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IN SEARCH OF SECURITY A Regional Analysis of Armed Conflict in Northern Uganda, Eastern Uganda and Southern Sudan

A Report by
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BRIEFING REPORT

Study Overview

The war and humanitarian crises engulfing northern Uganda are intricately linked with the armed conflict and unrest in eastern Uganda and southern Sudan. As a result of the links between the upheavals in these three areas, a vicious cycle of interlocked armed conflict and insecurity exists across the region. Yet the current policy of key international donor governments, the World Bank, the United Nations, and the African Union of addressing these conflicts in relative isolation may ultimately guarantee that armed conflict continues in the region. Regardless of the optimism surrounding the current peace agreement between the government of Sudan (GoS) and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), given the existing conditions on the ground, it is likely that this region will continue to be mired in violence and crises unless policymakers and donors adapt their perspective to take into account the larger regional picture.

Identifying and understanding the ways that the conflicts in these areas are linked requires a more holistic regional approach than has been articulated to date. This study provides in-depth, field data on the facets of the specific conflicts and makes clear the broader regional links to best inform policy and program formation in the following areas: protection of civilian populations, DDR, peaceful resolution to the conflicts, transitional justice, conflict prevention, and the strengthening of sustainable livelihoods.

The current briefing report "In Search of Security" presents findings from research conducted between January and October 2005. This first phase of research in the larger project focused on the use of military approaches to address the conflicts, the rise of militias, the regional trade in weapons, and current disarmament and demobilization attempts. **The full report on these topics will be available January 2006.**

The study is an on-going, multi-year field-based undertaking involving a core team of eight researchers from Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, and the United States. Funding is provided by the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Rights & Democracy, Montreal, the Peace-building Fund, Child Protection Unit, and Gender Equality Division of the Canadian International Development Agency, and the Andrew Mellon Foundation.

I. Study Methods and Sites

A total of 1,295 individuals were interviewed in the study region between January and October 2005. The team identified and interviewed a range of key informants in each of the study sites, including:

- Government officials: members of Uganda's Parliament, government ministers, district government officials, and local government officials;
- Armed forces and groups: members of the government armed forces, military intelligence officers, militia members, members of armed opposition groups, weapons dealers, and warriors;



- Local leaders: religious leaders, traditional leaders, opinion and community leaders;
- Civilian populations: internally displaced persons in camp settings, civilians in villages and towns affected by war and armed raiding, and members of women's and youth groups.

This phase of the study used qualitative research methods for the collection of primary data. These methods included in-depth semi-structured interviews, historic timelines, mapping of routes for weapons trading and cattle rustling, direct observation, and participant observation. In southern Sudan a quantitative survey was also conducted among selected war affected populations.

Map 1. Detail of Study Area Southern Sudan and Northern Uganda



Original from Michael S. Miller, 2003, RightsMaps.com.



Original from UN Dept. of Public Information, May 2003.

In northern and eastern Uganda, in-depth work was conducted in areas most affected by the armed conflict between the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda (GoU) as well as in areas most affected by wars of armed cattle raiding (see Map 1):

- Acholiland (consisting of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts);
- Lango sub-region (Apac and Lira districts);
- Teso sub-region (Soroti, Kumi, Katakwi, and Kaberamadio districts);
- Karamoja (Moroto, Kotido, and Nakapiripirit districts);
- Mbale and Sironko districts.

Interviews were also conducted in the capital city of Kampala with GoU officials.



In **southern Sudan**, the focus areas included those areas most affected by LRA activity as well as those with direct links to the regional conflict due to the presence of armed cattle raiding and weapons routes (see Map 1):

- Kapoeta, Torit, and Magwi counties (within the eastern provinces of the Eastern Equatoria State), and
- The southeastern section of Yei province of Bahr el-Jebel State.

II. Main Findings

Military Solutions and Outcomes

The GoU primarily uses military force to address the armed conflicts in the region. The Office of the President of Uganda considers the military option to be the best solution to the conflicts. In the eyes of the GoU, a successful outcome using this option would lead to military victories in northern Uganda and southern Sudan and military-backed forced disarmament in eastern Uganda.

In marked contrast to this official view, there is a widespread perception among civilians interviewed in **northern Uganda** that the GoU actively maintains the war for more malevolent purposes. These include: a) as revenge against northerners for gross rights violations allegedly committed during previous regimes; b) to ensure that the economic and political devastation of the north neutralizes any potential political challenge to the current national power structure; and c) to realize enormous financial gains which are used to maintain current power holders through patron and client networks (including within the armed forces). Respondents across the **northern and eastern Uganda** repeatedly pointed to the economic benefits accrued by senior GoU officials, UPDF commanders, local government officials, and, to a lesser extent, collaborators and traders as main factors perpetuating the war.

In September 2005, the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) publicly issued indictments against and international arrest warrants for the five top leaders of the LRA. While the actions of the ICC are an appropriate and, as some would argue, necessary response to the years of atrocities committed by the LRA, many respondents stressed the ICC indictments have occurred at an inopportune time for the larger peace process in northern Uganda. The ICC indictments and arrest warrants have, for all practical purposes, ended the peace talks of the past year. Respondents stressed that the ICC indictments and warrants have also damaged the validity and applicability of the Amnesty Act (discussed below). With the peace talks nullified and the Amnesty process in question, the military solution appears to be the only option remaining on the table to resolve the conflict in northern Uganda. However, almost no one interviewed in **northern or eastern Uganda** supported the GoU's current approach to ending the war by military force. Most of those interviewed said that the military approach to date was a failure that had only increased the suffering of the people of the north and the east over the last 19 years.¹

¹ Notably, if sufficient pressure is brought to bear on the GoS to direct its military intelligence to apprehend the top LRA leadership, this most likely would bring an end to the LRA and thus the war. Thus, this option might be a viable non-military solution to ending the conflict.



Independent information strongly suggests that the LRA continues to receive support from the Government of Sudan (GoS) through Sudanese military intelligence. Currently, the top members of the LRA leadership are living and operating in **southern Sudan**. Strong pressure must be brought to bear on the GoS and its military intelligence to turn over the indicted leaders of the LRA to the ICC.

In **eastern Uganda** cattle raiding by groups within Karamoja has evolved from a traditional means for males of gaining wealth and status into a commercial enterprise for major cattle and weapons traders, including those outside of Karamoja. The level of violence used in the raids has increased simultaneously. Independent data suggests that both senior and local government officials within Karamoja are playing important roles in the continuation of the raiding in order to increase their own power and status. Interviewees also maintained that the GoU is using the continued unchecked raiding by the Karamojong to economically suppress the neighboring ethnic groups and thus prevent those ethnic groups from politically challenging the current government.

In **northern and eastern Uganda** interviewees identified what they perceived to be the roots and the drivers of the current conflicts. Few respondents believed that these roots and drivers could be addressed through current military operations, and many contend that military operations actually deepen the crises. Instead, interviewees stressed the need for a series of local and regional peace dialogues among the groups involved in the conflict-affected areas. These local and regional dialogues would need to be followed by a national reconciliation process involving the GoU, ethnic groups from within in Uganda, as well as neighboring groups in southern Sudan. Numerous interviewees expressed their support for a forum such as a truth and reconciliation commission. Such a national process is necessary to address the root causes of the conflict, which have to do with the political and economic marginalization and persecution of specific ethnic groups.

In **southern Sudan**, violent raiding and attacks by the LRA continue against minority Sudanese populations even though other areas in south Sudan have seen a cessation in fighting between the GoS and the SPLM/A. Data suggest that neither the SPLA nor the Ugandan army (UPDF) which is now operational in south Sudan offer sufficient protection to minority ethnic populations against LRA attacks. In some areas, local communities are passing resolutions demanding that the UPDF withdraw from southern Sudan because of the army's perceived failure to engage with the LRA and the detrimental affects of the UPDF upon the local populations. The exposure to armed conflict continues to erode and weaken the familial, social, cultural and economic structure and resources of minority populations in southern Sudan. Lack of protection by the SPLM/A is seen by some in the affected populations as politically and ethnically motivated as these same unprotected populations had earlier resisted the rise to power of the SPLM/A.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Uganda:

Prioritize and ensure the adequate and equal protection of civilians affected by violence from the LRA and armed raiders in northern and eastern Uganda.



Appoint an independent investigatory team to identify and expose policies, practices and persons involved in illegal war profiteering. Focus efforts on ghost soldiers, army paymasters, military intelligence, businesses involved in supplying food, clothing, and supplies to ghost soldiers, and persons involved in the purchase of unusable military equipment.

To the Government of Sudan:

Instruct the military intelligence branch to suspend fully its support to the LRA and immediately assist in apprehending and turning over the indicted LRA leaders to the ICC.

To the SPLM/A:

Uphold the SPLM/A's legal obligations as the legitimate authority in southern Sudan to provide equal and adequate protection to civilian populations under its control. Policies and practices of allowing minority populations to be exposed to deadly violence and of not responding to attacks against these populations by the LRA and armed cattle raiders in the region must cease.

To the Lord's Resistance Army:

Immediately cease all attacks against civilians, humanitarian workers and other non-combatants in Uganda, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

To the International Donor Community, World Bank, UN, African Union, and NGOs:

Use diplomatic means to pressure the GoS and its military intelligence branch to apprehend and turn over the indicted leaders of the LRA.

Use diplomatic means to pressure the SPLM/A to provide equal and adequate protection to minority populations under its control in areas affected by the LRA and armed cattle raiding.

Use diplomatic means to pressure the GoU to offer equal and adequate protection to populations affected by LRA and armed cattle raiding.

Recognize that the present track of using a military solution to the situation in northern and eastern Uganda is a non-viable option that is further entrenching instability and does little to promote security for civilian populations. Recognize that the current war efforts in northern Uganda have become a means for key actors within the GoU, the UPDF, and some local officials to make money and maintain power. There is little belief, even among UPDF field officers and soldiers interviewed, that a military solution to the conflicts will (or is even designed to) succeed in ending the war.

Call for and support the appointment of an independent investigatory team to identify and expose policies, practices and persons involved in illegal war profiteering in Uganda. Support a focus within these investigations on ghost soldiers, army



paymasters, military intelligence, businesses involved in supplying food, clothing, and supplies to ghost soldiers, and persons involved in the purchase of unusable military equipment.

Support community-based dialogues in northern and eastern Uganda regarding the establishment of local, national, and regional truth-telling, justice, and reconciliation mechanisms meant to address the 19 years of war. Help to ensure that such mechanisms are not hijacked by current political power holders, but rather reflect the goals and processes identified by the war-affected communities themselves.

Militias

Beginning in 2003, the GoU encouraged local leaders in **eastern and northern Uganda** to raise civilian militias to assist in protecting populations under threat of attack by the LRA. Officially, all militia forces fall under the Ministry of Security and are directly under UPDF command and control. Currently, there are five regionally-based militia forces and, by a conservative estimate, approximately 24,000 persons involved in militias in northern and eastern Uganda.² There are three categories of militias operating in Uganda—civil defense units, home-guards and local defense units—although the distinctions among these three groups are at times porous.

In **northern and eastern Uganda**, the official GoU and UPDF stated purpose of the militias is to protect civilian populations in towns and internal displacement camps, thus freeing up the UPDF to actively engage and pursue the LRA. However, it was widely reported that the UPDF forces are instead directing the militias to engage in active combat with the LRA, while the UPDF soldiers themselves seek to avoid direct combat. The majority of adults who join the militias do so in an effort to protect themselves, their families, property and communities. Others joined in hopes of securing a regular income, which is extremely difficult given the crushing poverty in most of northern and eastern Uganda.

The current militias were hurriedly recruited, poorly screened and incompletely trained. Known criminals are reported to be present in the militias. Children under 18 years old are also present in all five militias, with girls under 18 years present in four of the five militias. Boys and girls have the same roles as adult militia members, namely to carry weapons, go on patrol and engage in combat with the LRA. Boys and girls orphaned by war and with little to no options for protection and livelihoods were named as the children most likely to join the militias. Other boys and girls involved in the militias reportedly joined because their families could not protect or support them, they had no means of attending school, they were seeking to protect themselves against abduction by the LRA, or to seek revenge against the LRA or cattle raiders for violence against their families.

In Teso sub-region and Acholiland, interviewees generally reported that the presence of the militias had improved their security in respect to preventing LRA attacks. However, in Lango sub-region, the majority of interviewees did not feel that the presence of the militia had contributed to improving their safety, although they did

² The militia forces are the Rhino brigade in Lango sub-region, the Arrow Boys in Teso sub-region, and in Acholiland there are the Elephant brigade in Gulu district, Pader Mig Stream in Pader district, and the Frontier Guard in Kitgum district.



believe that most of the local militia was trying hard to protect their families and communities. Interviewees in all areas of **northern and eastern Uganda** reported that the militias responded much more quickly than the UPDF to reports of LRA activity. Militias also were known to actively engage in repulsing the rebels when under attack. In contrast, interviewees never spoke of the UPDF engaging in such activities.

The militias in **northern and eastern Uganda** are either directly recruited by or affiliated with the GoU and the UPDF, although they do not receive the same pay or benefits as regular UPDF soldiers. Militia members are not receiving their salaries or the food that the GoU and UPDF are obligated to provide for them, with salaries delayed on average six months and lack of full pay when monies do arrive. As a result, there is widespread reporting that militias are stealing food and goods from the communities they are supposed to protect. This includes armed banditry and stealing from shops, as well as stealing food and goods from the most vulnerable members of the communities, including child-headed households, war-orphans, and former abductees. The routine theft of food from internally displaced persons is a serious matter, especially considering that the rates of food insecurity, malnutrition and related morbidity and mortality in the camps are “above emergency levels” as classified by the UN.³

There were also reports of militia members severely beating civilians and, to a lesser extent, of their participation in rape, torture and killing in internally displaced camps. Reports of rape, torture, and beatings by members of the UPDF, particularly the mobile forces, were widespread in all study areas. The presence of both UPDF and militia members was reported to be contributing to the increase in child mothers as girls and young women seek access to protection and food through sexual association with those forces. Desertion of militia members due to poor facilitation appears widespread, with weapons unaccounted for. In a smaller number of cases, some deserters are reported to now be engaging in armed banditry.

Interviewees also gave accounts of internal fighting within the militias or between militia and UPDF forces. These arguments sometimes resulted in the deaths of either militia or UPDF members or the accidental death or injury of civilians in the camp, including children.

In **southern Sudan**, civilian populations in Magwi and Torit counties continue to face attacks and incursions by the LRA. After repeated lack of response by the SPLM/A (who now form the local administration), some council chiefs and community leaders have appealed for weapons from the SPLA to protect the civilian population from LRA attacks. These requests have reportedly been ignored by the SPLA. SPLA commanders say they are against the creation and arming of militias as they fear that this will eventually increase insecurity. The commanders interviewed also expressed concern that some recipients of the guns may instead sell them across the border in Uganda. At the same time, SPLA efforts to protect populations from future LRA attacks do not appear to have increased and are far from robust.

³ UNICEF, Uganda: Unicef Humanitarian Action, 28 September 2005; United States Department of State, Northern Uganda Crisis Response Act: Report to Congress, Washington, D.C., 2 February 2005.



RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Uganda:

Overhaul governmental complaints procedures in the north to provide accountability for serious crimes committed by the militia under UPDF command as well as the UPDF themselves. Ensure that the resolution of such complaints is not at the sole discretion of the military commander, and that there is independent oversight of the complaints process.

Design and implement clear procedures for complainants, such as where and to whom to report complaints and how and to whom to appeal. Make sure these procedures are disseminated at all levels of the population in northern Uganda through public awareness campaigns and in partnership with local leaders and local actors within civil society.⁴

Direct commanders within the UPDF to ensure that militia forces are used for their original and stated purpose of providing security within the camps and that the UPDF assume its role in directly engaging members of the LRA.

Pay on time and fully pay (including back-pay) members of militias operating under UPDF command in northern and eastern Uganda.

Uphold international obligations and commitments to refrain from the recruitment and use of children under the age of 18 in militia forces. Disarm and demobilize and reintegrate boys and girls currently involved in all five militia forces.

To the SPLM/A:

Uphold obligations to protect civilian populations in areas under attack by the LRA.

To the International Donor Community, World Bank, UN, African Union and NGOs:

Use diplomatic means to encourage the GoU and the UPDF to strengthen the screening, training and maintenance of militia members. Additionally, focus diplomatic efforts on strengthening GoU and UPDF monitoring and accountability mechanisms for alleged crimes by militia members against civilian populations.

Assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of boys and girls within the militias. Adjust programs to address the protection and livelihoods needs that are compelling boys and girls to join the militias. Use current best practices of DDR and reinsertion to adopt appropriate policy and programming in regard to gender differences in protection, livelihoods, reintegration needs of girls and boys associated with fighting forces.

⁴ These recommendations are in line with recent recommendations from Human Rights Watch regarding violations committed by UPDF personnel.



Provide support to strengthening police forces that are under civilian command and control and for members of the police who are adequately screened, qualified and trained.

Weapons Markets

The availability of weapons and the presence of weapons markets are key components in facilitating the armed conflicts and insecurity in the study region. The sale and trade of weapons and the markets themselves all operate on a regional basis. The end of the civil war in **southern Sudan** has decreased the availability of weapons in the regional market,⁵ resulting in price increases. Currently, weapons dealers are able to receive the highest profits in weapons markets in **northern Uganda and Karamoja** due to the continuing demand in these areas. The weapons markets are closely connected to a number of large livestock markets and the link between livestock and weapons in driving supply and demand remains strong. Even with the end of the civil war and reduction from previous levels of supply, Sudan remains the main source of the weapons. Groups from Karamoja continue to be some of the largest buyers. Recognizing this demand, some traders now bring their guns and ammunition directly to Karamojong homesteads.

The LRA continues to be well armed and supplied, with evidence from interviewees pointing to continued assistance from the GoS via its military intelligence branch and local collaborators within **northern Uganda**. Communities in **southern Sudan** exposed to LRA attacks have or are attempting to arm themselves, claiming that the SPLM/A is not providing adequate protection.

In **southern Sudan**, some members of the SPLA are reported to be engaged in weapons sales and trading, with lower ranking members generating income to meet basic needs and high level officers participating in major weapons and cattle exchange schemes. Interviewees reported that some SPLA soldiers were supplying armed cattle raiders with heavy weaponry in exchange for a share of raided animals. These reports are strengthened by the perceived lack of interest on the part of SPLA/M in fostering dialogue and peace between hostile communities to resolve cattle rustling. The SPLA, GoS army, deserters from the Ugandan militias, and members of the UPDF, are also reported to be selling weapons and ammunition to weapons dealers and pastoralists. Local councilors who have challenged the armies on these practices have been harassed and threatened.

The **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** is still in turmoil with many armed groups supported by various actors in the region. The DRC is likely to remain a significant source of illicit weapons in the region for the foreseeable future. The research team documented weapons traders from the DRC arriving into Karamoja by bus to sell guns in the Karamoja markets.

The links between armed cattle raiding and the weapons trade are strong. It was reported that one of the primary sources of supply for weapons trading is a weapons market that runs in parallel with the Agoro market in Kitgum district, **northern Uganda**. Interviewees reported that the traders buy weapons and ammunition at

⁵ This decrease in availability of weapons in south Sudan is due to the cessation of weapons flowing into the region from external actors who supported the SPLA.



the market and then go to Karamoja to use these weapons to barter for bulls and other livestock. When enough cattle are collected the traders drive the cattle to the Agoro market and sell the animals and buy more weapons, which are in turn sold back to the pastoralists. The large market in Namalu in Nakapiripirit district in Karamoja reportedly serves as one of the main outlets for much of the commercially raided livestock.

The regional weapon markets and trade are also fueled by commercial raiders who make their livelihoods through violent cattle raiding. The growth of commercial raiding is relatively recent. Previously, raided animals were absorbed into the home herd of the raiding parties, which made it easier to trace the raided animals. When carried out by private parties, raiding occurred on a much more limited scale and community elders and women were able to play an oversight role and, if necessary, take actions to curb violence. Harming women and children during traditional raiding was considered taboo, but this is not the case in today's commercial raiding and numerous people are often killed.

Interviewees in Karamoja have a clear sense of who they believed was involved in commercial raiding. This list of people named in interviews includes some senior government officials, local government officials, shop keepers and well-know warriors within Karamoja.

As noted in interviews in **Uganda and southern Sudan**, pastoralist and agriculturalists are the groups most likely to purchase, own and trade or sell weapons. Interviewees reported that pastoralists in particular participate in selling weapons when they have excess guns. The excess guns are typically gained by killing other pastoralists in deadly battles. Pastoralists may exchange the weapons for more animals or sell the weapons to traders or directly to fellow pastoralists in Sudan, Uganda and Kenya.

Local businesses also participate in the weapons trade. In **southern Sudan**, shopkeepers were identified who rely on the money gained by selling weapons to restock the goods in their shops. In some cases the shopkeepers sell weapons directly to the pastoralists, while in other cases they may sell to a middle trader.

The ready availability of illicit weapons arms in the region fuels the armed conflicts, banditry and instability in the region. In **Uganda**, the presence of gun markets (and thus the ability for those who wanted weapons to quickly arm or re-arm) was noted by multiple informants as the primary reason why ethnic groups within Karamoja resist disarming, as they fear retaliatory attacks by their neighbors who still have weapons. The rationale was that giving up weapons through a disarmament program would invite attack or raiding by other groups that had not yet been disarmed (see Disarmament section below).

The proliferation of illicit weapons also contributes to insecurity in **southern Sudan**. There is strong suspicion that the GoS may be using the easy movement of small arms to fuel insecurity among southern Sudanese, thus making the region ungovernable. In our study region, insecurity due to armed forces and groups was responsible for limited movement, inability to plan and harvest some crops, and the continued closure of markets and trading posts.



RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Uganda:

Work in partnership with international, national and civil society organizations and the African Union to identify the key actors and components of commercial raiding with the aim of stopping this practice and the resulting loss of life and destruction of livelihoods.

Move to close down the illegal parallel weapons market operating in conjunction with the Agoro market in Kitgum district. Ensure that members of the UPDF do not participate in the buying and selling of weapons and ammunition in the parallel weapons market in Kitgum district or elsewhere.

Support district veterinary officers to implement livestock movement regulations to help ensure that all animals that come to market have a movement permit and have been properly inspected by veterinary doctors. Security officers should be tasked to assist the district veterinary offices enforce this regulation. Focus initial efforts on the Namula market.

To the SPLM/A:

Create investigation and enforcement mechanisms within both the SPLM and the emerging local civil administration to address the participation of SPLA commanders and fighters, as well as shop keepers and traders, in the selling and buying of weapons and ammunition.

Work to foster dialogue and peace between hostile communities to resolve armed cattle rustling which is fueling the weapons trade.

To the International Donor Community, World Bank, UN, African Union and NGOs:

Call for and support efforts by the GoU to have a transparent and independent investigation into commercial raiding to identify means to curb this violent practice.

Support and help to coordinate the efforts of IGAD to address the regional weapons markets, acknowledging that efforts to close down weapons markets and traders must be regionally-based.

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

In 2000, the Amnesty Act was passed in Uganda in part to enable the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of persons formerly associated with the LRA. The Amnesty Commission continues to struggle to meet its mandate and has only recently received sufficient funds to properly operate. As perceived by respondents, the recent indictment by the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC against the top LRA leadership has thrown the very basis of the amnesty process into question.



Interviewees in **northern Uganda** widely supported the Amnesty Act and many credited the Act and the efforts of local radio programs to promote it in bringing rebel commanders out of the bush. However, there were objections to compelling formerly abducted children to seek amnesty, as many interviewees said these children were victims who had been left unprotected by the community and the government and therefore should not be expected to seek forgiveness through amnesty.

There was tension in interviews regarding the individual packages granted by the Amnesty Commission to those who had turned themselves in. Some community members felt that these payouts were essentially rewarding violent behavior. The awarding of millions of Ugandan shillings to former top LRA commanders, while formerly abducted children cannot afford schooling, was repeatedly cited as a source of anger and tension. In other cases, it was reported that children under 12 years of age (who are technically exempt from having to seek amnesty) and those who had never been abducted were claiming amnesty in an attempt to access the small resettlement packages. There was concern voiced by both civilians and those formerly with the LRA that the Amnesty process was not linked strongly enough to community efforts for reintegration and that the materials given were insufficient to help those who had received amnesty to maintain themselves or their dependents.

The approach of the GoU to the problem of armed raiding in **eastern Uganda** and Karamoja has primarily been a security-focused initiative using the targeted removal of weapons. The approach has repeatedly failed to address the root causes which underpin why populations are arming themselves. The uneven pattern of disarmament in 2001-2002 failed to adequately protect communities that had disarmed from those still with weapons. When the remainder of the communities refused to disarm, the UPDF sought to forcibly disarm them but were called away to respond to a flare-up in LRA activity. This resulted in a security vacuum in Karamoja, widespread fighting, and loss of lives and properties of those who had disarmed across the region. Rapid rearmament occurred among most of the groups who had disarmed.

In 2004, the GoU launched plans for another DDR program in Karamoja. Our findings suggest that in its current form the process has no chance of success. The disarmament process is unilaterally conducted by the military without the involvement of civil society organizations or consultation with the groups to be disarmed. Once again, the process does not assess or address the root causes of why communities are arming themselves. The initiative also lacks the levels of funding needed to achieve its mission. The majority of interviewees in the area within the proposed disarmament initiative are totally opposed to the process, not least because of deadly errors in the last (2001-2002) disarmament attempt. These respondents recommended that the GoU and UPDF focus on peacebuilding initiatives instead of raising the controversial notion of disarmament (which they claim creates instability through uneven disarmament). The general view of nearly all interviewees in both Karamoja and the districts most affected by cattle raiding is that the current disarmament promises are a ploy by President Museveni to gain support for the changing of the constitution to enable him to run for a third term. In fact, interviewees within the areas the President promised to disarm stress that they currently see no signs of disarmament projects underway.



RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Government of Uganda:

Publicly speak out, using radio and newspaper, in support of the Amnesty Act and reassure members of the LRA and affected communities that amnesty is still open to all those not indicted by the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC. Work with local government officials, leaders and donors to clarify official on-going support for the Amnesty Act.

Work in close collaboration with civil society organizations, NGOs, and local populations to identify the root causes of why populations in eastern Uganda and Karamoja are arming themselves and engaging in deadly raiding. Involve pastoral communities in developing responses to address these root causes.

Work in close collaboration with civil society organizations, NGOs and local populations to build on positive examples of local level peacebuilding. Avoid using the term 'disarmament' as this is likely to cause increased insecurity among communities targeted for disarmament. Link these positive peace-building initiatives to policy at the national level and support them with real political will. Work with regional governments and groups in border regions to help ensure such initiatives have lasting success.

To the Amnesty Commission:

Critically assess the role of reintegration packages in providing meaningful economic and livelihoods support to returnees and their communities. Make efforts to learn from other successful programs that targeted community-based approaches for successful reintegration of persons formerly associated with fighting forces, most notably Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Prioritize access to education and skills to enable sustainable livelihoods for children and adults formerly associated with the LRA.

Prioritize access to food and shelter for children and youth formerly associated with the LRA.

Strengthen efforts to reach girls and women formerly associated with the LRA, with particular efforts to support those who were forced to bear children during captivity. Ensure clarity when speaking about such forced relationships so as not to condone criminal activities by the LRA or further stigmatize those females and their children.

To the International Donor Community, World Bank, UN and NGOs:

Support the GoU in identifying and addressing the root causes of communities in eastern Uganda and Karamoja in arming themselves and engaging in violent raiding, with a focus on peacebuilding and protection initiatives.



Support the Amnesty Commission, civil society organizations and NGOs working towards the successful reintegration of returnees, prioritizing community-based approaches that recognize gender-based differences and priorities of returnee women, men, boys and girls.

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