kitgum	24	24	682
	Pader	34	31	511
	Sub Total	112	109	1,474
Lango	Lira	41		-
	Oyam/Apac	20	-	-
	Sub Total	61	-	-
West Nile	Adjumani	8	8	8
Toro - Bunyoro	Masindi		N/A	-
Teso	Katakwi	44	30	4
	Amuria	17	13	27
	Sub Total	61	43	31
Total		476	160	1513

IASC Working Group

Inter Agency Standing Committee in Uganda

Update on IDPs movement		
		A
Region	District	Estimated original camp population - end 2005
Acholi Source WFP	Gulu	257,000
	Amuru	204,000
	Kitgum	310,000
	Pader	339,000
	Total Acholi	1,110,000

October 2008				
B		C		
Estimated Camp population (=A-C-D)	Estimated % remaining in camp	estimated IDPS in transit Sites	Estimated % in transit areas	Es ret vil sour
154,000	60%	100,000	39%	
108,000	53%	74,000	36%	
118,000	38%	58,000	19%	
78,000	23%	118,000	35%	
458,000	41%	350,000	32%	

West Nile Source DDMC	Adjumani****	54,000
Toro - Bunyoro*** Source IOM	Masindi ****	67,000

27,000				
55,000				

Teso**** Source OCHA	Katakwi	71,000
	Amuria	72,000
	Total Teso	143,000
Grand Total		1,374,000

8,000	11%		0%	
13,000	18%	4,000	6%	
21,000	15%	4,000	3%	
561,000	41%	354,000	26%	5

(Figures are rounded in 500)

* Please note that 18 decongestion sites (55,000 IDPs) in Gulu/Amuru previously considered as transit sites, are now counted as camps under the

***Please note that in Masindi IDPs are not in camps but in settlements

**** Data for Teso does not cover all the region.

*****Those IDPs who have returned from other districts to the villages of origin in Amuria are not included here.

***** Unknown represents the difference between the initial WFP estimation in 2005 and the current IDP figure in camps, transit areas and villages

***** October figure for Pader is not available

IASC Working Group

Inter Agency Standing Committee Working Group in Uganda

Update on IDPs movement		
Region	District	Original N. of Camps (2005)
Acholi	Gulu/Amuru	54
	Kitgum	24
	Pader	34
	Sub Total	112

October 2008	
Original camps	Transit areas
54	232
24	682
31	511
109	1,425

Inter Agency Standing Committee in Uganda

Update on IDPs movement			September 2008				
		A	B		C		D
Region	District	Estimated original camp population - end 2005	Estimated Camp population	Estimated % remaining in camp	estimated IDPS in transit Sites	Estimated % in transit areas	Estimated returnees in villages of origin <small>source: Protection Cluster</small>
Acholi <small>Source WFP</small>	Amuru	204,000	154,000	75%	73,000	36%	18,000
	Gulu	257,000	108,000	42%	93,000	36%	118,000
	Kitgum	310,000	119,000	38%	71,000	23%	120,000
	Pader	339,000	78,000	23%	118,000	35%	143,000
	Total Acholi	1,110,000	459,000	41%	355,000	32%	399,000
West Nile <small>Source DDMC</small>	Adjumani****	54,000	27,000				27,000
Toro - Bunyoro*** <small>Source IOM</small>	Masindi *****	67,000	55,000				1,000
Teso**** <small>Source OCHA</small>	Katakwi	71,000	8,000	11%	-	0%	57,000
	Amuria	72,000	13,000	18%	4,000	6%	55,000
	Total Teso	143,000	21,000	15%	4,000	3%	112,000
Grand Total		1,374,000	562,000	41%	359,000	26%	539,000

(Figures are rounded in 500)

* Please note that 18 decongestion sites (55,000 IDPs) in Gulu/Amuru previously considered as transit sites, are now counted as camps under the request of local authorities

***Please note that in Masindi IDPs are not in camps but in settlements

**** Data for Teso does not cover all the region.

*****Those IDPs who have returned from other districts to the villages of origin in Amuria are not included here.

***** Unknown represents the difference between the initial WFP estimation in 2005 and the current IDP figure in camps, transit areas and villages of origin.

IASC Working Group

Inter Agency Standing Committee Working Group in Uganda

Update on IDPs movement			September 2008	
Region	District	Original N. of Camps (2005)	Original camps	Transit areas
Acholi	Gulu/Amuru	54	54	232
	Kitgum	24	24	606
	Pader	34	31	511
	Sub Total	112	109	1,349
Lango	Lira	41		-
	Oyam/Apac	20	-	-
	Sub Total	61	-	-
West Nile	Adjumani	8	8	8
Toro - Bunyoro	Masindi		N/A	-
Teso	Katakwi	44	30	8
	Amuria	17	13	31
	Sub Total	61	43	39
Total		476	160	1396

IASC Working Group

Inter Agency Standing Committee in Uganda

Update on IDPs movement		
		A
Region	District	Estimated original camp population - end 2005
Acholi Source WFP	Gulu / Amuru*	453,359
	Kitgum	310,140
	Pader	339,369
	Total Acholi	1,102,868

Lango** Source IOM	Lira	350,828
	Oyam/Apac	115,275
	Total Lango	466,103

West Nile Source DDMC	Adjumani****	54,460
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Toro - Bunyoro*** Source IOM	Masindi ****	67,000
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Teso**** Source OCHA	Katakwi	70,534
	Amuria	72,417
	Total Teso	142,951
Gran tot.		1,833,382

August					
B		C		D	
Estimated Camp population (=A-C-D)	Estimated % remaining in camp	estimated IDPS in transit Sites	Estimated % in transit areas	Estimated returnees in villages of origin source: Protection Cluster	Estimated % in villages of origin
184,359	41%	143,000	32%	126,000	28%
131,605	42%	69,818	23%	108,717	35%
88,056	26%	181,901	54%	68,982	20%
404,020	37%	394,719	36%	303,699	28%

-		-		350,828	100.0
-		-		115,275	100.0
				466,103	100%

12,000				42,000	
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55,611				1,129	
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12,000	17%	200	0%	53,000	75%
14,000	19%	4,000	6%	54,417	75%
26,000	18%	4,200	3%	107,417	75%
497,631	27%	398,919	22%	920,348	50%

*Please note that 18 decongestion sites (55,000 IDPs) in Gulu/Amuru previously considered as transit sites, are now counted as camps under the request of local authorities

**Please note that in Lira, not all the IDPs returned all the way to their village of origin - some have joined camps/transit sites in Pader

***Please note that in Masindi IDPs are not in camps but in settlements

**** Please note that complete data is not reported from Masindi and Adjumani

*****Please note that majority of the population in Teso has been displaced by Karamajong criminal activities. Data for Teso does not cover all the region.

*****Those IDPs who have returned from other districts to the villages of origin in Amuria are not included here.

Estimated 25,000 children abducted since the start of the LRA conflict (April 2006)

- 25,000 children abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) since the start of the conflict.
- 1,000 'child mothers' who conceived while in captivity.
- The Survey of War Affected Youth states that abductions have been under-reported and estimates that at least 66,000 youth between the ages of 14 and 30 were abducted.

UNICEF, April 2006:

"Child protection issues remain of particular concern, owing to the child-centric nature of the conflict. The LRA uses boys and girls as fighters and porters, with children often subjected to extreme violence shortly after abduction and many girls allocated to officers in a form of

institutional rape. Of an estimated 25,000 children (7,500 girls) abducted by the LRA since the start of the conflict, some 1,000 are “child mothers” who conceived children of their own while in captivity.”

SWAY, April 2008:

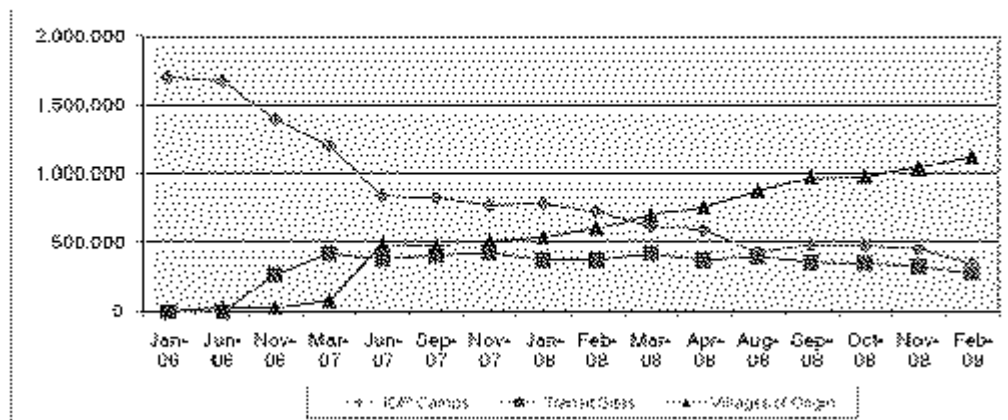
"Abduction has been under-reported: we calculate that at least 66,000 youth between the ages of 14 and 30 were abducted."

General

Cumulative population movements, Jan 2006 - Feb 2009

OCHA, Feb 2009:

Over time, the following trends in population movement in northern Uganda can be seen. (The chart below includes former IDPs in Lango, all of whom had returned to villages of origin by end March 2008, when the displacement was determined to have come to an end by the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) in Lira. Since there is no further movement, the Lango figures are no longer included in the above matrix.)



PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

Complex return movements in northern Uganda (September 2008)

- Returns process continues, but patterns vary from district to district.
- The returns process is least advanced in the Acholi sub-region.
- In the Lango sub-region, all former IDP camps have been phased out.

OCHA, September 2008:

An additional 145,144 IDPs have reportedly have left the camps for transit sites and villages of origin since May 2008, bringing the percentage of IDPs having left the camps to 75 per cent (based on figures for IDPs in camps as of 1 January 2005), including the 466,103 former IDPs returned to their villages of origin in the Lango sub-region.

Region	District	Original camp population (end 2005)	Estimated camp population	% of original camp population	Population in transit sites	% of original camp population	Population in villages of origin	% of original camp population
Acholi	Amuru/Gulu	453,359	184,359	41%	143,000	32%	126,000	28%
	Kitgum	310,140	131,805	42%	68,815	23%	108,717	35%
	Pader	338,938	86,056	25%	161,901	54%	65,982	20%
	Acholi Total	1,102,438	404,020	37%	394,719	36%	303,699	27%
Teso	Anseria	72,417	14,000	19%	4,000	6%	54,417	75%
	Katakwi	70,534	12,000	17%	200	<1%	53,000	75%
	Teso Total	142,951	26,000	18%	4,200	3%	107,417	75%
Grand Total	1,245,389	430,020	35%	398,919	32%	411,116	33%	

Source: UNHCR, August 2008

Oxfam, September 2008, pp.7-9

"Since the August 2006 signing of the cessation of hostilities agreement, close to 900,000 of the total estimated IDP population of 1.8 million have returned to their original villages, and some 460,000 have made the initial move to transit sites, smaller camps closer to return areas. However, a neat definition of 'return' as one-way physical movement from IDP camp to village of origin does not capture the complexity of the returns process in northern Uganda.

The pace of return differs markedly across the sub-regions of the North. In Lango sub-region, all IDP camps have been officially closed and the vast majority of people have returned home. In Acholiland, the area worst affected by the conflict, only 24 per cent of people have returned to their villages of origin. The uneven pace of return means that, although overall humanitarian needs are declining, traditional emergency programming in camps has to occur simultaneously with community-based recovery activities in return sites.

There is also a high degree of mobility between villages, transit sites, and camps. People who remain in the camps often leave during the day to cultivate land in or near their home villages. A

recent United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) study suggests that a majority of camp locations are less than 5km or 50 minutes walk from pre-displacement residences. The close proximity of return sites to camps may make it an attractive option for IDPs to return to farm in their original homes, while maintaining a presence in the camp where services continue to be concentrated.

Services outside the camps are often poor, so traffic also moves in the opposite direction. Residents of villages and transit sites continue to visit camps in order to access basic services such as clean water and health care. The absence or low quality of schools in return areas are causing the separation of family members as children are left behind to continue their education in camp schools, leading to serious child protection concerns. The perceived fragility of the current peace has also led some recent returnees to retain a residence in the camps as insurance against a resumption of the conflict, as most perceive the camps to be relatively safer than return sites.

The mobility of the population has blurred the distinction between IDPs and returnees, which in turn has complicated interventions by the government and by humanitarian agencies. How, for example, should an individual who has returned to his or her home village but can only access services in the camps be characterised? Similarly, how should a camp resident who has chosen to buy or rent land in the camp so as to be permanently based there be classified? A Gulu-based NGO staffer described trying to target such a mobile population as a 'logistical nightmare'. Local government and its partners will need to co-ordinate their efforts to avoid omitting or double-counting beneficiaries. Moreover, attention must be paid not only to the number of returnees as compared with camp residents, but also to the degree to which these populations are moving back and forth, and why."

No official IDP camps left in Lira, but thousands of IDPs remain in former camps (June 2008)

- In Lango, the last remaining IDP camp has been officially de-gazetted.
- Thousands of IDPs still live in former camp locations, including about 700 extremely vulnerable individuals.
- An inter-agency assessment conducted in June 2008 found that displacement had ended in the Lango sub-region.
- The plight of the remaining vulnerable camp population is cause for concern.

OHCHR et al., 24 June 2008

p.1:

"As of the 31st March 2008, all the 61 IDP camps present in Lango sub region were phased-out. The displaced population composed of some 466,000 persons returned to their village of origin. In consideration of the above and in line with its strategy, the protection cluster carried out an assessment to verify whether the displacement has ended."

p.7

"The assessment and previous monitoring reports show that more than 99% of former IDPs have returned to their villages of origin and that they no longer have needs specifically related to their displacement. Former IDPs do not face any discrimination for reasons related to their displacement or any other reason. Though some security concerns were reported such as the Karamajong attacks and armed thugs, these are of criminal nature and not directly linked to the cause of their displacement and are not carried out to "punish" IDPs" upon return. The issue of

UXOs though of concern to some returnees especially people whose land was formerly occupied by army detachments, is not a major problem in the sub region.

Although the delays in the signing of the final comprehensive peace agreement still concerns the population in Lango, now they feel safer and more secure than before. On the standard of living, despite increased intervention by humanitarian agencies to address some of the gaps, the living condition of former IDPs still remains bad. Many parishes do not have health centres, some accessing health services in neighbouring parishes which sometimes are far and without adequate staff and medicine. In many return areas the available water is not safe or sufficient. In addition, there are still serious protection needs, including with regard to Child Protection, that must be addressed. However, it should be noted that the problem is not limited to former IDPs/returnees but concerns the overall population. All former IDPs access what is available without any discrimination.

Based on the above findings the assessment team concluded that the conditions set in the Durable Solution Framework are met in Lango Sub Region and that the displacement has ended."

OCHA, March 2008

"Meanwhile, the last remaining IDP camp in the Lango sub-region – Olilim camp in Lira District – was officially de-gazetted during the March District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) meeting. Several thousand internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain in former camps, including 669 extremely vulnerable individuals, but while the DDMC recognizes the figure, there are officially no more camps in Lango."

OCHA, Feb 2008

"In the Lango sub-region, Olilim camp in Lira district remains the only officially-recognised camp," accommodating 1,234 IDPs. During the month of March, the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) plans to conduct a second assessment of the camp to determine what its status should be. The remaining vulnerable population in camps is a source of some concern in the sub-region; a consultative meeting to discuss the plight of these populations in Lira and Oyam is planned for 27 March 2008."

Urban IDPs (October 2008)

RLP, December 2007

p.1:

"At its peak, the conflict displaced at least two million people, many of whom fled to or were forced into notoriously unsafe and inhumane camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) known as "protected villages".

While such figures earned northern Uganda the dubious accolade of being one of the worst humanitarian emergencies in the world, they do not describe the full extent of conflict-related displacement. Over the years, unknown numbers of people also fled to urban centres across northern Uganda, as well as to more distant places like Masindi, Kampala, and Jinja, rather than to the squalid IDP camps in their home areas.

With the exception of profiling studies conducted in Masindi, Adjumani, Lango, and Teso, these “urban” IDPs have never been registered. The numbers of urban-based IDPs are therefore unknown, but estimates range between 300 000 and 600 000 persons affected by conflict in various parts of the country. Large numbers stay in slum areas and require protection and assistance.”

p.4:

“In part, the exclusion of urban IDPs from assistance stems from their low visibility and varied settlement strategies. Problems with identifying IDP populations in urban settings also make it difficult for GoU and humanitarian actors to address the needs of urban IDPs. A fundamental obstacle to assisting IDPs who do not live in or around camps or official settlements is that the official process through which they may be identified and registered is not always used by the responsible officials. Whereas rural IDPs have at times had ration cards indicating residence in an IDP camp—itsself an unsatisfactory form of documentation insofar as it was given to the apparent head of household—urban IDPs have no corresponding form of documentation with which to signify their displacement. Therefore, they often disappear into the larger population of rural-urban migrants, despite the fact that their reasons for moving are different.

In Uganda, IDPs’ choice of an urban destination is influenced by a number of factors. They include; access to employment opportunities rooted in a reluctance to be dependant on food rations; frustration with lack of livelihood options in the camps; reunification with family members, and the lack of adequate protection provided in rural camps. Underlying all of this is the lack of security which forced them to leave their homes in the first place and which distinguishes them from “voluntary” rural-urban migrants. A number of people also fled directly to urban areas at a time when official IDP camps had not yet been established.”

Patterns of displacement in Karamoja

Out-migration from Karamoja to other districts on the rise (September 2008)

- Improved security in some parts of Karamoja has led to shifting population patterns
- Basic services insufficient to cope with new arrivals

OCHA, September 2008

“Meanwhile, the out-migration of Karimojong to neighbouring districts, specifically Pader, is reportedly on the increase, with substantial presences of Karimojong from Kotido District reported in the border sub-counties of Paimol, Laponi and Adilang of Pader District. Whereas small scale population movements out of Karamoja traditionally occur in December and January, mainly in search of pasture, the current movements were first reported in May and continued through July and August. The primary reason cited for the increased out-migration is hunger and the lack of food, or

employment to earn money to buy food, within Karamoja. Authorities in Kacheri sub-county estimate that 2,000 people have left the sub-county for Pader, while estimates from Rengen sub-county suggest that over 1,000 people have left in the last three months. Migration from the countryside to urban centres within the Karamoja districts is also taking place, with the office of the District Community Based Services reporting an increase in the number of children moving to the streets of Kotido Town Council, as well as of Bokora women and children from Moroto District.”

OCHA, March 2008

"In Karamoja, the temporary improvement in security led to a substantial population migration into new resettlement areas such as Apeitolim and Nabwal in Moroto. Since October 2007, the population in Apeitolim has risen four-fold to 4,500, while the population of Nabwal has risen from 700 in November 2007 to an estimated 14,000. Furthermore, it is estimated that as many as 19,000 people might settle in Nabwal and 25,000 in Apeitolim. Estimated are still being gathered for the number of people who have settled in Lokales in Nakapiripirit and in new resettlement sites in Abim."

OCHA, Feb 2008

"In Karamoja, increased movements to Apeitolim in Moroto district have led to concerns over the welfare of the new arrivals. During the course of the last two months, over 4,000 people have moved to the area, a four-fold population increase against October 2007 figures. Yet basic services in the area remain extremely sparse, with only one nursing aid and one borehole available. In Nakapiripirit, between 8,000 and 10,000 people have moved to Lokales in Karita sub-county. These shifting population patterns have been attributed in part to improved security in the receiving districts."

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Physical security in the Acholi region

Crime is biggest threat to security (July 2008)

- General security situation in northern Uganda is calm.
- Biggest security threat is posed by theft and burglaries

IRIN, 10 July 2008

"Northern Uganda has enjoyed relative peace following years of clashes between government troops and rebels, but the prevalence of illegal weapons across the region poses a new challenge to displaced civilians returning to their villages, officials said.

"The region has seen a great deal of violence and so many guns are still on the loose," Phenihensas Arinaitwe, the regional police commander, said. "Some rogue elements are robbing IDPs [internally displaced persons] and people in villages."

Between January and June, 308 cases of robbery were reported in Gulu, Kitgum, Amuru and Pader Districts, with the first two topping the list. During these incidents, 168 IDPs were murdered as they tried to return home.

"May was the worst month, with 67 cases of robbery," Arinaitwe added. "On average at least 30 cases of robbery are reported monthly."

Some of the 168 suspects, who were arrested, tried in court and found guilty, included former fighters of the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Capt Ronald Kakurungu, army spokesman in the region, accused LRA ex-combatants of illegally possessing ammunition. "We have observed that some LRA ex-rebels who surrendered did not hand over all their guns and we suspect they are the ones they are using in robberies," he told IRIN.

The army, he added, had in the past three years recovered more than 500 guns from LRA ex-rebels.

"Some civilians find guns in the bush where rebels buried them and those are [some] that have ended up in the hands of the wrongdoers," Kakurungu said. Other weapons, he added, were trafficked into the region from neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo and Southern Sudan.

IDPs told IRIN they had fallen victim to the new wave of armed robbery sweeping villages and return sites. In Bungatira, 30km south of Gulu town, former IDPs from Paibow village recently spent the night in the cold during a shoot-out between robbers and the army.

"We were sleeping and we heard a bang on our door with a man shouting that we should open the door or be shot," said Akumu Harriet. "We were scared and started [imagining] LRA rebels

had come back. My husband told us not to open the door and the robbers fired several bullets, then moved to the next homestead where they robbed them."

Another IDP, Anena Verentina, said robbers forced her door open, held them at gunpoint and asked for money and mobile phones. "They robbed us of 400,000 shillings [US\$245] and a mobile phone," she explained. "Fortunately the [police] closed in; one of the robbers was shot dead while three others who were armed escaped."

Last October, police arrested the former LRA director of operations, Alfred Onen Kamdulu, for armed robbery. One of the LRA groups that surrendered in 2004, he was arrested with a pistol and AK47 rifles at a hideout in Maruzi, Apac District, after robbing local traders.

Egessa Oduri, a senior police officer in the region, said the force had instituted a new policy of sensitising the community to prevent crime. "We have established police posts at every sub-county to detect and prevent crime," he added.

A lull in clashes between the LRA and the Ugandan army over the past year has allowed thousands of IDPs to leave camps and return to their villages. Ongoing talks between the two parties, however, hit a stalemate after LRA leader Joseph Kony failed to sign a peace agreement in April."

OCHA, March 2008

"Within the northern Uganda region, several incidents of criminality were reported, with the population expressing concern about the rising incidence of crime. In Gulu, the widespread availability of guns and an increasing number of idle youths are believed to be the main reasons for the hike in crime rates. More than 20 guns were voluntarily handed over to the office of the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) by youths during the month. The RDC, in consultation with stakeholders, is lobbying for an extension of the amnesty programme to cover defectors of all armed groups."

OCHA, February 2008

"Among reported incidents in northern Uganda, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) remnants were reportedly in confrontation with the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) on 9 and 18 February in Pader district. No civilian injuries or abductions were reported, although three alleged LRA were killed in the confrontations. In Kitgum, there were also reported sightings of LRA elements in Agoro and Lokung sub-counties and across the border in South Sudan. Incidents of cattle raiding by illegally armed Karimojong were reported in Padibe and Lukole subcounties, Pader District, and in Madi Opei, Kitgum District. In Gulu, UPDF confronted and killed a Local Defence Unit (LDU) deserter, recovering two guns. In a reported domestic dispute, a hut in Awere IDP camp, Gulu District, was set ablaze, killing nine people and injuring two others. Overall, the general security situation in northern Uganda remained calm during the month; for humanitarian organisations and UN agencies, the biggest security threat remained burglary and other theft of goods."

UPDF withdraws troops from villages (July 2008)

The Monitor, 16 July 2008

"Following the prevailing peace in Acholi sub-region in the last two years, the UPDF is set to withdraw its troops from the army detachments in villages before end of July.

The 4th Division Public Relations Officer Capt. Ronald Kakurungu said in a statement on Monday. "The authorities of the Command of the 4th Division have decided to reduce the deployments of regular UPDF personnel in the IDP camps in Gulu, Amuru and Oyam Districts," he said.

Since the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities agreement in August 2006, there has been relative peace with people slowly returning to their homes.

Capt. Kakurungu said the move is aimed at enabling the Police Force to effectively carry out its policing duties of keeping law and order in the community.

According to Capt. Kakurungu, the new development was communicated by the 4th Division Commander, Brig. Charles Otema in a security meeting with RDCs and chairmen of the districts in Lango and Acholi sub-regions on Friday.

He said all district leaders are in favour of the move and pledged their cooperation during the exercise. Capt. Kakurungu said the soldiers to be withdrawn will be re-trained. He added that the soldiers would only be re-deployed in more sensitive areas like at the army detachments that border Uganda and Sudan and Uganda and DR Congo.

"The areas from which they are being withdrawn will be occupied by the auxiliary forces including the police. Senior UPDF officer Lt. Col Francis Achoka, who is in charge of monitoring IDPs in the Division, was assigned an extra responsibility of coordinating activities of the auxiliary forces with Police."

Army says it will assist police to protect returning populations (September 2008)

The New Vision, 9 September 2008

"The Chief of Defence Forces has assured the people of northern Uganda of security as they return to their villages.

Addressing a rally in Gulu municipality on Sunday, Gen. Aronda Nyakairima said the Uganda People's Defence Forces would ensure stability in the area.

"We have reached a level of 'cause chaos and you will see'. "We are monitoring Kony all the time. Should he want to kill the people again, we shall contain him," he said of the rebel group reportedly in the DR Congo.

Nyakairima added that the army would support the Police in protecting the former internally displaced people.

He appealed to the communities to report any suspicious metals so that they are cleared before people settle.

Explosives like grenades, rockets, bombs and fuses have killed and maimed thousands of people in the recent past.

Gulu district chairman Norbert Mao warned 'wrong elements' who want to disrupt the return

process of 'a new prison in the area nearing completion'."

Programme to re-establish police in northern Uganda runs out of funds (September 2008)

The Monitor, 5 September 2008

"The re-establishment of the Police in north and eastern regions is in balance after the"" project ran out of money, a police report has shown.

Daily Monitor has learnt that the project dubbed 'Police Mobilisation of Security for the Internally Displaced Persons in northern and eastern Uganda,' urgently needs Shs21 billion to continue with its work. The shortage of funds would mean that 24 districts which have to guarantee security for the resettlement of IDPs will be affected.

This would also jeopardise the fight against Karimojong cattle rustlers along the Karamoja sub-region borders. Police Under-Secretary Musoke Kabogoza said the Police re-establishment project in the north is operating in "great pain."

"The fund expired in March this year and we have a problem sustaining our services," Ms Kabogoza said. "It would be difficult to sustain peace in the region without funds." Police have written to the Ministry of Internal Affairs about the issue and have asked for additional funds but no response has been received, Ms Kabogoza said.

There has not been police presence in the north for 20 years. In 2006 after the end of the LRA war, the government re-established the police for six months in the north and the Karamoja sub-region to fight cattle rustling.

The period was however extended to December 2007.

So far, the project has received Shs29.5 billion from Netherlands, Denmark, United Nation, the government and international humanitarian organisations.

Deputy Inspector General of Police in charge of re-establishing police in the north Julius Odwe said much of the money needed is meant for feeding, clothing especially operational uniforms and accommodation.

"We need Shs21 billion to sustain what we have put in place," Mr Odwe said. Internal Affairs Under-secretary Josephine Onya confirmed that they had received a letter from the Police and were devising means of securing the funds.

She said they were in talks with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to support their supplementary budget. She said the government project funding takes some time.

"I can't say we will get the money at once or in on phase because the government processes to fund a project take some time," she said without elaborating."

Effectiveness of police hampered by lack of training and resources (Feb 2008)

- Special Police Constables (SPCs) deployed, but lack of training and resources for new police remain a concern.

OCHA, Feb 2008

“The deployment of Special Police Constables (SPCs) has been effected in nearly all sub-counties in Gulu and Amuru Districts, but the delay in salary disbursements has undermined the protection offered by SPCs. The Government reports that it has distributed three months’ salary out of the backlog of six to seven months for Gulu and Amuru.

In Kitgum, 456 SPCs received training on human rights and gender based violence (GBV), while sensitisation training on the role of the police in the community is planned for LCIIIs and LCIIIIs across the district. The deployment of Anti-Stock Theft Units (ASTU) in the district has been hampered by inadequate facilities at bases; for instance, four of the seven proposed bases lack water; while the other two sites require repairs.

In Pader, a total of 30 unarmed SPCs have been deployed across the district’s 19 sub-counties. The District Protection Officer has noted that the SPCs require further training on the code of conduct and the protection of civilians.”

Mob justice alarms authorities (September 2008)

Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 22 September 2008

"As more than a million refugees in northern Uganda resettle villages after years of war with the rebel Lord’s Resistance Army, LRA, mob killings of suspected criminals have alarmed officials.

In recent weeks, five people in the Lira district were hung, shot or beaten by angry mobs after being accused of petty crimes.

[...]

The deaths in the Lira region have been bloody. They’ve involved the use of machetes, stones, bricks and heavy sticks – much like the brutality used by LRA accused of atrocities across northern Uganda.

Police attribute the killings to trauma caused by the vicious LRA attacks on civilians over the past 20 years.

[...]

There has been some criticism of the courts for releasing prisoners, but judicial officials insist the policy helps ease overcrowding and removes minor cases so the courts can focus on hardcore criminals.

Court representatives also point out that sending minor offenders to prison runs the risk of turning them into more serious criminals.

“There is possibility of those arrested for petty offences [become hardened] if they are sent to prison [by mixing] with those who commit murder and robbery,” said Juliet Hatanga, a Lira magistrate judge.

"We are trying to emphasise community service [as a way] to decongest prisons.

"There is also [the] negotiation process where two parties with a case before us ... agreed on what [is] to be done [so] they resolve the matter outside court."

[...]

Mental health experts say that mob justice is a consequence of years of war, which has created a culture in which people are quick to turn to violence.

In order to tackle this, the Ugandan health ministry is expanding mental health units across the region to treat those who still bear the psychological scars of the LRA conflict.

The district police commander Raymond Otim said there was an urgent need to address the problem.

"The communities in northern Uganda are badly traumatised as a result of the prolonged insecurity, and people with bad character should be very careful," Otim told IWPR.

"We are advising our people who have settled in their villages to desist from taking the law into their hands, but [to] arrest and hand over suspected criminals to the police for appropriate action."

Karamojong attacks pose security threat in Acholi and Teso areas bordering Karamoja (September 2008)

OCHA, September 2008

"In the Teso sub-region, increased cattle raiding by illegally-armed Karimojong was reported in parts of Katakwi District, with at least 88 head of cattle raided in Olilim and Odoot villages in Ngariam sub-county during the month. The District Internal Security Officer (DISO) to advise that these areas, as well as other frequently targeted villages, specifically Okocho and Obwobwo, in Ongongoja sub-county, remained insecure. The DISO also expressed concern about the effectiveness of Anti Stock Theft Units (ASTUs) due to food shortages. The Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) has reportedly deployed to complement the effort of the ASTUs."

OCHA, March 2008

"Frequent raids, suspected to be the work of illegally-armed Karimojong, have been reported in eastern subcounties of Kitgum, Pader and Lira Districts. During the dry season, illegally-armed Karimojong cross into neighbouring districts and Kenya in search of pasture and water for their animals; moving through areas, they often carry out raids and clash with Anti Stock Theft Units (ASTUs) and the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF)."

The New Vision, 11 June 2008

"Pader district has established 455 new satellite camps for the internally displaced people who have left the main camps, the LC5 chairman has said.

Peter Odok W'Oceng added that the people were moving from the camps near their homes and cultivating their formerly abandoned fields as they prepared to finally resettle home.

He observed that the Juba-Peace talks, which had stalled, greatly contributed in building confidence among the people, who were gradually returning to their villages.

The resettlement was more evident in the southern part of the district, the chairman pointed out.

Odok, however, lamented that in the northeastern areas, residents were afraid of leaving the camps due to incessant raids by Karimojong cattle rustlers."

The New Vision, 26 May 2008

"The internally displaced people who had returned to their villages on the border with Karamoja have threatened to return to the camps if more soldiers were not deployed. This followed the murder of Charles Omara, the LC1 vice-chairman of Okede village in Adilang sub-county by Karimojong raiders."

Unexploded ordnance still poses a risk (September 2008)

OCHA, September 2008

"Concerns continue to be expressed by protection actors in Pader District at the lack of agencies handling mine risk education in Aruu County. An information package on mine/unexploded ordnance (UXO) awareness for the community is to be developed."

The New Vision, 2 June 2008

"Internally displaced people in Amuru district are reluctant to return to their villages for fear of unexploded ordinances, Bosco Onek, a resident of Opok sub-parish in Lamogi sub-county, has said.

"Many people have been maimed by bombs, grenades and landmines that were abandoned in the conflict area," Onek, the area LC1 general secretary, said on Wednesday.

He was addressing the district leaders during a security meeting at Olwal IDP camp.

The meeting was aimed at collecting people's views on how to ensure that displaced people return to their villages. The meeting, which was organised by the Norwegian Refugees Council, was funded by the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees.

[...]

The resident district commissioner, Edwin Komakech, promised to contact the UPDF mine experts and non-governmental organisations to detonate the landmines.

The Government has played a commendable role in clearing the areas known to have explosives and in taking the lead in mines risk education and victim assistance efforts, the resident district commissioner, noted."

The Monitor, 4 May 2008

"AVSI, an Italian non-governmental organisation which works mainly with victims of landmines in northern Uganda, has declared that landmines are no longer a threat in the region.

Northern Uganda is where the Uganda army and rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army have fought for almost two decades.

In a statement, the organisation said the biggest problem in the area is the abundance of other unexploded ordinance.

The organisation's Landmines Risks Education Officer, Ochan Ongom told journalists at Sun Set Hotel in Gulu town that a team of experts sent to northern Uganda to de-mine the area has removed not more than 30 landmines since the inception of the programme last year.

He said an assortment of explosives like grenades, rockets, missiles, cluster bombs, bullets and fuses among others have been recovered. "We do receive about five cases of suspected mines all over the region on daily basis but most of them have been discovered to be unexploded fuses, grenades, but not landmines as people suspect them to be," Mr Ongom said.

He said the weapons have killed 524 people and maimed thousands in the recent past. Statistics also show that there are 1,387 landmine survivors in Gulu and Amuru districts out of which about 700 are being supported by humanitarian organisations.

Mr Ongom, however, said there could still be thousands of unexploded weapons in the region particularly in the sub -counties of Atiak, Palaro, Agoro and Palabek.

Northern Uganda is suspected to have the highest number of disabled persons in Uganda who were maimed during the armed conflict.

Uganda, which signed the Ottawa Convention to stop the use of landmines in 1997, has destroyed 6,432 landmines since 2003. About 1,000 are still in the government armories for training purposes. Landmines can stay in the ground or in any environment for more than 75 years without getting expired."

OCHA, March 2008

"During the reporting period, 61 UXOs were reported in Gulu and Amuru, with 26 destroyed. The total number of UXOs now pending destruction is 226 (105 in Gulu and 121 in Amuru). Speedy programme implementation in terms of coordination, monitoring and support has been hampered by the absence of a UMAC field office in northern Uganda; the impending rainy season is also expected to further delay the demining programme.

In Pader, the mine action team recently deployed to the district has declared that while there is a low risk from mine contamination, there is a high number of UXOs in the district. During the reporting period, the team recovered 82 UXOs and continues to work with humanitarian agencies to collect information and map information on areas suspected to be contaminated with landmines and UXOs."

Physical security in Karamoja

Insecurity persists in Karamoja (September 2008)

- Number of cattle raids has declined

- UPDF continues disarmament operations, but number of weapons gathered by UPDF falls steeply

OCHA, September 2008

"Within Karamoja itself, insecurity persisted, albeit at a reduced level over the previous month. Some 35 deaths were reported as the result of 20 incidents, including ambushes, armed raids on protected and non-protected kraals and clashes between the UPDF and illegally-armed Karimojong. On a positive note, the security situation in Kotido and Kaabong Districts reportedly improved, attributed to heavy UPDF deployment along the roads and increased foot patrols at major hot spots. The temporary travel restriction imposed on United Nations agencies via the direct Moroto- Lopei-Kotido route was lifted."

OCHA, March 2008

"In Karamoja, low levels of aggressiveness were reported at the beginning of the month, but gained momentum in the third week. By month's end, aggressive Karimojong activities were at their highest in six months, with 67 incidents reported. The upsurge in aggressiveness is likely linked to the sustained disarmament operations being conducted by the UPDF: 15 operations have reportedly taken place in the past month, with 43 guns seized and several hundred individuals arrested. However, in a change of tactics, the UPDF has begun seizing cattle to be returned against guns handed over. The Government also announced that illegally-armed Karimojong that did not surrender their weapons voluntarily would be court-martialled."

OCHA, Feb 2008

"In Karamoja, insecurity was also at its lowest in six months, although general hostility prevailed. There were two road ambushes reported in February, while the number of raids throughout most of the sub-region has declined. The exception was Kaabong District, where attacks and cattle raids continued. Of particular concern is the failure by the UPDF to defend the protected kraals adequately. Since the beginning of 2008, four attacks on protected kraals in Kaabong District have been reported, including a reported five-hour raid on 17 February in which 400 to 600 head of cattle were taken. The UPDF conducted eight disarmament operations during the month, in which five people were reportedly killed, one injured, four guns collected and more than 100 Karimojong detained. The number of weapons being gathered by the UPDF in its disarmament operations has dropped considerably: in 2007, the UPDF was gathering an estimated 2,000 weapons per month, whereas only a few hundred are estimated to be gathered now."

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

High levels of child sex child abuse in northern Uganda (July 2008)

GUSCO, June 2008

"Child sexual abuse is widespread throughout northern Uganda. Despite the increase in reported cases, UNICEF says that under-reporting is the "norm." UNICEF, *Report on the Situation of Children and Women in the Republic of Uganda*, 133. It is a haunting reality for thousands of children throughout the region; children already suffering the severe human security consequences of over twenty years of war."

IRIN, 21 July 2008

"Acute poverty is forcing girls as young as 14 into early marriage and sex work in parts of northern Uganda affected by the war, says a new report by local NGOs.

A combination of extreme poverty, a large number of child-headed households, and the high mobility of internally displaced families are among the factors that have led to girls being subjected to sexual abuse or engaging in sex work, according to the Gulu Support the Children Organisation (GUSCO) and the Acholi Community Empowerment Network.

The two NGOs, both working to support children affected by armed conflict, interviewed over 100 respondents between December 2007 and February 2008 in a study prompted by a significant increase in the number of reported cases of child sexual abuse in the districts of Gulu and Amuru in northern Uganda.

Statistics obtained from northern regional police records indicate around 1,300 reported cases of sexual abuse of girls between January and June 2008, with Gulu and Amuru districts recording the highest number of incidents.

Hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northern Uganda - who fled their homes during two decades of war between the rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government - are living in "satellite" camps in between official IDP camps and their home villages as they try to regain their land.

Many children have been left alone in the official IDP camps to continue attending school. "Unguarded by their parents, they are vulnerable to sexual abuse," the report said.

Contrary to international legal standards that set adulthood at the age of 18, in many areas of northern Uganda girls are considered adult at the age of 16. "Girls are forced into marriage by their families between the ages of 15 and 18 for economic gain, i.e. the bride price," the report said. "Beyond 18, they are in some communities referred to as "oruta" ['used' in the local Acholi language] or "ogek" [wasted]."

Study respondents also said men sought younger sexual partners in the belief that they were less likely to be infected with HIV. According to the ministry of health, HIV prevalence in Uganda's central northern region is 8.2 percent, compared with a national average of 6.4 percent.

Many girls, struggling to keep themselves fed and clothed, have taken to hanging around local bars, hoping to be picked up by soldiers or businessmen. "My parents are dead; they were killed by the rebels and this is the only way for my survival. I earn between 5,000 shillings [US\$3] and 8,000 shillings [\$5] a day from clients in night clubs and bars," one 15-year-old girl in Gulu told IRIN/PlusNews.

"We have cases where girls are being sold in bars for sex in exchange for money, while other men exploit young girls working as baby-sitters in their homes," said Joseph Kilama, Gulu district child protection officer. "Large numbers of girls, working illegally as barmaids under the age of 18, are reportedly sexually abused by inebriated customers."

The study found that the perpetrators of child sex abuse included aid workers, businessmen, farmers, teachers, relatives and armed personnel, such as members of the LRA and soldiers of the national Uganda People's Defence Forces.

"This region has been under conflict and children have continued to be sexually and psychologically abused," regional police commander Phenihensas Arinaitwe told IRIN/PlusNews. He said the police received a minimum of five reports of child sex abuse every day.

Improved reporting mechanisms

The researchers found that raising awareness of child sex abuse and HIV had contributed to a recent increase in the reporting of these crimes, which are traditionally underreported.

"Continuous HIV/AIDS sensitisation campaigns, which include advertising prevention services available for survivors of rape and sexual abuse, have encouraged people to report cases more frequently," the report said.

Many health practitioners require a police form before a patient is provided with post-exposure prophylaxis, which has also increased the number of child sexual abuse cases being reported to the police.

"Respondents also noted the positive impact of grassroots participation in the promotion of rights awareness and reporting procedures. This includes the role of local leaders, past victim's parents and Special Police Constables ... People are in many cases more likely to listen to those whom they know and trust," the report added.

Francis Odokorach, GUSCO's programme officer, pointed out a gap between reported cases and those that made it to the courts. "Few cases reach the judge," he said. "There are a variety of reasons for this, including parents using the reported case as an opportunity to extort money from perpetrators."

Northern Uganda has highest levels of domestic violence (July 2008)

- Increased number of GBV cases recorded in Gulu and Amuru
- Concerns about access to justice for victims of GBV

IRIN, 15 July 2008

"Armed conflict, poverty, alcohol abuse and cultural attitudes are responsible for the high incidence of domestic violence in Ugandan communities, according to a report presented to parliament by jurists.

Some 92 percent of 6,000 people surveyed by the Uganda Law Reform Commission reported some form of domestic violence was taking place in their communities.

The highest levels were recorded in northern Uganda, which is struggling to emerge from more than two decades of conflict between the rebel Lord's Resistance Army and government troops. From 1996, the Ugandan government moved much of the north's population into crowded "protected villages".

"Over-congestion in the camp makes people put up with other people's bad behaviour, which includes fighting. The situation here is of fear, suspicion and jealousy. All these encourage

domestic violence because we are over-congested. We also have a problem of ignorance ... we do not know our rights and duties," a displaced person in Pabbo camp of Gulu district said in the report.

The report cited several types of domestic abuse, including sexual violence, drunkenness, psychological torture, confiscation of property, physical and bodily harm, adultery, use of abusive language, nagging and marital rape.

The commonest form of domestic violence reported was physical abuse and child abuse, including beating, torture, biting and stabbing, which accounted for 36 percent of the respondents, while 25 percent was psychological abuse and alcohol abuse. Some incidences have resulted in loss of life.

Cultural attitudes

In some parts of the country, the violence appears to be entrenched in cultural traditions that do not allow for the concept of a woman's lack of consent to sexual intercourse. The report noted that under 'akikamuni' or 'atokore', a marital custom in the Karamoja region, if a woman rejects a man, "when you find her you wrestle her and force her into sexual intercourse. This can happen anywhere, even in a public place. The purpose of the act is to extract consent."

"The culture here connotes that a woman is there to be ruled and not a partner in marriage," an attorney in Kabale district in southwestern Uganda said.

In Gulu district, there is a belief that to be a "true married wife" a woman should have lost a tooth as a result of being battered by her husband.

The report also cites the custom of paying a "bride price" at marriage as another potential source of abuse, since it reinforces the idea that men have "proprietary rights over their wives". A fear of having to return the "bride price" keeps many women trapped in unhappy marriages.

Trouble with the law

The law is not much help in cases of abuse, according to the report. Richard Lumu, a Kampala-based lawyer specialising in family matters, said Uganda lacks specific legislation on domestic violence, something the Uganda Law Reform Commission would like to change.

Lumu told IRIN another problem with prosecuting cases of domestic violence was the intimate relationship between the accused and the victims. "Victims are competent but not compellable witnesses, victims do not want their abusers jailed or to suffer too much," he noted.

The report quotes an ordeal of a police officer who was found in Gulu and narrated to the researchers an incident while he was still working in Moroto. A woman who had been severely beaten by her husband and had sustained serious injuries that rendered her unconscious was admitted in Mataany Hospital. However, as soon as she regained consciousness, she marched straight to the police station and accused the police officers of trying to break up her marriage by locking up her husband.

"She went on to say that she found nothing wrong with her husband having beaten her especially since he was her husband after all! She left the police officers perplexed because at the end of the day she was the would-be principal witness in the case," the report states, adding that the imprisonment or fine does not only affect the abuser -who is usually the breadwinner - but the rest of the family as well.

The report further notes that the attitudes of judges and judicial officers and their response to domestic violence often frustrates battered women because the perpetrators may be treated leniently."

OCHA, March 2008

"In Pader, cases of domestic violence are on the increase, with alcohol consumption presumed to be the major contributing factor. Only one agency in the district is carrying out a substance abuse project, in just two sub-counties. Domestic violence also continues to be a major concern in Kitgum, where displacement has augmented the problem. In Amuru, increased reporting of GBV cases is attributed to community awareness arising from intensified advocacy and sensitization campaigns."

OCHA, Feb 2008

"Increases in the number of GBV cases were recorded in Gulu and Amuru. During the reporting period, 92 cases were registered in Gulu (42) and Amuru (50). Nearly 65 per cent of the reported cases in Amuru were incidents of sexual violence, while 45 per cent of those in Gulu were.

Difficulties in administering Police Form (PF) 3 continue to be of concern in Pader district where the sub-cluster convened a meeting with the District Police Commander (DPC) to discuss, among other concerns, police practices in handling GBV cases that hinder victims' access to justice. The DPC informed the cluster that a notice had been posted to all police outposts clarifying that the PF3 form and police bond were free of charge. Other practical challenges to effective handling of GBV cases remain, such as the lack of photocopiers and vehicles to transport victims or perpetrators. Agencies have offered to support the police with photocopying of the PF3 forms and other communications."

Lack of access to justice for female victims of SGBV (November 2007)

- Female victims of SGBV often face insurmountable obstacles in trying to ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.

Amnesty International, 30 November 2007

"Many women and girls in northern Uganda suffer sexual and gender-based violence committed by state actors, including official authorities and military officers, and non-state actors within the family and in the community. These women victims of violence in northern Uganda often face insurmountable difficulties in trying to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice. Many are afraid to report rape and other forms of violence, not only because of intimidation, hostility and ridicule from the community, but also due to state inaction in ensuring redress. As a result, the justice system in northern Uganda ignores, denies and tacitly condones violence against women and girls and protects suspected perpetrators. Amnesty International considers victims' lack of access to justice as an issue of serious concern warranting the immediate attention of the Ugandan government and the international community.

Amnesty International visited five districts of northern Uganda (Gulu, Amuru, Kitgum, Pader and Lira) in August 2007. During this visit, delegates were told about the frustrating experiences of female victims of violence in attempting to access justice, the discrimination they suffer in the process and the entrenched culture of impunity that prevails regarding cases of rape, defilement, domestic violence, assault and other forms of violence. Often, there are no police officers to report cases to. Police posts and stations are few and far between in the whole of northern

Uganda. Many times the police officers who are available to report to are not sensitive to the rights of victims in the context of the trauma of the violence (including rape). The majority of police officers in northern Uganda are Special Police Constables (SPCs) who are newly deployed, with limited training. They are ill equipped and unmotivated. Even the basic ingredients of laying a report to the police and other authorities seemed undermined; most police stations and police posts do not have medical examination forms. These forms have to be filled by the medical officer carrying out the medical examination and are crucial for documenting evidence of violence. Where the medical examination forms are available, there is usually an inadequate supply and they quickly run out. Obtaining the forms usually requires the payment of an illegal "photocopying fee" by the victim or her family who are often too poor to afford these costs. Even when the victim obtains the medical examination form, it is not clear which medical officer is authorised to fill in the forms. Victims have to wait for inordinately long periods for the medical examination to be conducted, as government doctors and medical officers are very few. Victims are often charged for the medical examination. In addition, medical officers who conduct the examination are reluctant to give evidence in court. Although the court structure is taking shape and the judiciary is beginning to function in a limited manner in northern Uganda, these courts are barely adequate and have overwhelming caseloads. All these constraints often mean that even where a case is referred for trial, very few cases, if any, are successfully concluded. The result is that many female victims of sexual and gender-based violence have lost trust in the justice system – they often opt to remain silent."

Cases of defilement on the increase in Pader (March 2008)

OCHA, March 2008

"Cases of defilement and consensual sex among minors are reportedly on the increase in Pader due to children being left without adult supervision. Parents often opt to settle defilement cases out of court in the face of difficulties in resolving the cases legally. In response to alleged cases of defilement of pupils by teachers, agencies working on education will undertake sensitization of teachers."

Freedom of movement

Government has lifted all restrictions on freedom of movement (July 2008)

OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.6:

"Although the lack of a conclusion to the peace process is often cited as a reason that mass return has not occurred in the Acholi sub-region as it has in Lango, there is no indication that people are moving back into camps because of the recent developments. Instead, the general impression is that aggressive LRA activities have ceased to pose a real threat to northern Uganda. Significantly, the continued stability across the region has led the Government of Uganda to lift all remaining restrictions on the freedom of movement."

In Acholi districts, pressure from landlords on IDPs to leave the camps (Feb 2008)

- In northern Uganda, some IDPs appear to be under pressure from landlords to leave the camps

OCHA, Feb 2008

"In northern Uganda, some IDPs appear to be under pressure to leave the camps, despite the principle of voluntary return. Forced evictions have been reported in Attiak (Amuru) and Koro (Gulu)

sub-counties, with the pressure mostly coming from landlords, although the evictions in Attiak were initiated by the local authority on the grounds that the land was wanted for staff houses."

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS

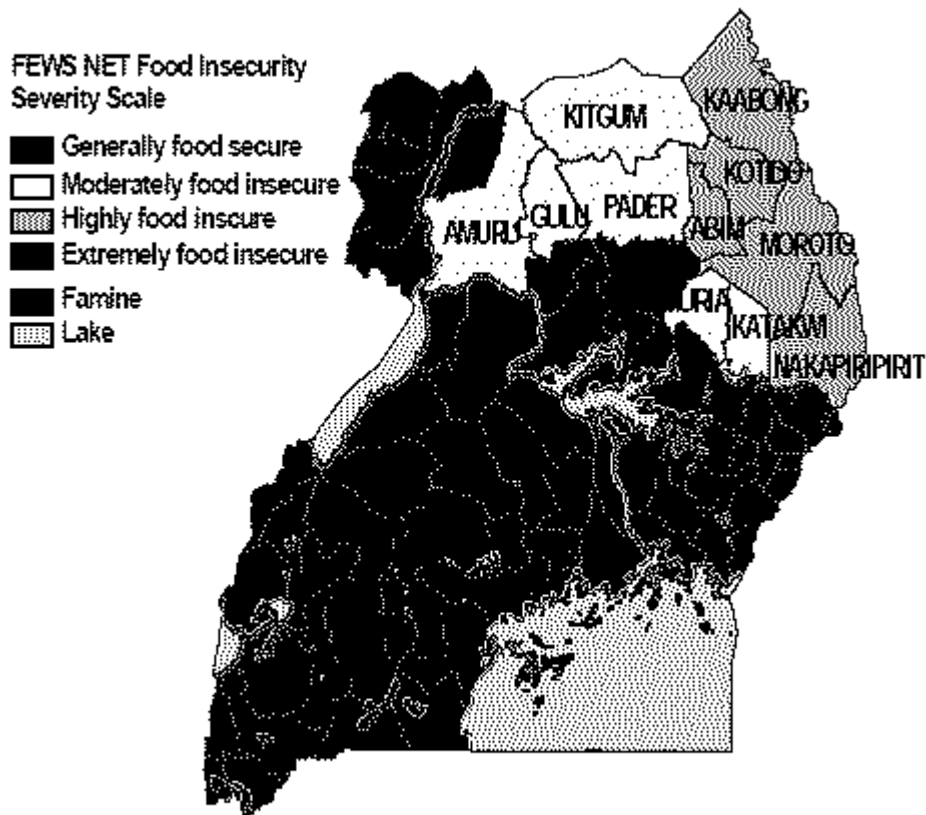
Food

700,000 people moderately food insecure in northern Uganda (June 2009)

- About 700,000 people in northern Uganda face moderate food insecurity.
- Harvest prospects in northern districts are low, probably more than 60 per cent lower than normal, raising the risk of diminished food security in northern Uganda.
- Staple food prices are high in northern Uganda (above the five-year average), limiting access to food for households that are dependent on food purchases

Famine Early Warning System Network, June 2009, p.1

Figure 1. Current estimated food security conditions, June 2009



Source: WFP/UN agencies, MAAIF/GaU, NGOs
Graphics: FEWS NET Uganda

Famine Early Warning System Network, June 2009, pp. 2-3

"In northern Uganda, more than 80 percent of the population has returned home following stabilization of civil security since 2006, and have gradually increased their access to cultivable land and their own food production. Nonetheless, many still experience fragile food security and require continued access to productive assets and good rains to sustain and stabilize their food production, food access, and food security. Late onset of the 2009 first season rains and overall below normal performance since April caused low germination, stunting and low head/cob formation and grain filling in maize, millet, and sorghum.. As a result, district officials, UN agencies, and NGOs indicate that harvest prospects are low, probably more than 60 percent lower than normal, and this will reduce stocks and lower food access and security for households in

the region in coming months. The maize harvests in Amuru and Gulu districts, which should be occurring now have so far yielded minimal crop; bean, groundnut, and sweet potato harvests are also very low; cassava growth has stagnated. Crop harvests — beans, pigeon peas in June/July and sorghum (September or October) — in Kitgum and Pader districts, which have drier conditions and have poorer soils compared to Amuru and Gulu, are expected to be much lower. Reduced production will reduce market supply and contribute to high food prices, thus limiting household purchasing power. Currently, crop prices are very high, including prices for maize, millet, ground nuts, and rice, partly due to high demand from Sudan. The high cost of staples limits many households' access to food from the markets.

A low season underscores the fragility of food security in northern Uganda as the region recovers. Without an effective early warning system to help farmers in their cultivation and with limited good quality data, monitoring the region is of utmost importance to ensure trends in food security are captured in good time to allow for adequate, well-planned responses. Currently, the UN World Food Program (WFP) has stopped general feeding in the region due to program resource deficits and is limited to providing assistance through targeted programs to cater to nutritional and therapeutic feeding.

Household food insecurity in parts of eastern Uganda, mainly Amuria and Katakwi districts, is reaching alarming levels, following low production there during the first season of 2009. Amuria and Katakwi districts have, over the past several years, experienced a succession of shocks that have left many households vulnerable. Nearly normal 2008 second-season harvests enabled households to replenish food stocks, providing some relief in the two districts, although conditions remained precarious and required sustained good harvests to build on the last season and ensure continued household food security recovery in the two districts. However, this year's lower than normal rainfall reduced crop and livestock production, limiting harvests and replenishment of stocks, and now many households' food security is again compromised as they lack adequate food and depend on one meal a day. The most affected areas are close to the border with Karamoja, where it is drier and has poorer soils that support only limited cultivation. These areas also suffer periodic incursions by lawless Karimojong, and are therefore often displaced, reducing their ability to secure adequate cultivation and food. Income opportunities are low, limiting their access to markets."

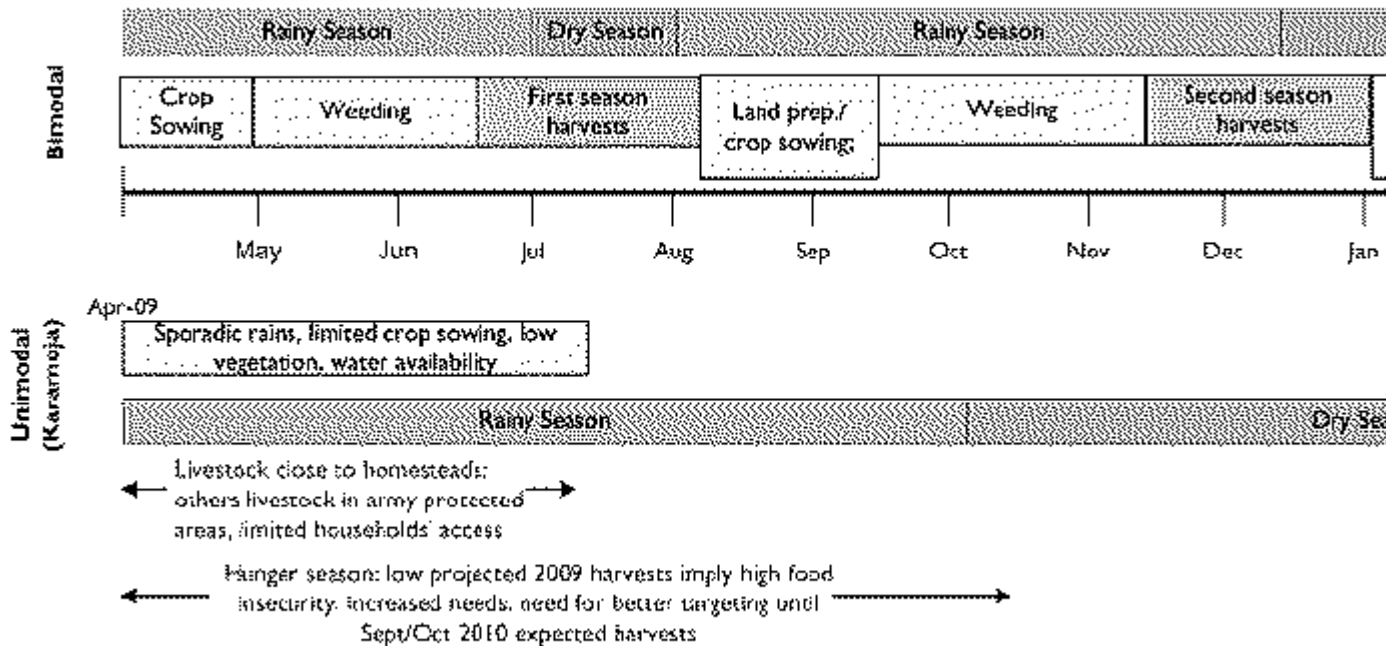
Famine Early Warning System Network, June 2009, p.5

"Staple food prices are high in northern and northeastern Ugandan districts affected by civil insecurity and several consecutive low harvests, respectively, as in other locations and constrain households access to food with more significant impact on their food access and food security given the long history of low household stocks, widespread food insecurity. Apart from low

supplies to markets, increase in food prices in northern Uganda is attributed to and reportedly exacerbated by high demand from Southern Sudan."

Seasonal calendar and critical events (April 2009 - April 2010)

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Poor harvest expected in the north (July 2009)

For further information, see the two maps produced by OCHA in June and July 2009

FEWSNET, July 2009 (July-December outlook), pp.2-3:

"In the northern districts of Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader (Acholi sub region), where households are still resettling and accessing land to improve food production, food security remains poor. The first rainy season, which normally runs from March to June/July, is the main cropping season in central, northern, and eastern Uganda, accounting for more than 60 percent of annual food production. This year, delayed and poorly distributed rainfall has reduced production prospects to only 50 percent of normal, preventing households from replenishing stocks and increasing supplies to markets. These conditions have heightened food insecurity due to low household stocks, high crop prices and low household incomes.

The majority of households in northern Uganda now mainly depend on market purchases for their food using income derived largely from the sale of charcoal. There are few employment opportunities as lower than normal rains have diminished labor opportunities in agriculture.

Where available, a day's wage labor can only procure about one kilogram of sorghum grain. Currently, sorghum and bean prices are up to 140 and 45 percent above the five-year average, respectively. Although a good harvest of maize, beans, and cassava is expected in neighboring Masindi district, it is not expected to ease high demand in Acholi as it is likely to flow to Kampala and south Sudan where higher demand and better prices offer higher returns despite the distances. This is likely to maintain and/or further increase commodity prices in Acholi. Similarly, average production of sorghum, maize, millet, and cassava reported in parts of Lango sub region, a major supplier to Acholi, Karamoja, and Teso regions, will not significantly improve supplies to the other regions as it tries to meet its own high food demand, so limiting any improvement in food security in the neighboring regions where crop production is projected to be lower than normal this season.

Despite these circumstances, some households in northern Uganda are still able to meet food needs using a combination of limited stocks and market purchases, and by gradually restoring social networks. The onset of rains in the last week of June has spurred farmers to intensify cultivation, preparing land and sowing second-season crops. The Department of Meteorology's projection of drier conditions until September could reduce the outcome of these efforts. The situation requires close monitoring to ensure that households meet their current food needs, but also determine and plan for any future remedial interventions before September."

FEWSNET, 7 July 2009:

"Although normalizing civil security in northern Uganda has enabled improvements in food security over the last three to four seasons since 2007, many households still face precarious food security and continue to need food assistance to bridge gaps. Currently, WFP is facing resource shortages that hamper its ability to procure and distribute food. For now, the agency has greatly reduced rations for general food distribution in the four northern Uganda districts, pending new contributions and the arrival of supplies expected from abroad, while it tries to maintain its emergency and therapeutic feeding programs at normal levels. The Protracted Relief and Recovery Program (PRRO) requires 23,556 MT of food aid between June and November 2009 to meet the needs of the remaining IDPs, refugees, and other vulnerable people. Reduction of food assistance poses challenges to the vulnerable, whose food security could deteriorate with a slight change in their conditions.

[...]

Despite these circumstances, households are finding ways to meet their food needs through a combination of limited stocks, market purchases, and gradually restoring social networks. Meanwhile, the onset of rains in the last week of June has spurred cultivation activities and farmers are preparing land and sowing second-season crops. If the Department of Meteorology's projected forecast of near-normal to slightly above-normal rainfall holds during July and August, a better second-season harvest will help ensure food security in Acholi after November 2009.

The situation requires diligent observation to ensure that households not only meet their food needs now, but also plant at the right time for the second season, which should begin in late July. The most difficult period will be late August to October, if the rains do not perform well enough for short-cycle crops like sweet potatoes to mature. Any food assistance will require a targeted approach so as not to disrupt the emerging self sufficiency within the region."

WFP reduces food distribution as a result of funding shortages (May 2009)

Famine Early Warning Systems Network, May 2009, p.2

"Although normalizing civil security in northern Uganda has enabled improvements in food security over the last three to four seasons since 2007, many households still face precarious food security and continue to need food assistance to bridge gaps. Currently, WFP is facing resource shortages that hamper its ability to procure and distribute food. For now, the agency has greatly reduced rations for general food distribution in the four northern Uganda districts, pending new contributions and the arrival of supplies expected from abroad, while it tries to maintain its emergency and therapeutic feeding programs at normal levels. The Protracted Relief and Recovery Program (PRRO) requires 23,556 MT of food aid between June and November 2009 to meet the needs of the remaining IDPs, refugees, and other vulnerable people. Reduction of food assistance poses challenges to the vulnerable, whose food security could deteriorate with a slight change in their conditions."

Persons with specific needs at risk of missing out on food rations (February 2008)

UNHCR, February 2008

"Despite many improvements towards providing the community early notification of food distribution, the community is still experiencing difficulties as many had missed their food rations.

Of especial concern amongst community members missing their food rations are the PSNs (persons with specific needs). This past month reports show that PSNs are often ignored in the line or are unable to stand in line and subsequently miss their food rations. There is need for community sensitization and early information passed on community on distribution dates."

Return movements call for different approach to malnutrition (December 2007)

- There has been a significant reduction in malnutrition rates in northern Uganda.
- However, a reversal of the downward trend is being observed in Lira, which was the first place where people started to return to their home areas. Limited access to basic health and nutrition services in the return areas compared to the camps may be to blame.
- This should be a warning sign for the return process in northern Uganda: adequate services must be made available in the return areas.
- Karamoja has seen a doubling of malnutrition rates between 2005 and 2007, from 5-10% to above 15%, exceeding the emergency threshold.

Uganda Health, Nutrition, and HIV/AIDS Cluster, December 2007:

"Since the mid-1980s, northern Uganda has been trapped in a cycle of violence and suffering due to conflict between the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the Lords' Resistance Army (LRA).

In particular, the people of Acholi land in northern Uganda have been significantly affected, evidenced by the more than one million Acholis who have been forced to flee from their villages of origin to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in search of relative peace and security. Thanks to progress made in the peace talks, the situation of the IDPs has evolved with currently massive population movement out of camps, to new settlements or to their original homestead.

Significant reduction in malnutrition rate in northern Uganda has been noted. United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and other humanitarian partners stepped in to roll out an

effective emergency response plan following an elevated prevalence of malnutrition in 2003 which coincided with the peak of the insurgency in northern Uganda.

The Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) was above the emergency level (15% GAM) in all conflict affected districts from as high as 30% in Gulu to current rates below 5% in all northern districts except in Kitgum.

Overall, the downward trends in malnutrition can be attributed to the effective humanitarian response in addressing the hunger gap mainly through food aid and emergency feeding programmes on the one hand and the effective management of severe acute malnutrition on the other hand.

However, a reversal in the downward trend is being observed (2006-2007) in Lira district and to some extent in Pader. This may be as a result of the return process spearheaded there in 2006.

Progress made over the last 4 years in reducing malnutrition rate is significant. The upward trend depicted in Lira and Pader should be seen as warning signs. The situation is still fluid and it is therefore important to put in place relevant plans and actions to sustain the gain.

Experience has shown that access to basic health and nutrition services by populations moving out of camps is limited, compared to when they were in IDP camps. Sustaining reduced malnutrition rates requires a change of focus and a change of strategy.

Till date, priority was given to treatment of severe malnutrition through Therapeutic Feeding Centres (TFC) and more recently through the Community Based Therapeutic Care (CTC). This is based in most cases, on VHTs, involved in screening for early identification and referral of children with severe malnutrition. In some cases, moderately malnourished children are referred to Supplementary Feeding Programme (SFP). It is high time to move out of the reactive mode to adopt a pro-active way of preventing onset of malnutrition.

With people settling in more or less permanent areas, nutrition programmes should be oriented towards community based promotion of adequate nutrition practices which include early initiation of breastfeeding (within one hour after birth), exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, and timely initiation of adequate (quantity, quality, feeding frequency) complementary feeding with breastfeeding up to two years and beyond. This effort should be complemented by promotion of healthy behavior including hand washing, use of latrine, use of clean water and promotion of health care seeking behavior."

Health

Lack of resources hampers the provision of health services in northern Uganda (April 2008)

- Lack of resources hampers the provision of health services in northern Uganda.

UNHCR, February 2008

"Humanitarian Gaps in Camps: Health

Again health centres and misuse of ambulances deserve urgent attention.

Overall reporting of a lack of staff, absenteeism among health staff and short opening hours for the health centers. This is an ongoing and general concern.

Malaria has continued to be in this period the highest cause of illness. In certain camps, even when medical services are available at the health centre, the costs are still too high so the community does not seek treatment except in emergency situations. Ambulances assigned to specific health centers are usually in use elsewhere and not therefore available to the population to which they are allocated."

UNOCHA, March 2008

"Lack of resources generally continues to hamper the provision of health services in northern Uganda. In Gulu, 11 health centres remain non-functional despite having been earmarked for rehabilitation. The District Director of Health Services (DDHS) says maternity wards are required in six health centres but cannot be constructed due to lack of funding. Where resources are available, they are insufficient to meet all the requirements. For instance, staff houses will be constructed at only six of 11 health centres and just one third of the required 2,484 village health teams (VHTs) have been trained. The district's health staffing level stands at only 25 per cent.

In Amuru, 116 health personnel have been recruited, but their deployment is hampered by lack of staff accommodation. The district is considering building huts as a stop-gap measure."

UNHCR, April 2008

"Amuru Health:

In the 19 sites assessed none have health centers, and the nearest are between 3 and 16 kilometers away. The 19 sites visited are in 15 different parishes. 8 have trained VHTs, though they mainly only consist of 1 person.

Gulu health:

In the 83 sites assessed, 9 have health centers, though only 5 are functioning. The nearest health centers are between 1 and 20 kilometers away. The 5 functioning centers are in 5 different parishes. 50 of the 83 sites have trained VHTs, though 90% of them consist only on 1-2 people each."

Amuru district launches neglected diseases programme for returning IDPs (October 2008)

The Monitor, 7 October 2008

"Amuru District has launched a programme to control 'Neglected Diseases' among the returning communities, the district health officer, Dr Patrick Olwedo Odong, has said.

Dr Olwedo said at the weekend that a recent survey, indicated that diseases like elephantiasis, river blindness, trachoma and bilharzia are very common in the district and need quick intervention.

[...]

Dr Olwedo told Daily Monitor that the programme will run for five years and they are targeting the rural persons that have returned and those returning because they are the most affected.

He said the poor sanitation in the areas of return, places surrounded by the game park in the district help in spreading the diseases.

[...]

Amuru District RDC Edwin Komakech said the ministry of health should address problems of lack of qualified staff and equipments.

He urged World Health Organisation to intervene. "We have been left behind in the health sector, the war has affected us, and we do not want to die of the diseases that we can control," he added."

Fears of increase in HIV/AIDS for returnee population (October 2008)

- HIV prevalence in Uganda's northern-central region is just over 8 percent, one of the highest in the country, with urban areas recording higher levels of infection than rural areas. The rate for all of Uganda is 6.2 per cent.
- IDP women had a lower risk of being infected with the HIV virus while they were living in camps, due to reduced mobility and better access to preventative health services. As people move away from the camps to rural areas, measures must be taken to ensure that the risk of infection does not increase.
- People in return areas are struggling to adhere to their ARV regimes, because of the long distances to the nearest health centres.
- The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has been forced to withdraw food aid to HIV-positive people in Uganda as part of broader cutbacks to its Ugandan programmes caused by a funding shortfall.
- There is insufficient assistance for people living with HIV/AIDS in the north's urban areas, including sex workers, since most organisations are focusing on the camps.

Romano Larry Adupa, July 2008

"The prevalence of HIV/AIDS varies in the region varies from 2.3% in North West and 3.5% in North East to 8.3% in North Central. The Uganda Demographic and Health Survey indicated that while 31% of women in Uganda had a comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS, only 20% in the north had this knowledge; a similar statistic was 26% in the IDPs and only 7% in Karamoja. Regarding men who normally initiate sexual intercourse in the country, 42% of them had knowledge of HIV/AIDS while in the North it was 39%; again in IDP camps and Karamoja the corresponding statistics were 48% and 13%. Although the level of infection is high, the declining trend in HIV prevalence in the region over the years have been seen to be consistent with the national one; the initially high prevalence has been attributed to the effects of civil strife that affected the region in 1986 when there was reduced access to health care and prevention services. However, while conflict, displacement, food insecurity and poverty have a big role to play in pre-disposing people in conflict areas to HIV infection, probably because of reduced mobility and accessibility but increased access to health prevention services as compared to people living outside of protected camps, IDP women had a lower risk of being infected in northern Uganda. Hence, as people move from the camps to rural areas, efforts need to be made in sensitizing the (i) population about the circumstances in and outside the protected camps as well as (ii) refugees/ex-combatants/reporters coming back into Uganda in context of HIV infection.

It is estimated that there are approximately 130,000 IDPs between the age of 14-49 living with HIV/AIDS; about 30,000 of these are in need of ART but by June 2007 only 10,467 were on treatment at various sites in northern Uganda including Karamoja region. Against this background, this region because of insecurity, has lagged behind the rest of the country in terms

of the availability, access and utilization of ART and other health services. As a result, (a) there are few ART sites and extremely limited paediatric, palliative care and PEP services and no testing facilities (PCR) in most districts (b) health facilities are dilapidated and/or dysfunctional with also incessant stock out of drugs (c) shortages of skilled human resource and over burdened medical personnel are rampant yet the region is unable to attract and retain different cadres of qualified health staff because of insecurity and poor working conditions (d) the road networks are poor and in some districts the recent floods have worsen the situation making many places inaccessible (e) the region which has the highest proportion of people living below the poverty line of \$1 per day also has the lowest human development index in the country. Where some health services are available, the clients particularly women are usually unable to afford to come or pay for complementary services; sexual and gender based violence and rape together with stigma and discrimination further complicate access to treatment and care by victims of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). Besides, as the IDPs including the PHAs leave the camps and go to transit sites and/or return to their places of origin which are usually far and scattered, this movement away from the ART sites and health units increases the chances of non-adherence to treatment by PHAs which is likely to result into cases of drug resistance and indeed, in some cases, the spread of resistant strains of the virus. In addition, a successful end of the rebellion through the on-going peace talks will result into many ex-rebels including combatants and their families to return to Uganda; these will require, in addition to services, monitoring of the types of strains of the virus they may be having. It is also forecast that there will be famine in the northern region next year, this situation will be worse for the IDPs and PHAs that had already returned and planted food crops but their crops were totally destroyed by the recent floods."

The Monitor, 27 October 2008

"It is feared that the infection rate of HIV/Aids will go up when people eventually leave camps and go back to their homes. This has been attributed to lack of access to information on Aids in the returnee areas.

NGOs and health agencies in northern Uganda estimate the scourge prevalence rate at 11 per cent higher than the national figure which stands at 8.5 per cent. "There will be a lot of sexual activity when people go home because the situation has normalised.

People will get married and want to have children but if there are no interventions, there will be massive infections in the process," the behavioural change approach Communications Officer at American Refugee Committee (ARC) Mr Richard Kintu, said during a media forum recently. "We shall promote prevention of HIV infection through the behavioural change approach," he said."

IRIN, 6 October 2008:



"As calm returns to northern Uganda, tens of thousands of people previously living in camps for internally displaced persons (IDP) camps are now in satellite camps mid-way between the IDP camps and their villages. The new camps are less crowded and people can cultivate their land, but the lack of healthcare is problematic.

Night Acayo is one of more than 1,700 people living in Awoo resettlement camp, having spent the past 20 years in Pabbo, the largest IDP camp in Gulu district. She is glad to be in Awoo because she can grow her own food, a welcome change after years of depending on the government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for every meal.

However, the move has proved a mixed blessing: Acayo is HIV-positive and now has to walk for hours every month to fetch her antiretroviral (ARV) medication from the health centre in Pabbo.

According to local officials, about 40 percent of the region's IDPs - estimated at more than two million at the height of the war between the rebel Lord's Resistance Army and the government - have left the dangerously congested IDP camps and moved to resettlement camps closer to their original villages.

HIV prevalence in Uganda's northern-central region is just over eight percent, one of the highest in the country. Cissy Musumba, manager of the Gulu office of The AIDS Support Organisation (TASO), a national NGO, told IRIN/PlusNews her organisation had more than 1,800 people on ARVs, about 40 percent of whom have left the main camps for satellites.

Acayo walks six kilometres to Pabbo, queues for a few hours to collect her ARVs from TASO, rests at a relative's home, and then heads back to Awoo. In September she missed her distribution day at Pabbo, but was able to sell millet worth around US\$2.50 to pay for transport into town on another day to fetch her medication.

She says she is luckier than her neighbour, [Christine Atto](#), who is registered for ARVs at Lacor Hospital in Gulu town, 36km away. Atto walks for two days in each direction to collect her ARVs every month.

The issue of transport to health centres is much more serious for patients too ill to walk long distances, when adherence to the life-prolonging medication can be threatened. Many patients are also too afraid to make the final move to their villages, which would take them even further away from health centres.

A recent [study](#) of adherence to ARVs in northern Uganda, published in the September edition of the AIDS Journal, listed transport as one of the major barriers to adherence in the region; other factors included food security, health infrastructure and human security.

Northern Uganda's rural areas, cut off by the war for more than 20 years, have few health centres, most of which lack staff trained in HIV management. Musumba said TASO was looking into the possibility of home delivery of drugs and home-based healthcare. "We are still marking exactly how it will work out; we are mapping it," she told IRIN/PlusNews."



Institute for war and Peace Reporting, 9 September 2008:

"Today, HIV/AIDS plagues northern Uganda, one of the lingering effects of 20 years of war with the LRA.

Official statistics show the overall infection rate in Uganda is 6.2 per cent of the population, with the figure in northern Uganda standing at nine per cent.

While war and rape may have contributed to the problem, health experts in northern Uganda told IWPR that the spread of the virus has been due largely to the crowded conditions in the 200 refugee camps in the region, many of which have dismantled or abandoned.

When villagers were forced into camps over the past dozen years, there was widespread social breakdown. Traditional lifestyles and values were lost as families and clans were dislocated and often destroyed.

“There was massive cross-generational sex, where younger girls [had relations with] older men in exchange for money to make ends meet,” said Dr Vincent Owiny, the Oyam District health officer.

Older men preferred to have unprotected sex, explained Owiny, and thereby spread HIV/AIDS among the camp residents.

Additionally, unborn children were infected by their pregnant mothers, said Owiny.”

[...]

Omoror assistant community development officer, Betty Ajalo, said that some villages have been hit hard by the disease. In Oculukori, a dozen youngsters and 18 adults have been tested positive for HIV, she said.

“Women are more vulnerable and they are at a risk of contracting the disease,” continued Ajalo, because “many have turned to [the] sex trade to make ends meet. Their husbands cannot provide [for them]”.

Despite efforts to educate people in the north about how HIV/AIDS is spread, she said many women remain ignorant, “Women lag behind when it comes to understanding the epidemic. They [do] not take care of themselves. We want the community to be educated on the danger of HIV.”

Owiny told IWPR that the infection rate among children in his district appears to have overtaken that of adults among those who voluntarily come to his clinic for testing and counselling.

“Children account for ten per cent [of the cases] compared to seven per cent of adults who go for voluntary counselling and testing for HIV annually,” said the doctor.

Of the pregnant women who agree to be tested and counselled, seven per cent have been found to be HIV positive, he said.

But some 90 per cent of these pregnant women who tested positive will transmit the disease to their babies, continued Owiny.

Also contributing to the high rate of the disease among children, he added, is that the vast majority of pregnant women do not get tested, “The rate of infection in children is high because expectant mothers run away from the test. We intend to begin testing every pregnant mother who comes for health services to reduce the risk of infecting their unborn babies.”

Lira medical superintendent Dr Jane Aceng Ocero said many who are HIV positive are dying in remote villages because they don't have access to trained carers.

In the Lira area, medical practitioners are working to attract HIV positive children to clinics.

“We are going to paint [clinics] that will be used to provide HIV services to children to make them child-friendly,” said Ocero. This she hopes will “attract many infected children to come for treatment”.

These efforts may be late in coming, said Charles Angiru Gutomoi, a member of parliament from northern Uganda.

He estimates that at least five people die each day from AIDS or other diseases.

Many are children or elderly people who have left the former refugee camps and now live in their old villages.

"There is high death rate [among] children and elderly people," said Gutomoi. "I'm burying people almost five times a day. It's a serious matter."

While HIV/AIDS is a problem, so is typhoid, cholera, hepatitis, and malaria, which some people mistakenly attribute to the HIV virus, he said.

The MP said he has asked the government to move quickly to improve health in the north, but worries help is slow in coming.

"We want the government to construct health centres," he added. "We need referral hospitals in every sub-county for easily accessibility to AIDS drugs."

To address the HIV/AIDS problem, Uganda has channeled 25 million US dollars to treat and educate HIV positive Ugandan children via the Baylor College of Medicine Children's Foundation-Uganda. The organisation will coordinate HIV/AIDS treatment of children in all government hospitals and health centres.

"BCMC-U will use the funds to expand HIV services for 140,000 children living with the virus," said Dr Wilfred Ochan Lokol.

"The programme will cover 32 districts in the first phase of the project implementation.

"Out of 140,000 infected children in the country, 50,000 are in need of HIV treatment, but cannot access [it] because of the few sites that provide AIDS services to children.""

IRIN, 23 September 2008:

"The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has been forced to withdraw food aid to HIV-positive people as part of broader cutbacks to its Ugandan programmes caused by a funding shortfall.

"For the past six months we have had hardly any funding for HIV/AIDS activities, and as a result, many people we have been supporting have already gone without nutritional support for some time," Stanlake Samkange, WFP's representative in Uganda, told IRIN/PlusNews.

"We have reviewed our programmes and are providing support to areas where there are fewer actors and we have better funding."

He added that there a number of other governmental and non-governmental organisations providing HIV/AIDS support in Uganda.

The cutbacks are expected to affect a total of about 1.5 million people, including children covered by WFP's school feeding programme. The UN agency has been supporting an estimated 173,000 HIV-positive people with food supplements.

[...]

WFP will continue to provide food aid to HIV-positive people who fit into its other support categories, such as internally displaced people, children in the chronically food insecure region of Karamoja in northeastern Uganda and new mothers and their babies."

IRIN, 25 September 2008:

"Attempts to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict have stalled, but although the LRA have allegedly been active in neighbouring Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo recently, their last attack in northern Uganda was over two years ago. The region has been operating in post-emergency mode, with people displaced by the conflict returning home and life slowly returning to a semblance of normality.

Towns have witnessed an economic boom since the return of relative peace, with several banks and businesses opening branches in the area. The influx of traders and employees of large companies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) has meant plenty of customers with money to spend.

"Many women work in the bars ... they do sex work," said Wilson Okot, the Gulu branch manager of the NGO, Reproductive and Sexual Health Uganda (RSU).

A number of NGOs are assisting people living in camps for the internally displaced, including providing them with HIV/AIDS education, treatment and care, but less has been done to reach people living in the larger towns with these services now that the conflict has subsided.

"There is no organisation taking care of [the sex workers'] concerns; it is an urgent need for their plight to be addressed," Okot said. "Most organisations are focusing on the camps and relief services, but they are abandoning people within the municipality."

According to the most recent survey by the ministry of health, HIV prevalence in Uganda's northern-central region is just over 8 percent, one of the highest in the country, with urban areas recording higher levels of infection than rural areas."

High rates of post-traumatic stress disorder in northern Uganda: urgent need for psychological assistance (October 2008)

- Study finds that in a random sample of 1210 adults IDPs in northern Uganda, over half (54%) of the respondents met symptom criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and over two thirds (67%) of respondents met symptom criteria for depression.
- Children in the north have been particularly affected by war-related trauma
- Neither children nor adults in northern Uganda with mental health problems are receiving the specialist help they need.

Roberts et al, 19 May 2008

"Abstract

Background: The 20 year war in northern Uganda between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Ugandan government has resulted in the displacement of up to 2 million people within Uganda. The purpose of the study was to measure rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression amongst these internally displaced persons (IDPs), and investigate associated demographic and trauma exposure risk factors.

Methods: A cross-sectional multi-staged, random cluster survey with 1210 adult IDPs was conducted in November 2006 in Gulu and Amuru districts of northern Uganda. Levels of exposure to traumatic events and PTSD were measured using the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (original version), and levels of depression were measured using the Hopkins Symptom Checklist-25. Multivariate logistic regression was used to analyse the association of demographic and trauma exposure variables on the outcomes of PTSD and depression.

Results: Over half (54%) of the respondents met symptom criteria for PTSD, and over two thirds (67%) of respondents met symptom criteria for depression. Over half (58%) of respondents had experienced 8 or more of the 16 trauma events covered in the questionnaire. Factors strongly linked with PTSD and depression included gender, marital status, distance of displacement, experiencing ill health without medical care, experiencing rape or sexual abuse, experiencing lack of food or water, and experiencing higher rates of trauma exposure.

Conclusion: This study provides evidence of exposure to traumatic events and deprivation of essential goods and services suffered by IDPs, and the resultant effect this has upon their mental health. Protection and social and psychological assistance are urgently required to help IDPs in northern Uganda re-build their lives."

IRIN, 23 October 2008

"A two-year lull in hostilities saw many IDPs in squalid camps returning to their villages or transit sites. As they begin to rebuild their lives, and development agencies embark on rehabilitation work, psychiatrists and studies reveal that mental illness as result of the war has adversely affected reintegration and community relations.

Benjamin Alipanga, a clinical psychologist at Gulu University's psycho-traumatology division, told IRIN that the level of trauma and mental illness in the region was worrying, with many of the population suffering from PTSD, depression and other conditions.

"The magnitude of the problem is so high in northern Uganda but we do not have enough psychiatrists to help people suffering from trauma," Alipanga said. "We have only three psychiatrists serving the entire war-affected northern Uganda, some two million people."

According to Alipanga, other traumatic events common during the conflict include rape, abduction, brutal killing, physical torture, as well as living in IDP camps under life-threatening conditions.

"Even those who were not affected directly by the war are suffering from secondary trauma since they interact with people who are suffering from severe trauma," Alipanga said.

Psychiatrists and humanitarian agencies providing psycho-social support in the region have expressed concern over the rising cases of people suffering from mental illness in the region."

Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 27 August 2008

"Specialists in northern Uganda are struggling to treat thousands of patients with mental health conditions thought to have been caused by the long-running conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army, LRA.

Experts say that 20 years of war with LRA rebels have devastated the north of Uganda, and left thousands of its residents with mental health problems.

Dr Tom Otim, the medical superintendent at Gulu regional referral hospital, said limited resources and staff shortages at hospitals have left overstretched nurses and doctors struggling to treat large numbers of patients.

"It is very common to get just two nurses attending to a crowded ward in the hospital, because the clients are too many [and] the hospital now serves people from [neighbouring] South Sudan," said Otim.

He added that services were even more limited in rural areas.

"Drugs to treat mental illness are so expensive, yet our target should be to extend services to the villages," he said.

Mental health problems are rife in the war-torn north, to which peace is now returning.

[...]

[Dr Thomas] Oyok [regional psychiatrist at the Gulu Mental Health Unit] said that the lack of available treatment during the war had compounded the problems. During the insurgency, treatment for physical and mental problems was scarce, and many patients used alternative medicines or went without treatment altogether.

"Few medical staff and limited drugs for the patients made most people resort to other means like traditional herbs, which are not the best alternative for most illnesses," said Oyok.

Oyok said that while PTSD was a treatable condition, many sufferers had tried to rid themselves of symptoms by turning to drugs.

"Most people are resorting to drastic steps, like abusing drugs, to help them to forget, but that only renders temporary therapy," he said. He added that drug abuse had instead increased the rate of mental health cases in the region.

Experts say children in the north have been particularly affected by war-related trauma. Approximately, 50,000 people have been abducted during the war, which began in 1986, and the vast majority of them were children, studies indicate.

According to a report published by the African Journal Psychiatry in November last year, many youngsters abducted during the war have been deeply affected psychologically.

"70.7 per cent of war-abducted children have been affected compared to 45.7 per cent of [children who were not abducted]," according to the report.

School teachers confirmed that their pupils are often very disturbed.

"They recall what they witnessed in the course of the LRA war," said Geoffrey Ocere, a teacher at Abella primary school about 50 kilometres from Lira. "These memories preoccupy them so much that they cannot perform well in class."

"I cannot forget about my lost brothers," said a 13-year-old Leo Bua. "I cry each and every moment I think about them."

Dr James Okello, a psychiatrist at Gulu University's faculty of medicine, said the current methods of dealing with psychosocial problems and reintegration among war-affected children were inadequate.

"The formal health sector alone is not sufficient to meet [their] needs," said Okello.

"Mental disorders, for example, developmental disabilities, are risk factors for [poor] learning, underachievement, and school drop-out," he said.

"Vulnerable children [orphans, former child soldiers and street children] have increased rates of mental illness and educational failure."

[...]

Experts say that nearly all youngsters who have experienced catastrophic situations display symptoms of psychological distress, including flashbacks, nightmares, withdrawal, and inability to concentrate.

While some children bounce back quickly from traumatic experiences, others need treatment

"Most children and adolescents will regain normal functioning once basic survival needs are met, safety and security have returned and development opportunities are restored, within the social, family and community context," said Joyce Opon Acak of the Lira Women Peace Initiatives group.

"Some children will require more specialised interventions to address their suffering and help restore their flow of development," she continued.

She said that it can be beneficial for children to talk about painful experiences and feelings, or express them by other means such as physical and artistic expression, particularly if this is facilitated by people the children know and trust.

However, experts say that neither children nor adults in northern Uganda with mental health problems are receiving the specialist help they need.

"There has been understaffing, under-funding and non-prioritisation in the [Ugandan] mental health sector," said Dr Sheila Ndiamarangi, Uganda's coordinator for mental health.

"Many NGOs flocked to northern Uganda with the agenda of giving solutions to the increasing cases of mental sicknesses, but they ended up giving social support without psycho-social support."

Emmanuel Otaala, the Ugandan minister of state for health, acknowledged that addressing psychiatric issues had not been a priority while the war was ongoing.

He said it was important to address the problem now by helping people take advantage of treatment on offer.

"[During the conflict] people were traumatised at varying degrees... They should be guided to make good use of the services available at the mental health unit."

Otala called for mental health services to be extended throughout rural areas, where he said there is the greatest need for treatment.

"To solve mental problems, there should be a special attention and provision of services, because [it is] not only the [internally displaced who] are affected, but the entire community in the northern region."

The New Vision, 31 August 2008

"Northern Uganda has one of the world's highest rates of a mental illness. A survey conducted by a team of British and Ugandan psychiatrists established that the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder in northern Uganda is higher than that ever recorded anywhere in the world.

They blamed it on the war that has lasted two decades. The team said people suffering from the resultant stress and depression do not have access to the required mental healthcare.

According to a research paper that the team published in the journal BMC Psychiatry, out of over 1,200 adults in Gulu and Amuru districts who were assessed by the psychiatrists in 2006, more than half (54%) were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Organisations which are trying to restore peace in the region have not paid much attention to mental rehabilitation."

Poor sanitation in IDP camps and return areas leads to Hepatitis E epidemic (October 2008)

- Hepatitis E epidemic started in Kitgum, mainly due to poor sanitation in IDP camps
- The epidemic has since spread to other districts in northern Uganda
- Lack of sanitation facilities and clean drinking water in return areas are further contributing to the spread of the disease
- People in return areas are struggling to access health centres

IRIN, 13 October 2008

"Hepatitis E is on the increase in Uganda's northern district of Pader, where it has claimed scores of lives and infected thousands in the past year, officials said.

Since May, there have been 55 new infections and seven deaths in Pader, according to Angelo Luganya, a health official in Pader.

"More cases are being received in health units in villages and there is need for urgent attention to check on the disease that is on the rise," he told IRIN.

Since 2007, the viral disease has infected up to 8,000 people in neighbouring Kitgum district alone, and killed 129. The disease has since spread to the districts of Pader, Gulu, Adjumani and Amuru.

Hepatitis E is transmitted mainly by drinking contaminated water or eating contaminated food.

Charles Kurua, the Pader deputy commissioner, said the majority of those infected in the district were internally displaced persons (IDPs).

"There is need for intervention by local government and health partners to curb the spread of the disease," said Kurua, who is also a member of the hepatitis E taskforce in the district, adding that the number of those being infected was rising daily.

Poor sanitation has contributed to the spread of the disease, with some IDPs lacking pit latrines and others drinking unsafe water from unprotected sources, leaving them prone to infection, Kurua said.

"Our people are living under unhygienic conditions in IDP camps and areas of return in villages that leave them more vulnerable to diseases such as hepatitis E and cholera," he said. "If they [IDPs] keep on staying in the camps, more would die from the diseases."

The infected were being treated at Kalongo, the main hospital in the district, as well as in health centres in Pader, Acholi Bur, Pajule and Patongo areas.

Kurua said the taskforce was being frustrated by a lack of adequate resources, making it hard for its members reach all the communities living in Pader.

He said efforts were underway to drill boreholes in all resettlement areas to avoid outbreaks of sanitation-related diseases.

Alfred Akena, a local leader in Pader, said the situation was worrying because most of the villages IDPs are returning to do not have adequate functional health centres.

"A number of parishes have not been able to get health centres within their reach due to a collaboration gap between the parish development committees and the district, this is dangerous when we get outbreak of diseases," he said.

Moreover, Akena said, people in the neighbouring district of Kotido also risk infection of hepatitis E following an influx of Karimojong people looking for food and water.

At least 346 Karimojong women and children have crossed into Pader district and settled in the sub-counties of Adilang, Lapono, Paimol, Kalongo and Parabongo, adjacent to Abim and Kotido districts."

Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 16 July 2008

"An outbreak of Hepatitis E, which first hit the Kitgum district in northern Uganda last October, has claimed some 90 lives and left 5,339 bedridden and battling the disease, say health officials.

The number of cases in northern Uganda continues to rise, officials say, with 505 cases having been registered in the past two weeks in the Kitgum district, with little relief in sight.

Kitgum local council chairman John Komakech told IWPR that two internal refugee camps, Padibe and Agoro, have the highest concentration of cases and deaths from the disease.

According to a top Pader district official, Charles Kurwa, 13 new cases of the disease were reported in the nearby communities of Atanga and Pader, and four cases have been confirmed.

"[Refugees] should leave the camps and go back home to have a spacious environment, ... one that doesn't favour the breeding of the virus," said Kurwa.

"NGOs should [hasten] the process of return by drilling many water sources in villages and putting up health facilities," he said, because most villagers lack access to clean water or health care once they leave the camps.

District disease surveillance officer Michael Chankara told IWPR that Hepatitis E has been confirmed in the Gulu district and is suspected to have also hit the adjacent Amuru district.

[...]

For the past decade, the vast majority of the north's nearly two million residents have been settled in 200 camps across the north. Most have several thousand inhabitants – some up to 60,000 – living in extremely close quarters.

These densely populated camps have been criticised by health officials as breeding grounds for disease. Of major concern has been sanitation, as latrines and water sources have not been properly maintained.

Although most of the camps across the north are in the process of being dismantled, many residents, especially those in the Kitgum, Pader and Gulu regions, continue to live in the temporary settlements while farming land in their villages.

The Gulu District Director of Health Services, Dr Paul Onek, said the numbers of Hepatitis E cases is likely to rise rapidly because it can spread easily.

"[The disease] takes one to two months before it shows signs of an infected person. That is why we don't know exactly how many people are already infected in Gulu," said Onek.

Hepatitis E is a virus transmitted through consumption of water and food contaminated with fecal matter in which the virus lives. It causes inflammation of the liver, jaundice, loss of appetite, and fatigue, but is generally not fatal.

"If the sanitation in the camps is not improved, the disease will live on. The abandoned huts in the camps which have been turned into 'lodges' for illicit sex, and fecal and condom disposal grounds, will increase the problem," he said.

Onek was critical of local leaders where the earliest cases were registered, saying they were uncooperative in alerting their communities to the dangers of improper hygiene. These representatives refused to attend community meetings on the crisis, said Onek.

Hepatitis E has no specific treatment, he said, but patients are treated by helping them feel comfortable and treating the symptoms.

Experts from the World Health Organisation, WHO, have confirmed that the disease came from contaminated water at the internal refugee camps.

Solomon Fisseha, of WHO in Gulu, said, "[Refugees] are drinking contaminated water because the [wells] and other water points are very close to the latrines."

An evaluation of water quality conducted between August 2007 to January 2008 at a number of camps in Gulu district found that wells and protected springs were contaminated.

Patrick Macek, Gulu's assistant water officer, said, "Thirty-eight out of 82 water samples from households in the camps in Gulu were found [to be] contaminated, and 37 [wells] out of 265 examined, had contaminants."

The water study showed that 34 out of 59 shallow wells, and 21 out of 41 protected springs, contained fecal coliform bacteria.

At the Acet camp, one motorised water system was supplying contaminated water to thousands of people.

"The water used by the [refugees] is contaminated because of poor management of water sources and surroundings," said Macek.

"The contamination of these water points is caused by latrines dug close to water sources, poor drainage, and ditches carved by animals, such as pigs, with dirty still water."

Unfortunately, Macek said people continue to drink the contaminated water because they have no other choice."

OCHA, February 2008

"The Hepatitis E epidemic in Kitgum continues to defeat containment measures. By the end of February, a cumulative 415 cases had been registered since the beginning of the outbreak, with 11 fatalities - a case fatality rate (CFR) of 2.7 per cent. The epidemic has persisted, due in large part to poor sanitation in IDP camps. For instance, there is only one latrine for every 112 people at the most-affected camp, Madi Opei. The cluster has developed an inter-agency contingency plan to strengthen interventions in the camp and in nine other subcounties. Meanwhile, the district is on the alert following reports of a cholera outbreak in neighbouring Owiny- Kibul and Pajwar in Southern Sudan."

Health services and psychosocial care for formerly abducted youth is grossly inadequate (Nov 2007)

Survey of War Affected Youth, 27 November 2007

"Health services and psychosocial support for the most severely affected youth have been grossly inadequate, leaving a core group of highly-affected youth without the attention they require. For these acutely-affected youth, treatment is among their most pressing concerns.

At least 3 percent of female and 9 percent of male returnees report serious war injuries that prevent them from performing basic tasks such as walking and running, working in their fields, or even standing up with ease. Chest and back injuries from carrying heavy loads are most common, followed by shrapnel in the body—for instance, 2 percent of males reported metal or bullets still in their torso or limbs. Unfortunately, few (if any) programs for war injuries exist outside of reception centers and programs for land mine victims.

The figures above suggest that thousands of returnees have not received adequate medical care, and are in urgent need of specialized assistance. Moreover, those abducted longer than one year report more than double the rate of injuries—a rate that we might expect to be mirrored in those yet to return from the bush.

A small percentage of youth are also experiencing frequent nightmares, lack of concentration, insomnia, irritation, and isolation. These symptoms are often related to their traumatic past, current daily stressors, and family relationships. For this small percentage whose symptoms impact their daily functioning, targeted mental health services (other than spiritual and traditional ceremonies) have not been available."

Inadequate health services in Nabwal resettlement camp in Karamoja (March 2008)

OCHA, March 2008

"In Moroto, health actors conducted a rapid health assessment of Nabwal resettlement camp, finding prevalent malnutrition, inadequate health services, poor shelter, lack of basic food and non-food items and inadequate water facilities. The camp has no pit latrine, and there is only one borehole located three kilometres away for a population of about 13,000. In another coordinated initiative, cholera outbreak preparedness plans are being developed ahead of the oncoming rainy season."

Water and sanitation

IDPs threaten to return to camps unless they get access to clean water (June 2008)

The New Vision, 4 June 2008

"Internally displaced people (IDPs), who have resettled in their villages, have threatened to return to the camps if the Government does not provide them with clean water.

Over 300 residents of Lalworo village in Paicho sub-county, Gulu district, made the warning last Saturday while meeting Lt. Col. Francis Achoka-Ongom, the UPDF officer in charge of the resettlement programme.

The meeting was aimed at collecting people's views on how to ensure that displaced people return to their villages. Geoffrey Lukwiya, 26 said: "If the Government does not drill boreholes in this area, we shall go back to the camps where we had access to clean water."

He said they collect water from an unprotected well in Lamin-Obura village and it serves over 320 people."

Average access to safe water improving; situation in return sites still critical (April 2008)

- In Gulu between 70 and 75 per cent of boreholes in IDP camps are functional.
- Water supply in return areas is provided by boreholes, shallow wells, and protected springs.
- Many streams have dried up during the dry season, leaving people to drink stagnant water.
- In some return sites, returnees travel 4 to 5 kilometers to fetch water.

OCHA, March 2008

"Average access to safe water in Gulu and Amuru has improved over time, with current statistics indicating 14 litres/person/day in Gulu and 12 l/p/d in Amuru, the situation in return sites and villages of origin remains critical. With the advent of the rainy season, Amuru has initiated a district-wide approach to water quality monitoring and surveillance. Access to safe water also remains a concern in transit sites and villages of origin in Pader District and in the Lango sub-region. Average access to safe water is 12.1 l/p/d in Oyam District and 14.8 l/p.d in Lira. Two thirds of drinking water sources in return areas of Lango sub-region are unsafe, i.e. unprotected springs, rivers or streams.

In Kitgum, access to water was at 14 litres/person/day in main IDP camps (the SPHERE standard is 15 l/p/d) , while the average in transit sites was 14.38 l/p/d. However, the situation in villages of return remains of concern as only 42 per cent of villages have a borehole.

Sanitation and hygiene issues also continued to feature large in areas affected by the Hepatitis E epidemic; key continuing challenges pertain to hand-washing and lack of commitment by the community for well construction. Bucket chlorination is ongoing at all water points in Madi Opei sub-county."

OCHA, Feb 2008

"In Gulu, average access to safe water stands at approximately 14.7 litres per day (l/p/d), with between 70 and 75 per cent of boreholes in IDP camps functional. Water supply in return areas consists mainly of 269 deep boreholes equipped with hand pumps and 15 motorized boreholes supplying simple reticulated water systems. Other sources include shallow wells and protected springs. However, many streams have dried up during the dry season, leaving people to drink stagnant water. In some villages of return, people continue to travel four to five kilometres to fetch water. School water and sanitation facilities desperately need upgrading."

Low access to safe water and sanitation in Karamoja (March 2008)

OCHA, March 2008

"Approximately 50 per cent of the population of Abim District, 32 per cent of Kaabong and 33 per cent of Kotido have access to safe drinking water, while respectively only 28 per cent, two per cent and 1.3 per cent of the population has access to safe sanitation. Access to hand-washing at the household level and in schools is reportedly around two per cent.

Across the three districts very few health facilities have dedicated water sources, impacting on hygiene and waste management. In Abim, for example, only 64.3 per cent of the health facilities have a functional pit latrine, which is shared by patients, the community and health workers. Half of those latrines are reportedly filled up. Meanwhile, staffing of health posts is at 56 per cent in Abim, 45 per cent in Kaabong and 51 per cent in Kotido, although all together only eight doctors account for those statistics."

Shelter and non-food items

Gulu district starts distributing iron sheets for roofing to returning IDPs (October 2008)

The New Vision, 6 October 2008

"GULU district has started distributing iron sheets donated to assist formerly displaced families. The distribution was launched on Sunday by the Gulu deputy resident district commissioner, Milton Odongo, at Bobi sub-county, Omoro county.

At least 18 households in Bobi were given 30 iron sheets. "We shall need accountability for these iron sheets by the end of December. Make sure you put them to proper use," Odongo said.

He said those who had not yet built their walls to the ring beam by the end of the year might miss the iron sheets.

He urged them to erect walls of their buildings as soon as they can. Odongo said 13 committees were distributing the iron sheets and the process was transparent.

He encouraged the Acholi to embrace Government programs like micro finance institutions despite their political differences in order to fight poverty.

Jenty Obur, one of the beneficiaries said, "We are so grateful for the iron sheets because they will save us from the grass- thatched houses."

The district disaster management committee chairman, Charles Uma, warned the residents against selling the iron sheets that they have received.

In 2006, President Museveni said sh33b was earmarked for resettling former LRA victims.

He said part of the money would be used for buying for the Internally Displaced Persons iron sheets. "I want the Acholi people to begin living in decent houses like people in other parts of the country," Museveni said."

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

Access to education in the Acholi region

Schools are returning to their original sites, but lack of facilities remains a challenge (August 2008)

- More schools are returning to their pre-war locations
- Lack of facilities (class rooms, housing for teachers, latrines, water points) remains a challenge
- Conflicts with landlords mean some schools need to find alternative locations

The Monitor, 14 August 2008

"Schools that have returned to their original sites lack classrooms and teaching staff, the senior inspector of schools, Mr Robinson Oboth, has said.

Mr Oboth told Daily Monitor on Monday that the two decade war displaced 64 primary and secondary schools. "As these schools return, there are no classroom blocks and lack of teaching staff is also affecting them," he said.

Out of the 64 schools that were displaced, six have not yet returned to their original sites because they lack classes and other facilities.

"In most of the schools, classes are combined, primary one and two, three and four, as a result of having no teaching staff and rooms," he said.

"Wachienge Primary School in Odeke subcounty has two teachers while Omoro Hills Primary School in Patiko Sub county is some times closed because the teachers do not turn up sometimes," he said. Onono Secondary School in Odek subcounty is understaffed and has never returned to its original site.

Apart from inadequate infrastructure, Mr Oboth said the wartorn areas do not consider girlchild education at all. "Girls in most cases are looked at as wealth, and with this biting poverty in the region, parents tend to marry their daughters off at an early age," he added.

Mr Oboth said this holiday 300 teachers will be trained on how they can improve on girls education. "Girls need to be handled in a way that can make them stay in schools," he said.

The Police Public Relations Officer for Northern Uganda, Mr Johnson Kilama, said in order to ensure girls are educated, follow ups should be made by the headteachers themselves.

"Headteachers should know why such pupils have dropped out of school and write reports," he said, adding that teachers should write reports so that the district can make follow ups."

The Monitor, 23 July 2008

"Four months ago, a truck laden with an assortment of furniture branched off a community access road to Awal Kok Primary School in Gulu, northern Uganda. Then, Awal Kok did not look exactly like a school; a bushy compound and a single block without windows and a door is all it had.

A handful of pupils cheerfully clapped as the lorry came to a halt and their parents quickly jumped off the back of the truck to offload the furniture. Awal Kok, displaced for six years from its original site, 25 kms away, had begun the process of returning home.

"We are very happy to be back," said the headmaster Sylvesto Okwera as he helped to take down the furniture with beads of sweat dripping from his face.

Four months later, on a Friday morning, the school compound was much cleaner, some of the windows and doors were fixed, two water tanks stood in the compound and classes were going on. In one of them, Okwera was conducting a Mathematics lesson.

"It's much easier to control the pupils now because we are the only school here. In our previous location, we shared the same compound with six different other schools with thousands of pupils. That made it very difficult to ensure discipline among pupils as sometimes, we even failed to identify our own because some of the schools had the same colour of uniform," Okwera explained.

Since peace talks between the Ugandan government and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army began two years ago in the South Sudan capital of Juba, security in northern Uganda, the region most affected by the two-decade-long conflict has tremendously improved.

Consequently, thousands of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) have voluntarily left the camps. By April this year, figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) showed that almost 1.2 million IDPs (out of the 1.8 million) have started the process of returning and are either in their villages of origin or in transit sites.

The movement of a sizeable number of the IDP population away from the camps has given rise to the need for social services like schools in areas where they are settling. But the districts quite often do not have the resources to adequately respond to the needs of the returning IDPs. As such, both the district and local communities regularly pass requests for support to humanitarian partners like the UN Refugee Agency. "The first request for the physical relocation of schools that we got was from the community members themselves," says Sissie Kristensen, a community services officer at UNHCR's sub-office in Gulu. "When we realised that there were many such requests from the community, we sat down with the district to develop a strategy on how this could be done," she added.

So far, UNHCR has supported the return of 134 schools in Gulu, Amuru, Pader and Kitgum districts. It's hoped that the returned schools will serve the needs of school-going children whose parents leave the camps for their villages of origin and transit sites.

"We are returning these schools because it's our mandate to take education services to where formerly displaced people are returning. The schools cannot remain behind in the camps when the parents and the children are leaving," Gulu District Education Officer, Rev Vincent Oceng Ocen said.

In Gulu, the district education officer says 54 formerly displaced schools have already been returned to their original sites. "Only seven schools in the district are still displaced. We hope to return them next year."

In the past, most parents would leave their children behind in camps while rebuilding their lives in villages. This left children vulnerable and prone to various risks.

[...]

Many of the schools that have returned to their original sites still face numerous challenges ranging from inadequate infrastructure to accommodation problems for teachers and lack of safe drinking water in the schools.

"There are cases where students have drowned in rivers while looking for drinking water. We don't want that to happen," Oceng said. Despite the odds, communities where these schools have returned are happy that their children can now access education.

And some have expressed their happiness by taking it upon themselves to construct huts to accommodate the teachers in an attempt to address the accommodation problem."

OCHA, March 2008

"In Gulu, all but 10 of 64 displaced schools have returned to their original sites, while in Amuru 33 of 53 schools have returned. However, academics are constrained by the lack of adequate numbers of teachers, teacher houses and other infrastructure. The Ministry of Public Service has authorised Gulu district to recruit only 60 teachers, given that its registry shows that there are enough teachers in the district. In response, a detailed assessment of schools in Gulu and Amuru Districts is planned for April to register the number of teachers in both districts and eliminate ghost teachers from the central government payroll.

Kitgum District has completed a headcount of students in post-primary schools under the Universal

Secondary Education (USE) programme, with preliminary results indicating that the number of students in rural schools has dropped significantly compared to the number in town schools over the last year. Schools in towns have registered an influx in the number of students due to their better facilities; however, the influx has led to challenges including inadequate classroom and dormitory space, water and sanitation facilities and number of teachers. Reports also indicate that some headmasters have insisted on students registering only in the school associated with their village. As schools have to return to their original locations, this has meant students must walk long distances from IDP camps and/or transit sites to attend returned schools.

In Pader, increased support supervision has been recommended to counteract the high levels of teacher absenteeism, cited as one of the greatest challenges to education along with lack of school infrastructure. On the latter front, classes in 63 schools are taking place under trees due to a lack of classrooms. Cluster members have pledged to construct new classrooms, but the onset of the rainy season has hindered activities. At present, only 1,224 of the needed 2,870 classrooms in district primary schools are in place."

OCHA, Feb 2008

"The return process in Gulu and Amuru continues apace, with 74 schools re-locating to their pre-war sites during the reporting period, 33 in Amuru and 41 in Gulu. Meanwhile, enrolment at some host schools has almost doubled over 2007, suggesting reluctance on the part of students to

return to pre-displacement locations. Among purported reasons for the reluctance are the lack of facilities for teachers, including housing; lack of qualified teachers; absenteeism among teachers; and the poor learning environment, including lack of classroom facilities.

In Kitgum, 45 schools have returned to their original sites since the first term began, with 35 more expected to relocate by year's end. Many of the returned schools face significant challenges, notably the lack of adequate facilities such as latrines, teacher housing and water points. According to the District Education Officer (DEO), at least 30,000 tarpaulins are required to set up temporary structures at the various return sites. An emerging problem is conflict with landlords: in Omiya Anyima sub-county, for example, a landlord sued and won a case against the district over the location of Wigweng Primary School.

Inadequate facilities also remain a major challenge in Pader district. The current pupil to classroom ratio (PCR) is 1:80 against the national average of 1:54. Classes in 63 schools take place under trees due to a lack of classrooms. About 2,800 classrooms will need to be constructed to bring the PCR ratio to par with the national standard."

UNHCR, February 2008

"Beginning at the end of January and still ongoing, many schools in both Amuru and Gulu Districts are returning home from their areas of displacement. Based on a request from Amuru District covering 53 schools and from Gulu District covering 61 schools, UNICEF, SCiU and UNHCR have joined together to support the districts in their efforts to bring the schools home before or at the

beginning of the new school year. Through the camp management organisations such as AVSI and ARC a number of schools have requested assistance and the communities have provided the labour needed to move furniture, textbooks and water tanks to allow the children and their parents to settle more permanently in their original locations. As of the 5th of February, 25 schools have been moved in Amuru and 14 in Gulu. Some schools will be remaining in their displaced locations for the time being as they either have no structures to return to in their original location, have a concern about the possibility of mines or UXOs in the area surrounding the original school structures or because the community does not feel ready to return yet. However, it is a very positive sign that

so many communities are requesting assistance and the cooperation between the various organisations involved will continue to fulfill these requests."

Returning schools in the north face shortage of classrooms and water (August 2008)

The Monitor, 27 August 2008:

"Gulu district suffers a shortage of 329 classrooms in primary schools, according to results of a head count and joint monitoring exercise that was conducted in April.

The district has 112 primary schools. The report, which was compiled with the help of Unicef, revealed that five primary schools in the district do not have classrooms while 29 schools have less than the recommended number of seven classrooms per school.

The report says that the schools with less than the seven recommended classrooms have between two and six classes.

The survey also revealed that primary schools in Gulu lack adequate latrines for pupils.

"Latrine-to-classroom ratio for the district is 54:1 which is still higher than the recommended 40:1 nationally," noted the report.

The most affected sub-county is Patiko, with a latrine to classroom ratio of 78:1, Lalogi with 61:1 and Bobi with 60:1."

The New Vision, 22 April 2008:

"At least 194 displaced primary schools in Pader district have returned to their original sites in the villages despite the acute shortage of classrooms and water for the pupils, according to the LC5 chairman.

Peter Odok W'Ocheng noted that only 23 displaced schools were still stuck in the internally displaced people's camps because their former classrooms at the previous sites had collapsed.

"There is a general problem of classrooms. Most of the pupils are studying under trees.

"We are worried that during this rainy season, many of the children may not go to school."

Odok, who last week spoke to The New Vision in Gulu, added that most of the teachers had also returned home except those whose schools were still in the camps.

The district chief observed that some parents had returned home but left their children in the camps where they are studying in the displaced schools.

He urged the school administrators to speed up the return process. But Odok noted that it was not proper for parents to live separately with their children given the poor conditions in the camps.

He explained that they were lobbying for assistance from development partners like the Norwegian Refugee Council and UNICEF to build more classroom blocks.

"I am happy to report the council has accepted to build 32 classroom blocks in 16 primary schools and UNICEF promised to drill water in the schools."

The Atanga sub-county LC3 chairman, Francis Kikoya, stated that pupils in eight primary schools were studying under trees.

He cited the schools as Wi-Akedo, Lapak, Opaté, Lacor, Aruu Falls, Akele-Kongo, Aswa Army Bridge and Laparanat.

"Jupa Primary School has two classroom blocks but their major problem is lack of water for the pupils.

These schools also lack latrines. Some parents tried to put up temporary structures but the buildings have collapsed," Kikoya explained.

As a temporary measure, the chairman said, the schools and returnee residents should be given tents as they reorganise themselves to build new houses."

Schools in return sites in Amuru struggle with lack of classrooms, latrines, teacher housing (July 2008)

The New Vision, 22 May 2008

AMURU needs 486 more classrooms in the villages where the formerly displaced schools are returning, the district education officer has said.

In addition, Ben Okwamoi noted, there were inadequate teachers, adding that they hope to recruit 297 more staff to reduce the huge teacher-to-pupil ratio.

The education chief was on Tuesday speaking to The New Vision at the district headquarters.

He said out of the 60 schools which relocated from their original sites to the internally displaced people's camps due to the LRA war, 38 had returned and 22 were in transit camps.

"We need at least two classrooms in each of the schools. Most of the pupils study under trees or in tents," Okwamoi stated.

"We also don't have enough teachers' houses, causing absenteeism."

The district service commission, Okwamoi said, advertised for the vacant teaching posts in primary schools and about 457 people were short-listed.

"I told them to be ready to go to live in the bush. We do not want people who intend to commute daily from town to their duty stations.

"We are mobilising and urging parents to build grass-thatched huts for the teachers."

According to Okwamoi, the rate of enrollment of pupils in primary schools had dropped from 59,359 last year to 58,204 this year.

"This is because some parents are returning with their children deep in the villages, which are far away from schools.

"We still anticipate a poor turn out of pupils when the second term opens on Monday." He pointed out that the re-established schools also needed 1,152 more latrines.

The education chief appealed to charity organisations to help the district build more classrooms, latrines and provide scholastic materials. "

Protection concerns for children left behind in IDP camps because of lack of schools in return areas (February 2008)

UNHCR, February 2008

"Children left unattended in camps while parents and primary carers have moved to areas of return remain a major protection concern. It is expected that with a number of schools returning to their original locations in the new term, coming months will see a decrease of children unattended in camps."

Access to education in Lango

Efforts are made to increase enrolment and attendance; end of school feeding programme may have negative impact (Feb 2008)

- Efforts are underway to raise enrolment and attendance in primary schools.
- The end of the school feeding programme may impact negatively on student retention.

OCHA, Feb 2008

"In Lira and Oyam, the Education Department is focused on improving the quality of learning environments. Cluster members are seeking to raise enrolment and attendance in primary schools with upcoming campaigns to address the problem of school dropouts. However, the current school feeding program benefiting 114 schools is likely to end within the year, with a concomitant concern for a negative impact on student retention. Education stakeholders have been asked to start looking for alternative means of to provide school meals."

Access to education in Karamoja

Enrollment campaign in Karamoja (March 2008)

OCHA, March 2008

"In Karamoja, agencies have undertaken to increase enrolment including by providing scholastic materials to all primary schools and launching an enrolment campaign. Initial reports on the enrolment campaign indicate an increase in enrolment between 60 and 80 per cent."

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation

Self-reliance

"Acholi still need help", says chief (October 2008)

The Monitor, 3 October 2008

"The acting prime minister of Acholi Chiefdom, Mr Michael Otim, has said the formerly displaced persons still need external help to recover from the 20year Kony war.
[...]
'Our people still need a helping hand to once again embark on productive activities,' he said. 'The Acholi people have a passion for farming; they should be helped to revitalise it.'"

Returnees making transition from dependence to self-sufficiency (August 2008)

- Increasing numbers of IDPs and returnees in northern Uganda have access to land to grow their own food.
- Beyond subsistence farming, farming of cash crops is also increasing in the north.

The New Vision, 13 August 2008

"A total of 74% of the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) can now access their own land to grow food, a study has shown. The study done by the Concerned Parents' Association also revealed that 15% of the IDPs rent land for cultivation at between sh8,000 and sh10,000 per acre. This is mainly among those who have left the camps and returned to their villages following the relative peace now prevailing. The survey, done from March to April, was to assess the displaced peoples' access to cultivable land and means of livelihood. It was carried out in the sub-counties of Namukora, Agoro, Padibe and Mucwini in Kitgum district. The study also showed that the people considered livestock as a vital source of income after crops."

The New Vision, 29 April 2008

"Relief and disaster preparedness state minister Musa Ecweru has urged non governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide more farm tools to internally displaced people returning to their homes.

"To ensure that there is food sustainability, NGO's should provide facilities that help families produce their own food and cash crops," Ecweru said.

Ecweru said there was need for both the Government and NGOs to work together for the recovery and development of the regions affected by the LRA war and floods."

Institute for War and Peace Reporting, 19 August 2008

Erisa Ekong, from Atabu village in Dokolo district, suffered as much as anyone in the war against the Lord's Resistance Army, LRA.

The rebels killed her husband, stole her cows and goats and all of her food and household goods, yet she feels she must now look to the future. "That time has passed and I want to start a new life," she said.

After several years spent living in one of northern Uganda's 200 internal refugee camps near Lira, Ekong returned to her family lands in 2006 and began to cultivate them.

In the fertile soil, she grew a local grain called sim-sim, beans, peanuts, sorghum, millet, cassava and rice. She kept what she needed, and sold the rest of the valuable crops, before using the profits to replenish the livestock she lost long ago.

"I purchased 12 goats, two [cows], five pigs and still have in stock adequate food stuffs to sustain me for a year," Ekong told IWPR, as she returned from the fields.

Ekong is just one of the many returnees who have successfully made the transition from a refugee camp life – dependent on support humanitarian aid from the United Nations and other international agencies – to self sufficiency through farming.

As life slowly returns to normal across northern Uganda after two decades of brutal war that left nearly 100,000 dead and displaced about two million, many villagers have eagerly returned to cultivating the land and raising animals – a development that is rapidly rebuilding the region's ravaged economy.

Like many across the region, Ekong exudes a deep sense of optimism about the future. Local people are confident they will be able to shake off the abject poverty that resulted from two decades of war – one of the continent's longest-running insurgencies.

This confidence persists in spite of the lack of progress with the government's redevelopment plans for the region, which have yielded little.

Many people there are instead taking matters into their own hands.

"We don't want to continue sitting and waiting for the government or [some] humanitarian agency to tell us what to do, since peace has returned," said Nekemia Obia, a resident of Bata trading centre, 20 kilometres east of Lira.

"We have enough fertile lands for crop production," said Obia. "It's unfair to keep on demanding aid from the government and international humanitarian agencies."

Out of 500 kilogrammes of sim-sim that he harvested last year, Obia managed to make a profit of about 1,400 US dollars – enough for him to withdraw his children from public school and send them to a better, more costly school in Lira.

"Our lives have changed totally," he said with pride. "We pray that the peace we have should be sustained so that we catch up with other parts of the country in terms of development."

Humanitarian agencies are supporting this effort by advising people on how to increase agricultural sales and income through improved agricultural production.

Other initiatives are appearing to provide farmers with financial backing. For example, micro-finance company Uganda Microfinance Limited opened a branch office in Lira in July, to supply savings and loan products to people on low incomes.

“We want to ensure that the land in the north is properly utilised by helping people acquire tractors, ox ploughs, oxen, seeds and money for business,” said Uganda Microfinance Limited employee Wilson Twamuhabwe.

“The institution has a customer base of 167,000 people across the country and a loan portfolio of valued at about 30 million dollars. We want more people in this region to come on board because they suffered for so long.”

However, despite the progress, there have been some setbacks.

The region, which was hit by devastating floods in late 2007, has now suffered a dry spell that has damaged crops.

“We tried our best to plant adequate food this season, but it’s been damaged as a result of the drought which has [continued for] two months,” said Vincent Awio, a resident of Adyang village.

“There is a serious [fear] that the area will be hit by food shortage [or] famine as a result of this unexpected situation.”

In response to this, much of the north is now focused on growing a cash crop which thrives in drier conditions – cotton. The Ugandan government’s Cotton Development Organisation, CDO, has distributed 660 metric tonnes of seeds across the north this summer.

“Our focus this year is to increase the cotton production from the 9,000 bales, which we managed last year, to 50,000, and to help farmers increase their income,” said CDO official Ben Byamukama.

“That is why we are distributing the seeds to the farmers rather than waiting for a market-based demand.”

Yet some farmers across the north are disappointed with the government’s cotton seed distribution – which is less than the 790 tonnes they received last year and will mean less production, they say.

“Cotton has been our major source of income right from the British time, but we are unhappy with the way the government is handling the distribution of seeds,” said James Okello, a veteran cotton farmer.

In addition to cotton seed distribution, the government has also allocated some 60 million dollars to the National Agriculture Advisory Services, NAADS – which helps Ugandan farmers to produce enough food for themselves with some left to sell. The programme includes the distribution of farming tools, as well as dissemination of information on modern farming technology and livestock rearing.

Other support has come from the European Union which has provided some 1.5 million dollars to

be spent on creating food security and supplementing income generating activities in four areas in the Lira region. The money was channeled through the government's Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Programme, NUREP.

"Under this project we are looking at how to enhance food security and help school dropouts acquire vocational skills," said Robinah Akullo of the Concerned Parent Association, CPA – an NGO that received some of the funding.

Francis Omaramoi, a local leader in Omoro, said that to rebuild the agricultural economy in the north, there is a need for tools – such as hoes, as well as seeds – for those who have already settled back in their villages. He added that it is also important that extra help is given to vulnerable groups, such as orphans, parentless families, widows and widowers, as well as the elderly and disabled.

While there is much work to do, many farmers in the north are enjoying their success.

Apart from subsistence farming, agricultural production disappeared across most of northern Uganda during the rebel conflict of 1986 to 2006.

Now farmers such as Nelson Opio, who resettled in his home two years ago after living in a refugee camp for many years, are quickly realising the benefits of farming for a profit.

"It's advantageous to us because the more we produce, the more we shall earn," said Opio with a smile."

IRIN, 13 March 2008

".... an improvement in security following on-off talks in the Southern Sudanese capital of Juba has encouraged thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to venture back to their villages.

In the camps, the IDPs relied almost entirely on aid but the agencies are scaling back wherever there is improved security and mass returns in the region. As a result, the returnees must learn to fend for themselves – a challenge that has pushed many to get involved in income-generating projects, such as fish farming.

"For a long time, more than 600,000 people in Teso and Lango [regions] were living in camps, depending on external support for things as basic as nutritious food. They now have an opportunity to reclaim their self-reliance," said Tesema Negash, Uganda country director for the UN World Food Programme (WFP), which is supporting the IDPs to resettle in their villages.

"The projects propel a move away from relief support to recovery," he added. "Currently, we are still both in relief and recovery but the trend is to move away from relief supplies. It is vital to help people returning to their homes establish a viable way of making a living."

Fish to the rescue

An estimated 3,000 farmers in Lango and Teso regions have ventured into fish farming with the support of WFP, Samaritan's Purse, an NGO, and the government's Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF).

"We started digging these ponds almost a year ago and other donors helped us to get the seeds. I can now see the results that will include selling some of the fish to get money for my children's school fees and other needs in the home," Anthony Okello, 26, explained as he pointed at four large ponds.

Aid workers estimated that 163 fish ponds have been dug in Lango and Teso. These are expected to yield more than 140MT of tilapia and catfish every eight months, worth 280 million Ugandan shillings [US\$165,000].

"Pond owners will each earn an average of 187,000 shillings [\$109] from the first harvest – if the fish is not smoked. If smoked, each member could earn a minimum of 560,000 shillings [\$327]," WFP's aquaculturist, Pius Kwesiga, told IRIN.

Paul Opoka, secretary of Atur young farmers, an association of 127 people of whom 103 are women, said half the proceeds from their harvest would go to the farmers while the other half would be used for re-stocking the ponds, especially the catfish that do not reproduce in the ponds naturally.

"We urge the farmers to re-invest their income from fish farming into other income-generating projects," he said. "We teach them about other opportunities."

Kwesiga said the returnees were being trained in a number of skills to sustain their projects. "We have trained them in book-keeping, net sewing, smoking, salting and preserving fish - all ensuring the sustainability of the enterprises," he explained. "We plan to replicate this in other areas of northern Uganda suitable for fish farming."

The Japanese International Cooperation Agency has joined the project by supporting the training and facilitation of some fish farmers to grow Nerica rice, a variety said to thrive in areas surrounding fish ponds.

Apart from fish farming, returnees have also tried their hands at planting trees or building teachers' houses and classrooms. Others are working on roads, dams and other social structures. An improvement in security following on-off talks in the Southern Sudanese capital of Juba has encouraged thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to venture back to their villages.

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Market analysis must be integrated into vocational training programmes (March 2008)

Women's Commission, March 2008

"This project aims to support VT [vocational training] providers in Northern Uganda to offer programs that promote sustainable livelihoods for youth and match market demands for skills and labor in the early recovery context. Our research examines the broad spectrum of VT programs run by NGOs, private and government actors and lasting from one-week to three-years. While we recognize that VT can make an important contribution to psychosocial rehabilitation, community reintegration, protection and educational enhancement, youth have specifically asked for expanded access to sustainable livelihood opportunities to better support themselves, their families and their communities. This research aims to show that livelihoods and psychosocial

objectives can be better served by more fully integrating market analysis and an economic development perspective into vocational training program planning."

Shift towards sustainable livelihood options (March 2008)

OCHA, March 2008

"Most agencies working on agricultural livelihoods in Gulu and Amuru Districts are shifting away from the emergency distribution of farming inputs to more sustainable livelihood options such as cash- or coupons-forwork and other income generating activities."

No more emergency relief for Gulu (May 2008)

New Vision, 21 May 2008

"THERE will be no more emergency relief supplies to the internally displaced people in the district, according to the Gulu district disaster management committee chairman.

Charles Uma said this was because the security situation in northern Uganda had improved tremendously and the people were returning to their homes from the displaced peoples' camps

"Don't expect to get plates, buckets and saucepans anymore because the Government in September last year declared that northern Uganda was no longer in an emergency situation," he stated.

"Even food distribution will gradually stop because you need to be self-sustaining as the security situation has improved for nearly two years now and the rains have been good."

Uma was on Tuesday speaking at Lalogi IDP camp and later at Loyo Ajonga transit camp during consultative meetings with residents on security, law and order. The meeting was organised by the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees.

However, Uma, who is also the assistant chief administrative officer, told the displaced people that nobody would be forced out of the camps because the return process was voluntary.

"Return is based on informed choice and that is why we are here to listen to your concerns," he said.

The district Police community liaison officer, Johnson Kilama, assured the residents that their security would be guaranteed back home in the villages as it was in the camps.

"Police constables have been deployed in every sub-county. The refugee agency gave them bicycles to easily reach out to people in villages to meet their law and order needs.

"We have warned them not to relax at the sub-county headquarters," he said. Residents pointed out that one of the main problems they faced as they returned to their homes was land conflicts.

The 4th Division officer in charge of monitoring displaced peoples' camps, Col. Francis Acoka and the northern regional army spokesman, Capt. Ronald Kakurungu, attended the meeting.

They observed that the security situation in the region was conducive for the residents to live freely and urged them to be vigilant in checking cases of armed robbery."

DOCUMENTATION NEEDS AND CITIZENSHIP

General

ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

General

A society verging on breakdown (September 2007)

Oxfam, 24 September 2007

"Many IDPs also spoke of increasing breakdown among the traditional Acholi family unit. They blamed a combination of alcoholism, mental illness among victims of the conflict, and the myriad social stresses of camp life. First-hand evidence of some of these problems was apparent during the research for this paper, when focus group discussions were often interrupted by obviously drunk or mentally disturbed individuals. Also of great concern is the plight of youth. Half of all IDPs in Northern Uganda are under the age of 15. A shocking one-third of children above the age of 10 have lost a parent. With many having been in the camps for years — some more than a decade — a generation of young people is growing up knowing little else.

Focus group discussions highlighted incidents of sexual violence, domestic disputes, alcoholism, mental illness, youth alienation, idleness, and pent-up frustration, which many attributed to camp life.

Focus group discussions revealed a society verging on breakdown:

'We are people losing our sense of direction. This is the first meeting we've had where we've sat together and shared ideas.' — young man from Amida camp

'A lot of women have to go to other men, because they are so poor they do not see other ways. This is also a result of congestion and the demoralisation of camp life.' — camp commandant."

Weak family structures and vulnerability of women and children continue to present obstacles (November 2006)

- Need for social welfare mechanisms to identify and help the most vulnerable
- Limited night-commuting ongoing
- Women and girls in conflict areas still vulnerable to SGBV and with return vulnerability likely to increase

UN, 30 November 2006, Pg. 32-33

"Irrespective of location, the basic requirement for delivering protection to children is having social welfare mechanisms in place to identify the most vulnerable, provide frontline support to them and their families/care-givers and to enable access or referral to other forms of mainstream or specialist services (including education and skills training). A poor family situation is a reason why some children still night-commute even as overall security improves, resulting in the need to individually assess the situation of each commuting child and link them to social welfare provision. These same protection mechanisms support the social and economic reintegration of persons returning from the LRA (some of whom need specialised care in the reintegration process). Reception centres remain needed in anticipation of the possible return home of over 2,000 children, women and youth and new facilities will be required for adult men. With

attempted recruitment into the armed forces (especially for boys) still reported, measures to strengthen prevention within the UPDF are required, including more effective Birth and Death Registration.

Women and girls in the conflict areas remain vulnerable to GBV, including all forms of sexual violence, as a result of the prevailing humanitarian and security conditions. They are at high risk of sexual exploitation as they are forced to engage in sex to meet basic needs of themselves and their families. Even as a return process accelerates, women and girls' vulnerability to GBV will not reduce - indeed for some, such as those who head households and others with limited economic opportunities, it will be heightened. While progress has been made towards building a coordinated humanitarian response to GBV among IDP communities in northern Uganda, much still needs to be urgently done to scale-up and improve both protective and remedial mechanisms. Institutional responses remain weak, with referral procedures poorly resourced, poorly understood and often ignored."

Traditional cultural practices severely restricted by conflict and displacement (September 2005)

- Despite attempts to revitalize cultural rituals and practices, due to conflict many Acholi have lost traditions and cultural practices
- Acholi cultural principles and values essential to rebuilding Acholi-land
- Commission on Reintegration and Reconciliation should be established

Liu Institute for Global Issues, September 2005

"The findings suggest that the Acholi people continue to hold sophisticated cultural beliefs in the spirit world, which greatly shape their perceptions of truth, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation. Nevertheless, traditional cultural practices and the role of Elders, Mego and Rwodi have been severely restricted by the conflict and circumstances of displacement. In the words of one Elder, 'these children don't know how to be Acholi'. Since their re-institutionalization in 2000, traditional leaders, through Ker Kwaro Acholi, have attempted to revitalize cultural rituals and practices, and to reach out to the population to encourage the safe reintegration of formerly abducted persons. Findings suggest that this initiative has had varying degrees of success on the ground, largely dependant upon the camp setting, leadership within the camp, as well as the individual circumstances the formerly abducted person (FAP) returns to, such as family life. Likewise, the approaches are often ad-hoc and lack coordination with other existing efforts, reflecting an institutional weakness of the organization.

Ker Kwaro Acholi must begin to define a unified, consensual vision of not only cultural contributions to the reintegration process, but also of how to adapt traditional justice mechanisms. This requires sorting out who should be subject to this justice process, as well as the mechanics of how this could take place. It will require local, national and international consultation and coordination with other stakeholders. For instance, the process of Mato Oput has received much attention by national and international stakeholders, with little understanding of what exactly is involved. The research found that the majority of Elders and Rwodi interviewed did not think that the process itself was possible to adapt in its current form. However, the principles, values and symbolic meaning of Mato Oput were considered essential to rebuilding a devastated Acholi-land, and should be carefully taken into consideration in the design of any future justice program in that region.

It is recommended at the conclusion of this report (see Chapter 6) that a Commission on Reintegration and Reconciliation be established in order to begin to investigate questions related to how best to: promote both justice and peace; facilitate reintegration and reconciliation; to maintain the momentum of the Amnesty Commission while at the same time ending the current impunity; and, to balance traditional and international approaches to justice."

Displacement erodes social ties (July 2005)

- The physical structures of the camps have damaged the social fabric of the communities
- Killing and rape are not sanctioned anymore by customary justice
- Children grow up separated from their parents

Refugee Law Project, July 2005, p. 27

"[...]many informants referred to the fact that the essence of their lives had been destroyed by displacement: the physical structures of the camps have created an artificial environment that has damaged the fabric of the communities. As one elderly man said, "If you look at the way huts are built, squeezed together, and what people do at night – even at daytime – has removed respect completely now... Morally we are completely broken, the Acholi way of life is torn apart.... Raping women has not been acceptable in Acholi culture, but today it is very pleasing. Killing has never been accepted in Acholi culture, but today it is considered a game. Go and see in the street what kind of games people play, the words people use. Our children now talk about laying ambush, shoot to kill – war games. Before they used to play marriage games, dancing games, hunting games. Now they make tanks, lorries, airplanes. Said another, "Our culture was very rich. Education was not just got from formal classrooms. Wang 'oo' was the place all the cultural, moral education happened. In camps the wang 'oo' is not there. Now parents do not have time to talk to their children... Now the basic "family" is destroyed and also the community at large. The camp situation has left people not believing in reality. They now have this as their way of life, they now dwell on artificial life, the hand-outs, feeding on WFP [World Food Program-provided food]. Being dependants is now part of the system, something that used not to happen."

RLP, 28 February 2004, pp. 26-27

" However, the impact of displacement is not only interpreted in economic terms: it is also seen to have eroded the very roots of Acholi culture. A social worker commented: .Community laws are no longer there. There are very many family break-ups. Poverty is very deep. There was frequent reference to the fact that cultural taboos were being broken by families having to live close together, and that social support networks within the society were being eroded. As a local businessman commented, . We grew up with dignity. These children are not growing up as true Acholis. Our culture is being destroyed completely. The children won't know about seasons and agriculture. A religious leader summarised the impression of humiliation that came through so tangibly in discussions about displacement:

This community is destroyed because the culture has gone. What is a community without a culture? There is no privacy, no morality in the camps. Children die very young. A young girl died yesterday giving birth. There were so many burials in this cemetery we had to take her elsewhere. The whole future of Acholi people is at stake, and this will also cause problems throughout the country. Even look at the night commuters. You are forced to let your children go each evening, but you don't know where to.

The dramatic increase in the number of night commuters., referred to as another form of displacement in the previous quotation, has further highlighted the disruption within families

and communities. Every night, up to 25,000 people, mainly children, walk into towns to sleep on verandas out of fear of LRA attacks during the night. As one informant commented: The future of the Acholi is very bleak in the whole of the Acholi sub region. The culture of coming to town is a bad thing. If the commuters continue coming to town at night as the normal thing for the next three years, I don't know what will happen. It should be a concern for the whole nation. A Catholic priest talked of the situation in his church where many children were sleeping: The children who are accommodated in the church use condoms. When I go to celebrate early mass I find a lot of condoms in my church. Lack of adequate parental control over the situation is having a devastating impact. As a teacher said, "The students have no respect. A very small child can abuse you. There's no discipline. I found small children playing a game and one side played as rebels while the other as soldiers. Imagine these are nursery children!."

Many abducted women and girls find it hard to adjust to the life back home (July 2003)

- Higher rate of acceptance back into the community for long-term female abductees as opposed to male returnees
- Women who were married before being abducted are rarely accepted back by their husbands
- Returned women know they are a burden for their relatives

HRW, 15 July 2003, p. 30

"Although abduction is a traumatizing experience for all abductees, abducted women and girls suffer unique abuses and consequent problems. Whereas beating, torture, and maltreatment are the experiences for most people abducted by the LRA, rape and forced sexual slavery is inflicted on women and girls. While there seems to be a higher rate of acceptance back into the community for long-term female abductees as opposed to male returnees who spend several years with the LRA, the pattern is different for mothers who have LRA-born children.

According to several Ugandan NGOs in Gulu working with returnees, the children born in captivity as a result of rape by one or several LRA soldiers are sometimes seen as unacceptable outsiders. According to the custom and kinship structure found amongst the Acholi people, the child belongs to the father and his family. Since the father in cases of gang rape is not known, or the father is an LRA rebel, the child may not be accepted by the mother's kin. Women who were married before being abducted are rarely accepted back by their husbands, who often fear their wives are infected with sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

Another factor that makes it difficult for women to return from captivity is that they are expected to conform to certain stereotypes of female behavior. Women captive with the LRA for years have become used to war, fighting, rough bush life, harsh conditions, and living with other fighters. At times they may have difficulty adjusting to traditional expectations of women.

The twenty-two-year old former "wife" of LRA Commander Tabuley is one case in point, according to a woman responsible for following women's issues at Caritas: "She is a convinced LRA fighter and does not want to be here." Many women and girls find it hard to adjust to the life back home. "They know they are a burden for their relatives, they will not be able to go to school if they return with children, and they don't see any future for themselves here."

Female-headed households disadvantaged during resettlement (2002)

- Survey found that Female-headed households (FHH) were extremely disadvantaged and vulnerable compared to male-headed households (MHH)
- FHHs will have limited capacity to grow and access enough food upon resettlement
- FHH have limited sources of income and thus limited access to required farm inputs
- The number of MHHs that acquired new life sustaining skill during displacement found to be almost double that of FHH
- Only 7 percent of FHHs endowed with house construction skills

Oxfam, 8 February 2002, p.10

"Meanwhile the changes in the household economy have also led to changes in economic and domestic roles. More than ¼ (54/190) of the women interviewed are now heads of household due death of husbands or separation, while many men reported to be now responsible for child care than before after losing or separating with their wives."

"The purpose behind this inquiry was to understand the required support priorities of both displaced male and female-headed households [MHH/FHH in the Gulu district] which would in turn enhance strategic and effective targeting of donor, government and aid agency resettlement programmes.

[...]

Key findings include a deprivation trap [...], in which most female-headed households are entrapped making them extremely disadvantaged and vulnerable compared to male-headed households.

[...]

The project also discovered that resettlement priorities differ according to the age and gender of the household head. It was further discovered that though there may not appear to be a big divide between female and male-headed household resettlement priorities, the two groups emerge as two worlds apart when viewed from the vantage point of how their assessed capacities and vulnerabilities will impact on the identified resettlement priorities.

[...]

the FHH phenomenon has been exacerbated by the now 15 year-old civil conflict. An article by Onyango-Obbo (1996) observed that, *"in Acholiland, there is virtually no generation of elders. Most people are widows or orphans. In some families, the grandmother was a young widow, the mother a widow, and the grandchildren too are widows or orphans."* The same article reports that by 1991, women were heading about 60% of the homes, while a survey report by ICRC (2001) indicated that on average, widows head about 20.4% of the households in Acholiland."

Food Production

World Vision/Cranfield University, December 2001, pp. 1, 6, 24, 52

"When it comes to crop production, a typical Acholi household practices gender division of labour. Opening virgin land and digging is traditionally a male occupation, while planting and weeding is a female occupation.

[...]

For those that mentioned inability to grow enough food upon resettlement, a number of reasons were given to explain their responses and included the following. *"The land is fertile, but being a woman with young children, it will be very difficult at the beginning...I don't have enough working tools, and there will be no man around to help me. We will try, but I don't even know where to begin,"* said Lucia, a 43 year-old widow and mother of eight.

[...]

A comparison of findings between FHH and MHH reveals that upon resettlement, FHH will have limited capacity to grow and keep enough food. This is explained by a number of factors. Firstly,

FHH have weak labour compared to MHH and will comparatively not be able to open up enough land. This is coupled by the fact that digging is traditionally a male activity thus women don't have enough digging skills. Thirdly, compared to MHH, FHH have limited sources of income, thus limited access to required farm inputs, e.g. farm tools, animal traction technologies, and improved seeds.

Again, compared to MHH, FHH do not have the skills to make granaries nor the funds to have one made for them. They will therefore experience more post-harvest losses than MHH, and may continue to be lured into selling their produce during the immediate harvest period. There is therefore ample evidence for this study to conclude that compared to MHH, FHH will be more vulnerable to food insecurity during the reconstruction period."

Means of production

World Vision/Cranfield University, December 2001, pp.27, 28, 54

"All respondents confirmed having had some form of life supporting skill before displacement. For the FHH, new and old life supporting skills include embroidery, brewing, pottery, modern agronomic practices, knitting, baking and cookery, livestock keeping, fish farming, bee keeping, TBA skills, tailoring, handcrafts and witchcraft. For the MHH new and old life supporting skills include modern agronomic practices, bicycle repair, tailoring, building huts and thatching skills, pitsawing, carpentry, brick making, brick laying, and making and weaving local crafts.

All interviewed MHH confirmed ability to continue using all their new and old skills, but mentioned problems associated with lack of investment capital. On the other hand, only 75% of the FHH confirmed ability to continue using all their life supporting skills amidst grinding constraints.

[...]

In their long lists of constraints, both FHH and MHH emphasised lack of capital as one of the leading constraints that continues limiting their production potential. *"I learnt carpentry and tailoring while undergoing rehabilitation with agency X, and am still taking tailoring classes for returned abducted children in the camp...If I had a sewing machine, I would be able to make dresses for sale,"* says Vincent, a 17 year ex-child soldier (formerly abducted). Vincent was abducted for two years, is still single but heads a household of eight, including his very weak mother.

[...]

Traditionally, the Acholi would keep livestock, especially cattle, as their main form of wealth. The study discovered that the number of IDP MHH keeping some form of livestock is more than double that of FHH, and the number of MHH that acquired new life sustaining skill during displacement is also almost double that of FHH. It would therefore follow that in times of severe stress; more MHH would have some form of fall back, which their FHH counterparts would not have.

Arguably, most of the MHH skills especially building, carpentry, opening up new land etc, will be more marketable during the reconstruction period, while for the FHH, their non-agricultural skills will have lost much of the market to the scattering effect caused by resettlement. It would therefore appear that during resettlement, more FHH will be more economically disadvantaged than MHH.."

Housing

World Vision/Cranfield University, December 2001, pp. 30

"House construction is a male domain activity, and as a result, only 7% FHH acknowledged to be endowed with house construction skills, and can construct their own huts without seeking for

male participation. Male participation is usually paid for in cash or in-kind, and the study discovered that some women have had to trade unwanted sex in exchange for the required male construction skills.

[...]

The study also found out that while in displacement, a number of FHH had acquired some of the required hut construction skills in order to reduce expenditure on house construction. Some of the skills include brick making, and the meticulous work of constructing the roof frame from the ground [...], instead of doing it from the housetop as usually done by men. Once the bricks are ready and the roof frame is in place, they then hire men to erect the wall and thatch the roof using the finished roofing frame."

Conflict affected areas in northern Uganda suffer social and cultural breakdown (2002)

- Loss of livestock one of the greatest economic and morale blows of the war.
- Parents feel they loose control over their children
- Problems include increased crime rate, consumption of alcohol and drug abuse, loss of respect and values and breakdown of family structure
- Anecdotal evidence suggests an increasing trend in child abuse
- Camp regulations undermining traditional gatherings

Gersony, 1997, Section 1, " The cattle factor"

"In an instant, the Acholi farmers were deprived of the milk their cows provided; the additional acreage and higher yields which their oxen permitted them; their fallback for marriage dowries and education; and the savings which carried them through drought, hard time, sickness and old age. The self-respect which attached to cattle ownership and the cultural functions upon which exchange of cattle had relied were disrupted. It was one of the greatest economic and morale blows of the war. It also deprived the insurgents of livestock upon which they relied for food and which they might have used to trade for the arms and ammunition upon which their viability increasingly depended."

Weeks March 2002, p.3

"Whereas the Acholi are accustomed to living in widely dispersed settlements, the populations of the "protected" villages are tightly packed together, often with only an arm's length between houses.

Sanitation is inevitably poor, and exposure to communicable diseases high. Social conditions are a matter of universal concern: parents feel, in particular, that they are losing control over their children's behavior. Sexual promiscuity is perceived to be unacceptably high, with correspondingly high rates of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. Girls and women turn to prostitution in the absence of other economic outlets, boys to brawling, to petty crime, to rape, and in some cases to armed banditry."

UN, November 1999, p.21

"The ongoing conflicts have also caused loss of life and major disruptions to the communities. Many children have witnessed violence and atrocities; lost family members to the war; been separated from their families, and undergone severe physical and mental hardships in fleeing the conflict. In addition, there have been massive abductions of children being trained as fighters or forced into slave labour. The conflict has destroyed or undermined the community support systems that once assisted and protected these affected children and reintegrated them in the community.

With the full consensus of the members of the Psycho-social Core Team composed of NGOs working with affected communities in northern Uganda, national technical experts, line ministries and UN Agencies, an in-depth Northern Uganda Psycho-Social Needs Assessment (NUPSNA) was carried out in 1998. The final report highlighted negative social trends of magnitudes previously unknown to the affected areas. These problems include social and cultural breakdown e.g. increased crime rate, consumption of alcohol and drug abuse, loss of respect and values, as well as breakdown of family structure e.g. separation, orphan hood and increased domestic violence."

UN, July 2000, p.8

"Anecdotal evidence points to an increasing trend in child abuse, especially sexual abuse. One problem is that there is little knowledge of legal protection and how to obtain justice. To respond to this need, Child Rights Advocates are being trained. These advocates have basic training on the legal aspects of child protection and child abuse. In cases of child abuse, the advocates can give advice as to how to pursue the case and to ensure that justice is obtained. So far, 30 Advocates have been trained in Nwoya County, Gulu district."

OCHA, 23 May 2001, "Lessons learned"

"Over 800,000 IDPs have been traumatized by terrorist attacks and have remained physically and mentally idle in camps for over five years. Nearly all traditional community and family mechanisms for ensuring cohesiveness and stability in society have broken down. Children have lost years of schooling, preventing them equal access to employment and future opportunities for participating in the national political system and economy."

Acholi Religious/Justice & Peace, July 2001, p.13

"As one moves through any of the displaced camps, one of the most depressing sights is to see scores of unattended children everywhere, idle youth loitering about and men drinking alcohol. This is just the surface of a deeper problem that most people, especially elders, feel as something very painful: the collapse of the good cultural values that people used to feel proud of. A whole generation is growing up in a moral and cultural vacuum, and considering that children under the age of 15 account for more than 55% of the total population in the IDP camps in Acholi this is a very serious situation.

The main means of transmitting the Acholi traditional culture to the younger generations is the evening family gathering at the fireplace, referred to in the Acholi language as *Wang oo*. Army-enforced regulations in most camps state that everybody is expected to be indoors or at least next to their huts by 7:30 p.m. Those who break this rule are routinely beaten. The consequence is that since there is no more *wang oo*, children - adults often complain - are not taught good cultural values.

Cramming together people in a small space is seen in all camps as another main reason for the lack of respect that children show towards their parents, since both parents share the same hut with the children without any privacy and at times children make fun of their parents when they see them sleeping together at night.

As a result, very early pregnancies (at the age of thirteen or fourteen), children becoming thieves, and alcoholism among adolescents who have dropped out of school, are worrying features of life in the displaced camps. People resent very bitterly the fact that in recent years no pupil from a school in the camps got a first grade. Little wonder when one considers that in Acholibur there are only four classrooms for 1050 pupils (only 17% of their students pass exams to continue to secondary school after P7). Palabek Gem Displaced Schools had 20 teachers for the 1060 enrolled pupils, and only 13% were able to pass exams to continue to secondary school. Pajule Displaced Primary School has an average of 300 pupils in the P1 classes, and in Pabbo the

average size of a P1 class is about 500 pupils. Given these circumstances for most young people going to Secondary School is just a dream beyond all possibility."

Oxfam, 8 February 2002, pp. 13-14

"Displaced persons were concerned with the degeneration of social values and order, as a result of displacement and staying in camps. Respondents noted that displacement has led to moral degeneration as reflected in behavior changes, neglect of responsibilities and disrespect.

[...]

Change in sexual behavior is among the areas that have significantly deteriorated. Many people confessed engaging in multiple and casual sexual relationships than before displacement. While the team did not collect any statistical data on this issue, female youth were reportedly most affected by the problem although adult and married people too are involved.

[...]

Alcoholism and drug abuses have been on the increase among IDPs staying in camps in particular those located in towns. The assessment observed several people chewing *mairungi/khati* in union camp located near Bundibugyo town. The youth were reported to be mainly engaged in drugs, while all categories (youth, men and women) locally brewed alcohol.

[...]

Respondents noted that the rate of domestic violence had increased with staying in camps. Wife battering and sexual harassment were reported as the most common forms of domestic violence. Women were particularly affected most by domestic violence. Idleness, poverty and increased alcohol use has aggravated the problem of domestic violence. Women reported being sexually harassed and or battered after their husbands were drunk."

Diverging perceptions of gender roles among IDPs in the camps (2002)

- Male perception: Men looking after children
- Female perception: Men resorting to alcohol and shunning work

Oxfam, 8 February 2002, p.10

"Meanwhile the changes in the household economy have also led to changes in economic and domestic roles. More than ¼ (54/190) of the women interviewed are now heads of household due death of husbands or separation, while many men reported to be now responsible for child care than before after losing or separating with their wives.

"It is us the men who are mostly affected because for example when your wife is taken, it is us men who will look after the children by feeding them and doing domestic work"

Women on other hand reported taking over men's roles, as many men have resorted to drinking thereby shunning work. Some men were reported to avoid going to the gardens under the pretext that rebels will abduct them. This has resulted in increased workload for the women."

Youth

As return process continues, number of separated children rises (October 2008)

IRIN, 10 October 2008:

"As former internally displaced persons (IDPs) continue to return to their homes, cases of children being separated from their families are on the rise thus the increase in the number of children in the streets.

Children are also being left behind in some IDP camps, exposing them to various forms of abuse, according to a recent assessment of the Lalogi IDP camp in Gulu. The assessment was conducted by the UN Children's Fund, the NGO World Vision and the local Gulu Support the Children Organisation.

"The situation is very bad in the IDP camps... with parents leaving their children alone with no adult care giver to take care of them, we encourage parents to go with their children to the villages," Santa Oketta, the Gulu district secretary for children affairs, said.

About 40 percent of the northern region's IDPs, estimated at more than two million at the height of the war, have left the IDP camps for their homes or to resettlement camps closer to their original villages.

Oketta said the number of street children and child prostitutes is on the rise, adding that the number of children affected has not yet been established.

"This is a problem that requires urgent attention otherwise we are losing out a lot with young girls engaging in prostitution and others abandoning their homes for the street," she said."

Elderly people

Many elderly people were separated from their families during displacement (Oct 2007)

IASC, 24 October 2007:

"The conflict in Uganda scattered families widely and the research team heard of many examples of old people who had become lost and separated from their families. People were often not given the choice to stay or leave – that decision was often taken and enforced by the parties to the conflict. Once separated, old people were often abandoned by their families, or remained unaccompanied in displaced camps and settlements."

Karamoja

Uncertain coping mechanisms make children and women move in search of food and labour in Karamoja (November 2006)

- Children and women move out of Karamoja searching for food and labour, falling pray to exploitation
- Children appear on streets of urban centers subjecting themselves to risk of exploitation and trafficking

UN, 30 November 2006, Pg. 12, 33

“The Karamoja sub-region consistently demonstrates Uganda’s lowest scores on key development and humanitarian indicators. A protection crisis in relation to disarmament (as per above) but also due to commonly accepted coping mechanisms is ongoing. Critically risky coping mechanisms include the movement of women and children out of Karamoja in search of occasional labour or food that easily become victim of Gender Based Violence (GBV) or other forms of exploitation. Climatic and environmental factors, a long history of marginalisation by successive national governments, cultural traditions and a breakdown of law and order have all led to increased banditry, inter-communal and cross-border cattle raids and to a human rights and development crisis of complex dimensions.”

“Protection monitoring is particularly weak in Karamoja and issues such as SGBV go largely unreported. However, the consequences of marginalisation and insecurity are putting vulnerable populations, including children, at risk of exploitation. Growing numbers of Karamojong children are reported to be appearing on the streets of urban centres within Karamoja, in surrounding districts and in Kampala. Amid reports of labour markets established in Katakwi, there is concern that children may be at risk of being trafficked to other parts of Uganda. Forcible returns complete a cycle of disadvantage and vulnerability that needs to be better understood and responded to.”

Women and children affected by conflict in Karamoja (August 2005)

- Women and children most affected by conflict, often displaced and/or widowed
- Women play a role both in conflict causation (due to high bride prices) and in conflict prevention

USAID, August 2005, Pg. 37-38

“Conflict among pastoralist is indiscriminate and affects all people. Women and children are generally the most affected because they are vulnerable and defenseless, they aren’t in a position to feed themselves, they can lose loved ones (spouses, parents and sons), and they are easily made homeless and turned into refugees. The pastoralists women play a significant role in the conflict environment.

Role of women in conflict causation.

Women play a central part in raiding in a number of ways. When faced with shortages of household necessities, married women scorn the male members of the household, singing songs that pressure them to go raiding. They do this physically or indirectly, through beating of children and telling them things such as: “where can I get the milk to give you when your father is seated while other men have gone to look for cattle for their children’s milk.”[] In the past, renowned women were consulted by raiders. Warriors on a mission brought them gifts of tobacco or a ram in exchange for blessings for the raid. Women bless the men and smear them with protective soil, *Emunyen*. There is considerable dancing, ululation, celebration and merry making spearheaded by women after a very successful raid.

Women are also at the base of raiding because men are forced to pay high bride prices for them in exchange for social status. Sometimes women incite conflicts by abandoning men who have not paid dowries to join those who are capable of paying them off, or by belittling men who marry their daughters with few animal dowries. Such mortification compels men to collect livestock before they decide to marry. Disrespect accorded to men who are not fully married through dowry payment forces men to raid.

Role of women in conflict prevention

Women suffer the effects conflict a great deal. They are left as widows, displaced, left without food, and often bear the consequences of being inherited by the kinship of their deceased husbands. To avert this anguish, women have considerably contributed to reducing conflicts in the region. Their various involvements are summarized below:

Due to death of many male members of the households, most women discourage their husbands and sons from going for raids.

Women have been organizing peace marches and peace campaign rallies in the villages of Rupa, Tapac, and Iriir. Women peace group of Naoi Parish organize peace retreats and peace meetings.

Refusing to praise raiders.

Women have composed songs that draw warriors' attention to the tribulations of raiding. They sing these songs to discourage the men from participating in raiding.

Women encourage and entreat men to give back their guns to the government during disarmament exercises. Some women actually physically handed over their husbands' guns.

They enrollment their children in schools with the hope of transforming the society in the future.

Senior women lament for peace at dawn before men are out. They decry the way raiding and the young generation have strayed."

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

Assets of IDP households (December 2007)

UNDP, December 2007, pp. 34-36

"Assets among dwellers and returnees

The asset base of households both in and outside the camps is limited, although male-headed households seem to be somewhat better off. Most households, whether male-headed or female-headed, own hoes, jerry cans, and blankets. Male-headed households are more likely to also own chairs, pangas (machetes), bicycles, radios, mattresses, tables, and beds (Figure 10). It is nevertheless noteworthy that, in almost all districts, fewer than 50 percent of households possess a bicycle or basic items of furniture (chairs, bed, mattresses/mats and tables).

There is no significant variation in asset ownership between those that have moved back to their places of origin, and those remaining in camps. The main difference is that those that have returned home are somewhat more likely to possess furniture: tables, beds, and chairs. Households with these items nevertheless remain a minority.

Other 'missing' assets from households are animals. Whereas most households reported previously owning poultry and sheep, and many claimed to have had goats and cattle, now only 14 percent of households in IDP camps report having any animals at all. Many households abandoned or lost their animals when moving into the camps; others took the animals with them, but have since slaughtered or sold them for food or income. In some areas, cattle raiding has also contributed to the loss of animals from households. In this respect, however, returnees and partial returnees are doing better: 32 percent claim they own some animals. Accordingly, as alluded to above, 31 percent of returnees claim to have recent experience in herding animals, versus 12 percent in IDP camps and 11 percent in transitional sites. Nevertheless, this is still severely less than previously, especially considering the central role that livestock and animals play in the food security and labour needs of subsistence farmers."

Land

OHCHR: "Protecting housing, land and property rights in the transition from camps to durable solutions" (February 2008)

OHCHR, February 2008

"In the transformation process from camps to viable communities/trading centres a number of housing, land and property rights (HLP rights) will need to be respected and upheld. These rights relate to both land owners whose lands have been used for settlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs), as well as IDPs choosing local integration as a durable solution. These rights are enshrined in the international human rights treaties ratified by Uganda, as well as partly in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and national policies Housing, land and property rights

include (a) the right to an adequate standard of living, including housing (Article 25, Universal Declaration of Human Rights), (b) the right to peaceful enjoyment of property (Article 17, UDHR), (c) the right to privacy and respect of the home (Article 12, UDHR), (d) the right to freedom of movement and choice of residence (Article 13, UDHR)."

***This non-paper by OHCHR sets out the rights of :
Owners of land on which camps were established;
IDPs choosing local integration as a durable solution, that is, IDPs who do not intend to
return to their villages but who want to continue living on the sites of the camps.***

Land as a prerequisite for return (December 2007)

UNDP, December 2007, pp. 31-33

Land as prerequisite for early return

As a rural and agrarian community, the most important resource for Northern Ugandans is land (see Refugee Law Project, 2006). One of the crucial factors shaping return decisions is, therefore, access to land (see also Oxfam, 2007).

The people of Northern Uganda traditionally lived in villages on their own land with their livestock and cattle. Prior to the war, the primary activity was agriculture, with millet and sorghum being the staple crops. Farmers also grew substantial amounts of maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, peas, beans, sesame, groundnuts, squash and various vegetables, as well as other savannah crops, largely for consumption. Before the war, avocados, mangoes, pineapples and other fruits were also cultivated for commercial purposes. Small-scale agro-businesses based on tobacco, cotton, sugarcane, sunflower and rice also operated. The land in Northern Uganda is very fertile, particularly in Gulu and Amuru, and hardworking farmers could make a good living before the conflict started.

Previously, most land was held under customary tenure.⁸ People typically owned land by virtue of the fact that they and their families always lived on it, and therefore were regarded as the 'owners' of their land. Most have no official papers or titles proving they own the land, and many of the vernacular rules governing land were not written down, and/or were constantly changing to adapt to new circumstances. These rules were also developed under conditions very different from those prevailing today. Until only one or two generations ago, a person could claim land as his own by settling on and cultivating virgin land. Some villages were established as recently as fifty years ago, when groups of people settled in forested areas and became the owners of sometimes large pieces of land. Due to land pressure and the formalization of property relations (exacerbated by the conflict), this tactic of claiming virgin land is much less available today.

Before the conflict, land was usually allocated and managed by the family patriarch (often the grandfather), who provided plots to each male family member according to their needs and perceived ability to use the land. Men controlled the land, but women also had certain rights. A woman had rights to use her parents' land prior to marriage, and her husband's land afterwards. No husband was supposed to prevent his wife from using his land, and if he predeceased her, she still had user rights: she could use the land as she saw fit and pass it on to her children, but could not sell it. If somebody tried to take this right from her, she could appeal to the elders who would then intervene on her behalf. On the other hand, if she remarried, she would get the right to her new husband's land, but would also relinquish her user rights to her first husband's land (see also Bøås and Hatløy, 2005a). Although the system created and maintained hierarchies of power (especially along gendered lines), it had the advantage of being relatively transparent. People knew their rights and how to protect them, and who to appeal to if they felt these had been

violated. However, this transparency or relative predictability cannot be taken for granted in the return situation, as years of displacement have weakened these mechanisms.

As noted above, today there is not much free land left in Northern Uganda, despite the apparent emptiness in some parts of the region. Not all land is intended for cultivation, and even that which is will not be kept in constant cultivation (notwithstanding the lack of cultivation prompted by displacement). Prior to the displacement, some land was used for grazing, and the other was kept as forest for hunting and the collection of forest products. Yet other plots of land were kept fallow in a system of shifting cultivation and rotational cropping. Local people, however, knew who owned what land. In a village, boundaries were known because they were usually agreed upon by owners of neighbouring fields, using a mixture of natural border posts (such as trees and edges of swamps)

and border signs developed over time, such as the lines of field refuse which develop into durable demarcation lines. One problem is that the longer people are kept away from their land, the less useful such practices become. Border signposts, such as the lines of field refuse, disappear, while the fact that the fields become overgrown makes it difficult to recognise natural border posts between the tracts owned by different people and families. Some will simply have forgotten the actual borders, some will be too young to remember, and some will try to take advantage of the confusion to try to enlarge their property or lay claim to land that never belonged to them (see also Bøås and Hatløy, 2005a; 2006).

The current confusion over land is exacerbated by widespread uncertainty among the IDPs about what has happened to their land during their time in displacement. 'Everywhere one goes in Acholiland, one encounters fear that the Acholi's land will be stolen from them' (CSOPNU, 2005:15); and whereas some of the rumours circulating about land-grabbing are false (if not perceived as such among those hearing them), others are more convincing. The uncertainty about what has happened to their land during displacement, in combination with the fact that people know all too well that land is their most important asset, fuels speculation and creates tension among the IDPs.

Given the centrality of land to livelihoods and coping strategies in Northern Uganda, therefore, it is not surprising that the vast majority of those that have returned to their places of origin claim an inherited right to land (see Figure 8). This includes both male-headed and female-headed households. Of those remaining in IDP camps or living in transitional sites, the percentage claiming access to inherited land is noticeably less than among returnees: only 48 percent of IDP residents reported having an inherited right to land. Accessing land through renting is thus a somewhat common coping strategy among camp dwellers (less so among transitional site residents).

Cumulatively, these findings imply that movement home is – if not predicated on, then – strongly correlated with access to one's own (inherited) land. We noted in Chapter 3 that some of the first movers might be households that were 'pushed' rather than 'pulled' out of the camps. While the findings here do not shed light on specific reasons for movement, they indicate that, at this stage, the pull factor of access to inherited land seems to be an important condition for the push factors to be acted upon. In each site, there are only small differences between male-headed and female-headed households in terms of access to inherited land, with most female-headed households seemingly retaining rights to the deceased husband's land (see also Chapter 6). However, it is interesting to note that in place of origin, male-headed households tend to cultivate larger plots than female-headed households (see Figure 4). Overall, approximately 15 percent of the female-headed households and 13 percent of the male-headed households have no rights to any land – inherited, rented, or otherwise.

Finally, it is worth reiterating a point made implicitly in Figure 3 above: namely, that while most people are cultivating, their other activities are quite limited. Given the crowded and confined nature of the camps, this is not so surprising. It is, however, surprising that there is not a more

marked difference among camp dwellers and returnees (in terms of current experience) involved in tasks such as building latrines, constructing grass roofs, and making bricks. Instead, differences between returnees and camp dwellers show up in terms of herding animals, gathering wild plants for food, and digging wells – all markedly more prevalent among returnees, as Figure 9 shows. This implies that construction and maintenance tasks are not confined to transitional sites or return areas, but are ongoing in the camps as well, as people continually try to make their living conditions as decent as possible. While not the majority activities, the investment of labour in camp dwellings is seemingly in line with people's cautious and patient approach towards return. Conversely, the increase in well-digging among returnees is indicative of return in areas without boreholes, while plant-gathering and animal-herding indicate attempts (out of necessity or choice) to diversify coping strategies and livelihoods once outside the camps."

Returns trigger land disputes which in turn slow down the returns process (September 2008)

OHCHR, Human Rights Analysis, Amuru District, September 2008

"Land disputes were described as rampant in the return areas as well as the camps too. These disputes are hindering return and displacing people from the camps to their homes. Landowners are reclaiming land on which camps are situated and destroying property of those returned home."

UNHCR, June 2008

"The community, especially in Amuru district has declared that lack of formal resolution in land issues make them fear return. There is need for further community sensitisation and further reach of mobile clinics in both districts."

The New Vision, 2 July 2008

"The World Vision has earmarked \$950,000 (about sh1.5b) for curbing land disputes that have hindered the resettlement of internally displaced people in Acholi sub-region.

According to the coordinator, Jackson Omona, the two-year project on peace building and conflict management would focus on building the capacity of the district land committees and districts leaders to resolve disputes.

"We have given \$300,000 to Amuru, \$250,000 to Pader and \$400,000 to Kitgum district for peace building and conflict management projects," Omona said last Friday.

This was after a two-day consultative meeting for Acholi leaders on the stalled peace process and land disputes at Acholi Inn in Gulu district.

On behalf of the leaders, the Kitgum LC5 chairman, John Komakech, urged the Government to organise a retreat to discuss how to handle land disputes.

He explained that during the meeting, they would also debate on how to allocate land to investors.

"We condemn all kinds of crime and violence associated with land disputes. We appeal to internally displaced people to return to their villages."

They were also concerned that people had encroached on the land that was donated to schools, health centres, churches and sub-county headquarters.

"We challenge district councils and land boards to sensitise their population on land issues. We are committed to using the local structures like elders, traditional leaders and land committees to handle land disputes." The leaders urged the LRA and the Government to continue pursuing the peace deal."

The Weekly Observer, 13 August 2008

"Bitter land disputes are raging in northern Uganda posing yet another threat to the people now returning home after nearly two decades in Internally Displaced People's camps.

More than half of the formerly displaced people have returned home after calm returned to this war-torn area more than two years ago. However, more than a year after peace talks began in the South Sudan city of Juba; the government and Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) are yet to hammer out a peace deal that would put a permanent stop to the conflict.

Nevertheless, returnees have continued to trickle back into their villages where many are finding themselves clashing over land as they try to trace long-forgotten boundaries.

Authorities say this is mainly because most people, especially younger ones, do not remember the boundaries while those who lost their parents during the war are fighting for the right to inherit the land that previously belonged to them.

By the end of July, some 950 cases of land disputes had been registered at the Chief Magistrate's Court in Gulu."

The Monitor, 31 July 2008

"Land conflicts are disrupting the resettlement of internally displaced persons in parts of northern Uganda and as a result, thousands have been forced back into camps, MPs have revealed.

At a news conference yesterday, the Acholi Parliamentary Group led by Chwa MP, Mr Livingstone Okello Okello (UPC) said land conflicts in the region have put a halt to the resettlement programme.

"Opportunists are using our people's situation to grab their land and thousands are now landless," Mr Okello-Okello said. "We have just completed a tour of Acholi sub-region and many IDPs have been pushed back to camps because some officials are interested in their land."

Citing a recent incident, Nwoya MP, Simon Oyet said the 4th Division Commander Brig Charles Otema acquired about 40,000 hectares of land in Latooro village in Amuru District, leaving an estimated 100 families homeless, a claim he denies.

"We cannot pretend that IDPs are returning home," Mr Oyet said. "In my constituency, resettlement has stalled because some army officers grab community land. If nothing is done urgently, we are going to see a new conflict.

But in a statement to Daily Monitor yesterday, the Army spokesperson for northern Uganda, Capt. Ronald Kakurungu defended Brig Otema saying; "This is an absurd allegation by an MP [Oyet] because he clearly did not do research.

He said the land in question is actually only 2,000 hectares and not 40,000 hectares. "It is in Pajemu village, Latooro Parish in Purongo, Nwoya county in Amuru," he said."

The Monitor, 23 July 2008

"The Fourth Division Commander, Brig. Charles Otema, is accused of grabbing an estimated 40,000 hectares belonging to internally displaced persons in the northern district of Amuru.

Area MP Simon Oyet (FDC, Nwoya) told Daily Monitor yesterday that the land in question is located in Latooro Parish in Porongo Sub-county, a few miles from Gulu town where an estimated 100 families are now landless.

"The land is now being guarded by people masquerading as soldiers in army uniforms," Mr Oyet said. "It's painful to see hundreds of my constituents being forced back to camp life because of Brig. Otema. Their crops were even confiscated from the gardens yet it is their land."

When contacted yesterday, Brig. Otema denied displacing the IDPs, but said the land was vacant and free from human settlement.

"The land I applied for was free and even if you go there now there are no people living on it. It was a game reserve which was gazetted during (former president) Idi Amin's (RIP) time," Brig Otema said.

He dismissed the land grabbing allegations as baseless and threatened to sue Mr Oyet for what he described as 'tarnishing my good name'.

"That's a mad man [Oyet] and I am going to sue him for tarnishing my name and inciting the locals against me," he said by telephone yesterday. "He is deceiving the country that I want to grab 40,000 hectares.

But the 40,000 hectares he is talking of is almost the entire size of Amuru District. I applied for 6,000 hectares and the district agreed to give me only 2,000 hectares which I accepted," he added."

Land owners seek compensation for having had IDP camps on their land (October 2007)

Customary land ownership vs individual land titles (October 2008)

- Government officials push for customary land ownership to be replaced with individual land titles.
- The Land and Equity Movement in Uganda argues that the return phase is not the right time to introduce such changes.

The Monitor, 1 October 2008

"The Local Government Minister, Maj Gen Kahinda Otafiire, has warned the Acholi against denying non-Acholi land for investment.

Gen. Otafiire said the views on land by opposition politicians hailing from the region is already impacting negatively on the residents.

[...]

The minister was presenting a paper at a three-day peace meeting organised by Mercy Corps in Pader District on the role of a local government in enhancing peace- building in northern Uganda.

Gen. Otafiire also urged the people of Acholi to abandon the customary land system, which he said holds them back and instead embrace concerted efforts with foreign investors whom he said have the propellers to development drive engines.

The Acholi Parliamentary Group has condemned advances by the government to have land allocated for foreign investors including Madhvani Group of Companies for sugar cane growing in Amuru District.

The politicians argue that there is no way land can be given to foreign investors when its owners are still in the camps.

Gen. Otafiire said sustainable peace will only prevail when the economy is also progressing in favour of the locals. The meeting, the first of its kind in northern Uganda, attracted over 300 dignitaries."

Land and Equity Movement in Uganda, June 2007, pp. 2-3:

"One of the main vehicles for strengthening people's land rights in the Government's Land Sector Strategic Plan is by turning land held under customary tenure into titled land, through a process of 'systematic demarcation'. By systematically surveying all land in an area (where the land owners agree), the high costs of surveying individual plots for titling is removed. The owners then have the choice to register their land and to process formal titles. The belief is that titles will give people greater security of ownership and will also enable people to invest in their land, by using the titles as security for loans.

Elsewhere it is questioned whether this process will really help people protect land rights or whether, in the current environment, it will only contribute to greater loss of rights and social conflict. In part, the policy is based upon the mistaken belief that land with title is more secure than land held under customary tenure. In fact, customary land is quite secure and legal ownership is guaranteed, and titling in certain conditions may make things worse.

There are two principal dangers in the process. First, the law of customary tenure is that land is held in trust, usually by a family head, for the benefit of the family members. He has the responsibility to look after their land rights and to allocate land fairly to all. The land is not all his personal property, though in everyday speech, the land would be said to 'belong' to him. If land is titled in the name of a family head, all other people and households who had rights to parts of that land suddenly lose them. A very careful process of social investigation is necessary to make sure that all rights to the land are agreed and then recorded on the title (as encumbrances, which remain even if the land

is sold). Such a careful process cannot take place within an accelerated programme of systematic demarcation, since it must follow its own timetable. Without it, the process of titling will serve to erode land rights, not protect them.

The second danger is that titled land is no longer administered locally by people's own social systems. Disputes cannot be heard amicably by clan elders, but must go to courts. Apart from the financial price that may be necessary, there is a huge social cost for people who take their disputes

with neighbours outside the community for settlement through an adversarial legal process. Even non-conflictual matters become difficult. When someone dies, ownership can only be transferred through obtaining letters of administration from a court, and then going to the land registry. This is a difficult, costly and foreign process for most, and one with many dangers of fraud, for people who cannot afford lawyers or who do not understand English. Experience from Masaka District has shown that land ownership quickly runs into difficulties where it is taken out of a 'living' system. Land transactions become paralysed, and not facilitated, when most titles are in the names of persons already deceased. Titling works well where there is an efficient system of land administration and where people understand well what is involved by registering their ownership in land. Establishing this is one of the Government's main priorities. We believe that pushing systematic demarcation

before an efficient land administration system is in place is a serious mistake.

Is there a special case for protecting land rights through systematic demarcation in the case of Northern Uganda? We believe that the return process is the most difficult time to attempt such a programme. In a climate of mistrust and fear, and at a time when people are trying to re-establish their customary claims to land, encouraging individuals to take land administration out of the social system is dangerous, both for society and for individuals. If people see individuals trying to set themselves above the community and to take family land for themselves, social unrest will be inevitable. The dangers of people losing land rights is particularly high in the first years, as they slowly try to reestablish old claims to land and to negotiate afresh the boundaries to land and the nature of overlapping and competing rights. This process must be allowed to happen calmly and in peace, with support given to people's own ways of solving their conflicts. Once this has happened and everyone feels secure, the recording of land rights and the processing of titles, either in the names of communal land associations, families or households, can evolve."

Tensions rise as investors express interest in acquiring land in northern Uganda (September 2008)

The Monitor, 9 September 2008

"Amuru and Lamogi clan elders have asked President Museveni to intervene and order investors to back off Amuru land.

In a letter submitted to the President at State House Entebbe recently, the elders demanded that the government reviews the Traditional Rulers Restitution of Assets and Properties Statute to cater for living allowances for Acholi clan chiefs.

"We reject attempts by Maj Gen. Julius Oketta and Ambassador George Abola to set up another sugarcane industry on the land that is for resettlement. Their proposal directly threatens our people's livelihood and food security," the document reads in part.

The elders from Pagak, Parabongo, Toro and Lamogi said the Madhvani Group and land owners should instead enter into direct talks on the matter.

"We the land owners have a proper framework through which this can be affected," the statement read. The Madhvani Group have expressed interest in acquiring 40,000 hectares of land for sugarcane growing, most of which is in Amuru Sub-county.

"We recall you clarified that any investor should talk directly to the land owners. But to date no direct approach by the Madhvani Group detailing any such requests have been made the land owners," the elders said.

But sources who attended the meeting told Daily Monitor that although Mr Museveni allegedly begged the group to give land to Madhvani, elders instead said they had started preparing their people to leave camps.

They accused the district land board of failing them in their efforts, saying, the land board had ignored people's land rights.

The elders, led by Ms Justine Ocitti, said the land in question forms part of the customary land of the four clans of Pagak, Parabongo, Toro and Lamogi.

They said the clan's rights and ownership is enshrined in the 1995 Constitution and the 1998 Land Act."

IDPs face eviction as Land Board officials apply for personal acquisition of land (September 2008)

The Monitor, 3 September 2008

"At least 10,000 people face eviction after Amuru District Land Board officials applied for personal acquisition of an estimated 85,000 hectares of land, Daily Monitor has learnt.

In a protest note to Daily Monitor yesterday, the LC3 chairman Amuru District Sub-county, Mr Edward Openy, named nine district lands officials whom he said were using their positions to push for an immediate and "disputed" transfer of the communal land in Acholi sub-region.

"These people have dubiously applied for land which is customary," Mr Openy said. "This land belongs to the internally displaced persons, it's for all people."

The region, which is recovering from a 20 year insurgency by the LRA rebels, is now the scene of land wrangles because the majority of the people had been forced into camps.

Among the district officials named in the latest land scandal include; the Board Chairman, Mr Martin Okot, who has reportedly applied for 1,500 hectares and the Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Amuru who is also the Secretary to the Board, Ms Christine Atimango. She is said to have applied for 2,000 hectares.

Others are Mr Augustine Oryem, Mr Charles Ocheng, Ms Okot Eugene, Ms Francesca Aciro, Amuru Sub-county Chief Walter Komakech, Mr John Bosco Akot and Mr Gaodensyo Lakolo who is the parish chief. Each applied for 1,000 hectares.

Mr Openy told Daily Monitor that the land in question was located in Kololo and Lakang villages in Amuru Sub-country.

He added that although the application was done three weeks ago, a planned inspection and survey of the land in question was blocked by area leaders who out-rightly rejected any attempts to grab community land on August 26.

But when contacted, Ms Atimango said the land was a game reserve, degazatted in 1973 by Iddi Amin's land decree. She said; "This man is mad and is saying that because of personal greed." "The law is clear and the board is following the Constitution because any Ugandan is free to settle and own land anywhere."

Sources within Acholi Parliamentary Group (APG) said after the government failed to secure the much-needed Acholi land owners' backing to acquire about 40,000 hectares for Madhvani Group to establish a sugarcane factory in Amuru, this could be a disguised attempt to rekindle the deal.

APG Chairperson Livingstone Okello-Okello said investigations were underway to double check reports that the district land board members were vying peoples' land. Amuru Woman MP ConcyAciro said opportunists are using people's situation to grab their land.

These fresh wrangles come after Nwoya MP Simon Oyet accused 4th Division Commander Charles Otema of illegal acquisition of about 40,000 hectares of land in Latooro village, leaving some 100 families homeless. But Army spokesperson for the north Ronald Kakurungu defended Brig Otema."

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

General

Improved security allows IDPs to return home (August 2008)

UNHCR, August 2008

"Kitgum district is rapidly approaching a situation where the vast majority of the population are no longer physically displaced as a result of the conflict between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army/Movement. From having almost the whole population displaced in camps, the district is now witnessing a situation where close to 60% of the originally displaced population have left the main IDP camps. Majority of those who have left the camps have decided to return and live within the boundaries their villages of origin. A smaller group is believed to have relocated to other locations other than their village of origin. Of the remaining population in camps, it is known through monitoring reports that the majority have intentions to leave the camps in a near future. Out of the same population, it is believed that a small group is planning or has already taken steps, to locally integrate in the locations hosting the camps."

Guidelines for phasing out IDP camps (June 2008)

OPM, May 2008:

"More than 90% (more than 1.8million) of the population in the Greater North region had been pushed into IDP camps by the insecurity as a result of LRA rebellion and cattle rustling. The abnormal situation halted development activities in this region consequently.

However, after the signing of the cessation of hostilities agreement between the LRA and Government, in 2006, there has been relative peace. ASTUs along the Karamoja border, have kept cattle rustling in check. To date, over 1 million people have either returned home or closer to their villages. Living conditions of IDPs have improved and there is increased access to land. Land that was previously occupied by IDP camps and army detachments should be returned to original owners for their use.

Considering that there is no unified approach to IDP Camp phase out, these guidelines aim at providing guidance on the camp phase out process within the framework of the National IDP Policy. The guidelines build on the lessons learnt from the Lango Sub Region where all camps have been phased out. They also borrow from the international guidelines on camp closure."

CCCM Cluster, June 2008:

Since 2005 approximately 190,000 IDPs have left the IDP camps in Gulu and Amuru and moved to transit sites and villages of origin. As a result of this movement many abandoned structures have been left in the IDP camps and transit sites and are increasingly becoming a source of protection concerns in the following ways:

- In some camps and sites the abandoned huts are being used by perpetrators of sexual violence against women and girls.
- According to the community the abandoned huts are being used as defecating places and for disposal of rubbish which is contributing to the poor hygiene in IDP camps.
- Some thieves are taking advantage of the abandoned huts to steal property from occupied huts and using the abandoned huts to store stolen property.

The District and Camp Coordination and Camp Management and Return and Resettlement (CCCM/R/R) cluster has decided to draft clear guidelines for the identification and demolition of abandoned structures, ensuring that the demolition of the abandoned structures is not used as a way of forcibly evicting IDPs from IDP camps or transit sites. These guidelines are intended to be distributed to the host and displaced communities by the local leaders. The guidelines will also serve to assist the communities who have taken the decision to begin this process already, and prevent any conflicts arising from this positive initiative.

In addition to sharing the guidelines with the relevant authorities, members of the CCCM cluster will carry out a series of out reach activities to ensure that both current and former inhabitants of the camps are well informed of this initiative and have the opportunity to make an informed choice about the demolition of the structures which belong to them.

Local government officials in northern Uganda put pressure on IDPs to return home (September 2008)

Oxfam, September 2008

"In 2004, the Ugandan government adopted a highly progressive national IDP policy that promoted the right of voluntary return in safety and dignity.¹⁷ But messages emanating from some local government officials suggest that commitment to voluntary return and understanding of the concept varies considerably across government.

In each of the three Acholi districts in which focus group consultations were held, camp residents said that local officials were pushing for returns to be speeded up, including by threatening imminent demolition of huts or levelling of the camp."

Refugees International, 22 July 2008

"Rhetoric by the Government of Uganda calling for the internally displaced to return home now is becoming increasingly strong. Officials have issued Camp Phase-Out Guidelines, which include plans for the gradual demolition of abandoned huts. There are concerns that the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is not taking a strong enough stance in opposing the Government of Uganda's focus on returns to the exclusion of other alternatives. In particular, there is a lack of clarity on options for those who choose to stay where the camps are located. UNHCR needs to foster ways for the displaced who wish to integrate locally to negotiate with landowners. While displaced people remain in the camps, basic services must be maintained to prevent de facto forced returns and the outbreak of disease, such as the current Hepatitis E virus outbreak, which has spread to several districts as a result of poor sanitation in the displacement camps."

The New Vision, 13 August 2008

"The internally displaced people still living in the main and satellite camps throughout the district have been advised to leave the camps and return to their original villages. The resident district commissioner, Yakobo Komakech, also appealed to the local leaders to mobilise the people to leave the camps and benefit from projects under the Peace, Recovery and Development Programme. Komakech, who chairs the district security committee, was on Monday, speaking at Awer camp."

The Monitor, 1 July 2008

"However, according to Gulu District Disaster Committee Chairperson, Mr Charles Uma, there would be no more relief supplies to IDPs [in camps] since the situation in the north has normalised.

"There will be no relief supplies to IDPs since the situation has improved tremendously and people are returning," Mr Uma said while addressing residents of Lalogi and Loyo ajonga in Gulu recently.

He said the region was no longer in a state of emergency and all former IDPs are expected to be on the way back to their ancestral villages."

The New Vision, 4 June 2008

"AMURU LC5 chairman Omach Atube has assured IDPs who have returned to their villages that social services will be extended near to their villages.

He said under the Peace, reconstruction and development programme, the Government, would construct roads and set up schools, health centres and water sources in villages.

He explained that the programme would not be effectively implemented if people do not leave camps and return to their villages.

Addressing residents of Awer IDP camp in Lamogi sub-county on Monday, he said the implementation of the development programme would start in July.

The resident district commissioner, Edwin Yakobo Komakech, urged the people to take advantage of the current peace and rains to cultivate their gardens in villages."

The New Vision, 21 May 2008

"THERE will be no more emergency relief supplies to the internally displaced people in the district, according to the Gulu district disaster management committee chairman.

Charles Uma said this was because the security situation in northern Uganda had improved tremendously and the people were returning to their homes from the displaced peoples' camps

"Don't expect to get plates, buckets and saucepans anymore because the Government in September last year declared that northern Uganda was no longer in an emergency situation," he stated.

"Even food distribution will gradually stop because you need to be self-sustaining as the security situation has improved for nearly two years now and the rains have been good."

Uma was on Tuesday speaking at Lalogi IDP camp and later at Loyo Ajonga transit camp during consultative meetings with residents on security, law and order. The meeting was organised by the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees.

However, Uma, who is also the assistant chief administrative officer, told the displaced people that nobody would be forced out of the camps because the return process was voluntary.

"Return is based on informed choice and that is why we are here to listen to your concerns," he said."

Fears about security continue to pose obstacle to returns (July 2008)

- Concerns about insecurity continue to pose an obstacle to IDP returns

Earth Times, 16 July 2008

"Hundreds of thousands of displaced civilians in Uganda are reluctant to return home despite a scale-down in the fighting between the rebels and government forces, aid workers said Wednesday. Only 290,000 people have returned home in the war-devastated northern region since the end of 2005 out of over 1.2 million, according to the latest report by the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

About 370,000 other people of the total displaced population are living in camps closer to their homes, the report said.

Return is slow because people are unsure about their security, OCHA's spokesperson in Kampala, Kristen Knutson, told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa.

"People are not moving overwhelmingly into their former villages. One of the reasons is the uncertainty about the peace process," she said.

Northern Uganda was engulfed in a civil war waged over two decades by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The conflict forced hundreds of thousands to flee their homes while thousands of others were killed, mutilated or abducted by the rebels.

Fighting began scaling down in late 2004 when the rebels moved from their southern Sudan bases into the north-east of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

However, the two sides have yet to sign the final peace treaty.

The LRA wants the International Criminal Court (ICC) to withdraw arrests warrants against five of its leaders and the government to guarantee they will be tried in Ugandan courts before inking the deal."

UNHCR, Gulu district, Camp Management partners, April 2008
UNHCR, Amuru district, Camp Management partners, April 2008

"The key issues expressed by the vast majority of the participants relate to the recent development in the Juba peace talk, and the lack of official information provided directly to the communities by the authorities. There is a general fear that the conflict might resume, and it has a direct impact on decision making regarding return, as well as people's interest in engaging in camp phase out activities."

OCHA, March 2008

"Across the Acholi sub-region, movement out of internally displaced persons (IDPs) out of camps has been increasing in the first months of the year, although there has been no large scale movement to transit sites / villages of origin; rather significant back-and-forth movements have been reported as IDPs have returned home temporarily to prepare their gardens for the first planting season."

OCHA, February 2008

"Population movement across the Acholi sub-region does not seem to have accelerated as expected at the end of the rainy season. In January, only an estimated 5,000 people moved out of the camps in Gulu and Amuru¹, a figure substantially lower than had been projected. The slow return is attributed to challenges such as the lack of thatching grass, inadequate basic services in return areas, and personal insecurity. Aid agencies and Amuru district authorities were expected to meet in early March to plan for joint confidence building and monitoring visits to IDP camps and return areas. In Gulu, the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) has established a taskforce to promote voluntary return. Its strategies will be piloted in Lalogi sub-county and will involve, among others, promoting basic service provision in all areas of settlement.

In Kitgum, general movement trends indicate a preference for transit sites over villages of origin. Only an estimated nine per cent of IDPs leaving the camp during the reporting period returned to their villages of origin, while 34 per cent moved to transit sites. Return movements in some areas have been higher than in others: in Chua County, for instance, over 80 per cent of the population in some camps has moved to transit sites or villages of origin. The district plans to phase out six camps beginning in March 2008. "

UNHCR, February 2008

"By the end of January 2008 the approximate total number of people who have moved from camps to either areas of return or villages of origin in Gulu and Amuru districts has been 109,000. (Gulu district approximately 56,000 and Amuru district 48,000). There has not been a significant influx of IDPs returning as it had been earlier expected for this period. There are various general factors affecting movement of those families who would like to return but feel it is not yet the right

time. Amongst others, security and the increase of criminality. The community wishes SPCs to have greater presence in the sites including more regular patrols before they decide to return. Nevertheless the psychosocial impact of living so close together for many years with the military providing security is longstanding and will require significant efforts by the Government as the affected population return to a more regular, civilian life. Amongst other seasonal factors, shortage of water due to sources drying up has been identified as a major cause impeding full return this period."

The New Vision, 2 December 2007

"Internally displaced people in Lamogi sub-county, Amuru district have been urged to use the prevailing peace to return to their villages. The LC3 chairman, Denis Rom, said displaced people in the main camps should use the dry season to resettle because the grass can be used to thatch huts. He said the settlement of displaced people in decongested camps was in line with the Government's resettlement programme. "Most people have refused to leave the main camps because they are waiting for resettlement packages, while others say the main camps are near their gardens. "I want to encourage people to move back to their villages because you will receive the packages even when you are at home," Rom told residents of Gira-gira, one of decongested camps, on Thursday."

High levels of crime threaten to reverse the returns process (May 2008)

The Monitor, 15 May 2008

"Cases of robberies are reported to be on the rise especially in villages where former IDPs have returned in Gulu and the surrounding districts.

Reports have also emerged that the insecurity caused by the thugs locally known as "bookech" continue to impede the resettlement programme that has been going on in the region after the relatively peaceful atmosphere.

Authorities in the camps said the constant security threats posed by the thugs especially late in the day and at night are forcing some of the people who had already resettled to abandon their new homes in the villages.

Daily Monitor has learnt that some of the thugs use guns that could be traced to the government armouries.

A recent report released by the Criminal Investigations Department, indicates that cases of robbery have doubled and many residents are living in fear for their lives and property."

Security improves, but fear of landmines and unexploded ordnance hampers return (May 2008)

- Improved security means increased access to land for IDPs
- Fear of landmines and unexploded ordnance hampers return movement

OCHA, Feb 2008

"Improved security has meant increased access by internally displaced persons to agricultural land and increased access to return areas for humanitarian organizations. Only the World Food

Programme (WFP) continues to use light military escorts for food convoys, particularly in sub-counties close to the border with South Sudan or adjacent to Karamoja. However, IDP return movement reportedly continues to be hampered by the feared presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO). In Pader, for example, there are close to 200 reported suspected landmine or UXO locations."

IWPR, 16 May 2008

"The conflict has subsided as the LRA and the Kampala government have been engaged in peace talks for the past 22 months. A peace agreement has been drafted but not yet signed.

The return to normality has been obstructed by the landmines the LRA rebels planted over the years of conflict, to prevent the army from pursuing them after their attacks. As people repopulate the villages and start working the surrounding lands, they risk setting off a mine planted there deliberately, or some other live explosive weapon left behind from the war.

"The biggest problem as we prepare to recover from war is the abundance of unexploded ordnance," said Patrick Omara, who lives in Pader district. "Many people now fear to go back to their villages because of this problem."

The Ugandan army has begun an operation to find and destroy as much of the scattered ordnance as possible.

"We have launched an operation to dig out mines and unexploded bombs which were planted by the LRA," said [Captain Deo] Akiiki [spokesman for the Ugandan army in the north of the country]. "We have recovered 2,153 bombs and 318 unexploded fuses."

The operation is concentrated in Pader, a former LRA stronghold which along with the town of Kitgum to the north has the biggest problem with unexploded ordnance. Some of the worst affected areas are Awere, on the administrative boundary between Gulu and Pader districts, and Omot, about 50 kilometres east of Awere, just outside Pader.

Areas around two other district centres in the north, Gulu and Lira, are not affected to the same extent.

Akiiki said the government launched its programme because humanitarian groups involved in demining were unable to keep pace with the demand for clearing areas of unexploded devices

Every week, he said, the government teams were recovering an assortment of explosive items such as hand grenades, rockets, missiles, cluster bombs, bullets and shell fuses in and around Pader and Kitgum.

Uganda's state minister for disaster preparedness and refugees, Musa Ecweru, told IWPR that the government planned to train an auxiliary force to help the military demining teams.

Ecweru said areas lying to the south of Pader, including the town of Lira, were less strewn with mines than the more northerly parts of the country.

"The pressure the government forces put on Kony did not allow the rebel commanders to plant a lot of landmines in Lango and Teso [sub-regions]," he explained.

In his view, "It's up to local leaders to get down to the communities and [inform] the locals on mine detonation."

Ocii Okello, who lives in the village of Awere, close to the epicentre of the conflict, believes increasing numbers of people are being killed by landmines.

Most of the victims, he said, are children oblivious to the dangers, or women who come across explosive devices while out hunting for firewood.

Despite the efforts to address the problem, people remain worried.

"It's [easier] to die of unexploded bombs than of LRA attacks," [said] Jasper Abok Ocere, a former LRA fighter who has returned to civilian life. [He] sees the lethal debris of war as the most dangerous part of life in the north these days."

Lack of services major obstacle to return (June 2008)

CartONG, June 2008

"Return appears to be steady in Gulu District, while return in Amuru is much more gradual. This led the UNHCR and its implementing partners to ask the IDPs to tell the Resident District Commissioner in Amuru why they were not returning. The IDPs stated a variety of reasons including security, services, access roads, schools and that the grass was not yet long enough in this season to build proper thatched roofs for their huts. Services are available around main roads and the IDP camps. Many of the sites from which the IDPs fled are very far removed from populated areas that are supported by security services, water, sanitation, schools, commercial centres and roads. In many instances, potential return sites are not accessible by footpath due to over a decade of long grass growth. For IDPs that fled from remote areas, return to those largely un-serviced sites is not practical."

The New Vision, 4 June 2008

"Internally displaced people (IDPs), who have resettled in their villages, have threatened to return to the camps if the Government does not provide them with clean water.

Over 300 residents of Lalworo village in Paicho sub-county, Gulu district, made the warning last Saturday while meeting Lt. Col. Francis Achoka-Ongom, the UPDF officer in charge of the resettlement programme.

The meeting was aimed at collecting people's views on how to ensure that displaced people return to their villages. Geoffrey Lukwiya, 26 said: "If the Government does not drill boreholes in this area, we shall go back to the camps where we had access to clean water."

He said they collect water from an unprotected well in Lamin-Obura village and it serves over 320 people.

The residents were also concerned about the unexploded ordinances that were abandoned by the LRA rebels.

Richard Lakwor, a resident, urged the Government to beef up security in the area, saying they live in fear because of the bad dreams they have about the atrocities committed by the LRA rebels.

Florence Akwero, a mother of five and has three dependants, asked the Government to continue supplying them with farm implements and food till they harvest the crops in their gardens.

The LC1 vice-chairman, Michael Olum, said lack of access roads to the villages, water, schools and health centres were some of the things that had made IDPs reluctant to return to their homes.

Achoka-Ongom urged the people to remain calm and promised that the Government would provide the essential facilities in their villages.

He said community roads would be opened up with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Achoka-Ongom added that the Government had played a commendable role in clearing the areas known to have explosives and in taking the lead in educating the people on landmines."

The Monitor, 17 May 2008

"Some internally displaced people interviewed by Saturday Monitor say they will not go back to their original homes, but not because of the fear of brutal rebel attacks, but because of the lack of roads, schools and hospitals.

The most affected districts in the two-decade long Northern Uganda conflict have been relatively safe since rebel attacks ceased over 22 months ago.

A peace process has not been concluded yet between the Lord's Resistance Army [LRA] and the government but for people like Mr Isaac Okello living in an IDP camp is still better than heading back home because of comparatively advanced social services there.

Mr Okello, 32, a father of six is worried that his children will have no schools to attend and have no access to a health center if he takes them back to his family home.

"There is a high chance that I will lose a family member in case they fall sick since there is nothing like a dispensary and the nearest health center is 15 miles from my village", he told Saturday Monitor .

A US\$ 600 million government fund to rebuild the north known as the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) has not gone beyond its planning phases.

Gulu LC 5 chairman Norbert Mao says most of the schools, health centers are concentrated within the camps where people have lived for the last 15 years.

"If you go to the villages where these people once lived, you will find nothing like any social service for the people yet they are expected to leave the places where they can access these services", he said.

According to Mr Mao, villagers are in a dilemma where they are caught up between going back to their villages and getting their children out of school or remaining in the camp and not being able to farm so that their children can access education from nearby schools.

Gulu District local government has earmarked 1.5 billion shilling for the construction of 80 bore holes, 40 new class rooms, 120 teachers' quarters and 30 health centers as part of the rebuilding effort to bring services to the eleven sub-counties in the district.

In the meantime the fear of bad schools not rebels will keep many parents from starting a new life in their old homes."

OCHA, March 2008

"In Amuru, the preliminary report from the District Security Committee's visit of return areas highlighted the lack of basic services as a chief impediment to return. Most IDPs are settled at transit sites at which some services are available, rather than villages of origin.

The findings of a rapid Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA), carried out by the Food Security Working Group in 20 camps in Gulu, listed a number of constraints to population movement cited by IDPs, including security concerns (79 per cent), waiting for the availability of local building materials (53 per cent), waiting for the signing of a final peace agreement between the LRA and the Government of Uganda (46 per cent) and waiting for a directive to return from the Government (30 per cent).

Similarly, in Kitgum, frequently cited reasons for maintaining a home in the camp, even if a family resided elsewhere was the availability of services and continuing general food distributions. Generally, the biggest obstacle to return or resettlement is lack of thatching grass: bush fires and demand from returnees has resulted in the depletion of the grass in areas."

UNHCR, February 2008

"Major Challenges in Return Areas:

Increased criminality and still limited police presence in return areas. Now that the police have received logistical support from various partners, there is need for effective even deployment and regular patrolling.

Water sources have dried up during the dry season. This is especially affecting areas of return.

Lack of general infrastructure for institutions especially.

Despite ongoing works, there is need for further efforts on clearing community roads. This ongoing activity goes a long way to promote Freedom of Movement and return with safety and dignity.

Fear of mines and UXOs. Lack of professional UXO mapping to guide quick and systematic demining efforts.

Lack of services in areas of return prevent full return: many returnees continue to maintain two homes in order to benefit from access to land in their villages and services in the camps (especially food, health and education)."

For vulnerable groups of IDPs, major obstacles to return persist (September 2008)

- Vulnerable groups of IDPs, including the elderly and child-headed households, face major obstacles in the return areas, preventing them from leaving the camps.
- Local government officials are nevertheless putting pressure on all IDPs to return to their villages.

Oxfam, September 2008

"Displacement and camp life have eroded community support networks that in the traditional rural setting helped to ensure that the most vulnerable were cared for. Moreover, many of the protection mechanisms that existed in camps, where NGO-trained community groups were active, are being disrupted as returns intensify. Meanwhile, the government has disbanded camp leadership structures, leaving a vacuum that local authorities have not yet been able to fill. In return areas, local government protection mechanisms are in their infancy; at the same time, it is difficult for NGOs to provide the same level of protection monitoring to a more dispersed population.

As people return home, it is the most vulnerable camp residents – widows, orphans, elderly people, and the sick – who are left behind. Some are physically unable to walk back to their villages, while others, in particular widows and orphans, may be actively denied access to their land or may not know the location of their original homesteads.

Moreover, many children who do have parents still face protection issues, because they are being left in the camps unsupervised in order to continue their education in camp schools, while parents return to their villages to cultivate land. Unsupervised children are vulnerable to sexual abuse or exploitation for casual labour. Older siblings are sometimes forced to drop out of school to care for younger children.

In both camp and return sites, women and children heads of households are often at the greatest risk of exploitation and face big challenges in building sustainable livelihoods. To survive, some women are breaking with traditional roles and seeking alternative ways to make money. Typically, women in the camps have resorted to brewing and selling alcohol, making them unwilling participants in the cycle of alcohol-related violence.

In Acholi culture, construction of the traditional grass-thatched homestead is a task reserved for men. Unmarried women and widows who want to return to their villages must therefore rely on male relatives to build their homes, and are expected to provide food and/or money in return. The poorest of these women may be forced to build the huts themselves, even though this is not culturally acceptable.

Mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that the most vulnerable receive the necessary support and protection. At the same time, initiatives that separate women from men or target selected individuals in isolation from the community risk fuelling resentment, leaving the vulnerable even more exposed. Moreover, the breakdown of traditional gender roles creates practical and psychological challenges for men, as well as women, to which recovery actors should be attuned."

The Monitor, 1 July 2008

"As the Peace Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda picks momentum and hundreds of formerly displaced persons in the Acholi sub-region are returning home, scores of them have refused to return saying they are uncertain of their survival in villages.

The defiant group comprises the elderly and child headed families who have found camp life as their only better place.

With free food, social services like education and other necessities in camps, these vulnerable groups view the planned return to their ancestral homes as a real path to death.

At Lalogi IDP camp in Gulu where 45,500 people had been displaced, a total 3,000 people are still in the camp yet others have gone back to their homes.

An 89-year old Matayo Lalango who lost all her children during the insurgency says he has nowhere to and no body to support him.

“All my 10 children were massacred during the insurgency and I was left alone. I cannot go back home because I can not build a hut or dig neither do I have any body to get back home,” says a visibly puzzled Matayo Lalango as tears rolled out of his eyes.

Ms RoseMary Nyega, 78 who looks after 12 orphans is pessimistic about life in her village.

“I am overwhelmed by the responsibility of bringing up all these orphans. I have been staying here since 1997 and I see nowhere to go. This is my only home,” she says.

“We are facing hard times as elderly people and to our bad luck we even hear that agencies have scaled down humanitarian aid. Where are we going to run now?” she asks.

In Adjumani District the situation is not different. With over 65,000 IDPs still living in three camps of Lewa, Arinyapi and Ogolo IDP camps in Dzaipi Sub- County, the occupants there also stick to their guns not return home.

In the camps of Ogolo and Lewa, residents say they could not risk going back to their villages when they are not sure of their safety. Mr Jeremiah Buga, a resident in Lewa camp says he had hopes of returning home only when the peace talks are concluded well.

Mr Matheo Okuga, also from Lewa camp, says as IDPs they risk going back to the villages when they are not sure of their protection. “ I’m not going until everything is clear, ” says Mr Okuga.

However, according to Gulu District Disaster Committee Chairperson, Mr Charles Uma, there would be no more relief supplies to IDPs since the situation in the north has normalised.

“There will be no relief supplies to IDPs since the situation has improved tremendously and people are returning,” Mr Uma said while addressing residents of Lalogi and Loyo ajonga in Gulu recently.

He said the region was no longer in a state of emergency and all former IDPs are expected to be on the way back to their ancestral villages.

The local leaders are currently embarking on a drive to clean up the camps.

At Lalogi IDP camp the 1000 unoccupied huts, 600 pit latrines and bathing shelters have since been pulled down.

“We see no point of continuing to stay in these squalid conditions, most people are now residents in their ancestral villages,” remarked Mr Moses Odida, head of a family that was happy at returning home.

Daily Monitor has also reliably learnt that scores of landowners that used to house the IDP camps are also demanding compensation from government.

"We are happy for having saved thousands of lives by sacrificing our land for people to build huts during harsh times it is time government considers compensating us," said a 67-year-old Christine Akun, a landlord in Lalogi sub county. However, she does not state how much she needs as compensation for hosting IDPs on her piece of land."

The New Vision, 15 April 2008

"IT is mainly the elderly and the disabled who are still stuck in displaced people's camps, a study by the ministry for the disabled has revealed.

Herbert Baryayebwa, a commissioner, said the two vulnerable groups form almost 80% of the people still living in camps.

Addressing journalists in Kampala recently, he said children also posed a special problem.

"Voluntary resettlement is taking place but majority of the young people who were born in the camps have nowhere to go."

The commissioner also said the ministry was working on a regulation demanding all buildings be made friendly to the disabled.

"Most disabled persons have difficulty accessing several infrastructure like buildings and vehicles, but we want to bring an end to their suffering."

Minister Sulaiman Madada said there was need to economically empower the physically handicapped.

"We shall ensure that the disabled get enterprise-based skills."

For the elderly, lack of shelter is major obstacle to return (Oct 2007)

OHCHR, Human Rights Analysis, Gulu district, September 2008

"EVI [extremely vulnerable individuals] are left behind in the camps without care takers as people are returning, one concern raised is the lack of shelters and people to construct them and other issues such as, fetching water, collecting food during the general food distribution since most of them are too weak to carry out their activities. A total number of 1191 EVIs with different needs have been identified by the UNHCR camp management partners (DRC and ARC) in the three sub counties. 1014 in Awach, 54 Bungatira, and 123 in Bobi. A total of only 101 EVIs have been assisted in Awach Sub County with plastic sheeting by ARC and UNHCR. All the EVIs Identified by DRC in Bungatira and Bobi sub county need assistance such as shelter, saucepans, cups and plastic sheets."

IASC, 24 October 2007

"One of the greatest obstacles to old people's return after displacement was the absence of shelter. In Uganda, after years away from home, people faced the daunting prospect of starting from scratch, with roads, water sources as well as fields overgrown. Many old people said they were physically unable to rebuild their houses – especially the oldest old, but that if some way

were found to build them, then they would prefer to return to their villages and attempt to restart their lives."

Disabled people stuck in camps (April 2008)

The New Vision, 15 April 2008

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"Voluntary resettlement is taking place but majority of the young people who were born in the camps have nowhere to go."

Concerns about destruction of forests by returning IDPs (September 2008)

The New Vision, 8 September 2008

Over 72% of forest reserves in northern Uganda have been destroyed by internally displaced people (IDPs) returning to their villages, environment state minister has said.

Jessica Eriyo noted that the destruction of wetlands in Teso and Karamoja sub-regions would lead to grave climate changes and desertification.

During the annual district environment officers' conference at Ridar Hotel in Seeta last week, the minister warned of more environment degradation as peace returns to the north.

"The former IDPs need sensitisation on sustainable resource use," she said.

She cited Wicheri Forest Reserve in Amuru district as one of the forests being destroyed by IDPs, adding that attempts by the National Forest Authority to sensitise the locals on preserving the reserve were futile.

"We could not agree with the locals because they said their MPs were discouraging them from conserving the forests."

Eriyo said even the sub-county LC3 chairman was blocked from going to the forest reserve to encourage conservation.

As a means of curbing the rampant degradation of the environment, Eriyo said her ministry would harmonise district environmental objectives with those of the ministry, ensure effective use of wetlands and improve the management of natural resources."

Return and reintegration

Landmine victims struggle to reintegrate (September 2008)

IRIN, 5 September 2008:

IRIN, 5 September 2008:

"The return of peace to northern Uganda has prompted many formerly displaced people to return home, but resettling into the villages has proved tough for landmine survivors.

"I never imagined that I would become disabled until I was hit by a mine planted by LRA [Lord's Resistance Army] rebels in front of my door in 1995," Irene Laker Odwar said. "Now some people look at me as a burden or a curse."

Laker, a member of the Gulu-Amuru Landmine Survivor's group, said several land victims in the region had been affected by trauma, inadequate medical support and inability to fend for themselves.

"Some of our relatives and members of the community do not want to associate with us - they think we bring more burdens," she added.

The group has 876 members in Gulu and Amuru Districts. The number of survivors is, however, believed to be higher in villages because some fear to come out and register or to openly express their problems. "The majority of landmine victims are very young, they still require a lot of support to be able to earn a living," Irene explained.

[...]

Others lament that village life did not provide adequate social support structures like well-equipped health units, clean water and access roads for the disabled. Those with unhealed wounds were languishing without proper treatment.

Support

Kalanzi Emmanuel, the officer in charge of Gulu regional referral orthopedics centre at Gulu hospital, said the survivors needed a lot of medical support as they try to resettle in their villages. But the centre lacked adequate staff and equipment to help all of them.

"Government recruited only three technologists and AVSI [an Italian aid agency] recruited one more, one occupational therapist, one psychosocial therapist and two social workers to help the victims," he said. "The local governments had agreed to transport the victims to the centre for routine treatment or control, but this is not being done."

Gulu district and AVSI run a project for some survivors, building materials from clay. "It will help them learn skills in manufacturing building materials and earn income to support their families," said the district rehabilitation officer, Perry Jawoko.

Michael Ocan Ongom, AVSI mine risk educator, said that the US\$12,000 project will help victims lead meaningful lives and be self-reliant.

"We are making roof tiles, flower pots, ventilation tiles, candle stands, flower pots, interlocking bricks and charcoal stoves," Lanyero Jennifer, a 25-year old mother who lost her right leg, said. "The proceeds are helping me meet daily expenses."

Extent

Northern Uganda has just emerged from two decades of armed conflict between the LRA and the government. The conflict devastated the region and led to almost two million people fleeing their homes to live in camps. According to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), it created the threat of mines, unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive ordnance.

[...]

"The cumulative number of mine casualties in Uganda is not known," the ICBL said. "The government reports 900 survivors in northern Uganda and 200 in western Uganda...data from the ministry of health, the ICRC and NGOs show that there might have been as many as 2,000 mine/UXO casualties between 1999 and 2004."

Formerly abducted children struggle to reintegrate (July 2008)

Joanne Corbin, April 2008

"Resettlement of FAC into families and communities requires massive efforts and resources by all social systems in war affected areas. The lives of the FAC in this sample hang in an uncertain balance. There is little opportunity for them to sustain their lives and provide for their families. The parents and relatives of the FAC are overwhelmed with the task of caring for these children with few resources. Communities as a whole have no way of supporting FAC. The challenge will be for international, national and grass roots agencies to work with communities and create a plan to help families and communities to support FAC and all children affected by war. This is a different strategy than providing support to individual FAC. It is a strategy that increases families' resources to care for the returning children and strengthens communities' abilities to accept them."

Survey of War Affected Youth, 27 November 2007

"Large numbers of youth report difficulties with their families and communities when they first return home from abduction, yet for most these problems lessen over time. Relatively few youth report conflicts within families and communities today, although for these youth such conflicts are extremely important and painful. Such conflicts may have been mitigated but not solved by blanket and broad-based sensitization programs. Like severe injuries, estrangement from one's family is painful and pressing, and few targeted services are available for these youth.

Relatively few (3 percent of males and 7 percent of females) report any current problems of acceptance by their families. Communities appear to have come to accept the majority of former abductees. Less than 10 percent of males and females report still having some problem with neighbors or community members.

Such acceptance was not immediate, however. For instance, 39 percent of females reported that they were called names by their community when they returned, 35 percent said they felt the community was afraid of them, and 5 percent report that their own family was physically aggressive with them. Current reports by females of such experiences were dramatically lower,

however—7 percent for insults, 1 percent for community fear, and 0.4 percent reporting family aggression.

Women and girls who returned from the LRA with children were most likely to report problems with their families and communities upon return, although the vast majority now say they are accepted into their families. An important minority of these young women do seem to have more persistent problems with family and community members than other female returnees, however. For instance, 14 percent of these females report that their families sometimes say hurtful things to them—far more than that reported by other long-term abductees. The reasons for such challenges seem to vary from case to case, however, suggesting that targeted conflict resolution or mediation may be the most appropriate intervention.

Where youth do report problems with families and communities, these problems often relate to specific conflicts with particular neighbors or family members rather than difficulties with the entire family or community. Of course, these conflicts are no less painful to these youth simply because they are with just a few rather than all community members. The important point is that such specific conflicts are not easily addressed by the majority of community sensitization interventions, which typically take a blanket, one-size-fits-all approach. Moreover, our study finds that conflict resolution, psychological support, and family counseling services are seldom targeted at the most severely affected."

Survey of War Affected Youth, April 2008

"Reintegration

- Two-thirds of formerly-abducted youth have not applied for formal amnesty or reintegration support packages.
- Programming for youth formerly-abducted by the LRA is insufficient to meet their needs.
- Most formerly-abducted youth primarily require support for education and livelihoods.

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- Health services and psychosocial support for the most severely affected youth are grossly inadequate: a core group of highly-affected youth are left unaided.
- Large numbers of youth report difficulties with their families and communities when they first return home from abduction, yet for most these problems lessen over time.
- All youth are struggling and suffering due to war and displacement. Neither abduction itself nor specific abduction experiences are good predictors of vulnerability or types of need."

Justice and Reconciliation Project and Quaker Peace and Social Witness, May 2008

"As Kingma has pointed out, reintegration efforts in northern Uganda have "rested largely on the shoulders of former combatants and their families." According to one of the principal NGO providers to peer support groups, "If reintegration and reconciliation is to be sustainable, communities must be responsible for it. They must be empowered". Although the need for external support remains, local ownership of the reintegration process is essential. Many organisations operating in northern Uganda feel that peer support groups offer a sustainable reintegration strategy, because they are both grass-roots level and evocative of Acholi social organisation. Peer support accomplishes sustainable benefits through empowerment of group members who share psychosocial support and skill training with each other.

Group leaders identified some key factors that allowed peer groups to thrive. These were characterised in two ways: internal factors of success included strong leadership, group unity, member commitment and perseverance, transparency, accountability and monitoring. External factors included training, funding, and support from parents, community members, camp leaders, and elders. Training was the most frequently identified group need, which was requested in the following areas: leadership, group management, conflict management, counselling,

communication skills, peace building, vocational skills, life skills, health issues (such as HIV/AIDS education), dealing with stigma, and utilisation of resources. Training was seen as a way to strengthen the group, empower members and become self-sufficient. Respondents identified a need for cooperation and dialogue between peer support groups, local leaders and organisations."

Washington Post, 28 July 2008

"He had escaped alone, running for his life through swamps and grassy savannas, leaving behind seven years of captivity in one of Africa's most sadistic rebel groups, the [Lord's Resistance Army](#).

But of all the horrors Samuel Ogwal endured -- being forced to teach children to kill and to watch them die, to deliver beatings and conduct ritualistic murders -- he was now facing a new kind of terror: returning home to the uncertain judgment of family and friends who had been brutalized by rebels like him.

"I was afraid they might kill me," Ogwal said, recalling the weeks he spent last year deciding whether to head home to his village or start an anonymous life someplace else. "I was ashamed of what I had done."

Thousands of other escaped abductees -- women coerced into sexual slavery, children forced to become soldiers and grown men such as Ogwal -- have faced similar decisions in the past couple of years, as life across this lush, green northern region of Uganda has slowly returned to some version of normal.

With a 2006 cease-fire holding, although peace talks between the government and the mysterious rebel leader [Joseph Kony](#) have stalled, many Ugandans are debating the question of justice: whether Kony and his top commanders, who still have a small army holding out in Congo, should be tried for war crimes at the [International Criminal Court](#) or in special Ugandan courts.

But for the rank and file, thousands of former abductees coerced into a brutal 20-year war with their own people, there are no courts or lawyers, no formal steps toward reconciliation. Instead, there is a certificate of government amnesty, followed by the long, day-by-day process of repairing relationships with parents and children, husbands and wives, friends and neighbors.

"Everybody talks about reintegration, but no one gets to the heart of the matter," said Joann Pacoto, a local commissioner, who was just last week dealing with a case of a former child soldier, a girl, who had returned home to her village, snapped, and killed her father with a machete. "It's very complex. To get people who've spent 10 years in the bush to come back to regular life and be accepted, that is a problem. It's not like 'Oh, Joann is back' and that's that.'"

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

No obstacles to humanitarian access (Feb 2008)

- Only WFP now uses light military escorts for food convoys.

OCHA, Feb 2008

"Improved security has meant increased access by internally displaced persons to agricultural land and increased access to return areas for humanitarian organizations. Only the World Food Programme (WFP) continues to use light military escorts for food convoys, particularly in sub-counties close to the border with South Sudan or adjacent to Karamoja."

Humanitarian access in Karamoja

OCHA opens second field office in Karamoja (March 2008)

OCHA, March 2008

"The opening of a second field office in the Karamoja region, in Kotido, has enabled OCHA to expand its coverage and coordination services throughout northern Karamoja. The three districts of northern Karamoja – namely Abim, Kaabong and Kotido – continue to exhibit alarming performance against humanitarian indicators. For example, at present, only 20 per cent of the population of the three districts is literate on average, varying from only six per cent of the population in Kotido to 12 per cent in Kaabong to 40 per cent in Abim. The pupil-teacher ratio for Abim is 1:71; for Kotido, 1:90; and for Kaabong, 1:111, while the classroom to pupil ratios for the respective districts are 1:118, 1:76 and 1:93."

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

National response

Overview: national response (April 2008)

On 15 October 2007 the government launched the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for Northern Uganda, including Acholi, Lango, Teso, West Nile, Karamoja, and Elgon. The PRDP is a comprehensive development framework aimed at improving socio-economic indicators in those areas affected by conflict and a serious breakdown in law and order and bringing them into line with national standards. The PRDP replaces the Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan (EHAP) and its Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC). The targets and objectives in the PRDP are to contribute to the national goals of Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) of 2004. The PRDP has four strategic objectives: consolidation of state authority, rebuilding and empowering communities, revitalisation of the economy, and peace building and reconciliation. The total estimated cost of the PRDP is \$606 million over a three-year period (Government of Uganda, September 2007, pp.vi-ix).

If implemented, the PRDP would be an important step on the path to addressing the perceived neglect and marginalisation that lie at the root of the conflict in northern Uganda. However, its implementation will be a significant challenge. The PRDP does not specify how its objectives are to be realised. Proper benchmarks to measure progress in implementing it will be crucial, as will further elucidation of the relation between the PRDP and the Consolidated Appeals Process (IDMC interview with NGO staff, 15 November 2007).

Finally, the Refugee Law Project in Kampala has raised concerns that while provisions are made for assistance for the returns process for IDPs who have been living in camps for the duration of the conflict in northern Uganda, no such provision has been made for the estimated 300,000 to 600,000 urban IDPs in the country (RLP, December 2007 and March 2008; The Monitor, 12 December 2007 and 17 December 2007).

National response: Uganda's IDP Policy (July 2008)

- Government adopts IDP Policy (August 2004)
- Policy is broadly consistent with UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
- Policy launched in Kampala followed by regional launches in districts affected by the conflict

The report by the IDMC and the RLP, "Only Peace Can Restore the Confidence of the Displaced" (October 2006) contains a detailed discussion of the implementation of the National IDP Policy.

The Report by DANIDA (August 2005) analyses the obstacles to full implementation of the IDP Policy in Teso.

The New Vision, 6 July 2008

"The commissioner for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Africa, Mukirya Nyanduga, has commended the Government for adopting a national policy on the displaced.

"I commend Uganda for adopting the national policy which contributed to the implementation of the Peace Recovery Development Plan."

Nyanduga was making a presentation on gender and IDPs during a meeting for leaders from seven districts of northern Uganda at Acholi Inn in Gulu on Thursday. The meeting preceded the official opening of the FIDA [International Federation of Women Lawyers] regional offices in Gulu.

He recognised the role civil society organisations play in the promotion of human rights among refugees and IDPs in Africa.

"Civil society organisations have continued to be a source of inspiration and strength to the African Commission."

Nyanduga said civil society organisations had earned the status of observers in the Africa Commission because of their critical role.

[...]

The refugees state minister, Musa Ecweru, said the challenge of resettling IDPs was enormous. He appealed to FIDA to strengthen the Government's capacity to dispense justice, law and order."

GoU, August 2004

"In August 2004, the Ugandan Cabinet adopted the National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons. The Policy establishes rights of IDPs, specifies the roles and responsibilities of various branches of the government, humanitarian and development agencies, donors, displaced persons and other relevant stakeholders. It also introduces various multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary structures at national, district and sub-county levels in an attempt to more effectively address the protection and assistance needs of displaced persons. The overall goal of the Policy is to ensure that IDPs enjoy the same rights and freedoms under the Constitution and national and international laws as do all other Ugandans. To meet this objective, the IDP Policy attempts to integrate IDP issues into all aspects of government planning and programming."

DANIDA, August 2005, p.25

"While the adoption of the IDP Policy is considered a positive achievement, it has yet to succeed in improving situations endured by IDPs. In certain areas, there is a total lack of awareness regarding the existence of the Policy. In the Teso sub-region a recent study found that out of 13 camps visited only one camp leader had a copy of the Policy whereas the other camp leaders had not even heard of it ."

UNHCR, October 2005, p.2

"A lack of resources has also hindered the Policy's implementation. At the district level, the Policy mandates that a District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) act as the lead agency in responding to and providing for the needs of displaced persons. Yet the Committees, constituted by all relevant heads of local government as well as humanitarian actors, do not have the resources nor the capacity to implement the IDP Policy and thus have been unsuccessful in ensuring that displaced persons are able to fully exercise both their social and livelihood-related rights (UNHCR, October 2005, p.1; IDMC interviews, Kampala, 29 October 2005). While the IDP

Policy notes that the DDMC can establish a district disaster management fund, in Katakwi district for example, local authorities have received no instructions from the central government as to where and how they were expected to find the resources to enable them to implement the many activities mandated by the IDP Policy (DANIDA, August 2005, p.27). While the government has acknowledged that the resources needed to operationalise the IDP Policy are considerable (GoU, April 2005, p.7), these resources have yet to materialise in the affected districts. The IDP policy does make provision for disaster-prone districts to recruit a full time District Disaster Preparedness Coordinator, many of whom have already been recruited and are operational in the affected districts. However because the Coordinators are funded by an outside agency, research in the Teso region has shown that many within the local government were confused about the Coordinator's role in relation to the rest of the district structure (DANIDA, August 2005, p.14). Anecdotal evidence also indicates that Coordinators are not integral members of the local government and lack authority and credibility to make decisions."

UNHCR, October 2005, p. 1

"Another concern relates to government's participation in implementing the Policy – in Lira district for example, for three months government representatives failed to attend the District Disaster Management Committee meetings (UNHCR, October 2005, p.1). The highest level committee, the Inter-Ministerial Policy Committee consisting of various government ministers, which is mandated to meet in Kampala as needed, is non-functional as it has yet to convene its first meeting."

Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP): concerns about delay in implementation (October 2008)

- In October 2007, the Government of Uganda launched the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda.
- The start date for the PRDP's implementation was set for July 2008, but there continue to be uncertainties about the PRDP's funding and oversight mechanisms.

PRDP, September 2007, page vi

Context

Since the 1990s, the Government of Uganda (GoU) has been promoting a development agenda that has led to a reduction in poverty nationally, with visible improvement in many of the welfare indices. The number of Ugandans who are unable to meet their basic needs declined from 56% in 1992 to 38% in 2003 and further to 31% in 2006 with a simultaneous improvement in other indices relating to access to health, education and water and sanitation. However, the welfare indices for Northern Uganda have not improved at the same pace as the rest of the country. Income poverty remains significantly high, literacy rates are low and access to basic services is poor. The presence of prolonged conflict in the North for over 20 years is the most important factor explaining the poor living conditions in the North whilst at the same time it is the major impediment to increasing GDP growth in Uganda.

Process of preparing the PRDP

Bearing this in mind, the H.E the President kick started a process to prepare a recovery and development plan for the North. The first step was the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee (IMTC) that has spearheaded a two year consultative process with all stakeholders at the district and national level resulting in the National Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP). The PRDP is a commitment by Government to stabilise and recover

the North in the next three years through a set of coherent programmes in one organising framework that all stakeholders will adopt when implementing their programmes in the region."

Resolve Uganda, 1 October 2008

"This week, key U.S. lawmakers have written to Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni regarding the lack of progress toward reconstruction and recovery in northern Uganda.

Citing a lack of basic services in areas of IDP return, as well as weak police and judicial structures and high levels of trauma amongst war survivors, several Senators from the Senate's Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa, as well as other influential leaders in the U.S. legislature, expressed their concern over the Ugandan government's delays in implementing its Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP). In the letter dated September 26, 2008, the Senators request that President Museveni respond with details regarding how the Ugandan government intends to fund and implement the plan."

Oxfam, September 2008

"Although the government and donors have devoted long hours to discussing financing and implementation modalities, a cloud of uncertainty still surrounds the PRDP, especially at the district and sub-county levels. But if the PRDP is to deliver, information sharing and communication flows will need to improve between key central government departments (namely the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the government unit responsible for PRDP co-ordination, and the Ministry of Finance); between central government and local authorities; and between government and international agencies.

Local government officials interviewed by Oxfam in June 2008 were, for example, unsure as to whether the PRDP would result in any additional funds flowing directly to the district budget. Central government should intensify efforts to provide local authorities – the main implementing organs of the PRDP – with the necessary information relating to the plan. Donors meanwhile should lend technical assistance to the OPM to strengthen its capacity to effectively fulfil its co-ordinating and oversight role."

National and local standards: humanitarian and recovery targets (May 2008)

OCHA, May 2008

This document provides an overview of targets for humanitarian and recovery interventions, in the areas of:

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

Education

Food Security and Agricultural Livelihoods

Governance, Infrastructure and Livelihoods

Health, Nutrition, HIV/AIDS

Protection

Child Protection

Gender-based Violence

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Gulu district earmarks funds for infrastructure in return areas (March 2008)

The Monitor, 28 March 2008

"Gulu District local government has earmarked Shs1.5 billion for construction of 80 boreholes, 40 new class rooms, 120 teachers' quarters and 30 health centers.

Speaking to Daily Monitor on Wednesday, the Secretary for Works, Mr Alex Otim said the money would be used for setting up infrastructures in areas where people have returned in all the eleven sub-counties.

"The district is setting up infrastructure in areas where people have returned in all the eleven sub counties, so that they can get access to services," he said.

"As people return home, there is need for infrastructure to be put in place so that people can get access to basic needs," Mr Otim said.

He said they are only setting up infrastructure in areas where people have returned, he said. "We are not setting up infrastructure in internally displaced camps (IDPs) but at the sites where people have returned to," he said.

He said the contractors would begin work next month. And they are using local contractors so that communities can benefit from the project.

"There are 120 contractors who they were trained and they have the skills in delivering services to the community," Mr Otim said. he said they have given them one month to finish the work, so that the beneficiaries make use of the services as they return, Mr Otim said.

"We expect the contractors to finish the work in a period of one month, so that the returning population gets access to the services," he said. He warned the contractors against doing shoddy work.

"Contractors who do shoddy work will not be given more contracts," he said. Mr Otim said they expect the residents to benefit alot when the infrastructure."

Government reneges on promises of resettlement packages for returning IDPs (April 2008)

IWPR, 24 April 2008

"Meanwhile, many people living in internal refugee camps say they are unable to return to their villages as the government has not fulfilled its promise to supply them with the resettlement packages they need to rebuild their villages.

[...]

Many northerners remain in internal refugee camps because the resettlement kits that the government promised them more than a year ago – which were to include the tools and materials they needed to rebuild their homes and villages – have failed to materialise.

Gulu District Commissioner Walter Ochora announced this month that the resettlement packages would be restricted.

Ochara told IWPR that a limited supply of metal sheets was available, and that these would only be given to those who have already built their houses to roof level.

Those who want roofing sheets had to register, he said, and have their house photographed as proof of construction. Only then will they be given the materials.

The restrictions, which also include signing an agreement to use the roofing sheets only for housing, are an attempt to stop the resale of the materials. Ochora said that those caught violating the terms would be prosecuted.

Many residents are angry that the roofing materials are in such short supply, when entire villages have to be rebuilt.

"These iron sheets are not enough even for a single camp like Pabbo camp," said Patrick Oryema, an official in the Armuru district.

Pabbo is one of the largest camps with an estimated 60,000 or more residents.

"Supposing all the returning [refugees] manage to set up their houses...where would we get [enough] iron sheets from?" he asked. "It is ridiculous for government to just give a symbol of assistance, while proclaiming to be resettling them.

"The concerned authorities should first ask the government for more iron sheets, or withdraw the programme altogether."

Former resident of the Opit camp Robert Opira said that the new restrictions had not been relayed to villagers. He said some think the metal roofing will never arrive, "We have not been told to build houses [to] get iron sheets. Others even doubt when and how the iron sheets will be distributed."

Oris Olal, who is from the same village, said the new rules have come too late. The rainy season has arrived and the rain makes it difficult to bake mud bricks and built houses. "It is now wet season and we can't lay bricks because they will be washed by the rains," he said.

But Amuru district official Basil Odongpiny urged refugees to return to their homes, and suggested that waiting for the resettlement kits to be delivered first was futile.

"Some camp dwellers are emphasising that the government brought them to the camps, and should therefore give them kits to return home, but please do not try to chase an animal that you cannot kill," he said."

IDPs seek compensation; government rejects claims (April 2008)

The New Vision, 23 April 2008

"Most formerly displaced persons (IDPs) want the Government to compensate them for the losses incurred during the LRA insurgency. They said camps were set up on their land. The army, they added, had also camped or cultivated on their land.

A 2007 survey by land experts in Acholi and Lango regions showed that 17% of the 1,119 respondents lost their resources and 73% want compensation.

They want to be paid for illegal or unauthorised occupation of their land and loss of income they would have accrued from the land.

About 23% said they found their land still intact when they returned to their villages.

The survey, funded by the World Bank, was conducted by Margaret Rugadya, Eddie Nsamba-Gayiiya and Herbert Kamusiime from Associates for Development.

Some respondents suggested that resolving land disputes was the second best alternative while 8% called for removal of illegal occupants on land.

Only 6% opted for re-establishment of land boundaries and 4% thought resettlement by the Government would solve the disputes.

However, the state minister for relief and disaster preparedness, Musa Ecweru, said the Government would only give them funds to start income-generating projects.

“The Peace Recovery and Development Programme will address these cases.”

The New Vision, 14 July 2008

“The Government will not compensate the people in northern Uganda for property destroyed during the 22-year LRA war. The property includes houses and degraded land.

“It is sheer madness to think that we shall compensate people for such claims,” the disaster preparedness minister, Prof. Tarsis Kabwegyere, told Parliament on Thursday.

Okello Okello (UPC) had asked whether there were any plans to compensate those whose land had been degraded due to the establishment of internally displaced people’s camps and army detachments.

Kabwegyere was appearing before the committee on presidential affairs together with Prime Minister Prof. Apolo Nsibambi and other ministers in the premier’s office to defend their policy statement.

Kabwegyere argued that the displaced had to be resettled somewhere because “we could not have put them in the sky.”

But Okello Okello claimed that the army bombed areas to threaten the people out of their residences, forcing them to flee to the camps.

However, disaster preparedness state minister Musa Ecweru said the camps were built where the army could provide adequate security and the people went there voluntarily.

“We never woke up one day and decided to set up camps. I hate such lies and that is why I left the UPC.”

Okello Okello retorted: “The UPC never put people in camps. Camps are an innovation of the NRM. Now since you left, can you return our card?”

Information minister Kirunda Kivejinja said under the compensation law, one is paid the value of what they lost. He added that the burden of payment must be shared by the LRA rebels and the Government.

Kabwegyere said the camps and army units were set up in open spaces.

In a recent study on land in the north, 73% of 1,119 respondents backed compensation."

Urban refugees left out of return plans (October 2008)

Refugee Law Project, July 2008

"Despite the stalled peace talks in Juba, many internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in Uganda's cities and towns have begun to plan for an end to their displacement. But many more could remain displaced indefinitely, as many of the urban IDPs the Refugee Law Project has spoken with say the government's return and resettlement assistance has so far been too little.

In February, Hon. Musa Ecweru, Ugandan Minister of State for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, met with a group of urban IDPs living within a slum dubbed "Acholi Quarters" in the Kireka-Banda neighbourhood of Kampala. Ecweru offered to facilitate elders representing the different IDP groups in Kampala, Entebbe and Jinja to travel to their home districts to assess the feasibility of return to northern Uganda. He also promised lorry trucks for those willing to make the move, as well as offering some food assistance.

While elders from Kampala, Jinja and Entebbe have taken the opportunity of a "go and see" visit, none of the urban IDPs we have spoken with have so far opted for the proffered lorries, as they feel it's a one-way trip north—and not necessarily to their home villages—where no further facilitation would be waiting for them. Return and or resettlement is however a complex process requiring several back and forth trips before a decision to settle can be made. Many of IDPs say they would have to rebuild their homes, clear their fields and begin acquiring food supplies.

The Ugandan government and humanitarian assistance organization are tasked with supporting IDPs in the north as they move from the camps to their homes, and urban IDPs are now asking the government for recognition of their status and to guarantee them the same assistance upon return."

Refugee Law Project, October 2008

"Perhaps because many urban-based IDPs settle in slum areas, where they tend to blend in with the existing population, they are often perceived, even by some officials in humanitarian agencies, as a population less deserving of serious attention than their fellow citizens living in camps. Some humanitarian workers even claim that these people are nothing more than economic migrants, despite their unique history and circumstances.

Such claims in some instances offer an excuse for inaction; there is no doubt that dispersed urban IDPs pose far greater challenges to effective intervention than do rurally encamped ones. However, as populations generally become more and more urbanized, it will become ever harder for agencies to avoid confronting such challenges, and indeed, in some countries, including neighbouring Sudan, displacement to urban areas is being given considerable attention.

Discussions with local government officials in Gulu suggest that if urban IDPs do manage to return to their areas of former domicile they will benefit from assistance just like their rurally-based counterparts. However, the dynamics of return are not the same for both categories and without a doubt, urban IDPs' needs and protection concerns are different: their return demands should

accommodate this distinction. For example, many urban IDPs have noted that they are unable to return because they do not wish to interrupt the education of their children.

When, in August this year, UNHCR started to host ad hoc meetings for organizations working with urban IDPs, it was therefore a welcome development. The aim of the meetings, which involved members of the existing protection cluster, including ASB, IOM, RLP, UNICEF, and WFP, was to plan profiling exercises which could begin to fill a critical information gap and lay the groundwork for assistance to this long-overlooked population. Although some profiling was done in Masindi,

Teso, Lango, and Adjumani in 2006, little is known about IDPs displaced to larger urban centres, notably Kampala, Jinja and Entebbe. Moreover, the little that is now known demonstrates a critical gap in knowledge and information on this category of people.

At the meeting, it was agreed to conduct a rapid population assessment and profiling exercise, beginning in the first week of September. This would have given time to identify urban IDPs' protection needs and concerns and to use such information for fundraising under the Consolidated Appeals Process for Uganda for 2009.

Unfortunately, the whole enterprise was stalled as a result of a request from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), a move which calls into question the government's commitment to honoring its obligations under the national IDP policy and the Constitution of Uganda. Sources suggest that the OPM has yet to finalise a position on urban IDPs, which seems to confirm our earlier observations that the National IDP Policy was drafted with displacement to rural areas in mind exclusively, and should perhaps have been called the 'Rural IDP Policy'. When the RLP contacted OPM to confirm its position, we were told by a senior officer that he was "too busy to comment". In a separate interview, another high-up OPM official however suggested that lack of information regarding the situation and concerns of urban IDPs is a major impediment to the identification of this population and provision of assistance. This suggests a lack of communication and coordination within OPM to seriously address this issue.

Given the limited time-frame in which the previously mentioned profiling exercise had to take place, the delay effectively precluded the possibility of fundraising for assistance to a population in an already dire situation. Despite the efforts of some humanitarian actors, and despite the fact that ignoring the problems associated with displacement to urban areas is clearly in breach of national obligations, the future welfare of urban IDPs, remains as uncertain as ever."

The Office of Prime Minister issues new response plan to address Karamoja situation (January 2007)

- Revised government plan for Karamoja to enhance security and promote recovery, the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme
- Military operations to be used in one component aimed at enhancing security
- Virtually no attention to the issue of displacement
- IDP camps in Northern Uganda to be dismantled and people to be resettled in their former homes as part of PRDP for Northern Uganda

Government of Uganda, January 2007, Pg. xii, 43:

"KIDDP is intended to contribute to human security and promote conditions for recovery and development in Karamoja, and to formulate a course of action that will define interventions by

government and other stakeholders necessary to achieve a comprehensive and coordinated disarmament that will enhance sustainable peace building and development in Karamoja.

Component 1 on: '*Providing and Ensuring Adequate Security for the People of Karamoja*':

Undertake strategic deployment of the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) and Local Defence Units (LDUs) to effectively check the international trafficking of small arms and ammunition into Karamoja, as well as protect the people of Karamoja and their property
Planned interventions under the KIDDP are thematically categorised into three: (a) Military-type operations; (b) development-type interventions for socio-economic transformation; (c) conflict management and peace building initiatives. Military operations will be coordinated through the normal military command structures and systems."

"In this revised KIDDP, the primary strategy to be pursued during the disarmament is the voluntary surrender of illegally held guns. Peaceful and voluntary disarmament is encouraged as far as possible. The recourse to the use of force to disarm is considered necessary, only and only as a last resort, when it becomes completely unavoidable. Forceful disarmament should only become necessary to disarm: (i) those who are found with arms and ammunition in public places; (ii) those who commit crime using guns, including staging road ambushes and conducting cattle raids."

"In order to provide a framework for the coordination of intervention for rehabilitation and reconstruction of Northern Uganda, government launched the Peace, Recovery and Development Programme (PRDP) for Northern Uganda. The primary goal of the PRDP is to accelerate poverty reduction and development of Northern Uganda to bring it at parity with other regions."

International response

Overview: international response (November 2008)

In light of the improved security situation in northern Uganda since the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in August 2006, and the large-scale returns which the region is witnessing as a result, urgent and effective measures are needed to set northern Uganda on a path to recovery and development. However, the management and coordination of the transition from humanitarian relief to development has so far been characterised by "institutional confusion and weak leadership" (Oxfam, September 2008, p.17; see also Resolve Uganda, September 2008).

In response to the lack of clarity from the government and the UN in Uganda, do-nor governments have adopted a wait-and-see approach, and donor funding for recovery has not been sufficiently forth-coming. The mid-year review of the Consolidated Appeal warned that "low donor response has left the various clusters without the means of implementing most of their transitional programming. [...] It is critical that all partners recognise the potential risk: if humanitarian concerns persist or worsen due to lack of funding for projects aimed at stabilising displaced and returning populations, any sustain-able recovery will be delayed, or even jeopardised" (OCHA, 16 July 2008, p.1). As of 5 October 2008, the Consolidated Appeal for Uganda for 2008 was 55 per cent funded (OCHA, 5 October 2008).

Uganda was one of the pilot countries for the implementation of the cluster approach under the humanitarian reform process. The coordination mechanisms set up in line with the cluster approach have to some account functioned as parallel mechanisms, next to the local government

structures in northern Uganda. With the transition from humanitarian relief to development, there is growing attention to the need to hand over responsibility to local government authorities for the delivery of social services and the provision of protection to the population of northern Uganda. However, local government itself has been severely weakened by two decades of conflict. For recovery efforts to be sustainable, all actors must prioritise the strengthening of local government structures (Oxfam, September 2008, pp.22-23).

The cluster approach in Uganda (October 2008)

European Commission, 15 Oct 2008

"The clusters are supposed to include host government authorities in the affected countries, and this happens as a matter of course in many cases. Host government participation has proved more difficult in countries where country teams are concerned that participation by the authorities may distort the humanitarian response. However, worth noting is the positive experience as regards government participation in clusters in Uganda."

Forced Migration Review, December 2007

"The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) strongly believes that the Cluster Approach holds promise for improving the international response to internal displacement. The approach represents a serious attempt by the UN, NGOs, international organisations and governments to address critical gaps in the humanitarian system. We want this reform effort to succeed and to play an active role in northern Uganda to support the work of the clusters and improve their effectiveness.

The introduction of the Cluster Approach in Uganda must be recognised for the role it has played in maintaining focus on the humanitarian crisis that continues to affect a significant proportion of the population across northern Uganda. The Cluster Approach has resulted in a more coherent and consistent policy response from the UN and humanitarian community, working to balance the priorities of ensuring freedom of movement and freedom of choice for IDPs and continued provision of assistance to people in camps. The challenge that remains will be to see how the Cluster Approach develops in line with the improving situation on the ground, most notably responding to movement from humanitarian relief to transition and early recovery, and ultimately to a post-conflict environment. Investment and support for the transition to a post-conflict environment must be done in such a way to ensure protection and assistance to IDPs and refugees throughout the region, regardless of their location.

Awareness and leadership

Effective implementation of the clusters depends largely on the ability of the cluster leads, headed by the Humanitarian Coordinator, to hold the Government of Uganda (GoU) accountable for its actions. To date the linkages between the cluster leads and the Humanitarian Coordinator remain tenuous, with weak leadership as a result. The unsuccessful introduction of a stand-alone Humanitarian Coordinator for Uganda was a disappointment.

To ensure better implementation, cluster leads and members must have a better understanding of the process, particularly with regard to tools, planning and strategic planning. The GoU must be brought on board, informed about the process and, where possible, included in coordination mechanisms.

Coordination

Despite the proliferation of coordination mechanisms, led by the UN, NGOs and the GoU, coordination still remains insufficient. As a result, many feel that little real decision making and follow-up take place in the clusters. Furthermore, local government officials lack clear understanding of the roles in the clusters and how they can push for action. A key challenge remains the capacity of the clusters to be all-inclusive (involving not only the UN and international NGOs but also national NGOs and, at district level, local NGOs and community-based organisations) and to establish clear linkages with the GoU and local government. Lastly, the clusters continue to fail to recognise that coordination amongst all actors will be most successful when it respects and reflects the priorities set by communities as well as by local and national government bodies. If the Cluster Approach is to be successful, a participatory approach must be the basis for coordinated interventions across northern Uganda.

Clusters in the context of transition

At this moment of cautious optimism in Uganda, the Cluster Approach should prioritise working towards a gradual and smooth transition from humanitarian aid to long-term development assistance. NRC looks forward to supporting the important role UNDP is beginning to play in developing and implementing the Early Recovery Cluster. For many actors in Uganda, it continues to be unclear that UNDP is responsible for this cluster; it is also unclear how it relates to other sector working groups and especially to clusters where there appears to be significant overlap in activities e.g. food security, non food items and protection.

Conclusion

The Cluster Approach is now at last actively working to improve humanitarian response and coordination in Uganda. We have seen improvements in coordination, service delivery and protection of IDPs and returnees in northern Uganda. However, much work is still needed to realise the full benefits of an inclusive Cluster Approach where all relevant actors are included as partners. With more attention to and progress on leadership and coordination, inclusiveness and the transition to early recovery by the clusters, we expect the rights of IDPs to be better met."

Decline in funding for humanitarian assistance for northern Uganda (July 2008)

OCHA, Mid-Year Review of the CAP, 16 July 2008, p.1:

"Unfortunately, despite the recognition of the decreasing humanitarian needs in the Acholi, Lango and Teso sub-regions made in the CAP 2008, with its attendant shift away from traditional emergency programming toward community-based recovery activities that complement other initiatives under the umbrella of the PRDP, low donor response has left the various clusters without the means of implementing most of their transitional programming. With less than 31% funding for the early recovery and recovery projects included in the CAP, basic service delivery and livelihood support in all IDP-hosting areas and in Karamoja are underfunded. Where possible, some of the more recovery-oriented projects have been withdrawn, wholly or in part, from this revised CAP.

It is critical that all partners recognise the potential risk: if humanitarian concerns persist or worsen due to lack of funding for projects aimed at stabilising displaced and returning populations, any sustainable recovery will be delayed, or even jeopardised."

UNHCR, 5 March 2008

"UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres pledged Tuesday to do more to support the return of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people (IDP) in northern Uganda.

During a visit to the north, where an estimated 850,000 people still live in IDP sites, Guterres said it was "our obligation to help," adding that Uganda had been a generous host nation to refugees from neighbouring countries and deserved support and solidarity from the international community.

"All of us in the international community are ready to work in support of the Ugandan government," Guterres told hundreds of IDPs gathered in a dusty football field in Kalongo, an IDP site which hosted 65,000 people at its peak in 2005. Some 17,000 IDPs remain in this area in northern Uganda.

"If we join hands, if we work together it will be possible to make sure that roads, water, education and health facilities are built," said the High Commissioner, who visited Kalongo with the Luxembourg Minister for Development, Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs Jean-Louis Schiltz."

IRIN, 5 May 2008

"Humanitarian activities in northern Uganda, which is emerging from more than two decades of civil war, are being curtailed because of a decline in funding and rising costs, aid agencies and a government minister have warned.

"Although the big donors, including the United States and Britain, have continued to support us, there has been a marked scaling down in their humanitarian response to us because they presume that we are no longer having a problem," Musa Ecweru, Uganda's minister in charge of disaster preparedness and refugees, told IRIN on 2 May.

He added that the government was likely to have to divert funds earmarked for development projects in order to ensure food security for the most vulnerable.

"We all should not allow the situation to degenerate into anarchy because food is a critical element of survival," he said. "The United Nations should be supported and for us as government, we shall do our best."

Ecweru added: "We are strained to breaking point. In Karamoja, where 700,000 people need relief this year, we used to intervene every five years, then it became every two years, now it appears it will be every year. Meanwhile [in the war-ravaged northwest] 940,000 internally displaced persons still need relief even with much better access to farming land now. The number is expected to reduce over time."

The rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), active since the late 1980s, is engaged in peace talks with the Ugandan government. Although the LRA no longer has bases in northern Uganda, the region's population still has enormous humanitarian needs.

Meanwhile, the northeastern Karamoja region is in the throes of a food crisis that has left almost the entire population dependent on outside assistance.

Just 21 percent of the funds sought by the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, through the Consolidated Appeal Process, have been forthcoming, about half the proportion provided by the same time in 2007.

"Out of the 58 million dollars that the agency appealed for in December (2007), only 11.6 million has been received," UNICEF Spokesman Chulho Hyun said.

"Some of the major areas of the appeal, including water and sanitation, and HIV/AIDS, have not received a single response. For those that have been funded, the funding has been below half of what is required," he added.

Hyun noted that northern Uganda was now in a post-conflict recovery" phase, buoyed by the peace talks with the LRA.

"With this momentum that has been generated, we want to make the message clear," Hyun said.

"If the international community is serious about investing in a stable and secure northern Uganda, the intervention should continue to give the people of northern Uganda a fighting chance to claim back a sense of normalcy in their life. We have to make the transition and if we fail, this will be a lost opportunity."

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) says a funding shortfall has forced it to interrupt some of its programmes in Uganda, including mother-and-child health and nutrition.

"School-feeding and HIV/AIDS programmes are also expected to be suspended in coming months due to lack of resources," Tesema Negash, WFP country director, said.

"The programmes are emergency initiatives, social safety nets. Now more than ever, we need them."

During the appeal to donors, WFP sought \$135 million to see it through 2008.

"With the increased food and fuel cost, plus Karamoja where the crisis is much bigger than was anticipated, WFP Uganda now needs \$180 million," Negash said. "For the next three years [2008-2010], there will be an additional \$24 million needed annually because of rising food prices. WFP's budget for the three years was 378 million. Now it is US\$451 million."

He added: "We have received an estimated \$29 million in donations. We are extremely grateful, but we need more support in order to curb malnutrition and sufficiently prevent deaths of young children." "

Support for the PRDP (September 2008)

Oxfam, September 2008

"The government has developed an ambitious three-year recovery programme for northern Uganda known as the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP). The PRDP encompasses four core strategic objectives: consolidation of state authority; rebuilding and empowering communities – under which return and resettlement of IDPs is included; revitalisation of the northern economy; and peacebuilding and reconciliation.

The launch of the PRDP in October 2007 – after repeated delays – was accompanied by considerable confusion. It was not clear if the PRDP was meant to be a new initiative that would create parallel implementation structures, a prioritised list of objectives already contained in Uganda's national Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), or a co-ordinating framework.

Likewise, at the time of its launch the PRDP did not contain a clear funding mechanism, and official implementation did not begin until July 2008.

There was further uncertainty as to whether the PRDP represented additional funds to the North on top of existing central government transfers, or the total cost of recovery in the North (in which case, the estimated \$606m cost of financing the PRDP would have been a big underestimate). Before committing funds to the PRDP, donors, who already provide substantial budgetary support, wanted an indication of the central government's own financial commitment and preparedness to increase transfers to the districts. For its part, the government first wanted to know how much the donors were considering giving, before putting a number on its own planned contributions. A painful waiting game thus ensued. The funding relationship between the PRDP and the UN's Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) was also initially ambiguous, giving rise to the perception that the PRDP and the CAP were competitors. Donors were left unsure as to whether, where, or how to channel money.

The government has since made concerted efforts to elucidate the objectives of the PRDP, emphasising that it is 'not a separate project' but 'a coordination framework for all programs and projects in the north'. The Ministry of Finance meanwhile has clarified the PRDP's funding mechanisms, confirming that in addition to budgetary support, funds for projects that are aligned to PRDP objectives but which do not pass through government coffers will be included in its financing. This is important, because it should eliminate the perception that the CAP and the PRDP are competing against one another and allow off-budget donors, such as USAID, to contribute to the PRDP."

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, October 2007

"Early recovery highlights and addresses a change in focus from saving lives to restoring livelihoods, thereby effectively preventing the recurrence of conflict and harnessing conditions for human development. Since the onset of the peace process in northern Uganda, a number of early recovery and life saving activities have been concurrently initiated in support of returnees.

This Early Recovery Strategic Framework has been formulated to inform and support the national plan for peace, recovery and development, with assistance from the United Nations system, specific non-governmental organizations and other international partners in Uganda. Initiated by the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Uganda, and supported by the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP, it reflects the objectives and priorities of the United Nations Country Team as well as the Government and other humanitarian and development actors.

The strategic framework aims to bridge the gap between immediate relief and long-term reconstruction. The objectives and priorities herein focus on identifying concrete interventions that may be implemented on an immediate basis. It sets out and reflects sectoral directions for initiatives that will facilitate a coordinated approach and improve aid effectiveness.

The Framework will guide early recovery initiatives that serve to:

- Rebuild and empower communities
- Revitalize economic livelihoods
- Build peace and reconciliation
- Consolidate state authority

The Early Recovery Strategic Framework complements the national peace, recovery and development plan by: (i) augmenting ongoing humanitarian assistance; (ii) supporting spontaneous recovery efforts of the affected populations; (iii) building the foundation for sustainable long-term reconstruction; and (iv) reducing future conflict and disaster risks."

Aid agencies struggle with transition from humanitarian relief to development aid (September 2008)

Oxfam, September 2008

"A transition from insecurity to relative stability, from humanitarian relief to development, and from displacement to return is inherently complex: competing needs overlap and actors must adjust to new roles. But northern Uganda's transition has been characterised by avoidable institutional confusion and weak leadership. There has been a lack of clarity from the government and from the UN as to how recovery activities should be defined, co-ordinated, implemented, and financed. At this critical juncture for northern Uganda, donor funding for recovery has not been forthcoming,

A historical lag in accepting that a humanitarian crisis existed in the first place partly explains the slow start to planning for the transition away from it. The Ugandan government was long reluctant to acknowledge and respond to the humanitarian disaster in the North, only launching an Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan for the region after the situation there was discussed at the UN Security Council in early 2006. And because of relatively impressive national economic growth rates and reductions in poverty, the international donor community has consistently lauded Uganda as a 'success story' in spite of the conflict, displacement, and marginalisation of the North.

It is now incumbent on the government and its partners to seize the opportunity created by the Juba peace process and the subsequent improvement in security to consolidate substantial gains already made in the North. Sustainable development will require far greater government ownership, improved co-ordination of state, UN, and NGO activities, and adequate donor funding."

Radio Netherlands, 9 July 2008

"The exact hiding place of Joseph Kony, the leader of Ugandan rebel movement the Lord's Resistance Army, remains a well-guarded secret. But one thing that is certain is that after 20 years of bloody civil strife, the situation in northern Uganda is now relatively calm.

Officially, however, the area is not at peace, for Joseph Kony is still refusing to put his signature to a peace deal. Nonetheless, the Ugandan government is in a hurry to get all the refugees now living in camps to return to their homes. Aid and relief organisations, meanwhile, are finding it difficult to adjust to the new situation.

[...]

Transitional phase

Of the two million people living as refugees in the Acholi region, around 12 percent have already returned to the villages from which they came. Some 36 percent have indeed already left the refugee camps but don't believe it's the right time to go back home yet. They are now residing in newly-created 'transitional' camps, in the neighbourhood of their home villages, where they are preparing for the new situation.

However, more than half of the refugees are still based in the old camps. As for adapting to the new situation, it's not only the refugees who need to do so, but also the aid workers. Speaking at her office in Gulu, Ajwang Stelle Roseline of the United Nations OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) says: "We're now in a transitional phase, moving from emergency aid to reconstruction." The room where she sits is full of graphs and charts that

attempt to chart the situation as regards the refugees in northern Uganda. "We need to redefine our strategy. We have to think about building roads and encouraging economic activity."

The biggest challenge in this respect - she refuses to speak of a 'problem' - is financing the reconstruction effort. Although donors actually provided 90 percent of the funding for emergency aid while the civil war was in progress, now they're accepted responsibility for a little over 20 percent of the finances required to pay for the reconstruction.

Emergency aid or reconstruction

Whilst the UN is already gearing itself towards reconstruction activities, there's still an urgent need for emergency aid in the refugee camps - as is the case, for example Palenga camp. Here, some 1400 people live cheek by jowl in a crowded complex of huts made from mud, reeds and grass.

Chickens and goats wander in between the huts eating off the ground, while children play around the water pump. At first sight, it's a peaceful scene, but the problems are mounting up just under surface, says Judith Maat, who's here to establish what kind and how much help is need: "The war is over now and that means that most medical and food aid has stopped. But by no means everyone is able to take care of themselves. For years, people haven't been able to cultivate their land. You see a wilderness all around. Without cows or oxen, which were stolen by the rebels, it's an enormous task trying to get the ground level once again."

Scorched earth tactics

Dutch relief worker Piet Buitendijk is also worried about the amount of aid being provided to the villages. He's been working in northern Uganda with his organisation Noah's Ark for 12 years: "Everything in the villages is now overgrown. There are no roads, no water pumps, no schools or doctors. There's nothing at all."

Piet Buitendijk also says there are still landmines and other weapons spread throughout the region: "Who's going to clean that up? Nobody knows what to do. There's no Marshall Plan like there was in the Netherlands after the war." However, the Ugandan government is in a hurry to get everyone to leave the refugee camps, which were established 12 years ago, and to go 'home'. Uganda is very keen to show the outside world that it's got its own house in order, that's what Mr Buitendijk thinks. "It's almost like scorched earth tactics. Put a halt to the provision of aid so people have no choice but to go back."

Large flags and logos

The changes for the aid workers in northern Uganda are quite large too. They've been trained to work in a war situation, as is the case with Piet Buitendijk's staff: "Now, for example, we're seeing how many personnel are not suited to working in this situation. Many programmes which were once effective no longer serve their purpose."

Meanwhile new aid organisations are making an appearance in Gulu, wanting to get in on the act as the situation changes. White four-wheel drive vehicles career through town trying to avoid the potholes in the roads. On every corner there are signs bearing the logos of NGOs. It doesn't make Mr Buitendijk happy: "It's sad to see how they try to outdo each other by having the biggest logos and flags. At the same time, everyone's waiting to see what happens. How's the security situations, how are the roads, what will the government permit?" And he says this is dangerous, because it will make the Ugandans bitter.

Strong people

Judith Maat of Cordaid hasn't encountered any bitterness during her visit to northern Uganda: "I have seen many strong people who are thinking once again about the future and daring to dream. I've seen families who have come together and put their backs into things and are working the land. That's very important at this stage. People really want to live again."

Aid agencies accused of having prolonged the war (June 2008)

Adam Branch, June 2008

Abstract:

"Given that humanitarian organizations can often be responsible for enabling, prolonging or intensifying violence and conflict through their interventions into war zones, it is important that these organizations, despite their presumed neutrality and beneficence, be held accountable for the deleterious consequences of their actions. The case of northern Uganda will be used to demonstrate how humanitarian agencies have made possible the government's counterinsurgency, including its policy of mass forced displacement and internment, which has led to a vast humanitarian crisis. The Ugandan government policy will be assessed as a war crime, making aid agencies accessories to this crime. This case study is used as an example to highlight that processes which demand the post-conflict accountability of those responsible for violence may be dramatically incomplete, and unjust, if they do not include the humanitarian agencies. In conclusion it will be suggested that if humanitarian organizations built popular accountability mechanisms into their daily operations this might prevent them from being complicit with egregious violence in the first place."

Reuters Alertnet, 21 February 2008

"Reports on northern Uganda often paint a picture of an evil, crazed rebel cult committing unspeakable atrocities while kidnapping thousands of children to fight.

In the background, aid workers do their best to feed hundreds of thousands of people crammed into squalid displacement camps where disease is rife.

But have humanitarian agencies actually helped prolong the crisis? The question is posed by journalist Matthew Green, who recounts his search for reclusive rebel leader Joseph Kony in his new book "Wizard of the Nile: The Hunt for Africa's Most Wanted".

Coverage of northern Uganda rarely makes clear that many people were systematically forced into the camps by the government as it sought to close in on Kony by depriving him of support. The army broadcast ultimatums telling people they would be considered rebels if they refused to leave their homes.

Green argues that the United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) was unwittingly sucked into underwriting this strategy when it began trucking aid into the camps shortly after the government began creating them in late 1996.

"The government said at the time it would be a few months," Green says. "Ten years later the camps were still there and they caused arguably more suffering than the rebels. The amount of disease, the squalor and social deprivation people suffered was appalling.

"And all this time the WFP was effectively sponsoring this strategy... No one was asking was it really correct for the government to herd hundreds of thousands of people into camps and leave them there indefinitely."

At the height of the crisis some 2 million people - 90 percent of the local population - were living in camps. Many were also dying there - up to 1,000 a week, according to a 2005 report by the Ugandan government and U.N. agencies.

Green describes the camps as "giant incubators of disease, alienation and despair" that ended up killing more people than the rebels did.

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He stresses he isn't condemning the WFP, but highlighting a bigger problem with the whole system.

"Aid agencies sometimes look away from the cause of the suffering," Green says. "They try to treat the suffering but by doing that they actually become part of the system that creates the suffering."

"It's easy to criticise but I think people even within the organisations recognise there's a dilemma - it's that dilemma of it's much easier to put a humanitarian band aid on the problem than to mobilise the political will in Western capitals to try to do something about it."

Western governments viewed Uganda as a success story - a development story rather than an emergency. And President Yoweri Museveni's government, for its part, was eager to play down the crisis.

"They always presented the camps as a temporary measure," Green says. "They kept repeating this mantra that we've defeated Kony and then there would be some terrible outrage and they would always use this phrase 'the last kicks of a dying horse'. It was essentially propaganda and I think that worked."

The myth of Kony as an apparently deranged mystic also distracted international attention from conditions in the camps. The plight of children abducted by his fighters made better copy than the quiet suffering of a generation growing up in squalor.

"The fact that Kony was this bizarre jungle dwelling demi-god figure surrounded by dozens of wives talking about the Holy Spirit - that image was so powerful that it made it much easier to dismiss the conflict as something almost beyond the realms of rational intervention and that played very much into the government's hands," Green says."

Aid must be delivered with greater transparency and accountability (August 2008)

HPG, August 2008

"Introduction (p.3):

Despite recent pushes within the humanitarian industry for increased participation, accountability and transparency, affected populations still lack power within the assistance process and access to the agencies that assist them. This distance between aid agencies and beneficiaries, combined with the limited attention of aid agencies to nonfinancial forms of corruption (with the notable exception of sexual exploitation), means that the perceptions of affected populations about corruption in the assistance process are often not recognised, understood or acted upon. This report summarises a case study on perceptions of corruption in humanitarian assistance among internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Northern Uganda.

[...]

Conclusion (p.21);

As people in Northern Uganda return home – and assuming they continue to do so if the peace process is successful – aid agencies are being encouraged by the government to focus their efforts on the parish-level planning system, involving Local Councils and parish development committees. This process is leaving the previous system of camp leadership behind. Whether leaders were installed through new camp leadership systems or as part of the Ugandan government structure appears to have had little bearing on corruption in the assistance process, but the power afforded to leaders indisputably has had a major impact. The movement of people into smaller camps and back to their homes provides aid agencies with an opportunity to make a concerted effort in working with affected people and systems of representation to ensure that aid is delivered with greater transparency and accountability."

Donors provide funds for reintegration of returning former rebels (September 2008)

The New Vision, 23 September 2008

"The government has received \$2.85m (sh4.7b) from donors to reintegrate former Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels into their communities.

Internal affairs minister Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda yesterday said: "The LRA returnees will benefit whether their leader Joseph Kony signs the final peace agreement or not."

His speech was delivered by Matia Kasaija, the internal affairs state minister, at the launch of the demobilisation and reintegration project at Hotel Africana in Kampala.

Last month, the World Bank and the Government signed the first grant agreement of \$2.85 (sh4.7b).

The funds were given to the Amnesty Commission, which will implement the project up to 2010.

Rugunda explained that the multi-donor trust fund covers former rebels of the Allied Democratic Force.

The total budget for the fund was \$ 8.2m (sh13.5b), to which Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden and the UK have contributed.

Kony failed to show up in South Sudan on April 10 to sign the final peace agreement, meant to bring an end to over 20 years of violence in the north.

Justice P.K. Onega, the Amnesty Commission chairman, said the project targeted 28,800 former rebels and collaborators.

World Bank country manager Kundhavi Kadiresan said the reintegration support would include counselling and follow-up services, education and specialised services for vulnerable groups.

He said communities hosting the returnees would also need support in projects that can sustain the whole community."

The New Vision, 19 August 2008

"The World Bank Group and the Government of Uganda have signed a \$2.85m Multi-Donor Trust

Fund Grant to support the Amnesty Commission's demobilisation and reintegration of former rebels.

The new financing follows previous support from the Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (MDRP), which closed last year.

The new grant agreement signed by Uganda's Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Dr. Ezra Suruma, and the World Bank Uganda Country Manager, Kundhavi Kadiresan, will improve access to socio-economic reintegration support for about 24,000 ex-combatants and collaborators.

It will also support reconciliation and trust building activities between former rebels and their communities of return, to build a strong foundation for future peace and development in Uganda.

"This Multi-Donor Trust Fund provides both financial and technical resources to assist the Government in supporting the reintegration of the people that have reported for Amnesty in the past, as well as for planning and implementing the demobilisation and repatriation of the remaining caseloads of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)," explained Kees Kingma, the World Bank senior social development specialist.

At the request of Uganda, the World Bank in January established a special Multi-Donor Trust Fund to the demobilisation and reintegration of former rebel combatants and their collaborators in their return to civilian life.

Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom have committed funds to the Trust Fund which will make financing available through 2010.

The new trust will be the main source of funds for the reintegration component of the Government's peace, recovery and development programme for the north."

Increased attention on Karamoja has yet to lead to tangible results (April 2008)

UNICEF, 16 April 2008

"In the Karamoja sub-region (Abim, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto and Nakapiripirit Districts), an ongoing expansion of life-saving humanitarian interventions and renewed interest amongst development partners have yet to be met by substantive progress to address some of the worst humanitarian and development indicators in the country – and indeed, on the continent.

Despite the sub-region's inclusion in the 2008 Interagency Consolidated Appeal (CAP), persistent insecurity and a dearth of both social and economic investment have hampered progressive efforts, including those undertaken by local communities themselves. Strong partnerships, advocacy and capacity for culturally sensitive service delivery in this unique area is urgently needed."

References to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

Analysing the "Protected Villages" in reference to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (March 2002)

- Prolongation of forced encampment seem arbitrary
- Lack of clarity if IDPs may or may not leave the "protected villages" seem to contradict a number of core personal freedoms
- Complaints about lack of reaction or preventive measures against destruction and looting of property and possessions
- Reason for concern but no direct evidence of punitive treatment of the Acholi on ethnic grounds

Weeks, March 2002, pp. 26, 27, 28

Extracts from Weeks' analysis:

Finding 1:

While the establishment of the "Protected Villages" may have been justifiable on grounds of military exigency in 1996, their prolongation into 2002 would seem to be inconsistent with international humanitarian principles.

In the UN "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement", Principle 6 states as follows: "(1) Every human being shall have the right to be protected against being arbitrarily displaced from his or her home or place of habitual residence. (2) The prohibition of arbitrary displacement includes displacement:...(b) In situations of armed conflict, unless the security of the civilians involved or imperative military reasons so demand;(3) Displacement shall last no longer than required by circumstances". [Emphasis added.]

While the LRA is still an active menace to civilians, it seems to have been sub-substantially weakened in recent years. The "imperative military reasons" that presumably led to the establishment of the villages would thus seem to have re-ceded accordingly, while the situation with regard to the security of civilians would appear to vary considerably from one area to the next, making the blanket prolongation of forced encampment to seem arbitrary and to reflect a failure to fully examine possible alternatives.

[...]

Finding 2:

The arbitrary nature of the forced encampment of the majority of the people of Acholiland, and the lack of clarity as to the circumstances under which they may or may not leave the "protected villages", for example to pursue agricultural activities in their home areas, would seem to stand in contradiction of a number of core personal freedoms.

Though all of the interviewees with whom the consultant spoke expressed a passionate desire to return home as soon as feasible, many recognized that the circumstances now were not right, and that as long as insecurity continued to prevail they would choose to remain in the camps until (for example) "guarantees of security" could be given by the authorities. Many of these would doubtless choose to remain in the villages even if a blanket green light for a return home were given.

But many others feel passionately that the time to return is now. Guiding Principles 14 states: "(1) Every internally displaced person has the right to liberty of movement and freedom to chose

his or her residence. (2) In particular, internally displaced persons have the right to move freely in and out of camps or other settlements.”
[...]

Finding 3:

Most or all property and possessions of the internally displaced, including houses, have been destroyed or looted. Personal security in the “protected villages” is often poor, with attacks, abductions, rapes, lootings and other violent acts being committed variously by LRA assailants, by UPDF elements, by free-lance bandits, and by other village residents. While there is no evidence of a deliberate official policy to incite or encourage such acts, residents complain that too little is done to prevent them or to hold perpetrators accountable.

Guiding principle 11 (2) holds that “internally displaced persons, whether or not their liberty has been restricted, shall be protected in particular against: (a) rape, mutilation, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, another outrages upon personal dignity, such as acts of gender-specific violence, forced prostitution or any form of indecent assault.’

Guiding Principle 21 (2) states: ‘The property and possessions of internally displaced persons shall in all circumstances be protected, in particular, against the following acts: (a) Pillage; (b) Direct or indiscriminate attacks or other acts of violence....’
[...]

Finding 4:

Prolonged, enforced encampment of the Acholi threatens the basis of their economic system.

According to Principle 9, “States are under a particular obligation to protect against the displacement of indigenous peoples, minorities, peasants, pastoralists and other groups with special dependency on and attachment to their land.”

As a long-established agro-pastoral society, the Acholi have such a dependency, and their displacement is consequently far more destructive, socially and economically, than might be the case for, say, a more urbanized population.

Finding 5:

There is no direct evidence that the Acholi displaced are being targeted for punitive treatment on ethnic grounds.

Principle 6, (2) (a) and (e), is relevant here: “The prohibition of arbitrary displacement includes displacement: (a) when based on policies of apartheid, “ethnic cleansing” or similar practices and at/or resulting in altering the ethnic, religious, or racial composition of the affected population...(e) When it is used as collective punishment.”

When combined with the history of tension and mutual suspicion between the Acholi and the central government mentioned previously in this report, the very fact that Acholiland is ethnically so homogeneous (virtually all the displaced are presumed to be of Acholi origin and ethnicity) and so distinct from the rest of the country must raise some concerns. Loose talk noted among government officials in Kampala adds to the concern: at a superficial level, remarks are often made that, taken out of context, could be interpreted as laying collective blame on the Acholi for, for example, the actions of the LRA. If this came to reflect a clear pattern of thought, as opposed to being mere passing expressions of frustration, it would raise the matter of enforced encampment in Acholiland to the very highest level of international concern and invite a level of scrutiny that the circumstances do not at present appear to warrant.”

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