



UGANDA: A RISK ASSESSMENT BRIEF

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February 2005

Based on the CIFP Risk Assessment Methodology

BACKGROUND

The roots of Uganda's conflict lie within ethnic cleavages aggravated by the British colonial regime, which intentionally split the civil and military power dynamic in Uganda. Having recruited soldiers and labour from the north, while favouring the south in terms of social and economic development and technology, noticeable imbalance grew into a basis for discontentment. Regional tensions in Uganda have persisted since independence in 1962, manifested in political and military struggles for group dominance. In many instances, the Acholi people of the north have been specifically targeted by mass violence, especially during the Amin regime. Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) seized power in 1986 following a five-year guerrilla war. Thereafter, Uganda experienced relative stability as the new government tried to rebuild political and economic institutions, though ethnic discord remained. Having previously used political and social exclusion to further the rhetoric of rebellion, the Acholi now added to its grievances the failure of the NRM government to realize its stated objectives for the northern regions. In 1999, Paul Collier identified four factors which have contributed to Uganda's northern violence and if left unchecked will likely undermine attempts at peace: poverty, borders on several "problem states", a northern region home to many ex-combatants, and political under-representation.¹

Mistrust of the government and armed unrest has taken several forms; most prominent is the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) – a fusion of the former militaristic Uganda People's Defence Army (UPDA) and the mystical Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF). Under the purportedly divine leadership of Joseph Kony, the LRA has terrorized Northern Uganda for over 19 years. In many senses, Kony *is* the LRA – central to it in action as well as purpose. Recent analyses of this conflict have considered the increased prospects for peace should Kony be removed, as the LRA

lacks any sort of coherent political goal beyond ousting Museveni.²

Significantly, the LRA is not tied down, having never permanently rooted itself by way of bases in Northern Uganda proper, while maintaining a tight organization, large stockpiles of weapons and advanced combat technology in southern Sudan. The LRA is reliant on external aid and the exploitation of the civilian population to sustain itself. This leads to the consideration of the truly regional dynamic at play in Uganda's conflict. Sudan's previous support of the LRA has been linked to revenge for Uganda's similar contribution to insurgent movements in southern Sudan, although both sides

deny outright



culpability in the other's internal problems. While attempts have been made to further cooperative relations between Uganda and Sudan, the complete dissolution of ties between the Sudanese government and the LRA would likely require a sustainable resolution to the Sudanese civil war, which appears to be underway at present. Subsequently, recent progress towards peace in southern Sudan may have positive impacts on resolution of tensions in Uganda.

Similarly, the situations in both Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) play a role in Uganda's trajectory. Tensions between Uganda and Rwanda have been linked to the fighting in the DRC, and there have been indications of renewed tensions on the border.³ Also, LRA violence seems to be spreading further eastward. Meanwhile, refugees and displaced persons continue to strain the conflict zones.⁴

Recent Developments: Peace talks between the NRM government and the LRA failed, and the cease fire collapsed 31 December 2004, leaving the state officially “at war” with the insurgency. Peace talks have since resumed, but extremely troubling is the antagonistic rhetoric swirling around negotiators, causing some commentators

to question the commitment of each side to the peace process.

KEY INDICATORS

Indicators	Contributing Factors/Developments
History of Conflict	<p>Stabilizing: Peace talks between government and LRA picked up again in January. African Crisis Response Initiative resumed in 2003 with US-Ugandan military exercises. US support for monitoring LRA ‘terrorist’ group. Nairobi peace agreement signed by Uganda-Sudan in July 2004.⁵ Peace agreement signed in January 2005 between Sudanese government and southern Sudan rebel group. Oslo channel peace talks under way by Norwegian government since mid-December 2004.⁶</p> <p>Destabilizing: Remnants of Allied Democratic Force continue to terrorize eastern Congo, posing a threat to stability in western Uganda.⁷ Largest ethnic group, Baganda, continue to demand autonomy; angered with Museveni.⁸ Renewed fighting between government and LRA in early January 2005 after talks broke down.⁹ Museveni continues to cite ‘War on Terror’ in justifying abuse of population.</p>
Governance and Political Stability	<p>Stabilizing: Museveni has promised free and fair elections in 2006. Since assuming power, President Museveni has enacted positive reforms improving the political and human rights situation considerably after the brutal Idi Amin regime.¹⁰</p> <p>Destabilizing: Antagonistic rhetoric surrounding peace negotiations potentially detrimental.¹¹ While elections promise democratic process, various factions also offer potential violence and unrest. Museveni’s reforms include a call to remove presidential term limits. Other political parties and ethnically-based organizations have been banned since 1986, instead dominated by entrenched ‘Movement’.¹² Media outlets are restricted and relatively limited in reporting accurate news by the government and police services.¹³ Although reforms have helped, corruption still runs rampant throughout the state apparatus.¹⁴</p>
Militarization	<p>Stabilizing: Recent Sudanese peace agreement may encourage implementation of arms controls in accordance with international declarations Uganda is party to.¹⁵</p> <p>Destabilizing: Military expenditure in 2003: 128.2 million USD (2.1% of GDP).¹⁶ CIFP Military Expenditure Score 4.6, total armed forces score 6.4; latter value is marked by high volatility.</p>
Population Heterogeneity	<p>Destabilizing: High ethnic diversity with over 15 different groups, including the largest, Baganda(17%). Religious diversity also high with large Protestant (33%), Catholic (33%), Muslim (16%), and Indigenous belief (18%) systems respectively.¹⁷</p>
Demographic Stress	<p>Destabilizing: High youth bulge, with 50.6% aged 0-14. Extreme urban/rural imbalance with predominantly rural settlement; high urban growth rate may lead to increased stress.¹⁸ Over 185 000 refugees from Sudan and Rwanda;¹⁹ 1.6 million IDPs due to ongoing LRA rebellion.²⁰ Rough estimates have put the January refugee arrivals from the DRC at minimum 20 000, all located in Western Uganda.²¹</p>
Economic Performance	<p>Stabilizing: Uganda’s economy performed well during the 1990s due to reforms and curbed inflation, and experienced an upturn in its export markets in 2003. Substantial natural resources (fertile soils) and minerals (copper and cobalt) complement large coffee industry. Has low total debt service and qualified for debt relief of approximately \$2 billion in 2000.²² GDP Real Growth Rate of 4.4% in 2003.²³</p>

	<p>Destabilizing: Corruption within government and ambiguous reforms threaten continued growth. Low trade openness challenges further economic prosperity. Growth rate of 7% needed to meet poverty reduction targets.²⁴ Cattle rustling from LRA along Kenyan and Sudanese borders continues despite UPDF's attempts to counter the problem.²⁵</p>
Human Development	<p>Stabilizing: Despite the alarming HIV/AIDS prevalence rate among adults (4.1%), the HIV Drug Access initiative established by Ugandan Ministry of Health and UNAIDS in 1998 has successfully expanded access to antiretroviral drugs in the country.²⁶ Uganda ranks 28th out of 163 countries on a measure of total seats in parliament held by women (24.7%).²⁷</p> <p>Destabilizing: Uganda's 2002 HDI rank score: 146 (out of 177 countries).²⁸ Only 52% of the population has sustainable access to an improved water source; 50-79% has access to essential drugs.²⁹ Average life expectancy at birth is 46.2 years; trend is worsening. Infant mortality stabilizing but remains critical at 82 deaths per 1000 live births. 25% of mothers are underage in northern Uganda.³⁰ Estimates of 2.7 million working children, 1/3 under the age of 10; further indication that 1 in every 5 working children has no education.³¹</p>
Environmental Stress	<p>Destabilizing: Land degradation and deforestation caused by IDPs, refugees. Illegal felling of trees for timber and cutting down of forests for security reasons.³² Extensive development of fishing industry has led to over-fishing, water pollution, and resource depletion.³³ Overgrazing, draining of wetlands for agriculture also problematic.³⁴</p>
International Linkages	<p>Stabilizing: Uganda is a member of the UN, WTO, UNHCR, OPCW and IBRD, among others.³⁵ Museveni chairs a regional peace initiative for Burundi.³⁶ Good relations currently exist between the United States and Uganda; President Museveni actively supports the US campaign on the War on Terror.³⁷ Improving relations with Sudan.³⁸</p> <p>Destabilizing: Level of international disputes /conflict currently high and worsening: CIFP score 5.8. Continuing regional discord given vast number of refugees from neighbouring countries and conflict among pastoral communities.³⁹</p>

MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS

Internal Actors	Objectives & Limitations
Government of Uganda (National Resistance Movement), <i>President Yoweri Museveni</i>	Museveni has been in power for nineteen years. He has introduced democratic reforms and has been credited with substantially improving the country's human rights record. However, the legitimacy of his government has been challenged continuously during this time, most notably by the LRA. The <i>Movement</i> has been unable to end the brutal conflict with the LRA which has led to the death, kidnapping and displacement of tens of thousands of people. ⁴⁰
Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF)	The official defences of Uganda, the army has a history of torture, rape, theft, and extra-judicial executions. ⁴¹ It is responsible for resisting the LRA.
Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) <i>Leader Joseph Kony</i>	This group has waged a brutal insurgency against the Museveni government almost from the latter's inception. While other groups have also challenged the government, the LRA's persistence and the intensity of violence make this 19 year old stand-off unique. Western governments not only rank the LRA among the world's terrorist groups but also as the major challenge to peace in Uganda.
Other Rebel Groups: People's Redemption Army (PRA); Allied Democratic Force (ADF)	Both draw support from the regions bordering the DRC, remnants of the ADF are rumoured to be considering a merger with the PRA, ⁴² this despite previous UPDF success in neutralizing the Rwanda-backed PRA in early 2003. ⁴³ This latter group is led by a contingent of renegade Ugandan military officers, and is growing in numbers.
Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU)	Made up of 40 national and international NGOs, CSOPNU recently increased pressure on the NRM government to resume talks with the LRA, citing concern over the dire humanitarian consequences resulting from renewed clashes between the government forces and rebels. While other forms of political expression remain tenuous, international media has taken note of and voiced CSOPNU concerns. ⁴⁴
External Actors	Objectives & Limitations
Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) <i>Leader Col. Dr. John Garang</i>	The SPLA is currently in control of southern Sudan. Recently, Garang, who is also Sudan's Vice-President, publicly expressed his commitment to drive the LRA out of southern Sudan should they refuse to participate in negotiations to end the conflict in northern Uganda. ⁴⁵
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	President Museveni was criticized for Uganda's military intervention in the civil war in the DRC (1997-2003). Thousands of refugees from the DRC are currently staying in villages in western Uganda, and are in urgent need of humanitarian aid. ⁴⁶ Interstate refugee flows significantly impact the course of violence.
Rwanda	In 1997, Uganda and Rwanda collaborated in an initiative to overthrow Zaire's (DRC) President Mobutu Sese Seko. In subsequent years (1998-2002), Uganda and Rwanda were involved in three major disputes over distribution and control of resources in the eastern Congo.
United States of America	Museveni is regarded by present U.S. government as an ally in the fight against terrorism; the LRA was added to the U.S. terrorist watch list in 2001. The U.S. has also been involved in attempts at mediation, and holds a significant donor relationship with the NRM government.
United Kingdom	UK maintains good relations with Museveni government. As a former member of the British colonial empire and continuing member of the Commonwealth, Uganda retains close trade and development links to the UK.

SCENARIOS

Best case: *Viable peace agreement achieved*

- Museveni does not pursue constitutional amendments regarding presidential term limits. Free and fair elections ensue in 2006; women continue to gain ground in political representation.
- Sudanese peace process continues along its current positive trajectory, enabling the further development of a mutually cooperative relationship between Uganda and the Sudan.⁴⁷ A united front against insurgency and the withdrawal of further support for the LRA by the Sudanese government bolsters the internal Ugandan peace process, as the strength of the LRA is discredited vis-à-vis isolation.
- Reduced tension in the region allows for the return or reestablishment of vulnerable groups with the help of human rights organizations, easing the government's financial and resource burden and allowing for more investment in the provision of basic health care.

Worst case: *Massive regional chaos and dissolution of peace efforts*

- Museveni pushes through constitutional reforms, securing an indefinite presidential term. Resulting controversy over the 2006 election process proves ultimately destabilizing; tensions escalate.
- Peace talks between the government and LRA breakdown, violence increases in the north and spreads further east across the country. LRA expands its roots.
- The Sudanese peace process disintegrates; LRA re-establishes its stronghold in southern Sudan.
- In the west, armed opposition continues to strengthen; political situation in the DRC deteriorates.
- Overall refugee and IDP movements increase due to regional instability, straining the resources of the Ugandan government and providing opportunity for continued violence towards and recruitment of vulnerable groups, especially children. Access to basic health services are severely undermined by conflict; rapid and critical deterioration of overall living standards.

Most likely case: *Maintenance of the present course*

- Museveni secures a third term, leading to increased dissention.
 - Sudanese peace deal holds for the time being, allowing for increased regional cooperation against insurgency. LRA finds itself increasingly isolated.
 - Ethnic and religious tensions persist, and are not addressed in the short term.
 - IDP camps continue to be targeted by LRA violence, and refugee flows across borders continue to exacerbate existing conflict.
 - HIV/AIDS programmes maintain their successful record due to international support, however overall health services continue to be neglected; further deterioration of living standards.
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NOTES

- ¹ United Nations, “Country Presentation for Uganda” from the Third UN Conference on the LDCs (Brussels: 14-20 May 2001), p. 14.
- ² International Crisis Group, “Northern Uganda: Understanding and Solving the Conflict” Africa Report No 77 (14 April 2004). <www.icg.org/home/index.cfm?id=2588&l=1> 22 Jan 2005. Except where otherwise noted, the bulk of information contained in this section is derived from this ICG report. While not explicitly referenced herein, a greater understanding of the Ugandan situation has also been derived from John Kiyaga-Nsubuga, “Uganda: the Politics of ‘Consolidation’ under Museveni’s Regime, 1996-2003,” in *Durable Peace: Challenges for Peacebuilding in Africa*, ed. Taiser M. Ali and Robert O. Matthews (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).
- ³ Ahimbisibwe, Fortunate, “Uganda People’s Redemption Army” *Uganda Anarchism* (Saturday December 18, 2004, <http://southafrica.indymedia.org/news/2004/12/7265_comment.php> 29 Jan 2005).
- ⁴ Norwegian Refugee Council “Uganda: Increased International attention has yet to produce concrete results for the displaced” *Global Internal Displacement Database*, no date. <<http://first.sipri.org/index.php?page=step2>> 23 Jan 2005.
- ⁵ US Department of State. Background Note: Uganda. <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2963.htm>> January 2005.
- ⁶ All Africa Global Media. <<http://allafrica.com>> 28 January 2005.
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- ⁹ Cawthorne, Andrew. “U.N. “appallingly negligent” of Uganda War.” Reuters. <<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk.N2781432.htm>> 28 January 2005.
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- ¹² BBC, “Country Profile: Uganda.”
- ¹³ Human Rights Watch. Human Rights Overview: Uganda. <<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/01/13/uganda9862.htm>> January 2005.
- ¹⁴ Uganda has been rated as one of the most corrupt countries of the world (88th of 91). Transparency International. “The Part Played by Structural of the State in Fighting Corruption: The Case in Uganda”. <http://www.transparency.org/iacc/8th_iacc/papers/ruzindana.html> 28 Jan 2005
- ¹⁵ Uganda is signatory to the 1997 Bamako Declaration and the 2000 Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. See for instance “Uganda Country Report June 2003: Reporting on the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects,” regarding the regional dimension of the problem. <<http://disarmament.un.org:8080/cab/nationalreports/2002/Uganda.pdf>> 29 Jan 2005.
- ¹⁶ CIA World Factbook, Uganda. <www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ug.html>. 27 Jan 2005. It is speculated that funds from other budget areas are redirected to military spending; see Annex 2, CIFP *East Africa Diagnostics and Risk Assessments* (05/2004). <<http://www.carleton.ca/cifp/docs/eastafrica.pdf>>. 28 Jan 2005.
- ¹⁷ The other ethnic groups are: Ankole 8%, Basoga 8%, Iteso 8%, Bakiga 7%, Langi 6%, Rwanda 6%, Bagisu 5%, Acholi 4%, Lugbara 4%, Batoro 3%, Bunyoro 3%, Alur 2%, Bagwere 2%, Bakonjo 2%, Jopodhola 2%, Karamojong 2%, Rundi 2%, non-African (European, Asian, Arab) 1%, and other 8%. CIA World Factbook. “Uganda”. <<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ug.html>> 18 Jan 2005
- ¹⁸ CIFP report on Uganda; CIA World Factbook.
- ¹⁹ CIA World Factbook
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ UN News Service “Help needed for Congolese refugees in Uganda, UN agency says,” (19 January 2005) <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=13082&Cr=democratic&Cr1=congo&Kw1=uganda&Kw2=+refugees&Kw3=drc>> 25 January 2005.
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- ²⁹ Unless otherwise noted, figures for this indicator are based on the Human Development Report 2004
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- ³⁰ According to a report by the Foundation for the Development of Needy Communities;
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- ³¹ Child labour report based on the Demographic Health Survey 2000-2001;
<http://www.ilo.org/public/English/standards/ipecc/simpoc/Uganda/report/ug_rep_2001.pdf> 26 Jan 2005.
- ³² CIFP Annex 2, *East Africa Diagnostics and Risk Assessment*.
- ³³ <<http://www.unep.ch/etu/etp/acts/capbld/rdone/uganda.pdf>> 27 Jan 2005.
- ³⁴ CIA World Factbook.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ <<http://www.irinnews.org/advsearch.asp>> Jan 27 2005.
- ³⁷ <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2963.htm>> Jan 29 2005.
- ³⁸ Ibid; CIA World Factbook.
- ³⁹ See CIFP Annex 2, *East Africa Diagnostics and Risk Assessment*.
- ⁴⁰ BBC "Country Profile: Uganda."
- ⁴¹ Minorities at Risk. Data. Assessment for Baganda in Uganda.
<<http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=50003>>. Jan 27, 2005.
- ⁴² Ahimbisibwe, Fortunate, "Uganda People's Redemption Army" *Uganda Anarchism* (Saturday December 18, 2004
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- ⁴³ John Kiyaga-Nsubuga, "Uganda: the Politics of 'Consolidation' under Museveni's Regime, 1996-2003," in *Durable Peace: Challenges for Peacebuilding in Africa*, ed. Taiser M. Ali and Robert O. Matthews (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 92.
- ⁴⁴ "UGANDA: Civil society groups call for resumption of talks on northern conflict" *IRINnews.com* 6 Jan 2005.
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