

Uganda Strategic Conflict Analysis



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Executive Summary

When people think of conflict in Uganda, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) immediately springs to mind. Not only has it become associated with highly publicised abduction of children and mutilation of civilians, but, also with the third largest internal displacement crisis in the world. In addition, after the SPLA and Government of Sudan finally signed a Comprehensive Peace Accord in neighbouring Sudan in 2005, northern Uganda took over the dubious distinction of being Africa's longest running conflict.

At the time of writing there is some hope that, after twenty years of unsuccessful military "solutions", a negotiated settlement may be in sight. A positive outcome to the talks would result in a significant reduction in the fear and violence which have plagued large parts of northern Uganda for the last twenty years, and create significant opportunities for Sida and other donors to engage in the immediate task of supporting the recovery of the northern region.

However, while the current talks in Juba are critical *and should be given all necessary support by Sida*, even a successful outcome at the Juba talks is no guarantee of peace and stability in Uganda. Firstly, the LRA-GOU conflict is symptomatic of underlying structural issues which may or may not be addressed in the peace talks. Secondly, and this offers further evidence of these structural tensions, the LRA is only one of 22 armed groups that have been active in Uganda since President Museveni seized power in 1986.

As Uganda moves closer to a post-LRA era, that group's well-known atrocities – abductions, killings, looting, mutilation, rape – will not be forgotten but will cease to hold centre-stage. This makes it possible, necessary and legitimate to scrutinise some of the broader issues underlying Uganda's numerous insurgencies; the tensions, power structures and contextual issues that need to be addressed in the country as a whole, and the actors promoting violence or pushing for peace.

The links with Sida's overall commitment to human rights and poverty reduction are clear: twenty years of violent conflict has at one point or another touched nearly every part of Uganda and impacted negatively on the struggle against poverty. As such, while the image of Uganda as a development success still lingers on, there is growing awareness that this image is seriously compromised. *Whereas Sida's previous country development co-operation strategy made no explicit mention of promoting peace and security, the 2007–2011 country cooperation strategy, recognising that 'preven-*

tion of violent conflict is prevention of poverty', needs to be not only conflict sensitive but also pro-actively peace-building in its orientation.

Geographic hot spots, national tensions and key actors

Within this strategy, areas of the country where Sida has to engage directly with violence and its aftermath include the LRA affected area of northern Uganda (Acholi, Langi and Teso areas), the West Nile area (north-west Uganda), the Karamoja region (north-east Uganda), and the south-west corner of the country which was affected by the ADF in the late 1990s.

In working on national level, Sida's support has to be cognisant of a series of tensions which impact on the country as a whole. The report identifies the following as requiring close attention: Ethnicity vs. Nationalism, South vs. North, East vs. West, Decentralisation vs. Recentralisation, Militarisation vs. Democratisation (including the legacy of Movement politics and the weakness of multi-partyism), Modernisation vs. Traditionalism, Patriarchy vs. Gender Equality. Despite the adoption of a multi-party system, the legacy of 20 years of Movement politics, and the deeply entrenched militarisation of large areas of the country *and* the mind-set of the Government itself, are obstacles to the true democratisation of the country.

Developments in Uganda are further conditioned by the relationship between population, land access and environmental degradation in what is still primarily an agriculture based economy. They also have to be situated within an understanding of changes in neighbouring countries in the region (notably Rwanda, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo), as well as those internationally (most visibly reform of the UN system).

Key Actors

When coming to key dividers and connectors, it is argued that the majority of actors in Uganda have the potential to work as 'connectors' rather than 'dividers', but that they are as affected by some of the key tensions identified as those most directly involved in the violence. If the prospects of further conflict in Uganda are to be reduced and the right kind of donor support is to be given, then a conflict-sensitive country cooperation strategy must take these wider dynamics into account. The military and its auxiliary forces continue to dominate day-to-day life in many respects, and constitute the key 'divider' in Uganda. The potential capacity of other actors to work as 'connectors' is consequently under-utilised. Civil society is relatively weak and actively intimidated by the Government; parliament and opposition have yet to truly hold the ruling party to account. UN and donors are only now becoming somewhat more pro-active in challenging the political and economic status quo. External actors play an important role in supporting civil society initiatives, but in the case of the International Criminal Court, have also contributed considerably to differences of opinion about the best way forward for northern Uganda and are regarded by many inside Uganda as 'dividers'. The majority of Ugandan actors (including the churches and traditional leadership), although striving to be 'connectors', themselves fall easily into ethnicised divisions rather than national solidarity. Large scale private sector enterprises are dominated by foreign investors with close ties to and the patronage of the central Government, while the majority of Ugandan businesses are small scale and fragmented and without the significant political voice or beneficial economic impact that they potentially could have. The civilian population, though to a certain

extent able to express its discontent through the vote, is in many respects still without voice; the legacy of war is a psycho-social one, a political one, and an economic one, and a pro-active peace-building perspective should address all of these dimensions.

Scenarios and Way Forward

Country cooperation must simultaneously address both the big picture and the specifics of the current situation. The outcome of the current peace talks is likely to be the primary determinant of the conflict context for the next five years. The first scenario is that the talks collapse and there is a return to low-level insurgency and existing patterns of displacement and humanitarian suffering, though with somewhat improved humanitarian responses as the UN and international NGOs become more established, and the prospect of further UPDF incursions into neighbouring DRC. This is a particularly unattractive scenario, not just for the civilian population which would bear its direct impact, but also for southern Sudan and the DRC – and indeed for the Government as it struggles to cling onto a degree of sovereignty and to rescue its image prior to the 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

A second scenario, which seems the most probable, is that there is a peace accord which deals with the LRA as an insurgent group, and places emphasis on visibly ‘normalising’ the situation in the north as quickly as possible, through demobilisation of the LRA and resettlement of IDPs in their home areas, and an economically conceived recovery programme in the north. This will leave untouched some of the underlying causes which have driven and nurtured the LRA and other insurgent groups over the last twenty years, and do little to directly address the psycho-social impacts of decades of violence and human rights violation. This entails a medium-high risk of the emergence of new armed groups and renewed violent conflict.

The third scenario, *which Sida can actively contribute to shaping and bringing into being*, is that the peace talks in Juba have a successful outcome and are regarded as the beginning rather than the end of a larger national peace process. An economic recovery programme goes hand in hand with establishing a national Truth and Reconciliation process and serious attempts to give greater substance to the country’s democratisation. This should aim at a revitalisation of public discourse and a renewed sense of national identity and unity. This latter scenario would also see a deepening of the enjoyment of economic, political, civil and cultural rights by Ugandans throughout the country. Clearly this last scenario should result in the greatest reduction in the risk of future conflicts and is the one which a conflict sensitive country co-operation strategy should seek to promote.

To maximise this contribution to promoting peace and security, therefore, the country cooperation strategy should strike a considered balance between channelling resources to the most affected areas of the country (West Nile, Northern Uganda, Karamoja, ADF affected parts of the south west), working at national level to reduce the cross-cutting tensions identified, and strengthening the potential of a multiplicity of actors to work as connectors rather than dividers.

Note on analytical framework and methodology

The TOR for the analysis requested that attention be paid to events and dynamics in northern Uganda from 2000 up to the present in particular, but within an analysis of conflict in Uganda in general. In developing both interviews and the subsequent analysis the study was informed by

Sida's own policy on 'Promoting Peace and Security in Practice (2005). This takes Johan Galtung's Conflict Triangle of Attitudes/Assumptions, Root/Structural Causes, and Behaviours as its point of departure, and identifies three corresponding types of intervention; Promoting Dialogue, Promoting Structural Stability, and Promotion of Security. Data collection involved review of the wealth of grey literature produced since 2004, including research reports and key policy documents (see bibliography), together with interviews with a range of key informants in Kampala, Gulu, Kitgum and Pader (see Annex A). The report is further informed by the author's extensive fieldwork in northern Uganda (1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2004) and familiarity with the academic and policy literature up to that point.

Acronyms used

ADF	Allied Defence Force
AF	Auxiliary Forces
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Accord
DDMC	District Disaster Management Committee
FDC	Forum for Democratic Change
GOU	Government of Uganda
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICC	International Criminal Court
INGO	International NGO
IMTC	Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
LC	Local Council
LDU	Local Defense Unit
LRA	Lords Resistance Army
NALU	National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
NUAPP	Northern Uganda Advocacy Partnership for Peace
OHCHR	Office of the High Commission for Human Rights
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PRDP	Peace Recovery and Development Plan
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRF	United National Resistance Front
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UPDA	Ugandan People's Democratic Army
UPDF	Ugandan People's Defence Force
WFP	World Food Programme
WNBF	West Nile Bank Front

Section 1: Conflict Analysis

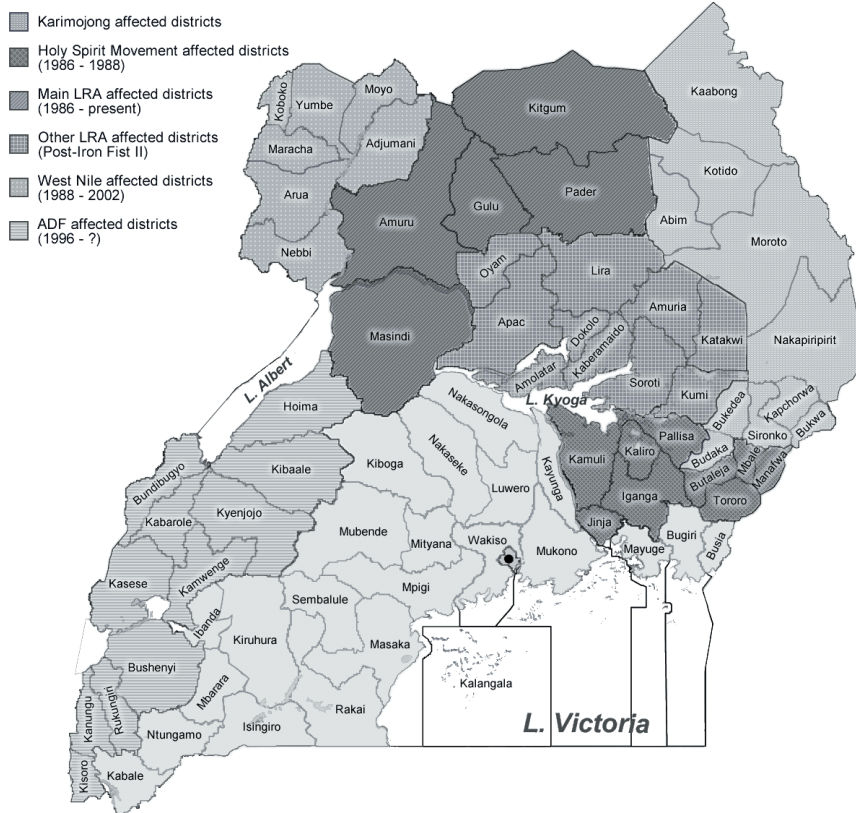


Figure 1: Map showing the extent to which Uganda has been affected by violent conflict over the period 1986–2006

Overview of the situation from 1986

The easiest way to understand the extent to which Uganda has been touched by violent conflict over the last twenty years, and since 2000 in particular, is to consider the above map of the major areas affected, which shows clearly that more than half of the country has been directly affected.

North West Uganda (UNRFI & II, West-Nile Bank Front)

Since the fall of Idi Amin in 1979, West Nile has been dogged by a series of armed rebellions, starting with the United National Resistance Front, a force which reached an accommodation with the Obote regime in

1984. Following the NRA take-over, the United National Resistance Front, now known as UNRFII, re-emerged in 1988. Hostilities with the GOU continued throughout the 1990s, and were complicated further by the emergence of a second insurgent group, the West Nile Bank Front, which was active from the mid to late 1990s. A lengthy GOU-UNRF II peace process was embarked upon in 1998, ending with a successful peace accord four years later in December 2002.¹ West Nile is now generally considered to be in a post-conflict phase,² though, as it borders on all sides with areas which are also conflict affected, it continues to be affected by the overspill of other conflicts, notably in the form of large scale refugee populations from both DRC and Congo,³ and, in Adjumani district in particular, by an IDP population of at least 41,000.⁴

South West Uganda (ADF)

The ADF insurgency erupted in 1996 in the Rwenzori region of South West Uganda, with insurgents using the DRC as their rear base and enjoying some support from the former President Kabila. This insurgency was said to have the Salaf Tabliq, a Muslim sect, at its core, but also to have been fuelled by 'disaffection in Western Uganda, which centres mainly on lack of economic opportunity, scarce land, lack of access to social services, and ethnic tensions', as well as unequal access to structures of governance.⁵ It incorporated the remnants of the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) – which in turn had consisted of Rwenzururu rebels who had not surrendered under Obote II – and resulted in displacement of approximately 200,000 in the region, particularly in Kasese, Kabarole and Bundibugyo districts. It was largely put down by the UPDF and considered more or less pacified from 2002 onwards. However, a core group remains and there are reported skirmishes with the UPDF at the time of writing.⁶

The presence of UPDF troops on Congolese soil, ostensibly in support of the overthrow of Mobutu and the pursuit of the ADF, but also in pursuit of the resource extraction opportunities offered by the collapse of state control there,⁷ further complicated the situation.

North East Uganda (Karamojong)

The situation in Karamoja is substantially under-documented. A dry pastoral area in the north-eastern quarter of Uganda, Karamoja has some of the worst development indicators of the whole country. At the meeting point of Uganda, Kenya and Sudan, and at the far end of Uganda's cattle corridor which stretches diagonally from the far south-west corner of Uganda, the Karamojong are notorious as cattle raiders, often making incursions into neighbouring areas, and, since the 1980s, using light weapons instead of the traditional weapons which were previously used. They are often accused of being responsible for the serious depletion of cattle stocks in the Acholi area in the late 1980s, though this is only one of several interpretations of what happened.

¹ Lomo & Hovil, 2004

² PRDP, August 2006

³ See Hovil (2002), Kaiser, Hovil & Lomo (2005), Okello, Gottschalk & Ridderbos (2005)

⁴ Okello & Ng (September 2006), *Invisibly Displaced Persons in Adjumani District*

⁵ Conflict Resolution Strategy for Western Uganda (undated), Department for International Development, UK Government, para 2.2.5.

⁶ See for example, *ADF rebels on the move again*, The Guardian, Kampala, 29 September 2006

⁷ See UN 'Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo', 2001

There have been numerous attempts at disarmament, most recently in 2006 through the use of cordon and search operations by the UPDF, an approach which led the UNDP to close its operations in the area in protest at the accompanying human rights abuses evident in these exercises. September 2006 saw the launching of the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme (KIDPP) by the Government, with support from DANIDA. While the UN Country Team welcomed KIDPP as “recognition of the special needs and significant disparities faced by Karamoja as well as the importance of progress in Karamoja’s stability and development to Uganda as a whole and the success of the PRDP/PEAP/MDGs”, they nonetheless expressed considerable reservations about it.

These included the extent to which KIDPP perpetuated a “twin-track approach that continues to allow for widespread military operations against civilian populations”, the under-prioritisation of economic development, protection and justice mechanisms, and the failure to acknowledge and accommodate Karamajong traditional values. The UNCT commentary stressed that

*“The operational strategies of the GoU within all the different sectors continues to need specific adaptation to the social, political and climatic conditions of the Karamojong, and the Karamojong should not be expected to adapt to standard development strategies pursued elsewhere”.*⁸

The UNCT response to KIDPP is in part a reaction to dominant portrayals of the Karamojong as warriors associated with primitivism and traditionalism who cannot generally be regarded as a part of modern-day Uganda. Early drafts of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan initially described the Karamojong as ‘terrorists’.⁹ The PRDP provides a relatively moderate analysis of dynamics in and around Karamoja, arguing that:

The conflicts in north-eastern Uganda are chiefly as result of competition over scarce resources in a hostile environment, fuelled by the proliferation of small arms. Pastoralists are forced to move in search of water and pasture for livestock within and outside the Karamoja sub-region during droughts. Key contributing factors include reduced access to pastures and watering points due to land gazettement, cattle raids, availability of market for stolen cattle, and the socio-economic value attached to cattle. The conflicts are exacerbated by social contextual factors such as revenge; inter ethnic animosities, and the culture of secrecy.¹⁰

While this is not an unreasonable interpretation it has serious limitations, not least in that it does not situate these local dynamics within the larger national context. There is no mention of the social and political marginalisation and exclusion of the Karamojong from the national scene, nor is there any consideration given to the possibility that – as the UNCT response to KIDPP hints – some Karamojong violence may be a symptom of a struggle for cultural survival in the face of a strongly homogenis-

⁸ UN Country Team position on KIDPP and its launch, September 2006

⁹ Interview with donor official, Kampala, 9 August 2006.

¹⁰ PRDP, 2006: 88.

ing mainstream Ugandan value system.¹¹ Overall it can be said that successive governments have seen the solution to the Karamojong ‘problem’ in terms of disarmament and re-culturalisation: there has been little apparent attempt to reach any accommodation with the specificities of that area or to engage in a dialogue about future directions which could be adopted to ensure a win-win situation for the Karamojong and Uganda as a whole. As such it is likely to remain a blemish on Uganda’s record for some time to come, even if the LRA conflict to the west of Karamoja is successfully addressed.

Northern Uganda (UPDA, HSM, LRA)

The most significant insurgency has been that of the LRA. This initially incorporated remnants of both the UPDA and the Holy Spirit Movement, the latter having been defeated militarily at Jinja as it sought to march on Kampala in 1988 (see map). The intensity of this insurgency has fluctuated considerably over the years, but prompted the establishment of the position of Minister for Pacification of Northern Uganda. The first incumbent, Mrs Betty Bigombe (herself an Acholi from Gulu district) succeeded in establishing contact with the LRA and had several meetings with them in the bush in late 1993 and early 1994. In February 1994, just when it seemed a peace deal was due to be struck, President Museveni gave the LRA seven days to come out of the bush or face the consequences. The response to this ultimatum was a rapid escalation of violence, a pattern which was to be repeated on several occasions over the coming decade. By this point the Government of Sudan was offering a range of support to the LRA, at least partly in response to Uganda’s barely concealed support to the Sudan People’s Liberation Army.^{12 13}

In 1996, just one year after the promulgation of the new Constitution of Uganda, the Government ordered large numbers of Acholi into IDP camps, often underpinning the order with the use of force, thus setting in place a trend which was to continue for the next decade.¹⁴ With the exception of 1999, which was something of a lull year in terms of LRA incursions, the violence continued and the numbers of IDPs grew steadily, particularly in Gulu district, but also in Kitgum. Some fled the Acholi districts, crossing the river Nile into Masindi district.¹⁵ By 1999 there were already some 34 IDP camps in Gulu district and 8 in Kitgum,¹⁶ while IDPs in Masindi were scattered amongst the local population or created new settlements in hitherto unpopulated forest areas.¹⁷ The Nairobi Peace Accord of 8 December 1999, in which the Carter Centre mediated an agreement between the Governments of Sudan and

¹¹ Other minority groups under considerable threat include the Ike (between the Karamojong and Iteso), the Batwa (situated in Kisoro on the borders of Uganda/Rwanda/DRC), the Bakonzo (Kasese area). The latter sustained a movement known as the Rwenzururu Movement from mid-1962 to 1982, remnants of which have constituted a veterans group aligned with one of the multiple claimants to the Bakonzo monarchy. Rwenzori (later Kasese) district results was created in 1974 as an attempt to appease this movement, together with Semliki (later Bundibugyo) for the Bamba ethnic group.

¹² The SPLA, amongst other things, had an established presence in northern Uganda, regularly visited Kampala for discussions with the GOU, and conducted forcible recruitment from Sudanese refugee camps in both West Nile and Acholi regions (Dolan, 2005, Hovil, 2001, Hovil and Moorehead, 2002)

¹³ Museveni has also supported rebel groups in DRC: the Kisangani faction of Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD-ML) and the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC). See African Rights 2001, *Avoiding an Impasse: understanding the Conflicts in Western Uganda*

¹⁴ Dolan 2005, HURIFO 2002, Amnesty International 1999

¹⁵ Masindi was largely outside the LRA’s area of operation

¹⁶ Under British rule the entire Acholi region was considered one administrative unit. It was subsequently divided into Gulu and Kitgum districts, and in 2000 Pader district was formed out of the southern half of Kitgum district.

¹⁷ Personal observations, Masindi district, 1999

Uganda, but failed to include the LRA (despite a number of attempts), provoked the LRA into a renewal of violence.¹⁸

In 2000 a referendum was held which found that Uganda should not adopt a multi-party system. This prompted the GOU to develop a highly contested Political Organisations Bill setting out the legal foundations on which parties were to operate. Also in 2000, after several years of sustained advocacy and lobbying by civil society and religious groupings in northern Uganda, the Government passed an Amnesty Act and began the establishment of the necessary implementing institution, the Amnesty Commission. This was a blanket amnesty open to all insurgents nationwide. Unprecedentedly, it was not open to members of the Government army forces.¹⁹ In the same year the UN produced a report in which the depredations of the UPDF in DRC – in particular its extraction of high value minerals – were given substantial coverage,²⁰ information which was no news to Acholi who had seen their sons taken into Local Defence Units and subsequently transferred to fight in the DRC.

Although the Amnesty Act initially seemed to have brought little response from LRA members, and suffered from slow implementation,²¹ by late 2001 the number of LRA reporters was beginning to rise. Just at this point the Government took two important steps. Firstly, it located the northern Uganda situation within the US-led global war on terror. In March 2002 it passed the Anti-Terrorism Act (the LRA was already on the US State Department's list of terrorist organizations), effectively making the pursuit of a negotiated settlement with the LRA extremely difficult, particularly for non-state parties. Secondly, it returned to its customary military mode; large scale military 'training exercises' organised in Aswa Ranch in Kitgum district²² soon proved to be the prelude to a massive military operation code-named Operation Iron Fist. Under this, in agreement with the Government of Sudan, at least 10,000 UPDF troops were sent into South Sudan, ostensibly to crush Joseph Kony and the LRA once and for all. The strident militarism and apparent impatience with non-military approaches – which both the Anti-Terrorism Act and Operation Iron Fist simply brought yet more sharply into focus – stood in striking contrast to the four years the GOU had invested in resolving the West Nile situation over the period 1998–2002.²³

In practice Operation Iron Fist proved a military and strategic disaster, with considerable losses on the UPDF side. Rather than dealing conclusively with the LRA, it prompted their return into northern Uganda. Not only was there a drastic increase in internal displacement in the Acholi region, but the LRA dramatically extended their area of operations southwards and eastwards into the Langi and Teso sub-regions (see map). By 2004 90% of Acholi were in IDP camps, together with significant numbers in the other two regions. The total of approximately 2 million IDPs became, after Darfur and Colombia, the world's third largest IDP situation.

¹⁸ Dolan 2005

¹⁹ If the Amnesty had been open to members of the UPDF and its auxiliary forces, its legal and moral bases would have been considerably weakened. For further discussion see also Hovil and Lomo 2005

²⁰ See UN, 2001, *Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

²¹ See ARLPI 2002, *Seventy times seven: the impact of the Amnesty Law in Acholi*

²² Announced on 22 January 2002 by Army Commander Kazini (Kacokke Madit e-newsletter no 6)

²³ The UNRFII process demonstrated not only the need to give negotiations time, but also that they could be successful and offered a viable alternative to the kind of military solution proposed for the LRA.

January 2004 saw an important further twist to the situation, as the GOU invited the newly established International Criminal Court (ICC) to make the prosecution of the LRA its first case.²⁴ This was much to the dismay of a broad range of organisations operating in northern Uganda, many of which had been keen advocates of the blanket amnesty, and who generally regarded the ICC process as potentially jeopardising the prospects of a non-military solution (this is discussed further below).²⁵

Other key events in 2004 included the launch of Operation Iron Fist II in April, and the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Accord between the SPLA and GOS in October. The latter was to have significant ramifications for the GOU position on northern Uganda, as is discussed below. At a national level, the Constitutional Review process (which began in 2002) led to a bill amending the Constitution, the lifting of the ban on multipartyism, and the passing of the Political Organisations Act.

In 2005 the International Court of Justice ruled that Uganda should pay reparations of between \$5 and \$10 billion to the DRC,²⁶ and late in the same year Colonel Bwesigye returned from exile to head up the opposition party FDC. Within two weeks he was arrested and charged with rape and treason, prompting large-scale civil unrest, particularly in Kampala. The High Court was at one point surrounded by the Black Mamba, a hitherto unknown element of the GoU's security forces. The Government suggested that Bwesigye should apply for amnesty under the Act of 2000, which he refused to do as it would have demanded an admission of collaboration with both LRA and PRA. It was at this time that Vincent Otti, the LRA's second in command, publicly stated the LRA's intention and wish to talk peace.

In January 2006, the United Nations Security Council for the first made specific mention of the LRA situation in UNSC resolution 1653. This was closely followed in March 2006 by UNSC 1663.

Following a controversial amendment to the 1995 Constitution which removed term limits to the presidency, the incumbent President Museveni, won the elections in February 2006, effectively entering his 3rd constitutional term and his 5th *de facto* 5 year period in office. Civilians throughout the north of Uganda made their dissatisfaction clear, with a clear majority voting for the political opposition and not for the NRM. The swing away from the NRM was particularly clear in those areas which had been the recent victims of the extension of the LRA's areas of activity, namely Langi and Teso sub-regions. The most dramatic development of 2006, however, was the beginning of talks between the GOU and LRA in Juba, beginning in June 2006. These led to an agreement to a cessation of hostilities by late August, under which LRA troops were to assemble in two agreed assembly points by mid-September, one in South Sudan, the other in north-eastern DRC. At the time of writing negotiations were ongoing, with the outcome as yet uncertain. Some IDPs had begun spontaneous return movements to new settlement sites and home areas.

²⁴ See www.icc-cpi.int.

²⁵ See also Hovil and Lomo 2005.

²⁶ In August 2006 this became a negotiation point, as 'The DR Congo has said that Uganda must first pay up to \$10 billion in compensation for plunder of that country's natural resources and loss of life before the UPDF can be allowed in to flush out the Kony rebels should the peace talks in Juba fail' (Daily Monitor, 20 August 2006, *Congo wants its \$10 b to let UPDF hunt Kony*).

Figure 2: National Matrix of conflicts and tensions

	North	South	Central	East	West
North	Acholi-Langi tensions	Economic grievances, political marginalisation		Karamojong blamed for cattle thefts, inflow of small arms	
South	Threat from 'aggressive' northerners	Land pressure			
Central	Luwero: who did what when and to whom.	Baganda demand for federalism		Government de-gazetting national parks and forests in Karamoja for agricultural and mining purposes*	'Lost counties'**
East	LRA & Acholi seen as synonymous → blame Acholi for incursions	Government see as southern dominated; Tensions over GoU's forcible disarmament programmes		Karamojong raids result in long term IDP camps in Teso region (since late 1970s)	
West		Bakonzo & Bamba ethnic groups.	Bakonzo wish to establish a kingship known as 'Obusinga'		Competition over land & natural resources

* Banfield J, 2006: 20.

** Chunk of land in five counties from what used to be called Buganda was lost to what used to be called Bunyoro. The Baganda have always wanted to have them back. This issue is frequently raised in Parliament.

Observations on trends from 2004 onwards

When considering the five major conflict affected areas the developments with the greatest immediate impact on country co-operation planning are those in the Acholi, Langi and Teso areas, which have experienced both a serious deterioration in the humanitarian situation of the population as a whole, and, perhaps as a consequence, a considerable increase in international attention.

It is perhaps this increased attention which has helped to generate significant shifts in the GOU's approach to the LRA situation since 2004. There currently appears to be a greater political will to find a solution than at any time in the previous eighteen years. This shift, though it cannot be described as a complete volte-face by the GOU, is nevertheless important and potentially beneficial to the people of northern Uganda and therefore to the country as a whole.

The shift can be explained by a number of overlapping factors which have played out and continue to be played out at regional, international, national and local levels. At the regional level the three most important developments are undoubtedly the visible internationalisation of the conflict as the UPDF pursued the LRA into South Sudan under Operation Iron Fist, the signing of the CPA in Sudan, and the urgent push to move forward the post-war transition process in DRC through the holding of the country's first democratic elections in forty years in

2006.²⁷ International investment in both of the latter processes has been considerable, with little wish to see either jeopardised by the continuing existence of the LRA.

The Government in South Sudan is understandably reluctant to have its limited resources and capacities diverted into dealing with an errant insurgent group, preferring to focus its energies on preparing for a referendum on secession to be held within the next five years, on building good trading links with and through Uganda and Kenya, and on ensuring that territorial sovereignty is restored through the departure of both the LRA and the UPDF.²⁸ The importance it attributes to the issue is demonstrated in the initiative it has taken as the main mediator. Equally, as long-standing allies of the GOU, they are an acceptable and plausible mediator with whom the GOU can presumably engage relatively well.

Equally the DRC Government is confronted with the daunting challenge of uniting four major armed groups into one national army (*brassage*). The United Nations is reluctant to add a further burden onto, or expand the mandate of, the already overloaded UN peace-keeping force, particularly after 9 Guatemalan soldiers working for MONUC were killed in an encounter with the LRA.²⁹ In short, the two governments immediately bordering northern Uganda would seem to have greater interest in seeing an end to the LRA situation than its continuation.

At an international level there has been a dramatic shift in attention levels. With the visit of Jan Egeland, UN's Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs in November 2003, during which he declared Northern Uganda the world's most neglected humanitarian crisis, a long-standing pattern of silence about these humanitarian problems was substantially broken.

It is possible to trace this new awareness through a scrutiny of the burgeoning grey literature from 2004 onwards (see bibliography). While the bulk of this focuses on humanitarian issues, it is possible to find increasingly critical analyses of the political dimensions of the crisis, together with a greater preparedness to highlight some of the human rights implications and the need for enhanced protection of civilians.³⁰ In short, the hitherto predominant image of Uganda as an unmitigated success story, has begun to come unstuck, largely due to growing awareness of all that is wrong in northern Uganda, the most visible indicator of which has been the growing scale of internal displacement and subsequent humanitarian suffering, both of which rose almost uninterruptedly from 2000 until 2005.³¹

The percentages of population displaced into IDP camps rose from around 30% in the late 1990s to nigh on 90% by 2004, with corresponding rises in rates of abduction and the phenomenon of 'night commuting'.³² And as the geographic scope of internal displacement spread into

²⁷ The first round was held on 30 July, the second on 29 October.

²⁸ Much as the SPLA and GOU have long been allies, the initial agreement allowing the UPDF into South Sudan was made with the Khartoum government in 2002, nearly three years prior to the signing of the CPA.

²⁹ In late 2005 the GOU demanded that the Congolese army and MONUC hunt down and capture the LRA after it re-located to the north-eastern corner of the DRC, and threatened to move (back) into the DRC if they failed to do so. Given its own evident failure to track down and capture the LRA in the preceding 19 years, this seemed somewhat disingenuous.

³⁰ See, for example, Liu Institute, May 2004 *The Responsibility to Protect: A Plan of Action for Northern Uganda*, CSOPNU, December 2004 *Nowhere to Hide: Humanitarian Protection Threats in Northern Uganda*, Paul, D, January 2006 *Fulfilling the Forgotten Promise; The Protection of Civilians in Northern Uganda*

³¹ See CSOPNU, February 2006, *Counting the Cost: Twenty Years of War in northern Uganda*.

³² 'Night commuting' refers to the phenomenon of children walking from neighbouring villages into town centres, initially at least in search of greater security from abduction. At its peak night commuting involved some 40,000 children and saw a number of NGOs involved in the provision of night shelters, some with armed guards.

Langi and Teso regions, the indicators in health, education, economic status, human rights, etc all worsened considerably, with inevitable negative consequences for Uganda's overall development indicators. In particular, growing displacement caused the numbers falling below the poverty line to also increase, such that the downward trend national poverty statistics throughout the 1990s was reversed.

The upward shift from the 34% to the 38% was in no small part due to figures of nearly 70% in the Acholi area, rising to the low 90s in Karamoja.³³ High levels of HIV/AIDS in the north also appear to buck the national downward trend, and therefore undermine one of the key components of Uganda's success story.³⁴ In part, at least, this negative trend in HIV can be related to the massive levels of militarisation experienced in northern Uganda in recent years.³⁵ While there has long been recruitment into Local Defence Units, 2003 saw the emergence of three new and substantial militias in Teso, Lango, and Kitgum.³⁶

Although it has come very late in the day, there has been a corresponding increase in UN and INGO presence in the last couple of years and a shift in the nature of programming; the reconceptualisation of northern Uganda as a massive humanitarian crisis has led to an abandonment of the earlier narrow focus on LRA returnees, for example, to a concern with the broader question of child protection throughout the northern region. Similarly there has been a shift away from the exclusive concern with the LRA's use of girls as 'sex slaves' to a wider concern with high levels of sexual exploitation affecting young women in general. There is growing awareness that the disturbingly widespread problems of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) are closely associated not just with very high levels of militarisation but also with the psycho-social impacts of mass impoverishment and disempowerment.

The UN's decision to make Uganda one of three pilot countries globally in which to 'roll-out' the new 'cluster' approach to humanitarian coordination has effectively guaranteed that northern Uganda will remain under the international spotlight for some years to come. Most notably, perhaps, it is also one of the first instances in which UNHCR's newly extended mandate for IDPs is fully tested. At the time of writing UNHCR, UNDP and OHCHR were all in the process of dramatically extending their presence in the Acholi region.³⁷

A further internationalising factor has been the the ICC's controversial investigation into and indictment of five top leaders of the LRA. As the first case to be handled by this new mechanism of international justice, this has helped to galvanise international interest in what is going on in northern Uganda, and has sparked considerable debates about the

³³ PEAP, 2004.

³⁴ HIV prevalence in northern Uganda is estimated at 9% as compared with a national figure closer to 6%. Levels in the Acholi area, at 9% are three times those in West Nile (3%) and more than double those in the north east (4%). (PRDP, 2006: 7, 11)

³⁵ The same pattern of creating LDUs and home guards was evident in ADF affected areas in South West Uganda in the late 1990s (DFID, 2002, para 4.1.5.)

³⁶ Dolan, 2004. The emergence of the first of these, the Amuka boys in Teso, under the leadership of the former RDC of Kisoro, Musa Ecweru, can be interpreted as having posed something of a threat to state authority. Ecweru, by his own account, simply abandoned his government post in Kisoro in order to return to his home town of Soroti, where he proceeded to mobilise 10,000 men. In two speeches given by Ecweru (now Minister of State for Disaster Preparedness) at Brookings Institute (3 July 2006) and Oxfam (8 August 2006) he claims that they had had at least four major encounters with the LRA before President Museveni called him up and brought him back under the fold of Government operations. It is also noteworthy that these forces are not included under the Ministry of Defense budget, but are rather paid for by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

³⁷ Dolan & Hovil, 2006: 'Humanitarian Protection in Uganda: A Trojan Horse?'

complex relationships between peace, justice and impunity.³⁸ Both the sequencing of peace and justice, and the nature of justice itself, have come under considerable scrutiny, for it has become evident that the ICC cannot be regarded as removed from the real-time dynamics of the situation, and has become a key political element in them. Some have argued that the ICC indictments helped to create the pressure needed to bring the LRA to the negotiating table (see Allen, 2005, for example). It could equally be argued that the (albeit faint) possibility that the ICC might extend its investigations into Government abuses in northern Uganda helped to persuade the GoU to engage seriously in peace talks.

While it is difficult to verify either of these possibilities without interviewing the indictees themselves, by late September 2006 the lifting of the indictments was being used as a negotiation point by both sides.³⁹ This suggests that the widely held fears within northern Uganda that the ICC process might jeopardise any non-military solution to the situation did have some basis.⁴⁰

All of these trends have arguably created unprecedented pressure on the GOU to be seen to be doing something about northern Uganda. Previously it was possible (particularly in the larger context of the global 'War on Terror') to continue to claim to be pursuing the military option, but with the changing political situation in neighbouring countries and the international spotlight on northern Uganda, this stance has simply become untenable.

In addition to the ICC question, the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, due to be hosted in Uganda in November 2007, must certainly have helped to focus the GOU's thinking about its international image. Furthermore, the clear signal given in the 2006 elections, in which virtually the entire north voted for the opposition, may have given the Government pause for thought as it faces further declines in the national vote in 2011 if the situation remains unresolved. The discovery of economically viable quantities of oil in Lake Albert in mid-2006, within easy reach of the LRA's home territory of Gulu district, may have created an additional incentive to be seen to be creating the kind of stability which would help reassure investors.⁴¹

A further consideration for the Government has undoubtedly been its reluctance to cede too much control to the ever-increasing intervention of the United Nations in response to the burgeoning humanitarian crisis in the north.⁴² The Government's refusal to accept the designation of a UN Envoy to Northern Uganda,⁴³ and its establishment of a Joint Monitoring Committee in response to the two UNSC resolutions, are both indicators of this. The clearest statement of its intent to re-exert control is to be

³⁸ The intervention of the ICC eventually resulted in the top five members of the LRA being excluded from what was otherwise supposed to be a blanket Amnesty Act. In early 2006, however, some time after the ICC unsealed its arrest warrants for the top five, the GoU declared that they could benefit from the blanket amnesty after all, if it was the only way of ending the violence

³⁹ See for example, Daily Monitor, 5 July 2006 *Museveni offers Kony amnesty*, New Vision, 31 August 2006, *Uganda to appeal to ICC for LRA leaders*, in which 'The Government will convince the International Criminal Court not to arrest the LRA leaders if they respect the terms of the truce'

⁴⁰ See also RLP Working Paper 15: *Whose Justice?* (February 2005).

⁴¹ See, for example, The Sunday Monitor, 8 October 2006: *Uganda to build diesel refinery*. Speaking at 'national oil prayers', Museveni was reported to say that investors had so far sunk \$70 million in oil exploration, and that he expected production to commence with the drilling of 6,000 – 10,000 barrels per day. See also Sunday Vision, 8 October 2006: *Petroleum production starts 2009*

⁴² Dolan & Hovil, 2006: '*Humanitarian Protection in Uganda: A Trojan Horse?*' argue that under cover of humanitarian intervention there has been a significant challenge to perceptions of Uganda's sovereign capacity to protect its own people.

⁴³ In mid-October, 2006, Joaquim Chissano announced in London that he had been appointed as the UN's special Envoy, though whether to the LRA affected region, or specifically to northern Uganda, remains unclear at the time of writing.

found in the draft Peace Recovery and Development Plan of August 2006, in which institutional coordination mechanisms under direct control of central Government are extensively discussed.⁴⁴

While the GOU has begun to refer to the LRA as rebels and insurgents rather than 'bandits', it has a long way to go before it truly moves away from a generally triumphalist tone and military rhetoric. This can be seen in its insistent characterisation of the negotiations in Juba as offering the LRA a 'soft landing'.⁴⁵

Key issues and tensions

From the above review of key events and trends a number of important conflict-related power relations, tensions and divisions, stand out as affecting both the north and the country as a whole. Northern Uganda exemplifies ethnic divisions, tensions between decentralisation and recentralisation processes, regional political and economic grievances (many of which are closely related to extensive human rights violations), GOU-donor tensions, GOU-UN tensions, and gender and inter-generational problems. The latter are symptoms of national tensions between entrenched patriarchal values and systems, and some push for gender equality, and this in turn exemplifies broader tensions between modernisers and traditionalists. A further tension affecting the population as a whole is between civilians and military, and between militarisation and democratisation.

Ethnic divisions: The tendency of each post-independence regime to be dominated by a particular ethnicity is expression of this which has had important consequences for relations between key areas of the country. Thus Obote's overthrow by Amin saw Langi and Acholi replaced by West Nilers (Madi and Kakwa), a situation which was reversed again under Obote II, both events leaving a historic legacy between the West Nile and Acholi areas. The Obote II period generated considerable dislike of northerners generally, and Acholi specifically, in many parts of southern Uganda. The alleged involvement of Karamojong in the massive cattle rustling which took place in the Acholi region in the late 1980s following the NRA take-over created east-west tensions to add on to south-north ones.

Despite the NRM's stated intention of overcoming ethnic divisions, they continue to be an important feature of national political life; the extension of LRA activities into Langi and Teso regions in 2003–4 ignited tensions between those ethnic groups and the Acholi. A number of ethnically based parliamentary groups (e.g. Acholi Parliamentary Group, Karamojong Parliamentary Group) effectively give recognition to, and thereby help to entrench, ethnic organisation. The impact of these on conflict resolution has been considerable, both because for a long time few would question the GOU's portrayal of the war in the north as an Acholi problem, and because even those seeking to promote peaceful resolution often fell back on ethnicity as an organising motif. It is only in recent years that the national offices of Justice & Peace, for instance, have achieved good working relations with religious leaders in the north. Overlaid onto ethnicity have been religious divisions, depending on which denomination arrived first in an area during the colonial era. Thus Acholi was seen as a Catholic dominated area.

The existence of significant *economic discrepancies* between the *south and north* of the country is regarded by many northerners not just as more than

⁴⁴ See PRDP, 2006: pp93–97

⁴⁵ See for example The Weekly Observer, August 31 – September 6 *No job for Kony – govt reports the Director of the Media Centre as saying that "We are offering them (LRA) an exit. There will be no negotiation of personal benefits but discussion of mechanism of soft landing".*

just an inevitable consequence of decades of war, but also as evidence that the Government has hostile intentions towards them – as Acholi. The discrepancies are indeed stark. While the PEAP Poverty Status report for 2005 is remarkably coy about giving statistics, the draft PRDP suggest that while those falling the poverty line in Uganda as a whole amount to 38% of the population, the figures for northern Uganda are far higher at around 64%, and worse still in Karamoja.⁴⁶ As a recent International Alert report found “While the proportion of the population living in poverty in the south and west is now roughly 27 percent, the percentage across the north is 63 percent while in the east it is 46 percent.”⁴⁷ Mixed economic development interplays with fragmented national identity to produce resentment, mistrust, alienation and the ongoing potential for re-emergence or exacerbation of conflict around the country”.⁴⁸ Certainly, research in West Nile indicates that economic marginalization is a key grievance behind the UNRFII and WNBFI insurgencies.⁴⁹

Related to economic marginalisation of the north is the question of *access to land* and the widespread fear among Acholi that there is an economic agenda behind the strategy of encampment. In March 1999, for example, attempts were made in several villages to establish ‘block farming’, schemes whereby groups of villagers would return to their home areas (but not to their own land) to clear the land and farm on a commercial scale, with special protection afforded by the army. Various elements of the army, including the President’s brother, and the commander of the northern reserve forces, were centrally involved in these schemes, at times in collaboration with international NGOs.⁵⁰

Fears that ‘protected villages’ had an ulterior motive were given even sharper focus by the publication in May 2003 of Salim Saleh’s proposals for a Security and Production Programme (SPP).⁵¹ Although the scheme was not part of official government policy, the fact that it came from the President’s brother inevitably raised fears. The more so as it envisaged incorporating all 800,000 people displaced in the Acholi Sub-region into 45 highly militarised production units, each containing 17,500 people, of whom 736 per unit would be involved in civil defence.⁵²

Even though such grandiose schemes do not appear to have got off the ground, there remain very real issues around access to land, and these are highlighted in several reports, including *Land Matters in Displacement* by CSOPNU (December 2004), and a more recent review by the World Bank (Rugadya Margaret, September 2006). They include tensions between traditional and modern land tenure and ownership systems, and the absence of administrative structures capable not just of arbitrating land disputes, but also of putting in place adequate registration and title systems.

Furthermore there are fears that, as people return to their areas of origin, there will be considerable confusion over who has access to and rights over which pieces of land. This is closely linked to inter-generational tensions; where older people have died, knowledge of boundaries

⁴⁶ PRDP 2006: 11.

⁴⁷ Barkan, J.D. (2005) ‘An African ‘Success’ Past its Prime’ presentation at Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars conference, *Uganda: An African ‘Success’ Past its Prime?* 2 June 2005.

⁴⁸ Banfield J, 2006

⁴⁹ Lomo & Hovil 2004

⁵⁰ In Atiak in March 1999, for example, Catholic Relief Services reportedly promised seeds and tools to those who formed into groups of 10 as demanded by the commander of the reserve forces. Dolan, 2005: 195.

⁵¹ For discussion of other initiatives involving Salim Saleh see Finnström, 2003: 238.

⁵² See Dolan, 2005: 196–197

may have died with them; equally, where young people came to the camps as children (or were born there), older people may be able to expropriate land from them by playing on their ignorance.

Grievances about abuses and violations in northern Uganda derive not just from the LRA and UPDF as the two major actors in recent times, but also from an extensive history of human rights abuses by a multiplicity of actors, including the UPDA, NRA, UPDF, WNBF, SPLA, Police, LDUs and militias.⁵³ The sense of abuse derives not only from violations of individuals, but from the violation of the rights of entire sections of the population through displacement and encampment, a policy which the LRA's attacks may have catalysed, but for which the Government was largely held responsible. Indeed, until Jan Egeland's visit in late 2003, which as described above somewhat belatedly drew the international spotlight onto northern Uganda, there was for many, in addition to an experience of LRA impunity, a sense that there was also considerable Governmental impunity and international indifference, insofar as GOU policies, while adding insult to the injuries of the LRA, appeared to draw very little criticism (Long before Egeland's visit, people would urge the author, as a researcher, to 'go and tell them (i.e. the outside world) what is happening to us').

The sense of Governmental impunity and lack of accountability was reinforced by the GOU refusal to respond to calls from Ugandan MPs for northern Uganda to be declared a 'disaster area'.⁵⁴ The inability to influence central government is undoubtedly felt by people in the north as yet another indicator of their *political marginalisation*. Indeed, the Government's refusal to see northern Uganda as a national problem is a symptom of this marginalisation and is evident in the draft PRDP, which presents northern Uganda as detached from the development of Uganda as a whole. It is further demonstrated in the GOU's persistent declarations that *Mato Oput*, a very culturally specific reconciliation mechanism, is sufficient to deal with all the reconciliation needs arising from the northern conflict, and its corresponding lack of visible interest in a national Truth and Reconciliation Process.

There is also a tension around the role of traditional leaders. While there have been some initiatives to meet with traditional leaders from other areas, such as West Nile, to promote inter-ethnic reconciliation, one limitation of the traditional leadership is that, by definition, the solutions they can make most contribution to are also ones which tend to reinforce the idea that this is purely an Acholi matter. Their place in promoting *national* peace and reconciliation is less self-evident.

An important area of tension exists between the GOU and the donors, and between GOU and UN. Uganda's heavy dependence on donors for budget support is clearly irksome to the Government, particularly where conditionalities are in place. However, donors are gradually becoming aware that the 'developmental project of the 1990s has seemingly gone astray in its [the present government's] current focus to maintain power at all costs'.⁵⁵

The UN, for long a quiet and uncritical partner, has gradually been raising the temperature on northern Uganda, first through the visit of Jan Egeland in late 2003, and subsequently through its decision to make Uganda a pilot for its new cluster approach to humanitarian emergen-

⁵³ See also Lomo & Hovil 2004

⁵⁴ These were made repeatedly from 2003 up to 2005.

⁵⁵ Banfield J, 2006: 9

cies. The extent to which this is seen as threatening by the GOU is perhaps indicated by its refusal to accept the UN's first two proposals for a new UNDP country representative who would also, by tradition, also double as the country's humanitarian co-ordinator. Nonetheless, the portrayal of northern Uganda by the UN as a "humanitarian crisis" has in other respects played into the Government's hands; more attention is given on a day to day basis to the functioning of District Disaster Management Committees than to developing mechanisms such as a national Truth and Reconciliation process to address the underlying causes of conflict. The structuring of the new cluster system, whereby human rights is a *sub*-cluster of the protection cluster, is an indicator that, from the UN's humanitarian perspective, protection is not primarily a human rights issue.⁵⁶

The significant *militarisation* of the north is likely to remain a source of tension for some time to come. Figures for army deployment are not available, but the PRDP gives a figure of just over 31,549 'auxiliary forces' made up of militias and Local Defence Units as follows:

Local Defence Units in West Nile	=	2,724
Local Defence Units in Acholi	=	11,704
Amuka (militia in Lango)	=	10,288
Arrow Brigade (militia in Teso)	=	6,812
Anti-Stock Theft Unit (Karamoja)	=	21
TOTAL	=	31,549 ⁵⁷

These figures do not include LDUs in non-LRA affected districts of the Teso sub-region, and it seems likely that they under-represent the total numbers.⁵⁸ The PRDP notes that 'Administratively, LDUs are under the Uganda Police Force which also holds their budget.'⁵⁹

One result of forcible displacement has been an under-educated and under-employed youth population; as a result, as a recent UNICEF report argues, 'military service, while a risk activity, can nevertheless be a reasonable (if unfortunate) protective and economic strategy for many young males'.⁶⁰ De-militarisation, therefore, must deal with two interlocking sets of interests; those of Government military strategy, and those of economic survival by impoverished individuals. A further element for consideration is the fact that child soldiers are not just a phenomenon associated with the LRA: the UPDF also contains child soldiers, though no overall figure can be given.⁶¹

While some LDUs are being re-trained to join the civilian police force, the planned expansion of police presence can only absorb a few thousand, leaving the vast majority in need of demobilisation.⁶² And the

⁵⁶ Dolan & Hovil, *Humanitarian Protection in Uganda: A Trojan Horse?* 2006: 32–33.

⁵⁷ These are auxiliary to the UPDF. The Government of Uganda's White Paper on Defence Transformation in 2004 indicated approximately 55,000 troops.

⁵⁸ In 2004, on the basis of figures given in the national press, the author estimated at least 25,000 men under arms in the newly created ethnic militias. This figure did not include Local Defence Units or Home Guards (Dolan, 2004).

⁵⁹ PRDP, 2006: 44.

⁶⁰ UNICEF, 2006: 35.

⁶¹ When UNICEF surveyed the UPDF's Lugore training camp in 2003, they found 10% of recruits were "probably" under the age of 18 – IRIN, 13 November 2003: *Uganda should do more to stop child soldier recruitment* – UNICEF

⁶² A further group of concern is so-called Special Police Constables. These predominantly comprise former LDUs and ex-combatants. Unlike other security forces, they are recruited for very specific periods and, if circumstances changes, are supposed to be disbanded.

UPDF itself, which for so long has been kept 'busy' by the LRA, will have to find other justifications for maintaining its current scale. Indeed, some have suggested that a certain number can be re-deployed as peace-keeping forces in other countries.

This large-scale militarisation is one key dimension of the *small-arms* question. As all the auxiliary forces bear arms, this represents a considerable concentration of weaponry in northern Uganda. The formal allocation of small arms to relatively under-disciplined forces by the Government is in addition to the existence of small arms entering into Uganda both from south Sudan and eastern DRC. While the Government tended to under-play the importance of organized insurgent groups by dismissing them as 'bandits', there is no doubt that the deliberate arming of large numbers of civilians, in combination with a number of poorly controlled entry points for small arms from other conflict areas, is a potentially dangerous mix. There is, to date, however, little evidence of small arms feeding into criminal activities such as car hi-jackings and armed robberies, such as are notorious in Nairobi or Johannesburg.

The impacts on the population of long-term exposure to violence and trauma are considerable, and responses to them vary by age and gender. Young women living in IDP camps see little by way of future prospects, and are often obliged to engage in early marriages and 'survival sex' in order to feed themselves and others. There are correspondingly high risks of HIV infection, and there are elevated levels of suicide. Young men are similarly deprived of a sense of future direction, with militarisation one of the few available options – and suicide another. Adult women find themselves disempowered and are often obliged to resort to survival sex, and brewing of alcohol for sale. Rates of alcoholism and suicide in this category are also relatively high. Similarly adult men, deprived of their roles and responsibilities by being in IDP camps, demonstrate relatively high levels of self-destructive behaviours, including suicides. In this broad climate of disempowerment, inter-generational tensions are considerable (though often hidden), as is a widespread sense of 'social collapse'. Conservative models of gender and gender relations continue to be the norm (most clearly demonstrated in official position on homosexuality), and there is generally a failure to address youth-adult, women-men relationships; the draft PRDP, for example, makes not a single mention of these as issues requiring attention.⁶³

National tensions

One serious problem for Uganda is the prevailing military behaviour and mindset in top positions. This manifests itself in many ways, for example in the creation of what one respondent described as a 'Pretorian Guard' (in short a Presidential Guard Brigade commanded by the President's own son), and in a general militarisation of society which is characterised by an official intolerance of criticism. As another respondent described it to the author, 'we have a military government dressed in civil attire... the presence of the UPDF in parliament is a clear signal of the rejection of reforms which put the UPDF under civilian control'.

One visible symptom of this mindset is an excessive reaction to anything which appears to offer competition. An example of this comes from Kitgum district, where during the campaign period for the 2006 elections, one NGO happened to be distributing a brand of soap known as 'key soap' due to the key logo stamped on it. As this happens coinci-

⁶³ For a succinct discussion of Uganda's shortcomings in addressing patriarchy, see IRIN, 19 December 2002, 'UGANDA: Focus – Little change for women despite affirmative action'.

dentally to also be the symbol of the FDC, the soap distribution to IDPs was seen as an explicit attempt to campaign by that particular NGO. Much time and effort went into employing extra hands to scrape of the symbol from the soap which had not yet been distributed. As this incident suggests, twenty years of the Movement system has left a troubling legacy of political immaturity; multi-partyism is still in its infancy.

A further tension exists between *decentralisation and re-centralisation*. Decentralisation, advocated by the World Bank, has taken on its own peculiarly politicised momentum in Uganda in recent years: the number of districts has virtually doubled from 43 to 81 in the last six years (see map), at times leading to increased ethnic tensions and even splits within ethnic groups. Yet at the same time, there has been a re-centralisation of certain key powers. Thus the appointment of the Chief Administrative Officer's has been taken away from District level and centralised. Equally the removal of graduated tax, which used to be collected by District authorities, has decreased capacity to control the tax base. In Gulu the Government has chosen to distribute iron sheets for IDPs returning home through the RDC's office rather than through the LCV, despite such activity falling far outside the terms of reference of an RDC.

The capacity to critique the Government or UN is relatively weak, though not completely erased. The NGO Act of 2006 requires NGOs to re-register every two years through a board which includes security officials but no NGO officials. It also makes executive directors individually responsible for their organisations. Such tactics threaten to further weaken the critical voice. Academia, as described by the Ugandan scholar Mahmood Mamdani, is weak, vocationalised and uncritical. As such, there is a lack of research, critical engagement in issues and capacity to hold governmental, UN commercial and other actors accountable.

This lack of accountability is visible in the yawning gap between Uganda's often exemplary policies and their disappointing implementation. Examples with a direct relationship to conflict or its management include its policies on environment (forest reserves are being sold off – indeed this was widely regarded as part of a wider phenomenon of 'selling off the country'), gender (there is still no equal opportunities commission, eleven years after it was called for in the 1995 Constitution), refugees (they are effectively restricted to rural encampments) and IDPs (the IDP policy has been poorly implemented and attention to it was diverted by the formation of the Joint Monitoring Committee).⁶⁴ In the business sector, there is a tension between the adoption of free market rhetoric and a reality of business opportunities being limited by poor infrastructure, a weak commercial and criminal justice system, and the close control exercised by core members of the Government and their associates. The vast majority of businesses are small or micro-enterprises with little or no access to credit facilities or the necessary political connections to win contracts.⁶⁵

Another area of potential conflict is the growing pressure on natural resources, the most basic of which is land. The shortage of fertile land is evident in the encroachment of agricultural activities into areas which were previously wetlands or used on a seasonal basis by pastoralists. As one respondent noted, with growing land pressure, what used to be one long cattle migration corridor stretching from the south west of Uganda right up to the north east is now effectively becoming truncated, for

⁶⁴ For a detailed analysis of the IDP policy's implementation see IDMC/RLP 2006: *Only Peace Can Restore the Confidence of the Displaced*

⁶⁵ Banfield J, 2006: 11

example in parts of Nakasongola district. The draft national land policy “recognizes that competition over land, caused, among others, by population growth, resource depletion, and scarcity is the cause of conflict, insecurity and environmental stress in many parts of Uganda, [and that] this is exacerbated by trans-boundary conflict”.⁶⁶

Key actors (connectors and dividers) pushing for peace and armed conflict in northern Uganda

Table 2: Spectrum of actors in northern Uganda from those intending to promote non-violence and dialogue ('Connectors') to those promoting conflict ('Dividers')

Connectors	Ambiguous	Dividers
– Religious leaders and organisations	– Parliament	– LRA
– Traditional leaders	– Local Government	– SPLA
– A minority of Local Human Rights Organisations	– Judiciary	– Pre-CPA Government of Sudan
– Local NGOs	– National Press	– President Museveni
– Some women's organisations	– UN	– UPDF
– CSOPNU	– Donors	– LDUs
– Radio Mega FM (Gulu) & other independent radio stations	– Academia	– Militias
– Amnesty Commission and Returnees themselves	– Uganda Human Rights Commission	– Traditional leaders
– Local communities	– Joint Monitoring Commission	
– Post-CPA Government of Sudan	– International Human Rights Organisations	
– Non-Uganda based coalitions	– ICC	
– Some international NGOs	– Private Sector	

Connectors

The list of ‘connectors’ is strongly suggestive that those who are unambiguously pro-peace and have consistently advocated for non-violent negotiations and solutions such as the blanket amnesty are predominantly local/national. Three civil society groupings stand out as having made contributions to promoting the cause of peace in northern Uganda; religious leaders, traditional leaders, and NGOs (both local and international).

The first of these includes the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), which began in 1998 and has been sustained to date. This is an interdenominational initiative comprising Anglicans, Catholics and Muslims. Together with the Justice & Peace commission of the Catholic church it has made considerable and courageous efforts to raise awareness of the situation of the IDPs, both through publications⁶⁷ and speaking tours abroad, and also made consistent efforts to engage the LRA in dialogue, even when at risk of being branded rebel or terrorist collaborators. To a certain extent both ARLPI and the local J&P commission limited their impact by remaining primarily ‘Acholi’ initiatives, and demonstrating initial reluctance to engage religious leaders from other parts of the country in their struggle. This, however, appears to be changing, with increasing involvement of the national J&P commission, and new leadership at the Uganda Joint Christian Council.

⁶⁶ World Bank, 2006: 11.

⁶⁷ See for example, *Let My People Go: The forgotten plight of the people in the displaced camps in Acholi* (ARLPI, 2001)

Traditional leadership structures have also been promoted as actors for peace in recent years. This was despite the fact that traditional leaders initially blessed Kony when he took up arms (a fact he did not fail to remind them of during the 1994 peace talks)⁶⁸ and by the mid-1990s were in some respects a discredited structure. Massive displacement into IDP settlements further weakened them, insofar as clans which had been living in one area were often scattered into multiple camps, and as such the leaders lost their constituents. Furthermore, ceremonies to anoint leaders fell into disuse.

That said, initiatives from 1998 onwards, led initially by the NGO ACORD, helped to revive these structures; funding from the Belgian Government paid for anointment ceremonies, and eventually a paramount chief, Rwot Achana, was put in place (despite doubts by some purists about whether the Acholi structures included a paramount chief). Rwot Achana's contribution has in many respects paralleled that of the religious leaders (awareness raising, direct contacts with the LRA), and, whether or not they truly reflect traditional leaders of the past, the leaders of today have acquired some status and widespread recognition of their role in promoting non-violent solutions to the conflict and the value of traditional cleansing and reconciliation ceremonies, the best known of which is called *Mato Oput*.

It should be noted, however, that the majority of traditional structures are highly patriarchal and age-hierarchical. As such they do little to accommodate the interests and needs of either women or youth. Indeed, a strengthening of traditional structures is in many respects at odds with the promotion of the rights of women and youth, and it can be argued that the reinvention of traditional structures is an attempt to re-exert control over both. To the extent that traditional structures actively suppress the voice of women and youth they can be therefore be seen as 'dividers' rather than 'connectors'.

Civil Society in northern Uganda, as in Uganda as a whole, is relatively under-developed, though with some important exceptions, including local NGOs established to deal with the phenomenon of returning abductees (notably Gulu Support the Children Organisation, Kitgum Concerned Women's Association, and Concerned Parents Association). Human Rights Focus stands out as the *only* human rights organisation to have provided a sustained critique from a human rights perspective, while People's Voice for Peace has made considerable efforts to give voice to the experiences of ordinary people in the war zone.

National NGOs which have made important contributions to raising awareness of northern Uganda include ISIS-WICCE, Refugee Law Project, and Jama ya ku patanisha (JYAK). With the exception of ISIS-WICCE there has been no sustained attention from women's organizations at a national level.

The formation in May 2002 of the umbrella grouping CSOPNU, comprising over 40 national and international NGOs, was a positive example of civil society presenting a united front, and resulted in some highly critical press releases and reports. In April 2006, after CSOPNU released its report *Counting the Cost: Twenty Years of War in northern Uganda*, many of its members were amongst the NGOs called to a meeting at the President's country residence and warned that they risked overstepping their limits. This, and the difficulties of maintaining a balance between the inputs of national and international NGOs,

⁶⁸ Dolan, 2005

led to several months of soul-searching by the grouping, and a general sense of intimidation.

Externally based civil society organisations which have contributed to raising awareness raising have included the Acholi diaspora grouping Kacokke Madit, which had considerable impact by hosting large meetings of the diaspora in 1997, 1998 and 2000, but has been less visible in recent years. Kacokke Madit is closely associated with Conciliation Resources, a conflict resolution NGO based in London with a long standing focus on northern Uganda. A group of the smaller British NGOs convened an umbrella known as Northern Uganda Advocacy Partnership for Peace (NUAPP) and has focused considerable effort on lobbying the British Government in the last year or so. In 2005 the US-based Uganda-CAN (Conflict Action Network) was established and has been prominent in lobbying the US Government on northern Uganda. The Vancouver based Liu Institute for Global Affairs has made a number of important contributions to raising awareness.

Ambiguous

In the middle column of the table above there are many actors whose position has either never been clearly stated, or has fluctuated. In such cases the real commitments have to be read from their actions. There are a number of actors in the middle column – including the judiciary, Uganda Human Rights Commission, national press, and academia – whose pro-peace contributions have in part been conditioned by their lack of an independent financial and/or political base.

The record of Ugandan *academia* in pushing for peace has been very muted, and this is undoubtedly a reflection in part of the overall weakness of the academic sector. Until the late 1990s few external academics paid much heed to northern Uganda. Although that has changed somewhat in the last three to four years, the challenge remains to channel the existing flurry of academic interest into influencing policy and practice in a positive direction. There are also areas of research which would be of benefit to peace-building, but which are currently weak. International Alert's report to Sida highlighted, 'A lack of research and awareness among decision-makers in Uganda (including the private sector itself, but also government, international development agencies, and civil society) on critical issues relevant to the links between economy and conflict'.⁶⁹

National media attempting to report on northern Uganda have not had an easy time. Individual journalists and radio presenters working there have at times experienced direct intimidation from authorities and military, and frequently been obliged to report the Government's version of events. The Gulu based radio station, Mega-FM, has at times had to abandon live programming to ensure that it does not run foul of the Government. Kampala based editors, particularly of the independent newspaper, The Monitor, have spent inordinate amounts of time in court defending their decisions on what to publish. As such it is not possible to say that individual journalists and editors have not made strenuous efforts to provide solid information and analysis on the war in the north, but any regular reader of the two main daily papers is often left wondering what is really going on; not only do the two frequently contradict one another, but often individual stories within the same newspaper will contradict one another. Call-in talk shows on independent and private radio stations – such as the Kam-

⁶⁹ Banfield J, 2006: 24

pala based KFM and Radio 1 –give a useful sense of what ordinary people really think about what is happening, but these are generally not national broad-casts.

The record of *local government leadership* is somewhat mixed. The most visible actors have been two LCVs of Gulu district, Lieutenant Colonel Walter Ochora, and his successor, Norbert Mao. Whereas Ochora was a Government candidate, Mao is an independent. Both have been highly involved in seeking dialogue with the LRA and, to different degrees, in lobbying central government on behalf of their constituents. Acholi MPs have also over the years played an important role in challenging the GOU position on the war,⁷⁰ and in calling, unsuccessfully, for northern Uganda to be declared a disaster zone. At a national level the position of Minister for Pacification of Northern Uganda, which was subsequently amended to Minister for Northern Uganda Reconstruction, has had only one noteworthy incumbent, Mrs Betty Bigombe (see above).

One of the most important international actors of recent years has been *the ICC*. Debate around its role in fueling the conflict or helping to reduce it has been heated. While recognising the importance of the ICC in the eyes of its proponents as an instrument of international justice which in principal has the potential to reduce otherwise shocking cases of impunity, civil society groupings from the area most directly affected by the perpetration of crimes against humanity have expressed considerable fear that the ICC's intervention could actually aggravate the armed conflict; as such they will be made to suffer more in the interests of assuring the institutional survival of this new international instrument.

One of the key reservations about the ICC's approach is that its mandate only extends back to crimes committed since 2002,⁷¹ not far enough to investigate some of the Government's own actions prior to that date.⁷² Another is that it has to date made little visible attempt to pursue investigations and prosecution of Government officials.⁷³ This lack of action, when contrasted with the considerable tenacity with which it has pursued investigation and indictment of top LRA commanders, has led some to doubt the ICC's impartiality. Certainly the proposal to issue international arrest warrants for the top five LRA leaders was regarded by many as an obstacle to progress towards peace,⁷⁴ and has subsequently become a significant issue in the Juba Peace talks.⁷⁵

The UN response to the intervention of Jan Egeland in 2003, has undoubtedly played a key role over the last two years in changing inter-

⁷⁰ In January 1997, for example, Acholi MPs on the Parliamentary Sessional Committee on Defense and Foreign Affairs appended a minority report challenging the Committee's recommendation of the continued pursuit of a military solution.

⁷¹ See www.icc-cpi.int for details of its statute.

⁷² For documentation of Government abuses, see for example, Amnesty International, 1999, 'Breaking the Circle: Protecting Human Rights in the Northern War Zone', and Human Rights Watch, 2004, 'State of Pain: Torture in Uganda'.

⁷³ Immediately following the referral in January 2004, Amnesty International stressed that "Any Court investigation of war crimes and crimes against humanity in northern Uganda must be part of a comprehensive plan to end impunity for all such crimes, regardless of which side committed them and of the level of the perpetrator" (Uganda: First steps to investigate crimes must be part of comprehensive plan to end impunity, AI Index: AFR 59/001/2004 (Public), 30 January 2004

⁷⁴ CSOPNU has repeatedly expressed its reservations about the ICC process. In March 2005, for example, it called for care in the sequencing of activities (Position paper for participants to the 1st March meeting on the International Criminal Court), and in a press statement made in August 2005 prior to the issuing of the arrest warrants by the ICC, CSOPNU argued that 'If these (warrants) are issued now this will be a fatal blow to hopes of sustainable peace in northern Uganda'. ('Fighting and Talking' offers no relief for people of northern Uganda). The American Non-Governmental Organisations Coalition for the International Criminal Court reported that Mrs Betty Bigombe and Justice Onega, chairman of the Ugandan Amnesty Commission, both believed that "The warrants will make it impossible to negotiate a peace agreement and may escalate the violence" (Questions and Answers on the Ugandan arrest warrants, 17 October 2005).

⁷⁵ See "Only Peace Can Restore the Hope of the Internally Displaced" Refugee Law Project/IDMC, 2nd Edition, October 2006.

national perceptions of what is happening in northern Uganda. Prior to that the UN Country Team, with the exception of WFP, had a marginal role in developments in the north, and appeared unwilling to engage in any meaningful manner. As Francis Deng, then Special Representative of the Secretary General on Internally Displaced Persons, noted in his report on northern Uganda to ECOSOC in March 2004, “The humanitarian assistance provided only covers the bare minimum needs. Noone is conducting regular and reliable protection monitoring of the displaced”.⁷⁶ OHCHR was invited by the UN Country Team to establish an office and did so in mid-2005. Developments in 2006 indicate that the UN is becoming more willing to challenge the Government’s actions. In country the UNDP withdrew its programme from Karamoja in protest at the UPDF’s cordon and search operations in the area, and it was UNSC pressure which prompted Uganda to establish a Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) to develop solutions to the northern Uganda situation.

Key donors such as the UK and US have also played ambiguous roles. The British Government, for example, largely sponsored the establishment in May 2002 of Mega FM, a peace-oriented community radio station based in Gulu, a step which greatly increased the range of issues under public discussion in northern Uganda, but the same donor has been reluctant to criticise the Government and has pushed for a UNSC resolution calling for military action to arrest the ICC indictees, just at the time when such a resolution could seriously de-stabilise the peace talks process in Juba.⁷⁷ Similarly, the US Government on the one hand provides funding for its own Northern Uganda Peace Initiative (NUPI), and on the other provides ‘non-lethal’ military support to the UPDF.

The private sector does not have a very high visibility in northern Uganda, but its potential role should not be underestimated. The arrival of mobile phone companies and the expansion of their coverage from late 1999 onwards had an enormous impact on breaking down the silence which for so long surrounded northern Uganda. Equally the expansion of financial services, such as Western Union, Stanbic etc. all help to integrate the area into the national economy and diminish the sense of marginalisation which has for so long plagued the region.

And finally, it would be inappropriate to discuss actors in conflict without a word about the *civilian population*. The GOU strategy of displacement has been based on the premise that the civilian population is the pond in which the rebel fish can swim. In other words, there is assumed to be a degree of support from civilians for the insurgency. Pro-peace actors, on the other hand, have tended to present civilians as simply the grass which gets trampled when two elephants fight, in other words as completely lacking in agency. The truth of the civilian role in the war surely falls somewhere in between these two views.

Within this tendency to treat civilians as victims, there is even more tendency to treat children and women as lacking in agency. At times, as in the case of the many thousands of children who have been drawn into the LRA, the UPDF and its auxiliary forces,⁷⁸ this portrayal of victims without agency is tantamount to a form of denial. At other times, as in the visible absence of women from the peace process in Juba, it is closer to a reflection of reality. Despite the fact that a very small number of women (most notably Mrs Betty Bigombe) have had high profile roles in

⁷⁶ ECOSOC, E/CN.4/2004/77/Add.1, page 2.

⁷⁷ The UK took a strong stand on the ICC process. See for example, Daily Monitor, 31 August 2006, *UK insists on Kony prosecution*.

⁷⁸ UNSC resolution 1612

addressing the conflict, in the vast majority of cases – contrary to UN Security Council resolution 1325 of October 2000 on Women, Peace and Security – women's voices have been excluded.

Dividers

On the far right is a surprisingly short list of actors whose contribution has been predominantly pro-conflict. However, the shortness of the list should not disguise the considerable power each of these has in terms of their direct contribution to the exercise of force and the numbers of people involved. It is important to distinguish between those who have major decision-making power (e.g. insurgent hosting Governments, the President and the upper ranks of the military), and those who implement these decisions (e.g. the LDUs and militias). All have argued that they are seeking peace, but that the best way to reach it is through military approaches. They would therefore deny that they are promoting violence for its own sake. By virtue of their incumbency in positions which are defined by the control of the means of force, encouraging a non-violent approach to resolving conflict is not easy. Nonetheless, particularly with a Government that is majority donor funded, the potential leverage of donors in terms of funding conditionality is probably considerably greater than they have chosen to exercise to date.

One major actor with little visible interest in or commitment to promoting peace has been *the UPDF*. The vested interests in maintaining the status quo are numerous, ranging from the petty economic interests of individual officers who receive bonuses for working in high-risk areas, or who utilise their position to exploit available resources in the areas they are stationed in (e.g. logging, commercial farming), to the interests of the institution as a whole in having an ongoing justification for high levels of military expenditure. Certainly in terms of behaviour, the UPDF and its associated auxiliary forces, whether the Local Defence Units or the relatively recently formed ethnic militias, are widely regarded by the populations they are supposed to protect as a threat to their individual security. With the exception of a few show-case executions of individual soldiers who have been found guilty in court-martial, most perpetrators are simply moved to another posting, a practice which is a considerable source of grievance to those affected.

Section 2:

Scenario Analysis

Views as to the prospects of peace and conflict in Uganda vary widely. As one respondent put it, 'we are closer to both 'peace' and to explosion than (at any time) for 20 years'.

With regard to the immediate future the GoU-LRA peace talks mediated by the Government of Southern Sudan appear the primary determinants of Uganda's conflict landscape. In this regard there are three broad scenarios to consider.

Scenario 1: A collapse of the Juba process

This would result in a return to the pre-talks situation of ongoing insurgency and mass displacement, though this would be managed within very different parameters given that, from being the world's most forgotten crisis it has become one of its higher profile ones. There would thus be higher levels of international humanitarian intervention and ongoing scrutiny of the situation, both of which would create continued pressure to ameliorate the conditions of IDPs and to professionalise and make more effective the military protection provided. This scenario would undoubtedly be used to justify continuing high levels of military expenditure, and would also see further demands from GOU to neighbouring MONUC and the DRC army to pursue Joseph Kony and the other ICC indictees – and the risk of renewed UPDF incursions into DRC, ostensibly to track down the LRA.

For a Government which clearly needs to manage its international image, this would be a worst case scenario, as it would undoubtedly confirm its decline from a key representative of what Thabo Mbeki referred to as Africa's 'Renaissance' to something more equivalent to East Africa's 'Jurassic Park' – a country headed by one of the continent's longest-standing presidents with all the atrophy of political vibrancy and freedoms that such leadership generally entails. It would also be a worst case scenario for civil society, media and academia, as there would be little incentive for the Government to increase the space for civil society to develop a critical voice. Needless to say, for the civilian population as a whole, any resumption of armed conflict would be a disaster.

Scenario 2: A peace accord with the LRA dealing with the insurgent group as a discrete military force

Under this scenario, there would be a conclusive end to armed hostilities in the north which substantially removes the existing threats to physical security, and thus enables the durable return of the internally displaced.

This seems to be a relatively high possibility given the multiple actors who at present have an interest in the peace, as discussed above. These include the GOU, the Governments of South Sudan and DRC who both need stability, the UN which needs to be seen to have taken action, and donors who also do not wish to see a return to the pre-talks situation. An emphasis on economic recovery would be expected as this would have the greatest impact on reversing the downwards slide of Uganda's national poverty indicators. This in turn would be used by donors to justify renewed confidence in the present Government, perhaps at the expense of supporting the democratisation process, which should include strengthening opposition voices and the more critical voices and non-partisan voices in civil society.

This scenario seems in many respects the most probable. The Government's political will to resolve the northern Uganda situation is greater than at any point in the past, and this is due at least in part to a desire to re-establish its international good reputation. There are few signs that this is anything more than image management. A successful outcome in Juba would not automatically guarantee any shifts in entrenched militarism with all the restrictions on civil society, gender-equality, democratisation and the enjoyment of rights which this entails, nor would it necessarily contribute to a greater sense of national identity and cohesion.

As such, the major question-mark which hangs over Juba is the extent to which the peace accord will be a *comprehensive* one: will it be regarded by the GoU as marking the end of the problem rather than the beginning of its resolution? Will the political will which is demonstrated in the talks be sustained in the process of meeting commitments made during those talks? Will local actors feel they have sufficient ownership of the process? While the answers to these questions cannot yet be given, this scenario will undoubtedly help to restore some of the President's reputation, both nationally and internationally, and therefore make an attempt to stand for a 4th/6th term in the 2011 elections more likely, and the need to strengthen multi-partyism and civil society appear less pressing. The overall likelihood of conflict re-emerging in the medium term therefore remains quite high.

Scenario 3: A comprehensive peace accord leading to a national process addressing political, economic, judicial and psycho-social causes of conflict

Under this scenario a peace accord with the LRA will be taken as an entry point into a comprehensive peace process which seeks to address some of the tensions which afflict the country as a whole. A nationwide Truth and Reconciliation process, involving both Government and Civil Society actors in its conceptualisation and implementation, would be one step in this. This seems the most desirable scenario. It would be the most challenging for all concerned, but ultimately the most rewarding in terms of reducing the likelihood of conflict in the medium term, as it would inevitably strengthen civil society and academic voices, as well as a climate of transparency and debate which should underpin the strengthening of democratic and multi-party process.

However, the prospects of this at present seem rather dim. The amount proposed in the draft PRDP for all reconciliation activities is only US \$3,424,253, clearly insufficient to address some of the needs they identify (e.g. extension of counseling provision throughout affected areas) and certainly not enough to establish a national Truth and Reconcilia-

tion process. When set against the overall draft PRDP budget, which is for US \$ 336,882,687, this proposed provision is a stark indicator of the low priority which the Government places on the need for reconciliation. There has also been remarkably little public debate about the nature of a postaccord peace process, whether focused primarily on truth-telling or – more simply – on reconciliation.

Whereas Scenario 1 would entail a return to a state of elevated military presence in the north, Scenarios 2 and 3 will raise considerable challenges around the successful return and (re)integration of IDPs,⁷⁹ and are likely to result in serious tensions around what to do with the large number of men put under arms in militias and LDUs, particularly in recent years. Even if a few thousand are recruited into the regular forces, and a few thousand more are re-trained as civilian police-men, the vast majority should in principle be demobilised.

If a peace accord is achieved, and northern Uganda thus becomes regarded as a post-conflict situation, attention is likely to turn increasingly to the Karamajong region. However, the nature of interventions under Scenario 2 is likely to remain primarily military and focused on pacification through disarmament, whereas under Scenario 3 attempts could be made to engage in a more comprehensive fashion with the region.

⁷⁹ A recent World Bank literature review identifies three groupings within the IDP population; those who would return spontaneously, those who would return with some external support, and those who would chose to remain in the camps (World Bank, 2006: 4)

Section 3: Developing Strategies and Options

This national conflict analysis confirms that what has long been understood as primarily a GOU-LRA struggle which is in many regards detached from Uganda's overall development trajectory, is in fact symptomatic of a much more complex set of tensions which are present throughout the country as a whole. These can be re-conceptualised in multiple additional ways, including by geographic area, and by the following polarisations: South-North, Decentralisation-Recentralisation, Ethnicity-Nationalism, Movement-Multi-partyism, Patriarchy-gender equality, militarisation-democratisation.

Furthermore, it also confirms that the range of actors with a significant potential to impact in a positive or negative manner on existing or new armed conflict are numerous and extend from local and national bodies to regional and international. As such, there is considerable scope for designing conflict-sensitive co-operation strategies.

These findings suggest that, whereas the overall objectives for collaboration with Uganda during the 2001–2005 period did not explicitly identify peace and security as an area of cooperation,⁸⁰ the new country cooperation strategy, while retaining poverty reduction and human rights as its driving themes, must also explicitly recognize that, as Sida's own policy states, 'Prevention of violent conflict is prevention of poverty'.⁸¹

Strategies and options should therefore both respond to the immediate conflict context in northern Uganda and yet also address the underlying issues which have led to that context. It is useful to relate the strategies and options to the three issues around which this report is structured, namely conflict affected areas, key tensions, and, finally, to the various actors who could be engaged with.

Conflict Affected Areas

When considering the balance between working on specific situations and areas, such as Acholi, and working on the overall Ugandan context, it is useful to note the EU Council Conclusions drawn on 15 May. While couched in diplomatic language, the growing recognition of problems at a *national* level is visible in the call for "Uganda to continue the democratisation process in a multiparty environment", the recognition of the need for a strengthened "Parliament, dialogue between the government and the opposition parties and civilian control of the military in a democratic society", and the Council's "willingness to support Uganda in

⁸⁰ The previous strategy identified the following areas of cooperation: macro-economic stability, sustainable economic growth, social sectors, democracy development and reinforcement of respect for human rights, capacity and skills development (Sida, 2001: 14–17)

⁸¹ Sida, 2005: 13.

these efforts, as well as in the fight against corruption and for poverty alleviation.” Notwithstanding the need to work nationally (which is returned to below), each area has its own specificities:

North West Uganda

Here the greatest need is to help overcome economic marginalisation and the grievances this gives rise to. This needs to include attention to fulfilling the commitments made during negotiations with both WNBF and UNRFII, including reintegration packages through the Amnesty Commission and a direct grant of Ush 4.2 billion to the UNRFII.⁸² Although Yumbe, from which many former UNRFII combatants were drawn, has been granted district status in the last two years, it requires considerable investment. As a recent report notes, many business people from Yumbe transferred their activities to Arua town during the war. While they are a dominant force in Arua, their district of origin continues to lack a petrol station, banking services and electricity,⁸³ all of which would seem important for economic growth and to reduce the sense of marginalisation and exclusion evident in it being known as ‘the dark district’.

South West Uganda

Here further research needs to be done into the nature of this insurgent group and the extent to which it has been truly pacified. At the time of writing there were some reports of renewed activity.

North East Uganda

While the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme represents an advance on previous GoU approaches, the UNCT’s reservations do indicate the need for some further research, in order to open up the debate about what the ‘Karamoja problem’ really is, and possibly go beyond a discussion centred on the proliferation of small arms. Some exploration is required of the extent to which the Karamajong may feel themselves culturally embattled by the Ugandan majority, the extent to which they may be torn between resentment at their current exclusion, yet dismayed at the thought of inclusion on the terms of the majority. Equally the links between Karamoja and other conflict situations, notably south Sudan, northern Kenya and Ethiopia, need to be better understood, as do the structural relationship between Karamoja and the bordering Acholi and Teso regions. Some cross-border research into the comparative experiences of pastoralist groups in northern Kenya could help to shed light on the changing parameters within which pastoralists generally are having to operate, rather than focusing exclusively on one area within political boundaries which do not correspond to the livelihood patterns of those living within and across them.

Northern Uganda (Acholi, Langi, Teso areas)

Until recently the need was to draw attention to the war in the north and to the lack of political will to address it. Now the primary issues are:

- 1) to support the peace process, however long it takes, both financially and morally/politically

⁸² See Lomo & Hovil 2004, pp 29–31.

⁸³ Banfield J, 2006: 17

- 2) to lobby for the peace process to be as comprehensive as possible
- 3) to support the return of long-term displaced and the economic recovery of the north, possibly using the PRDP as a planning tool
- 4) to push for and actively support the rapid demilitarisation of the area, particularly the demobilisation of militias and the re-training of LDUs into the civilian police-force
- 5) to draw attention to the extent to which the LRA war was symptomatic of political problems which need solving at national level
- 6) to reiterate the extent to which the problem of internal displacement and poverty cannot be de-linked from security and conflict resolution⁸⁴.

Further concerns now include the psycho-social impacts of twenty years of violence and abuse (after twenty years of violence and ten years of large-scale encampment it is no longer exaggerated to talk of a 'lost generation' in terms of education and development), and the future role of the population in general and of former child soldiers and women in particular.

To give people back a sense of their citizenship after years of abuse and exclusion is no easy task; quite apart from the pressure to get things done, the sheer mechanics of in-depth consultation and participation are frequently alien to governmental and international actors who control the bulk of resources. The involvement of a range of civilians in the peace talks in Juba is a positive development, and should be the forerunner of serious initiatives to develop meaningful participation of civilians in any post-conflict recovery processes. This should have the objective of ensuring the development of appropriate strategies and programmes – and thereby making a contribution to building trust and confidence in both government and international community.

Key tensions to address at both national and local levels

Ethnicity – Nationalism

As Sida's policy on Promoting Peace and Security argues, there is a need to promote 'political identity markers other than ethnicity and religion'.⁸⁵ Although it is a difficult balance to strike, it is necessary simultaneously to recognize the positive dimensions of ethnicity (e.g. a positive sense of identity and connectedness, cultural and linguistic wealth and diversity), and its considerable potential to catalyse divisions. This analysis has focused on ethnicity as a symptom of divisive dynamics within the national polity as a whole.

Ideally, given the reality of state-centred political organization, ethnic identities would be regarded as a positive identity which are, nonetheless, subsidiary to nationality as the primary form of political identity. In a situation such as Uganda, the realities of regional economic and political imbalances and exclusion effectively undermine people's sense of national identity, and they inevitably fall back on ethnicity as a source of identity and a principle of political organization. In the process they confirm and reinforce their own marginalization. Thus the difficulties of the *Acholi* Religious Leaders Peace Initiative in generating a *national* coalition of support. Unfortunately the principles of ethnic organisation are evident not only in such local organisation, but also in the very structure of national institutions. Thus there is the Acholi Parliamentary Group, the Karamoja Parliamentary Group, etc. etc.

⁸⁴ MFED, 2004, PEAP 2004–2008

⁸⁵ Sida, 2005: 15

If recourse to ethnicity as an organizing principle is an important measure a reaction to the failures (deliberate or otherwise) of the State to sustain or generate a sense of national coherence, then this particular tension is best addressed not through direct attack on ethnicity, but rather through building up that sense of national coherence and inclusion such that there ceases to be any need to use ethnicity for political purposes. The key elements in doing so have been discussed above and are further addressed below:

South – North economic and political imbalances

An emphasis on the continuing economic recovery of West Nile, and the beginning of economic recovery activities in the Acholi area, should help significantly to reduce perceptions of economic marginalisation. There is a need for economic recovery to include not just support to the resumption of subsistence agriculture in areas of return, but also substantial support to the private sector, particularly the small business sector. Support to commercial agriculture should be preceded by close investigation into the impact on land-ownership and access.

The question of political marginalisation is considerably more difficult to address, though support for a national Truth and Reconciliation Process would go a long way to help create a more conducive climate and would help to kick-start an accompanying process to address the long-term psycho-social impacts and their resultant sense of social collapse. Support to a TRC would also be in some respects less politically risky for Sida than direct support to political parties, though this is also an option.

Decentralisation – Recentralisation

This is an area which requires considerable investigation; the rate of decentralisation in terms of creation of districts is extreme and raises numerous questions about cost-effectiveness and sustainability, but at the same time there are moves to re-centralise certain key functions, notably tax collection and strategic appointments. In combination these suggest that decentralisation is primarily being pursued for short-term political gains rather than as an important strategic approach to enhancing development and implementation of policy. As such it would be advisable for Sida, possibly in collaboration with other donors, to commission an independent review of the decentralisation process.

Militarisation – Democratisation

In line with the pursuit of human rights, Sida should pursue options to encourage demilitarisation. This involves supporting both physical demilitarisation and disarmament of Acholi, Lango, Teso, Karamoja areas. Given that joining the military is one of the very few economic options open to the youth of northern Uganda today, it must go hand in hand both with increased educational and economic opportunities. If done well, this would be the biggest single step to reducing the stock of *small arms* in Uganda.

There is also a need for psychological demilitarisation at both sub-national and national levels. This should be, at least in part, through the promotion of law and order and the use of judicial process to deal with conflict, and also through strengthening political parties under the new multi-partyism.

But in its broadest sense militarisation/militarism embodies and is underpinned by an unwillingness to countenance criticism, which itself is an expression of particular gender norms most usually found in highly

patriarchal systems. As such, Uganda's de-militarisation needs to go hand in hand with considerable work on *gender* norms.

Modernisation – Traditionalism

This is a complex area, but its complexity should not mean that it is ignored. At times traditionalism is seen as having considerable value, as in the GOU's promotion of *Mato Oput* as an important mechanism in reconciliation in northern Uganda. At other times, traditionalism is seen as a major weakness and is regarded as synonymous with backwardness, as in portrayals of the Karamojong. On many occasions oppressive patriarchal systems are justified on the grounds that they embody 'tradition'. Equally, ethnicity and traditionalism are often seen as synonymous, and both end up in tension with a sense of national identity.

Sida's strategy on all these issues must be to promote the capacity for critical engagement and action through civil society organisations, research organisations, academia, both to open up and stimulate the public discourse, and to ensure that there is greater civil-society driven policy accountability.

Patriarchy – Gender Equality

The extent to which systems of patriarchy underpin many of the key tensions in Uganda should by now be clear. To address patriarchal value systems requires multiple strategies, many of which may target patriarchy indirectly. Thus, for example, demobilization and de-militarisation create a context in which it is more feasible to work on gender norms. If demobilization goes hand in hand with re-skilling and the promotion of alternative respected forms of masculine behaviour, it will have an impact on patriarchy. Similarly with work on traditionalism, where the promotion of tradition needs to be considered hand in hand with discussions on human rights.

Working with the various actors

As the discussion of actors involved in one way or another in the northern Uganda conflict shows, the spectrum is wide, and the possibilities for interventions which reinforce actors' capacities to work as connectors rather than dividers is considerable. *This is fully in line with Sida's overall policy position, namely that "by having a broad approach and targeting different groups, we are more likely to have a positive impact on the conflict dynamics".*⁸⁶

In a broad sense, Sida's interventions should strengthen existing connectors, harness those actors that currently play an ambiguous role to developing a more pro-active 'connector' position, and directly or indirectly diminish the scope of the 'dividers'. *Key actors whose potential to contribute to peace is currently under-recognised and under-supported are a) the local/national NGO sector b) the civilian population, in particular women and youth c) academia/research institutions d) the private sector*

The local/national NGO sector

The finding that connectors are predominantly local/national is in line with Sida's policy statement that 'Sida shall acknowledge that the ownership and capacity for change belong to the local, national or regional actors'.⁸⁷ Simply being in the list of connectors should not, however, guarantee unconditional support; many actors have adopted approaches which

⁸⁶ Sida, 2005:11.

⁸⁷ Sida, 2005: 9.

have arguably limited their impact and effectiveness. In particular, through organising around ethnicity, groupings such as the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative effectively blocked the engagement of sympathetic non-Acholi. While this may have helped to generate the initial cohesiveness needed to get started, it only helped to feed perceptions of the situation in northern Uganda as an intra-Acholi one, a perception which it was also in the interests of GOU to promote. As such, *funding to local actors should encourage them to work on identifying and building relationships with sympathetic allies across ethnic, religious and geographic boundaries*. Indeed, the importance to 'local capacities for peace' of sympathetic support from externally based actors who have particular insight into the dynamics of the conflict should not be underestimated; as the case of northern Uganda has proven, it is precisely in a situation where the lack of international interest was so damaging (insofar as it allowed the situation to continue), that external support bases are necessary.

The Civilian Population

While it is difficult to fund the civilian population directly, it is possible to make the involvement of civilians a criterion of funding decisions. Within this, in line with UNSC 1325, funding should promote the participation of women in all activities related to peace-building.⁸⁸ Human rights actors capable of raising the question of child combatants in government forces should also be supported.

Academia and Research capacity

Given that the ambiguous nature of some actors' contributions to peace is in part determined by their sources of funding, greater financial contributions to such actors could and should be used to enhance their independence.

In the case of academia, particularly tertiary research and teaching institutions, there is a resource gap which donors can lessen. Whereas support to education, if limited to the primary and secondary levels, basically serves to create a more controllable population, support to tertiary, non-vocational teaching and research, gives an important signal as to the value placed on independent and critical research and thought. This is a signal which is desperately needed in a country where the dominant powers have tended to respond to critiques not through rational engagement but rather through branding the proponents as rebel supporters or traitors, and where access to tertiary opportunities is largely determined by student's financial means.

The Private Sector

A potentially very important actor for peace is the private sector; this could be in terms of lobbying for peace, but also if it is able to generate employment opportunities for demobilized ex-combatants and for young people entering the labour market. In northern Uganda, where most local businesses are small-scale, the lobbying capacity is probably relatively low, but the potential for post-conflict growth and the subsequent provision of employment opportunities is important. Furthermore, as Banfield argues, business activities in northern Uganda have demonstrated the potential to counteract ethnic tensions (e.g. between Langi and Acholi). This contribution to national reconciliation is potentially significant.⁸⁹ In this regard Banfield's recommendation bears reiterating:

⁸⁸ UNSC 1325 (2000).

⁸⁹ For fuller discussion see Banfield (2006), *Mobilising the Ugandan business community for Peace*

‘There is a pressing need for government and donors alike to be encouraged to give conflict-sensitive capacity building to local business associations, including at the lowest levels, more priority’.⁹⁰ The introduction of commercial agriculture could have potential benefits for the area, but also, insofar as it results in diminishing access to land for subsistence purposes, entails some risks. It is difficult to assess, at this point, the extent to which land access will be a serious constraint, and how exactly commercialisation would fit into this. It is early days to talk of northern Uganda’s tourist potential, yet it would be short-sighted not to recognise that it contains many areas of natural beauty; the careful exploitation of these for commercial tourism could turn out to be a silver-lining on the dark cloud of under-development.

Involvement with other actors

Support for the judiciary will involve more than just re-establishing physical and human resources; it will also require some intensive training on the issues which are likely to dominate in a post-LRA era, notably land rights, SGBV, and reparations. Support for the Uganda Human Rights Commission is more of a political nature, encouraging it to meet its mandate to the full. It is clear that it has often failed to highlight human rights abuses and has been self-censored, and it is also evident that the Government has undermined its functioning and credibility by failing to pay compensation monies ordered by the Commission. With the media close relationships need to be established with journalist and editors attempting to give coverage to politically sensitive issues, and this support needs to be made visible such that it provides a degree of protection.

Parliament undoubtedly has the potential to play an important role in moderating militaristic tendencies in Government, but this requires both support to the broader process of strengthening multi-partyism, and to the removal of seats for special interest groups such as veterans and the UPDF. Unfortunately in the last constitutional review this was not done.

Also in the middle column are those who have no shortage of resources, but whose interest in promoting non-violent solutions is determined by broader strategic and diplomatic concerns, and who have therefore either directly or indirectly supported both ends of the spectrum; this would include a number of the larger donors and the UN itself. There is undoubtedly a need for other donors to engage with them and the United Nations in dialogue around their direct and indirect contribution to peace processes (and violence), precisely because their decisions about where to invest their resources can significantly impact on the direction of events.

Proposed thematic areas for intervention

Four broad areas of intervention suggest themselves as priorities from a peace-building perspective.

- 1) *Promoting a National Truth and Reconciliation Process*: This should be a multi-pronged process which goes beyond the establishment of a commission, and involves a range of academic, religious, governmental and non-governmental actors and activities. Such a process, if effective in addressing the problems of truth provides an alternative – and arguably more comprehensive – mechanism for addressing the national need for a sense of justice and a reduction in impunity than a more purely judicial

⁹⁰ Idem: 24.

mechanism such as the ICC. Within this, there is scope for donors to engage in bi-lateral dialogues with the Government of Uganda to promote the necessary political climate for such a process, and also to facilitate inputs from other countries and regions in which such processes have already been established (e.g. Peru, Chile, El Salvador, South Africa, East Timor etc). Activities could include:

- stakeholder dialogues in order to establish broad consensus on the issues to be addressed:
- major support for the roll-out of Legal Aid and Counselling initiatives in war-affected districts: these would have a triple objective of ‘Truth, Documentation and Counselling’; while the work with individuals would be of direct benefit to them from a legal aid or counseling perspective, its careful documentation would also feed into the hearings of national and sub-national commissions, and could form the basis of specific campaigns (e.g. a ‘Back to your land’ campaign). This might require particular skills development in the areas of land rights, SGBV violations, compensation/reparations.
- A linked key area of support in this is to academia and research institutes, enabling them to make substantive contributions to the documentation and analysis of areas of grievance.
- A media monitoring and support body to improve the quality of national media and their contribution to national awareness of key issues

2) *Support to Judiciary and Police:* Without adequate input into the (re-) establishment of judicial and police structures, legal aid initiatives will fall into a vacuum and serve little purpose. Equally, demilitarization/demobilization, without a corresponding increase in judicial and police structures, creates a still more anarchic situation in which abuses can flourish.

3) *Education and Training initiatives:* Just as there can be no successful demobilization without corresponding increase in Law and Order mechanisms, so there can be none without a substantial investment in education and training opportunities; however, these need to be availed not just to ex-combatants, but to the generation of youth who lost access to education as a result of forcible displacement. The reinforcement/establishment of secondary and tertiary education opportunities will be a significant opportunity to address questions of political marginalization, ethnic division, economic discrepancy. It will also feed into the development of the country’s critical capacity, which is important for the creation of an informed political opposition.

Risks and Opportunities for Sida, and the relationship to Sida’s policy on Peace and Security

The shift from treating Uganda as a success story which merely requires support to key budget areas, to a country in which there are numerous unresolved tensions which contribute to actual and latent or submerged conflicts, and which therefore require pro-active intervention, is a big one. Nonetheless, it is in keep with Sida’s own policy on Peace and Security, which indicates that Sida shall not just work in existing conflicts, but also work *on* conflict and insecurity, by ‘consciously trying to influence the situation in a positive direction’, through activities ‘within the specific framework of development cooperation, that consciously target the attitudes and behaviour of parties to a conflict, as well as

structural instability, and whose primary or secondary goal is to increase security and contribute to conflict prevention or resolution'.⁹¹

Evidently, should the Juba process collapse, there will be a need to support humanitarian initiatives and to seek to create further openings for non-military solutions to the northern Uganda situation. Equally, if the Juba talks are successful in securing a peace deal with the LRA, and this allows a large-scale demobilization of the LRA and return of the IDPs, then it will be necessary and appropriate for Sida to offer financial support to these processes.

There is though a risk that Sida, along with the Government and other donors, will treat a successful peace deal in Juba, as an indication that northern Uganda should now be treated as a post-conflict recovery case only.

Restricting its 'conflict' related activities to a narrow focus on rebuilding northern Uganda would be wholly inadequate. As Sida's own policy on Promoting Peace and Security argues, "post conflict need not be the end of the conflict, as it can also entail the beginning of a new conflict if matters do not move in a favourable direction".

As this analysis has shown, not only is northern Uganda a 'local' symptom of national tensions, but many of these tensions are both a reflection of and a contribution to the weakness of a range of actors who should ideally be making far greater contributions to the vibrancy of Uganda's economy and politics as a whole.

While EU Council conclusions of 15 May recognise that "[t]he Government of Uganda has the primary responsibility for addressing the conflict and the grave humanitarian impact it has had [in northern Uganda]", it is clear that for the upwards trends in poverty levels to be addressed and for the deplorable protection and human rights records in northern Uganda to be addressed in consonance with Sida's rights perspective,⁹² then, hand in hand with measures to hold the GoU to account, there is a need to support a wide range of non-governmental actors directly. Civil society organizations, particularly those which increase the voice and involvement of women and youth, religious organizations, various media, research and policy institutions, political parties, all need support.

This necessarily involves a re-prioritisation of funding which will not necessarily be readily welcomed by the Government, in part because it will not wish to see a reduction in funding coming into its own coffers, in part because it does not welcome the development of critical capacity, and in part because it is reluctant to acknowledge the national problems of which the northern conflict is merely one example.

Linked to this is the risk of antagonising other donors, who may see in Sida's approach an implicit criticism of their own strategies. There is therefore likely to be at least some diplomatic pressure from other donors to bring Sida back in line.

However, the Juba process has created a real window of opportunity; not only is the Government under considerable pressure to deliver a peace accord, but it has recognized that it must be seen to deliver, at least in the short term. This in turn is tantamount to an admission that the pre-Juba status quo was untenable. Furthermore, it has taken a number of other initiatives to be seen to be addressing at least some conflict issues, not least the PRDP and KIDPP. The fact that these may be more form than substance is in itself another opportunity, as it leaves more space for donors to influence the substance through their funding decisions.

⁹¹ Sida, 2005: 8

⁹² Sida: Promoting Peace and Security through Development Cooperation

In sum, although there is some risk that a conflict sensitive strategy could in itself alienate certain stakeholders, by the same token there are significant opportunities for Sida to pursue one of its top priorities, namely to ‘promote structural stability by addressing the root causes of violent conflicts’.⁹³ In doing so, Sida will position itself as a progressive donor which is leading the way in terms of the identification of key issues and actors and a true and principled concern with the stability of the country and the well-being of its citizens through the promotion of conflict sensitive strategies.

⁹³ Sida, 2005: 15, 13

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Terms of Reference Strategic Conflict Analysis of Uganda 2006

1. Background

1.1 Country co-operation strategies

Sweden produces co-operation strategies for partner countries with which Sweden conducts long-term development co-operation.

A country co-operation strategy normally has a five-year horizon, depending on the specific circumstances. The country co-operation strategy outlines conclusions and guidelines for Swedish development co-operation for the whole strategy period. These include goals and targets for the cooperation, prerequisites for partnership, key issues for the continued dialogue, sectors for co-operation and forms of co-operation.

1.2 The up-coming country strategy process for Uganda

The present country strategy for Uganda is valid until December 2006. From January 1st 2007 a new country co-operation strategy will be in place. In the process of developing a new country co-operation strategy for Uganda, Sida requires a deeper understanding of a variety of specific themes, one being the present internal armed conflict in northern Uganda, conflict dynamics in the country as well as risks for potential future conflicts. Sida also needs to better understand the way in which development co-operation activities in the country affect and are affected by the conflict dynamics. To do this, a strategic conflict analysis will be carried out.

2. Objective and Point of Departure

2.1 The *objective* of the conflict analysis is two-folded. On the one hand it shall contribute to deepen Sida's understanding of the ongoing internal armed conflicts in northern Uganda¹, root causes, key sources of tensions and power structures within Uganda as a whole. On the other hand it shall give concrete recommendations on how Sweden through the development co-operation with Uganda, can contribute to conflict-management responses².

2.2 The *point of departure* for the analysis are the two perspectives guiding all Swedish development co-operation; the perspective of the poor and the human rights perspective. This implies relating the analysis and

¹ Acholiland, the specific characteristics of Karamoja and the fragile "post-conflict" situation of West Nile

² Conflict management being the term used in Sida's policy on Peace and Security (i.e. dialogue, structural stability and security)

recommendations to the international framework and instruments of human rights and international humanitarian law ratified and agreed upon by Uganda, to promote participation of Ugandan points' of view by consulting relevant stakeholders in Uganda and to be guided by a gender and age-disaggregated approach (women, men, girls and boys as actors and subjects of change and not according to the description of being solely victims and/or perpetrators).

3. Scope of work

The report shall include the following three sections plus an executive summary:

1. Conflict analysis

The conflict analysis will consist of two inter-related parts:

1.1 An overview of the situation and recent trends (since the year 2000, with specific highlight of the timeperiod from end of 2004) of the ongoing internal armed conflict in northern Uganda (LRA, Karamoja and West Nile respectively) the rootcauses to-and the dynamics of the conflicts as well as forces -connectors and dividers- pushing for armed conflict and for peace, respectively.

1.2 An overview, including recent trends, of power-based relationships, key sources of tensions and power structures within Uganda as a whole (i.e between different parts of the country as well as inbetween ethnic, religious, political, socio-political and economic interest groups or by gender).

The two overviews shall include relevant analyses of and reference to the relationship between Uganda and its neighbouring countries, specifically the role of Southern Sudan after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the DRC.

Example of questions to be taken into account:

- What actors³ influence or are influenced by the conflicts? (incentives, interests, capacities, peace agendas). This also includes identifying relevant Ugandan- and other- actors/organizations working in the area of conflict management and their point of views?
- How is the current democratic structure in Uganda, e.g the civil and political liberties, the role of the Military and the militias, the system of checks and balances, affecting the ongoing conflict situation and vice verse?
- Is the North-South ethno-political divide or tension a reality to people? what is the impact of it for the overall political life?
- In what way(s) have the democratic structures (executive, judicial and legislative but also local governments, civil society, academia and media been able to address and handle the conflicts in the north and what has been its possibilities to manage other/so far non-violent conflicts or tensions?
- What mechanisms, state and non-state can deal with the conflict(s) and how can these be strengthened?
- The role of ICC and the relationship to the Amnesty Act/Commission?

³ Women's movement, media, religious associations, parliament, local govt's, NGOs, CBOs, cultural/traditional/social associations/movements etc

- How does the general situation for human rights affect the conflict dynamics and vice versa?
- How does the humanitarian responses relate to conflict management?
- How prominent is the issue of land ownership/return/decongestion etc particularly for internally displaced people in relation to the conflict dynamics?
- What influences does organised crime have in relation to the conflict dynamics,?
- How does trade in small arms affect the conflict dynamics?

2. Scenario analysis

2.1 Departing from the conflict analysis above, assess the likelihood that the conflict in northern Uganda (LRA, Karamoja and West Nile respectively), as well as other potential conflicts, will increase, decrease or remain stable, and to give likely future conflict scenarios and to assess their probability.

Example of questions to be taken into account:

- How can various scenarios within the Ugandan democratic development affect the conflict dynamics and what are the possible consequences for Sida as a donor?
- Who are the possible agents/drivers of change for a peaceful solution and what are their possibilities to act under different scenarios?
- Prospects for truth and reconciliation nationally?
- The role and prospects of Southern Sudan in mediating between the LRA and the Govt?

3. Developing strategies and options

3.1 Departing from the conflict analysis and scenario analysis above, as well as a dialogue with Sida/Swedish Embassy in Kampala, identify both opportunities and risks for the Swedish Development Co-operation in Uganda. The strategies and options should emanate from an understanding of the needs of local ownership and take into account the two perspectives that shall guide all Swedish development co-operation and Sida's policy on Peace and Security (see 2).

Example of questions to be taken into account:

- How can Swedish development co-operation most strategically support conflict prevention and peace-building efforts, “connectors” rather than “dividers”?
- If a peaceful solution is met for the internal armed conflict between the Government and the LRA, how can Sida and donors be prepared to meet the demands of a post-conflict support?⁴
- What are the main opportunities and risks for Sida as a donor?
- Given the fact that several dimensions of the conflicts in Uganda are of a regional character, in what way can Sida (and other donors) handle these?

4. Executive summary (maximum 2 pages)

Outlining the main findings and recommendations.

⁴ Taking into account Sida's policy on conflict management, OECD/DAC guidelines on conflict prevention and the two perspectives that shall guide all Swedish Development Co-operation

4. Methodology and limitations

4.1 The methodology of work shall include the following stages:

Pre-fieldwork consultation: mapping the overall context, key literature and key stakeholders and draw up an initial list of individuals and organisations to be interviewed during the fieldwork phase. It should include consultations with relevant organisations and individuals, including the Swedish Embassy in Kampala, academics, peace and conflict/military/security analysts, private sector and diaspora communities. Sida will provide documents about Sida's processes, strategies and internal documents in order to enhance the consultants' knowledge about Swedish development co-operation. Sida will also assist with names of key people who can be interviewed. The pre-fieldwork phase also includes identifying existing analyses and research within the consultants' own networks that can be used in the report.

Fieldwork: consultations and stakeholder meetings with relevant actors such as identified key actors, local partners, the Swedish Embassy in Kampala, CSO's, local and central authorities, other donors and/or individuals of relevance, identified by the Consultant and/or Sida. If appropriate, the Embassy in Kampala can facilitate its venue and invitations for focus-group discussions at the Embassy where the Consultant is meeting with 1 or 2 groups of stakeholders at a time.

Reporting: after the fieldwork phase, the Consultant shall write a draft report. The draft report will serve as a foundation for further consultations with Sida about operational recommendations for Swedish policy, focusing on Sida's future action and the future Country Strategy. It will be presented at the Country Strategy meeting, September 6 in Kampala, where a brief overview and main findings and recommendations be put forward for discussion with stakeholders from the Swedish MoFA, Sida and the Embassy in Kampala.

During this possible seminar, findings from other studies can also be linked to the analysis to draw final conclusions. Sida will provide its written comments to the draft report before the Consultant elaborates the final version.

4.2 Limitations. The study shall be written in English and not exceed 40 pages including the executive summary (=maximum 2 pages).

A maximum of 35 are estimated for the assignment of the Consultant.

5. Timeframe of the Conflict Analysis

The following tentative timeschedule applies to the process of elaborating a Conflict analysis of Uganda:

Week 1–4: Pre-fieldwork consultations and fieldwork

Week 4–5: Preparation of draft report

Week 5 – August 28th: Focus group discussions. Submission to Sida-Embassy of Sweden of draft report (electronically)

Week 7/8: Consultant presents the draft report at the Country Strategy meeting in Kampala (September 6th) and Sida/Embassy submits its comments in writing to the Consultant on September 12th.

Week 9/10: Consultant submits final report in 3 hardcopies and electronically to The Embassy of Sweden/Sida no later than Monday 29th of September.

6. Required qualifications of the Consultant

The Consultant for the assignment shall meet the following requirements:

- Extensive knowledge of conflict management issues and the role(s) of development co-operation, both from theory and practice,

- Good knowledge of the African conflict context and development agenda in general incl Uganda, in particular substantial field experience,
- Good knowledge of Uganda, the conflict situation in the country, its recent history, political economy, democratization, ethnic and cultural setting
- Good knowledge of democracy building, human rights and international humanitarian law, including gender and the rights of the child
- Well documented analyzing capacity and writing skills,

7. Reference literature to be provided by Sida

Swedish Country strategy for Uganda 2001–2006

Sida’s policy on conflict management (“Peace and Security”) and other relevant Sida policy papers relating to conflict management (for example “How to conduct a Strategic Conflict Analysis”)

Sida’s policy paper Perspectives on Poverty (PoP)

Swedish Government white paper on Global Development (PGU)

OECD/DAC guidelines on Conflict Prevention/management

Summary from Government Project 2003–04 “Power and privileges; gender and poverty”

Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



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