

Uganda¹

by Simon Amajuru

The war in northern Uganda is one against civilians. Although the government purports to be targeting Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels, it is well known that more than 80% of the current rebels were conscripted against their will. The war has continued for more than 17 years, caused displacement of more than 1.6 million people, and left more than 100,000 people dead. Over 20,000 children have been abducted and forced to join the LRA ranks or become sex slaves, while over 50,000 children have turned into "night commuters" for fear of abductions.

[T]he LRA explained to us that all five brothers couldn't serve in the LRA because we would not perform well. So they tied up my two younger brothers and invited us to watch. Then they beat them with sticks until the two of them died. They told us it would give us strength to fight. My youngest brother was nine years old (Human Rights Watch, July 2003).

*I have been increasingly surprised how northern Uganda can remain the world's greatest neglected humanitarian crisis (Jan Egeland, United Nation's Emergency Relief Coordinator while briefing the U.N. Security Council on the situation in northern Uganda. *The New Vision*, Oct 23, 2004).*

Uganda had no laws on terrorism before September 11, 2001 but enacted the Anti-Terrorism act in 2002. This legislation reduces a broad cross-section of dissidents to

'opponents of the state,' thus making those in the media and public life who have divergent views suspect. The terrorism law contains rather sweeping provisions. For example, possession of unlicensed firearms is tantamount to terrorism... Clause 14 empowers ministers to declare an organization "terrorist," without challenge in court (Human Rights Watch Report: State of Pain: Torture in Uganda, March 2004).

Uganda gained independence from the British on October 9, 1962. Many people believe that the colonial legacy created the south-north divide in Uganda and planted seeds of ethnic conflict in the country. The British created white collar jobs and plantations in the south and used northerners as army reserves and laborers in the plantations. Idi Amin and Tito Okello, both semi-illiterate, became presidents through military coups and were beneficiaries of the colonial legacy. To date, northerners continue to feel marginalized.

Uganda's record of open human rights abuse dates back to Milton Obote's first administration in the late 1960s, which sought a one-party system. Conditions worsened with Idi Amin's military coup in 1971. Since then, the army has been vital to Uganda's political direction.

The bibliography covers literature on human rights abuses, terrorism and the War on Terror beginning in 2000. Most of the articles are about human rights issues in northern Uganda, where the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) of Joseph Kony claims to be fighting for the liberation of Uganda and to rule it according to the Ten Commandments.

¹ This section has a supplement that begins on page S-51.

Conflict Causes and Resolution

Causes of The Conflict

Lawrence E. Cline. 2003. "Spirits and the Cross: Religiously Based Violent Movements in Uganda." *Small Wars and Insurgencies*. 14(2): 113-131.

Provides detailed analysis of the havoc caused to humanity in northern Uganda from various rebellions since 1986. Combination of doctrines of traditional and "modern" religions, ethnicity, marginalization, and external forces played complementary roles in the rise and sustenance of the terrorist forms of rebel movements in Uganda.

Nick Grono and Jim Terrie. 2004. "Trying Times in Uganda." *The Diplomat*. <http://www.icg.org/home/index.cfm?id=2564&l=1>.

As rebels of the LRA kill over 300 people in a camp for displaced people, there are calls for the ICC to investigate both rebels and government soldiers for atrocities. The ICC has taken the challenge as its first investigation.

International Crisis Group. 2004. *Northern Uganda: Understanding and Solving the Conflict*. Africa Report No. 77. <http://www.icg.org/home/index.cfm?id=2588&l=1>.

A report on the root causes of the northern conflict that provides possible solutions and reasons why current "efforts" to solve this conflict have failed. Calls on the government, rebels, local community and international community to be committed to end human rights abuses.

International Crisis Group. 2001. "Rwanda/Uganda: A Dangerous War of Nerves." http://www.icg.org/library/documents/report_archive/A400688_21122001.pdf.

Gives complete picture of the causes and implications of the war between Uganda and Rwanda, who were once allies. Rivalry and struggle over resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo contributed to much of the causes of the past war and only international intervention can stop further suffering of civilians.

International Crisis Group. 2000. *Conflict Prevention and Resolution Uganda and Rwanda: Friends or Enemies?* Africa Report No. 14. <http://www.crisisweb.org/home/index.cfm?id=1646&l=1>.

An account of the historical relationship between Uganda and Rwanda and how differences in their sometimes hidden agendas and a mutual strategy of sending national troops led to competition of the army commanders of the two countries in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Only intervention by "stronger countries" could avoid further war.

2004. "Northern Uganda Alarms UN." *The New Vision*. <http://www.newvision.co.ug/detail.php?newsCategoryId=13&newsId=395320>.

UN's Jan Egeland describes the situation in northern Uganda as the worst in the World and not producing the global outcry it should. Believes that there is a conspiracy of silence over the war that has caused several deaths and abductions.

Conflict Resolution

Nick Grono and Jim Terrie. 2004. "Trying Times in Uganda." *The Diplomat*. <http://www.icg.org/home/index.cfm?id=2564&l=1>.

As rebels of the LRA kill over 300 people in a camp for displaced people, there are calls for the ICC to investigate both rebels and government soldiers for atrocities. The ICC has taken the challenge as its first investigation.

Human Rights Watch. 2004. "ICC: Investigate All Sides in Uganda." Human Rights Watch. <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/02/04/uganda7264.htm>.

Human Rights Watch is concerned about the partiality of the International Criminal Court, given that both rebels and government soldiers have committed crimes against civilians in the more than 16-year war in northern Uganda.

International Crisis Group. 2004. *Northern Uganda: Understanding and Solving the Conflict*. Africa Report No. 77. <http://www.icg.org/home/index.cfm?id=2588&l=1>.

A report on the root causes of the northern conflict that provides possible solutions and reasons why current efforts to solve this conflict have failed. Calls on the government, rebels, local community and international community to be committed to end human rights abuses.

Okello Lucima. 2002. "Protracted Conflict: Elusive Peace Initiatives to End the Violence in Northern Uganda." *Accord*. 47(1): <http://www.c-r.org/accord/uganda/accord11/index.shtml>.

Attributes the sustained conflict in northern Uganda to government's use of violence against opponents, indiscipline of the army, previous support of LRA by Sudan in retaliation to Uganda's support to Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and declaration of LRA as terrorists by the U.S. All negotiations have failed because of lack of trust in Museveni, issuing of ultimatum by Museveni for rebels to surrender during peace talks of 1994, continued infighting by LRA, and failure by the Carter Center to involve LRA and SPLA in peace talks between Sudan and Uganda. Humanitarianism has focused much on abductions at the expense of the welfare of suffering civilians living in "protected camps." Civil society peace efforts have not succeeded because of failure to bring government and the LRA into meaningful dialogue but the Amnesty Act is in place and functional. There exists lack of trust between both government and the LRA, and government and the Acholi political community. People are suffering and questioning the hidden motive of both government and LRA in this war.

Joanna R. Quinn. 2004. "Constraints: The Un-Doing of the Ugandan Truth Commission." *Human Rights Quarterly*. 26(2): 401-428.

ABSTRACT: In the aftermath of a period of mass atrocity at the hands of the state, the restoration of the political and social fabric of a country is a pressing need. Hundreds of thousands of people were murdered throughout the period, while the various heads of Ugandan government sought to legitimize their rule and cement their positions of power in any way possible. Civil war leaves in its path a series of communities in need of many things, all of which stretch budgets that have been depleted by years of significant military expenditure. These include roads, hospitals, education, and security, among others, and each of these must be carefully weighed against the country's need for justice. In transitional societies, the outward signs of poverty and destitution sometimes mask

the importance of rebuilding those structural social institutions that form the basis of any stable society. A restructured judicial system and strengthened networks of civic engagement all lead to increased levels of social trust. And these processes are particularly important in addressing the causes of conflict within divided transitional societies.

Uganda has moved through difficult times as each government tries to legitimize its power through dictatorship and military suppression. Investments in social infrastructure and justice continue to be neglected as military expenditure takes priority and the result is conflict with associated effects.

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

Internally Displaced People

2004. "Northern Uganda Alarms UN." *The New Vision*. <http://www.newvision.co.ug/detail.php?newsCategoryId=13&newsId=395320>.

UN's Jan Egeland describes the situation in northern Uganda as the worst in the World and not producing the global outcry it should. Believes that there is a conspiracy of silence over the war that has caused several deaths and abductions.

International Crisis Group. 2004. Northern Uganda: Understanding and Solving the Conflict. Africa Report No. 77. <http://www.icg.org/home/index.cfm?id=2588&l=1>.

A report on the root causes of the northern conflict that provides possible solutions and reasons why current "efforts" to solve this conflict have failed. Calls on the government, rebels, local community and international community to be committed to end human rights abuses.

Jemera Rone. 2003. "Uganda: Sharp Decline in Human Rights." Human Rights News. <http://www.hrw.org/press/2003/07/uganda071503.htm>.

The war against terror in northern Uganda is in a vicious cycle and only the intervention of United Nations and members of the international community can reverse this bad crisis. All mortality rates are high and HIV/AIDS prevalence is high in northern Uganda.

Jemera Rone. 2002. "Uganda: Army and Rebels Step up Attacks on Civilians." Human Rights News. <http://hrw.org/press/2002/10/uganda1029.htm>.

Steps taken to end the war in northern Uganda have brought more misery to civilians: Forcing civilians to vacate their homes for camps in 48 hours, bombing villages, following the LRA in Sudan, and Sudan's cutting of food aid to the LRA, have made the steps more ruthless to civilians in Uganda and Sudan.

Refugees

Human Rights Watch. 2003. "Briefing to the 59th Session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights Special Envoy for the Abducted Children in Northern Uganda." <http://www.hrw.org/un/chr59/uganda.htm>.

The briefing to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights indicates that both the government and the LRA are involved in recruiting child soldiers, and the military offensive against the LRA in Sudan has been counterproductive; calls for the Secretary General to appoint a special envoy for abducted children.

Human Rights Watch. 2002. "LRA Conflict in Northern Uganda and Southern Sudan, 2002." Human Rights News. <http://hrw.org/press/2002/10/uganda1029-bck.htm>.

Describes how the war of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels causes human rights abuses both in Uganda and Sudan, despite the earlier support of Sudan to the LRA. The military offensive by Uganda government has worsened the situation and humanitarian aid is affected.

Jemera Rone. 2002. "Uganda: Army and Rebels Step up Attacks on Civilians." Human Rights News. <http://hrw.org/press/2002/10/uganda1029.htm>.

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HIV/AIDS

Lisa Karanja. 2003. Uganda Just Die Quietly: Domestic Violence and Women's Vulnerability to HIV in Uganda. Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda0803/>.

Domestic violence associated with rape within marriage is a high contributing factor to HIV/AIDS transmission to women in Uganda. Government is doing little to protect women.

Samuel Olara. 2004. Rape: The Hidden Weapon against Women in War-Torn Northern Uganda. <http://www.km-net.org/e-news/2004/nov04/nov14.htm#item5>.

Reports that rape is a hidden weapon of war in northern Uganda and is committed by both government soldiers and rebels. Condemns acts of rape and violence against women and young girls as acts contravening both the Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). With HIV/AIDS, rape is like death sentence.

Jemera Rone. 2003. "Uganda: Sharp Decline in Human Rights." Human Rights News. <http://www.hrw.org/press/2003/07/uganda071503.htm>.

The war against terror in northern Uganda is in a vicious cycle and only the intervention of the United Nations and members of the international community can reverse this bad crisis. All mortality rates are high and HIV/AIDS prevalence is high in northern Uganda.

World Vision. 2004. Pawns of Politics: Children, Conflict and Peace in Northern Uganda. http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/wvusuf0.nsf/stable/globalissues_uganda_report.

As the war in northern Uganda continues to escape substantive action by the UN, the LRA continues to abduct and train children to rape, maim and torture. In Gulu, more than 75% of death cases are war related, the HIV/AIDS rate is very high, child malnutrition rates are high too, and night commuting to town for safety occurs daily. Corruption in the military is a factor in prolonging the war.

Civil Rights Violations

Three bills--the Non-Governmental Organizations Registration (Amendment) Bill, the Suppression of Terrorism Bill and the Political Organizations Bill--before the parliament of Uganda would put human rights at great risk if passed the way they are formulated now.

Susan Dicklitch and Doreen Lwanga. 2003. "The Politics of Being Non-Political: Human Rights Organizations and the Creation of a Positive Human Rights Culture in Uganda." *Human Rights Quarterly*. 25(2): 482-510.

ABSTRACT: This article focuses on what role human rights organizations (HROs) actually play in the development of a rights-protective regime and a rights-respectful society in Uganda, given structural, internal, and regime limitations. We argue that Ugandan HROs are significantly limited in their ability to help create a positive human rights culture in Uganda by historical/structural legacies that have created a culture of political apathy and fear amongst the general population. Regime repression of vocal "political" non-state actors and foreign donors' implicit acceptance of the regime's human rights transgressions in light of neo-liberal economic reforms reinforce this fear and political apathy. Ugandan HROs, not willing to risk state repression or lose foreign aid, thus resort to non-contentious human rights issues that do not engage the regime or test the resolve or interest of society to demand human rights for all.

Dicklitch and Lwanga articulate how, in the quest for donor funds and fear of repressive government actions, human rights organizations have neglected the cause of human rights in Uganda. This has jeopardized the development of a rights-protective and rights-respectful society in Uganda.

Susan Dicklitch. 2002. "A Basic Human Rights Approach to Democracy in Uganda." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. 20(2): 203-223.

This article discusses with clear quotations from various reputable sources how the "internationally" respected no-party movement system in Uganda has failed to develop into a rights-protective regime and rights-respectful society. The paper also analyses how donors, weak civil society and disintegrated political parties have endorsed the status-quo in Uganda.

Human Rights Watch. 1999. Hostile to Democracy: The Movement System and Political Repression in Uganda. <http://hrw.org/reports/1999/uganda/>.

The liberation of Uganda from the dictatorial governments of Idi Amin and Milton Obote has lost meaning as the Museveni government has restricted political parties. Arbitrary arrests of people on allegations of treason are increasing and a one-party system seems to be on the way.

Lisa Karanja. 2003. Uganda Just Die Quietly: Domestic Violence and Women's Vulnerability to HIV in Uganda. Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda0803/>.

Domestic violence associated with rape within marriage is a high contributing factor to HIV/AIDS transmission to women in Uganda. Government is doing little to protect women.

Julianne Kippenberg. 2001. "Uganda Attacks Freedom of the Press: Closes Main Independent Newspaper." Human Rights News. <http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/10/uganda1011.htm>.

On October 10, 2002, the *Monitor* newspaper in Uganda probably became the first victim of the new anti-terrorism law that was enacted in May 2002. The law provides for a possible death sentence for anyone publishing news "likely to promote terrorism."

Samuel Olara. 2004. Rape: The Hidden Weapon against Women in War-Torn Northern Uganda. <http://www.km-net.org/e-news/2004/nov04/nov14.htm#item5>.

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Uganda has moved through difficult times as each government has tried to legitimize its power through dictatorship and military suppression. Investments in social infrastructure and justice continue to be neglected as military expenditures take priority and the result is conflict with associated effects.

Jemera Rone, Julianne Kippenberg and Bronwen Manby. 2004. Uganda, State of Pain Torture in Uganda. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/uganda0404/>.

Since 2001, torture by government security agents has been on the increase in Uganda, purportedly to suppress political opponents. Many people have been detained in "safe houses" instead of official police stations, which has led to reports of torture and related deaths.

Jemera Rone. 2003. "Uganda: Unacknowledged Detention of 14 Persons and Reported Executions of 4 of Them." Human Rights News. <http://www.hrw.org/press/2003/10/uganda100203-ltr.htm>.

An open letter by Human Rights Watch to President Museveni regarding executed people and detention without trial by the newly formed Anti Terrorism Task Force and other state organs, who at times violate human rights. Requests the President to take action against human rights violation by state agents.

Abductions

2004. "Northern Uganda Alarms UN." *The New Vision*. <http://www.newvision.co.ug/detail.php?newsCategoryId=13&newsId=395320>.

UN's Jan Egeland describes the situation in northern Uganda as the worst in the World and not producing the global outcry it should. Believes that there is a conspiracy of silence over the war that has caused several deaths and abductions.

Jo Becker. 2003. "Uganda: Drop Treason Charges against Child Abductees." Human Rights Watch. <http://hrw.org/press/2003/03/uganda030403.htm>.

Treason is a very serious charge and should not be used against children who have been abducted by force and compelled to commit acts of violence. The government should immediately drop treason charges and ensure that the boys in question have access to rehabilitation assistance. Charging children under 17 years of age and who have been abducted by rebels to fight against the government with treason defeats the purpose of fighting to free abducted children from the rebels.

Jo Becker, Tony Tate, Lois Whitman and Jemera Rone. 2003. "Uganda, Stolen Children Abduction and Recruitment in Northern Uganda." Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda0303/uganda0403.pdf>.

A discussion of the torture, sexual abuse of girls, killings and abduction of about 20,000 children by the Lord's Resistance Army and recruitment of child soldiers by the government in northern Uganda. Calls for an end to these inhumane acts and the appointment of a special envoy by the Secretary General of UN.

Lawrence E. Cline. 2003. "Spirits and the Cross: Religiously Based Violent Movements in Uganda." *Small Wars and Insurgencies*. 14(2).

Provides detailed analysis of the havoc caused to humanity in northern Uganda by various rebellions since 1986. Combination of doctrines of traditional and modern religions, ethnicity, marginalization, and external forces played complementary roles in the rise and sustenance of the terrorist forms of rebel movements in Uganda.

Rosa Ehrenreich. 1997. *The Scars of Death: Children Abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda*. Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org/reports97/uganda/>.

First true stories of abductions and life with the LRA from former abductees. Abducted children were hardened through torture, and being forced to torture and kill.

Human Rights Watch. 2003. "Abducted and Abused: Renewed Conflict in Northern Uganda." [http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda0703/.](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda0703/)

Draws on evidence from eyewitnesses that the governments of both Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army are still abusing human rights abuses in Uganda. This time, the war has spread to eastern Uganda.

Human Rights Watch. 2003. "Briefing to the 59th Session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights Special Envoy for the Abducted Children in Northern Uganda." [http://www.hrw.org/un/chr59/uganda.htm.](http://www.hrw.org/un/chr59/uganda.htm)

The briefing to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights indicates that both government and the LRA are involved in recruiting child soldiers and the military offensive against the LRA in Sudan has been counterproductive; calls for the Secretary General to appoint a special envoy for abducted children.

Human Rights Watch. 2003. "Uganda Government Forces." [http://hrw.org/reports/2004/childsoldiers0104/18.htm.](http://hrw.org/reports/2004/childsoldiers0104/18.htm)

Both the government (mostly through Local Defense Units) and rebels (through abductions) continue to recruit child soldiers. Rescued rebels and those who escaped are reported to be kept under military confinement for a long time before being released for counseling services.

Human Rights Watch. 2002. "LRA Conflict in Northern Uganda and Southern Sudan, 2002." Human Rights News. [http://hrw.org/press/2002/10/uganda1029-bck.htm.](http://hrw.org/press/2002/10/uganda1029-bck.htm)

Describes how the war of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels causes human rights abuses both in Uganda and Sudan, despite Sudan's earlier support of the LRA. The military offensive by Uganda's government has worsened the situation and humanitarian aid is affected.

Okello Lucima. 2002. "Protracted Conflict: Elusive Peace Initiatives to End the Violence in Northern Uganda." Accord. 47(1): [http://www.c-r.org/accord/uganda/accord11/index.shtml.](http://www.c-r.org/accord/uganda/accord11/index.shtml)

Attributes the sustained conflict in northern Uganda to the government's use of violence against opponents, indiscipline of the army, previous support of the LRA by Sudan in retaliation for Uganda's support to SPLA and declaration of LRA as terrorists by the U.S. All negotiations have failed because of a lack of trust in Museveni, an issuing of an ultimatum by Museveni for rebels to surrender during peace talks of 1994, continued infighting by LRA, and the Carter Center's failure to involve LRA and SPLA in peace talks between Sudan and Uganda. Humanitarianism has focused much on abductions at the expense of the welfare of suffering civilians living in "protected camps." Civil society peace efforts have not succeeded because of a failure to bring the government and the LRA into meaningful dialogue but the Amnesty Act is in place and functional. There exists a lack of trust between both the government and LRA, and the government and the Acholi political community. People are suffering and questioning the hidden motive of both government and LRA in this war.

Jemera Rone. 2003. "Uganda: Sharp Decline in Human Rights." Human Rights News. <http://www.hrw.org/press/2003/07/uganda071503.htm>.

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Frank Van Acker. 2004. "Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army: The New Order No One Ordered." African Affairs. 103(412): <http://afraf.oupjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/103/412/335>.

ABSTRACT: For almost 18 years, the so-called Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has waged war on the Ugandan government and its own people, the Acholi. The robustness of the conflict indicates that the forces working against peace outstrip those working for it. Analysis of the conflict is often reduced to describing the LRA rebellion as the handiwork of a religious fanatic. However, the social disorder that the National Resistance Movement, led by current President Museveni, inherited in 1986 after the downfall of the Acholi-led Okello regime, contained the root causes for continued insurgency. These were amplified by external circumstances that created the operational leeway for rebellion, gathering force in the absence of a credible Acholi political leadership. A deliverance couched in religious discourse resolved the quandary. The emergence and transformation of the LRA can be made comprehensible only in relation, or even in opposition, to the emergence and downfall of the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF) as a radical structure of rejection. Millenarian religious justification contextualizes violence and the use of terror as a means of immobilization and control of the population. As the character and composition of the LRA evolved to include the kidnapping of children, and as the terror escalated, the insurgency became increasingly ensnared in a web of internal contradictions. The result is that the LRA has exacerbated the process of dehumanization the HSMF first set out to counter.

Emily Wax. 2004. "In Uganda, Terror Forces Children's Nightly Flight: Thousands in Rural Areas Flee Villages to Avoid Abduction by Rebels." Washington Post. <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/4260453>.

Emotional story of the plight of children and parents in Gulu town. Fearing abductions by the Lord's Resistance Army, children trek daily to sleep in Gulu and other towns under very difficult conditions. Two girls sang "they are all raped, there are no more virgins in Gulu."

World Vision. 2004. Pawns of Politics: Children, Conflict and Peace in Northern Uganda. http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/wvusufo.nsf/stable/globalissues_uganda_report.

As the war in northern Uganda continues to escape substantive action by the UN, the LRA continues to abduct and train children to rape, maim and torture. In Gulu, more than 75% of death cases are war-related, the HIV/AIDS rate is very high, child malnutrition rates remain high, and night commuting to town for safety occurs daily. Corruption in the military is a factor in prolonging the war.