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A CONTEXT ANALYSIS FOR PEACE AND SECURITY IN UGANDA.

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1. Executive Summary

Peace and security contain a strong conceptual and operational relationship, where one may not be effectively achieved without the other, and this can be traced in the conflict dynamics that characterize the government and communities in Uganda. Despite the gains achieved by the government through successive Peace, Recovery, and Development Plans and similar initiatives, the following analysis highlights key dynamics that demonstrate a movement between structural and relational elements where people interact with the government to meet their needs and interests as groups and communities. Structural dynamics include insecurity, the challenge of constitutionalism, poor management of natural resources, political conflicts and intolerance, the militarization of the state, institutional rivalries, urbanization, and allocation of resources. Relational dynamics include identity-based conflicts, the youth bulge, violent extremism, and cross-cutting conflict dynamics. In both situations, the roles of international, national, and community or group-level actors cannot be separated from each other because of the overlapping conditions that combine to undermine peace and security at national and local levels, and the need for complementarity to ensure stable and enduringly predictable conditions for people to meet their needs and interests. To this extent, this paper proposes a departure from the piecemeal approach of treating peace and security as distinct from each other, towards more complex and multifaceted programming to be able to deliver on the diverse needs and interests accounting for the enduring cycles of violence over the past 50 years in Uganda.

1.1 Introduction

Defined by its location, Uganda is landlocked in East Africa covering a total area of 241,551 square kilometers of land, and a population of over 45 million people and growing at an annual growth rate of 3.51%. The country's post-independence history is littered with internal inter-communal and armed conflicts, and transnational and cross-border violent conflicts, the effects of which continue to undermine peace and security in the country. The Global Peace Index (GPI) ranks Uganda 121 out of 163 most peaceful countries,¹ with an estimated total economic cost of violence at 9.4% of GDP.² While COVID-19 pandemic-associated restrictions may account for the low GDP growth of 3% through 2022, Uganda experiences enduring challenges that rank the country 166 of 191 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI).³

Uganda's HDI is 0.525, below the Sub-Saharan average of 0.547, placing it in the Low Human Development category, yet actual development is unfairly distributed across people and regions of the country. For example, Uganda's female HDI value is 0.503, compared to the male value of 0.582, indicating a development gap between men and women in the country. While 20.3% of the population live below the poverty line, 85% of the poor population live in rural areas, yet 55.1% of these are youth and women.⁴ These figures indicate conditions under which conflicts are mobilized and evolve to undermine peace and security, and suggest that the majority of the population is vulnerable and affected whenever violent conflicts occur.

¹ <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/>

² <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/The-Economic-Cost-of-Violence-Containment.pdf>

³ <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center>

⁴ UNDP 2020. "Briefing Note for Countries on the 2020 Human Development Report: Uganda." <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/UGA.pdf>

The government of Uganda has made attempts to redress peace and development challenges, especially in the war-ravaged Northern region, for example, through Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP) I, II, and III,⁵ focusing on northern Uganda. Implementation of the plans delivered some gains in infrastructural development but remains challenged by capacity gaps in management, corruption, and resources. A draft National Peace Policy for Uganda has also been produced with recommendations from regional consultations involving Civil Society Organizations, religious institutions, local governments, and women's grassroots groups in West Nile, Acholi, Lango Teso, Mbale, Karamoja, Ankore, Kigezi, Rwenzori, and Buganda. However, the policy is still in draft and has not yet been debated across the government and the parliament.⁶ At the CSO level, religious and community-based organizations, human rights groups, cultural institutions, and other self-help groups, have implemented various peacebuilding initiatives, for example, in northern⁷ and western⁸ regions. These provide alternative forms of mobilization, coordination, and engagement at the lowest levels of affected communities to implement interventions responding to experiences of various forms of violence. Suffice to note and recognize that majority of government and interventions implemented by CSOs are supported by Embassies and other development partners to Uganda.

Despite such efforts, an analysis of peace and security in Uganda reveals key conflict dynamics as identified below, and these demonstrate a potential for escalation or a highlighted risk of intensification toward large-scale perpetration of violence and insecurity by both state and non-state actors. To this extent, the dynamics demonstrate a movement between structural elements of the state and relational elements where people are regulated, enabled or constrained by the interaction between the two.

2. Understanding peace and security:

There is a strong conceptual and operational relationship between peace and security, to the extent that no programming for one can be complete and effective without integrating the fundamentals of the other. Security is a condition where the satisfaction of basic human needs is stable and enduringly predictable,⁹ while positive peace¹⁰ is marked by the transformation of root causes or underlying factors accounting for the failure to meet these basic human needs.¹¹ For example, regarding the conflict in Rwenzori region, the Inter-religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) noted that *“the glaring manifestation of revenge attitude and the unforgiving spirit in communities call for urgent attention to address the underlying causes of this protracted conflict.”*¹² To this extent, security in the region is not only about the political arrangements and military capabilities to respond to or deter threats to the state, but is more about prevention¹³, ensuring overall human

⁵ Rubimbwa, Robinah and Webare, Benon (2016). A Report of the Impact Evaluation of the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, 1820 and the Goma Declaration. December 2016. Coalition for Action on 1325 and UN Women.

⁶ <https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Africa/Images/Publications/2019/WPS%20REPORT.pdf>

⁷ <https://allafrica.com/stories/202108240553.html>

⁸ Omach, P. (2016). Civil Society Organizations and Local-Level Peacebuilding in Northern Uganda. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 51(1), 77–96

⁹ <https://rfpjuganda.org/2020/02/17/intricacies-of-peaceful-co-existence-in-the-rwenzori-region-building-blocks-of-peace-justice-and-respect-for-rights/>

¹⁰ Dennis J. D. Sandole (2008). Critical systematic inquiry in conflict analysis and resolution: An essential bridge between theory and practice. In *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*. Taylor & Francis Group. 428

¹¹ Galtung, Johan and Høivik, Tord (1971). Structural and Direct Violence: A Note on Operationalization. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 8 (1). 73-76

¹² Burton, John 1990b. *Conflict: Basic Human Needs*. New York: St. Martins Press

¹³ Peace In Rwenzori Sub-Region Still

Fragile – IRCU Findings. <https://www.ircu.or.ug/publication/view/peace-in-rwenzori-sub-region-still-fragile-ircu-findings/>

¹⁴ Burton, John 1990a. *Conflict: Resolution and Prevention*. New York: St. Martins Press

security where the satisfaction of basic needs remains uninterrupted across time and place. The peace and security dynamics explained below demonstrate this confluence while avoiding the attraction to separate them as independent of each other. This is especially the case when government invests heavily in the military, claiming to guarantee national security while rendering peacebuilding a peripheral responsibility of CSOs and development partners.

Against this understanding of peace and security as complex but mutually reinforcing processes, the actors cannot be discerned from one another because of the overlapping conditions that characterize related conflict dynamics. For example, the military, the police, ministries of gender, labor, and social development, education, public service, finance, or the local governments are cross-cutting actors with respect to peace and security in the country. Religious and cultural institutions hold positions of uncontested influence and authority among their members and can contribute to building trust and social cohesion through, for example the Uganda Kings and Cultural Leaders Forum (UKCL)¹⁴ and the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU).¹⁵ Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are equally critical actors with an expanded reach to provide services, and complement or reinforce the goals and programs of the government and its development partners across the country. This also applies to the informal sector, made up of informal groups of market traders, casual laborers, street vendors, Boba Boda riders, subsistence farmers, etc., all of them being pieces of the country's peace and security puzzle.

This understanding of the practice and the actors in peace and security represents a departure from the piecemeal approach to each of them as distinct areas of operation, conducted by different forms of specialization, to respond to various conflict processes. It suggests that peace and security occur where they both meet to deliver on the needs and interests of both communities and government, where the resulting conflict dynamics require all programming to demonstrate responses that capture this complexity while avoiding being simplistic.

3. Methodology

The assessment of peace and security in Uganda was conducted through Thematic Analysis¹⁶. The information collected for analysis was accessed through desk research, which was largely narrative and descriptive, but also contained descriptive quantitative data. The statistics provided in this assessment have been referenced to help provide the extent of the issues underlying peace and security. The assessment first identified patterns of views, opinions, knowledge, experiences, and manifestations of violence as a challenge to peace and security in the country. As the second level, the assessment determined the underlying conditions and their levels of frequency across regions of Uganda, and at different times. Emerging categories of information were clustered to begin generating and constructing broad themes. The categories were further reviewed and more abstract themes were generated, under which the various factors, dynamics, and conditions that help explain peace and security in Uganda are highlighted. The themes, therefore, provided the structure of this paper and helped to create associated recommendations.

¹⁴ <http://www.bunyoro-kitara.org/94.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.ircu.or.ug/uganda-national-dialogue-process/>

¹⁶ <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/thematic-analysis/>

4. Key peace and security dynamics in Uganda.

The dynamics can be traced through structures that influence and mediate the relationship between people and the state as they interact to meet their needs and interests as individuals, communities, or formal and informal groups. This is particularly so because people produce and reproduce systems and structures that recursively shape their practices to meet their needs and interests,¹⁷ and during which conflicts often occur to undermine or reinforce the nature and experiences of peace and security.

4.1. Structural dynamics:

These include insecurity, the challenge of constitutionalism, poor management of natural resources, political conflicts and intolerance, the demilitarization of the state, institutional rivalries, urbanization and allocation of resources.

Insecurity: While ensuring human security should be the central goal of systems and structures of government, the country has not lived a day without being at war for the past 50 years, during which the procurement and perpetration of violence has been normalized to redress conditions that groups and communities find unfavorable. Four military coup d'états, two civil wars, over 20 insurgencies, inter-communal violence, violent extremism and terrorism, targeted murders of women and political activists, and violent crime are some of the direct forms of insecurity that have led to the development and equipping of militaries to counter enemies of the state and threats against national security. Across the country, therefore, communities are suffering from transgenerational trauma¹⁸ imposed by legacies and everyday experiences of violence, in turn increasing the risk of more violence in the future. However much of the insecurity in Uganda lies in the failure by successive governments to transcend beyond this mechanistic approach, rooted in political and ethnic differences, to address needs that account for the recurrent destructive conflicts i.e., identity, recognition, security, and personal development.

To this extent, while Uganda enjoys the largest security detail in the history of the country, consuming almost the biggest share of the national budget (18.9%),¹⁹ this mechanistic arrangement is but a piece of the whole human security puzzle, which otherwise requires whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches. The needs, indicated above, that influence mobilization and recurrent insecurity are non-negotiable.²⁰ In Uganda, these become salient under conditions of violations of human rights and the rule of law, poverty, injustice, exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination often sanctioned by the state, poor governance, prolonged and unresolved historical conflicts, etc. Elite propaganda has often qualified these conditions as threats to especially ethnic and religious communities, and are framed as denial, exclusion, and oppression, to help elites mobilize followers to find redress.

Environmental degradation and climate change have produced multiple levels of insecurity due to severe and prolonged drought, and unpredictable rainfall seasons affecting the availability of

¹⁷ Giddens, Anthony 1984. *The Constitution of Society*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

¹⁸ Volkan, Vamik (1997). *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism*. New York

¹⁹ file:///Users/ashad/Downloads/Uganda%20Budget%20Highlights%202022-23.pdf

²⁰ Burton, John 1997. *Violence Explained: The Sources of Conflict, Violence and Crime and Their Prevention*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

favourable grazing land, especially in northern and western regions; food insecurity, poverty, stunting, and malnourishment due to reduced and poor-quality harvests.²¹ While climate change does not directly cause conflict, the ensuing insecurity limits people's ability to cope with climate shocks, rendering them more vulnerable. Currently, of the 25 countries deemed most vulnerable to climate change, 14 are mired in conflict, where the reasons are more about their inability to cope with climate shocks that render affected communities more vulnerable.²² To this extent, the interventions should focus on both the conflict processes and the changes in the climate. In Uganda, policy interventions by the government have also been inadequate in the areas of fishing, coffee growing, agro-processing and export, etc. For example, much of the poverty in Busoga has been linked to sugarcane growing, accounting for 60% of households in the sub-region yet the returns are meager and irregular.²³ The sugarcane policy by the government lacks market adjustment guidelines to increase returns among growers, thus reinforcing poverty and exploitation of local growers by manufacturers and their middlemen.

The challenge of constitutionalism: The current constitutional order is faced with challenges stretching from national to district levels, and sets up a conundrum that feeds into a variety of conflict processes. For example, the current constitution presents two major conflict areas at the national level i.e. the absence of both age limit²⁴ and the term limit²⁵ on the presidency favors a life presidency for the incumbent. This is at the expense of any possible and constitutionally democratic transition to alternative leadership for the country. Unfortunately, the regime is already marked by perceived exclusion and discrimination in favor of the western region “who are not only heads of most of government institutions; they also have the largest share of the top jobs including the military.”²⁶ The Chief Justice is also reported to have stated that “I don't think this thing of age limit was a big issue, but what I wept for this country was for the removal of the presidential term limits. That is where we lost it. The mistake we made in the Constituent Assembly was not to entrench, not to make it difficult for anyone to amend the provisions of the term limits.”

Weaknesses in constitutionalism have also extended into the manipulation of the decentralization system in favor of the political agendas of the incumbent, and the system generates more conflicts than it solves at two levels. Level one is the re-centralization of decentralization, where the constitutionally delegated authority of local governments has been re-centralized over time through various constitutional amendments. For example, the appointment of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) by the central government, the CAO is now the pillar of decentralized authority but is accountable to the center instead of the locally elected political leaders.²⁷ This has weakened the decision-making authority of local leaders to respond to local needs and interests, and resolve conflicts over unmet local priorities. CAOs are also implicated in

²¹ The impacts of climate change on food security and livelihoods in Karamoja. <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/impacts-climate-change-food-security-and-livelihoods-karamoja>

²² The *International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)* (July 2020). Seven things you need to know about climate change and conflict. <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/climate-change-and-conflict>

²³ <https://www.independent.co.ug/sugarcane-farming-why-busoga-has-remained-the-poorest/>

²⁴ Uganda: Bill Eliminating Presidential Age Limit and Extending Parliamentary Term Passed. <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2017-12-27/uganda-bill-eliminating-presidential-age-limit-and-extending-parliamentary-term-passed/>

²⁵ Kiyonga Derrick (2020). I Regret Removal of Term Limits for President - Chief Justice. The monitor. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202010141086.html>

²⁶ <https://www.independent.co.ug/the-monster-of-tribalism/>

²⁷ Nabaho Lazarus (2013). Decentralization of Local Government Chief Administrative Officers Appointments in Uganda: Implications for Downward Accountability. *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance*. Issue 13/14: November 2013

corruption and perpetuating impunity by collaborating with the rich, the powerful, and political allies to grab land and evict local people; prioritizing politics and nepotism over service delivery; mismanaging local revenues collected and other resources; misappropriating development grants by the central government; and becoming over compromised by rewarding and favoring political allies while denying supporters of their opponents.²⁸ This undermines effective local governance, concerning the planning and management of local programs, further explaining their failure to effectively respond to local needs and resolve local conflicts.

At the second level, the creation of new districts produced more conflicts, stretching already meager resources away from development to respond to local needs, towards meeting salaries and allowances for civil servants personnel, and accommodating elites that support the regime. Despite the increase from 34 in 1991 to 111 in 2020²⁹, the majority of the districts are economically unviable in terms of generating local revenue to support the local budgets. They also lack the administrative capacity to deliver on the promise of decentralization i.e. effective and localized delivery of services. On the contrary, the creation of new districts increased political patronage through the dependency of the new districts on the central government and advancing the political goals of the NRM. The multiplication of districts also increased the cost of political competition that only the incumbent can afford e.g. staging candidates in all electoral national and local government constituencies is beyond the reach of already weak and poor opposition political parties. At both these levels, the pressure for effective political competition and service delivery was shifted to local governments and produced localized grievances at district and community levels, but without the authority and no capacity to provide solutions, thus accounting for the enduring conflicts in the system.

Poor management of natural resources. Land ownership, access to Lake Victoria for transport and fishing, forest reserves, oil, and other deposits of commercially viable minerals are some of the resources found at the center of conflicts involving national and local governments, politicians, investors, communities, as well as families. In the Northern region, land conflicts are referred to as the “new war”, after the LRA. In the central region, the land is part of the Baganda identity and belongs to the King, who holds it in trust for his subjects. Culturally any form of encroachment on land threatens this traditional authority and entitlement. Grievances over development opportunities from management and control of natural resources undermine the trust and coordination necessary for national and local actors to collaborate and generate shared benefits. There are weak policies, laws (e.g. Land Act of 1998), and insufficient implementation mechanisms to effectively regulate and managed natural resource utilization, marked by corruption, land grabbing, poor mineral permitting, and land titling systems.

Nearly 70 percent of households in Uganda are engaged in land-based subsistence farming,³⁰ and therefore any related conflicts can easily spread across the country. In the Western region, just like other regions, the freehold land system is infested by corruption with widespread reports of duplicate land titles and security personnel executing illegal evictions. In the Eastern region,

²⁸ <https://www.independent.co.ug/rdc-accuse-chaos-of-losing-corruption-fight/>

²⁹ <https://ugandafact.com/list-of-all-districts-in-uganda/>

³⁰ <https://www.oxfam.org/en/how-land-injustice-reinforces-inequality-uganda>

especially Karamoja, armed livestock raiding and attacks by armed pastoralists from Kenya and South Sudan is a tradition that continues to ravage the region. Mineral extraction has also exacerbated conflicts in Karamoja, just as oil exploration has generated conflicts within and between communities and the government in the western region. The porous international boundaries making Uganda and its neighbours render the proliferation of illegal firearms used by the raiders, despite interventions and incentives offered by the government towards disarmament. The commercialization of this tradition involving traders from other regions has increased the violence with which cattle rustling is pursued to undermine law enforcement.

Population pressures increase the demand for natural resource utilization e.g. land, yet climate change has also reduced productivity from such land to sustain the increasing population. Environment-related conflicts are marked by uncontrolled deforestation, and encroachment on wetlands often contested between the government and the settlers.³¹ Associated with land conflicts are the expansive displacement of Bibanja tenants, suppression of absentee Baganda Landlords in Buyaga and Bugangaizi, and acquisition of large grazing land by cattle keepers from the western region in central and northern regions, allegedly with protection and facilitation from the government especially in Kiboga, Kyankanzi, Masaka and Gomba, and some of the key hostile experiences in the central region

Political conflicts. These underlay the fact that all political regimes in Uganda have changed through violence, while the current and longest 35 years political regime has had only one president, with the NRM as the ruling party. This legacy therefore endures, marked by widespread grievances over ethnically dominated political regimes; strong perceptions of religious and ethnic exclusion from political representation and participation; the politicization of control and distribution of national resources; and legal flexibility within the judiciary in favor of the politically influential actors, denying the majority of citizens fair access to justice. Subsequently, political opposition groups and other social groups claim to be marginalized including the underemployed, minority groups like the Muslims or the indigenous community of the Batwa of Western Uganda.

Underlying these political grievances, across time and places, are the politics of patronage, where systems, structures, and all processes of government are manipulated, influenced, and aligned to protect, maintain and prolong the incumbency of the ruling party. But also the dominance of co-ethnics who are related to powerholders, at the expense of ethnic and political others. While it is true that the traditional political parties were sectarian i.e. the Democratic Party being catholic founded, the Uganda People's Congress founded by Protestants outside of Buganda, and KY for Protestants in Buganda as stated in the NRM Ten Point Program³², the current political regime is marked by unprecedented ethnic domination by tribal groups from the Western region. The political conflicts that led to the closure of the Uganda and Rwanda, border³³ surprised many given the ethnic similarities and history of comradeship between western Uganda and Rwanda and the head of state respectively. But the closures created tensions between the two countries, despite

³¹ Omagor, James Gideon and Barasa Bernard (2018). Effects of Human Wetland Encroachment on the Degradation of Lubigi Wetland System, Kampala City Uganda. Environment and Ecology Research Vol. 6(6), pp. 562 - 570

³² See The Ten Point Programme (1984), NRM Secretariat

³³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-47495476>

ethnic ties across cross-border communities which also helped mitigate overt inter-communal conflicts until political issues were resolved.

Similarly, the predominant army during the Obote regimes was more of alliances of Acholi, Langi, and Iteso ethnic groups against their political enemies³⁴ - principally Baganda and Banyankore, contributing to the fragmentation of the people. However, the current Uganda People's Defense Forces are reported to be a Banyankore outfit, advancing their economic and political control, as well as their dominance in key public service jobs.³⁵ This political environment has marked Uganda's post-independence governments, strengthening perceptions that politics is about joining and controlling government to meet in-group interests while remaining unresponsive to out-group needs and interests. The approach to governance also accounts for the enduring cycles of frustration and the aggression with which victimized citizens seek to find redress.

Political intolerance. Relatedly, a broad range of conflicts in which the state and the military are implicated tend to reflect increasing levels of political intolerance, but also unfair acquisition and control of local resources. This occurs through repression and suppression of especially opposition political activities by the state, controlled by the NRM party. This undermines the participation of the suppressed in decision-making, especially at the local level, as most decisions are only informed by a highly centralized and dominant political authority. It further contributes to the high levels of mistrust, but also often a sense of resignation where cooperation with the state is perceived to be fruitless, which is a growing experience within and among political parties and their supporters.³⁶ During the elections, political supporters are mobilized and radicalized to counter such repression.³⁷

Intolerance is therefore rampant within and between the ruling NRM political party towards opposition parties and their structures from national to village levels. An NRM stalwart stated that "I appeal to NRM, to be tolerant of people who hold different views from ours. It's not possible that people will always agree with us on everything. We call upon the NRM to exercise the moderate politics you played; it's good for our people to accept that people can hold different views even on solving our country's problems."³⁸ The appeal is an apparent response to incidents and experiences of violent treatment of members of the youth-based political wave that swept the country through the People Power pressure group and the National Unity Platform in the past elections. The wave attracted the wrath of the police and the military to suppress it, in favor of the NRM, which attracted appeals from senior citizens to respond to the wave in a sober manner.³⁹ Opportunities for political dialogue to build tolerance and collaboration over national interests, through the Interparty Organization for Dialogue (IPOD), still lack the credibility, transparency, and resources necessary to bring all actors into the process.⁴⁰ Similarly, the conduct of multi-party

³⁴ Ogenga Otunnu (2002). Causes and consequences of the war in Acholiland. Conciliation Resources. https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/ Accord%2011_2Causes%20and%20consequences%20of%20the%20war_2002_ENG.pdf

³⁵ <https://newz.ug/tribalism-museveni-speaks-out-on-the-claim-banyankore-control-most-public-service-jobs-updf/>

³⁶ Khisa Moses (2015). Political Uncertainty and its Impact on Social Service Delivery in Uganda. *Africa Development Journal*. Vol. 40, No. 4 (2015), pp. 159-188. CODESRIA

³⁷ Mubiru Dues Mukalazi (2021). Challenges of Ugandan political parties. *The Independent*. <https://www.independent.co.ug/challenges-of-ugandan-political-parties/>

³⁸ <https://www.pulse.ug/news/politics/i-appeal-to-nrm-to-be-more-tolerant-says-nrms-prof-kagonyera/kj32bbl>

³⁹ <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/oped/commentary/respond-to-nup-wave-in-a-sober-manner-3278444?fbclid=IwAR0vquCCCMgjbWZseexGIlOnEoHW-Ihkp2UGmjZYmDTmckKauOyEYw7Y5Rs>

⁴⁰ <https://nimd.org/ugandas-inter-party-organization-for-dialogue-ipod-welcomes-back-jeema/>

politics in Uganda still lacks an evidently clear peace and security orientation, which ought to be entrenched in the codes of conduct that all candidates out to promote, protect, and conform to.

Related to political intolerance, the longevity of the NRM regime has produced a sense of hopelessness in terms of opportunities to correct the country's political anomalies, maintained through manipulation of majority representation in parliament, making it impossible to achieve meaningful political change. Subsequent grievances across political groups and desperate communities increase the attraction and preference to use violence to demonstrate discontent and possible regime change. The militarization of political processes to secure regime continuity has produced inflammatory effects on the credibility of electoral processes, especially the high levels of violence and repression from the military towards political opposition groups and activities. During the 2021 election, the block vote in the central and some parts of eastern regions towards the youthful National Unity Platform demonstrated deep-rooted and highly ethnicized political grievances, while the ruling NRM achieved scattered victories which combined to lead to their contested victory.⁴¹

Militarization of the state. This is a key factor setting up the country for more insurgencies to emerge, and possible civil wars to counter and help redress associated repression and abuse of power. It is marked by a highly securitized and heavy-handed military response to otherwise civil disputes and disagreements, which tend to be perceived by the government to threaten the power or the state and interests of the political leaders at the executive level. Various legislative provisions, including the Public Order Management Bill (2011), have been adopted while criminalizing peaceful contestations by aggrieved organizations and communities and sanctioning the use of military force to counter such demands. In the process, the use of armed and excessive force against citizens demanding services and rights has been normalized in the management of the affairs of the state.

Militarization of the state apparatus, where serving military officers are appointed to the civil service to do civilian work in all departments of government is perceived to ensure regime survival while enabling powerful people in government to accumulate and protect ill-gotten wealth. Kagoro (2020)⁴², while explaining Uganda's politico-military fusion states that "the military, the police, and other paramilitary structures are the bedrock of the NRM's long-term grip on power and have played profound roles in President Museveni's "victories" in the five presidential elections (1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2016) in which he has competed. Thus, the presidency, the ruling party, and the military essentially function as a single entity." Similarly, several serving military leaders of the UPDF are also political leaders, and civil servants in various government departments at all levels, others are part of the national executive, and the UPDF is officially represented in parliament with voting rights. The military has been linked to meddling in every electoral process in Uganda,⁴³ and the Commander-in-Chief has ordered that the engineering section of the military takes over government projects in education, health, and other areas of construction, traditionally

⁴¹ Bruce I. Afran (2021). Report on Governmental Abuse, Violations, and Misconduct in Advance of The January 14, 2021 Presidential Election and its Aftermath. <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3.sourceafrica.net/documents/120896/Report-on-Governmental-Abuse-Violations-and.pdf>

⁴² Kagoro Jude (2020). Uganda: A Perspective on Politico-Military Fusion. Politics. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1861>. Published 19 November 2020

⁴³ <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3.sourceafrica.net/documents/120896/Report-on-Governmental-Abuse-Violations-and.pdf>

implemented by the civilians.⁴⁴ Such suppression of fair access to and competition for business and development opportunities has produced a sense of hopelessness and disengagement from public-private partnerships by the private sector.

Institutional rivalries. This occurs within and across all levels of government to undermine the whole-of-government approach to deliver services fairly, provide justice, fight corruption, and subsequently change perceptions of a skewed government functioning to protect only the presidency and its associates. For example, the country has over 20 different security outfits within the police, army, and intelligence, with manifest coordination and information-sharing limitations regarding their mandates and operations to deal with conflict situations and to provide security. Some of these outfits, including the Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence, counter-terrorism forces in the police, and also in the UPDF, have been accused of brutality towards political opposition and aiding land grabbing. The deployment of the UPDF to command the police force⁴⁵ by the Commander-in-Chief also dictates a non-traditional policing approach where the military guides the countering and prevention of crime, enforcing law and order, and engagement in community policing as a core tenant of policing in Uganda.

The Uganda parliament was overrun by the military in 2017⁴⁶ during the debate to amend the constitution to remove the age limit that would have prevented the President to remain the head of State; the police of prison forces have been reported to ignore court orders, especially during land conflicts; the State House has established departments that take over traditional functions of government departments e.g. inspector general of government versus the anti-corruption unit of the state house led by a UPDF major;⁴⁷ etc. At local government levels, serious conflicts over mandate center on decision-making and authority to manage local resources.⁴⁸ The parties include politically elected local government leaders, civil servants recruited by the government as technical officers in local administration, and officials directly appointed by the president to oversee government programs and manage security e.g. RDCs. These conflicts often undermine the provision of services, effective utilization of meager resources to meet identified needs of local communities, and the relationship between local and central government, leading to people taking the law into their own hands.

Elections are, the world over, a trigger for violent conflicts. Weaknesses in the electoral process, often with glaring cases of election rigging ruled out by courts, lead to frustration among the electorate and render the population vulnerable to manipulation into violent retaliation. Electoral processes in Uganda are always contested; which led to the 1980-86 NRM/A civil war; is currently marked by increasing levels of allegations of state-inspired violence, and each election leaves the constituents more polarized from national to village levels.⁴⁹ Part of the problem is that majority of political leaders seem to be self-interested when they exploit poverty and illiteracy gaps, and political conditions to construct winning electoral constituencies. Poor institutionalization of

⁴⁴ <https://observer.ug/news/headlines/70457-museveni-directs-army-to-take-over-govt-construction-projects>

⁴⁵ <https://spyreports.co.ug/news/m7-to-deploy-army-officers-as-regional-police-commanders/>

⁴⁶ <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/oped/columnists/muniini-k-mulera/2017-raid-of-parliament-worse-than-1966-edition-1722354>

⁴⁷ <https://sh-acu.go.ug/>

⁴⁸ Green, Elliott D. (2008) Decentralisation and conflict in Uganda. *Conflict, Security and Development*, 8 (4). pp. 427-450.

⁴⁹ Women's International Peace Centre (2019). Election Related Conflict and Violence in Uganda. Research Report. <https://wipc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Election-Related-Conflict-and-Violence-in-Uganda.pdf>

multi-party politics, sometimes marked by a politically influenced electoral commission, and religious and ethnically mobilized forms of competition between groups, undermine ensuring that related processes are democratic and in the interest of all Ugandans. Historically, the leadership of political parties in Uganda has also been associated with the religious and ethnic belonging of the founders, and this influences the electioneering and manipulation towards becoming elected into office.

Urbanization and allocation of resources – Developments in local government structures, and the expansion of manufacturing and service industries by the government and the private sector, have increased urbanization but with related conflicts over resource allocation. According to the Urban Authorities Association of Uganda (UAAU), founded in 1959, increasing urbanization in Uganda is currently indicated by a membership of 11 City Authorities, 25 City Divisions, 31 Municipalities, 587 Town Councils, and 91 Municipal Divisions.⁵⁰ The central region is the most densely populated with almost 30% of the country's population, but also the most cosmopolitan. While over 70% of the GDP is generated from the region, communities and their leaders claim unfair allocation of these resources since the income is not shared proportionally with other regions.

The central region is also home to the capital city, but experiences increasing levels of urban grievances and discontent marked by poverty (52%), unemployment (32%), family dispute (27%), political activism and extremism (23%), and religious extremism (10%). On average, 6.3% of youth in various urban/slam areas already have a history of violence and are considered to be at risk of participating in more acts of violence. The main acts of violence include violent crimes (47%), mob justice (46%), rape or sexual harassment (33%), human sacrifice (17%), suicide (10%), and acid attacks (7%), among others. Resource disparities dominate grievances in Northern Uganda, with widespread perceptions of the region's marginalization in terms of the allocation of resources by the state for service delivery and local development, especially in West Nile. This is because despite the promise of industrialization by the government, where perceptions of exclusion influence the disengagement of communities from effectively participating in civic life. Urban youth gangs, called Aguu have been responsible for crime and gender-based violence in the northern region, while others are reported to be recruited by rebel groups based in the DRC.

Regional Insecurity

The insecurity characterizing neighboring states with Uganda has produced bilateral and transnational challenges in the region's peace and security environment that also affect the country. The government has had to commit personnel and resources to be able to play various roles to help craft some form of settlement and stabilization, sometimes at the expense of local priorities. This is exacerbated by the shallow strategic depth where the country is landlocked with no access to a seacoast. There are also shared natural resources e.g. lakes, rivers, and forests, and regional and international obligations under various frameworks e.g. EAC, ICGLR, AU, IGAD, the UN, etc., all of which influence how Uganda estimates and perceives peace and security in relation with such commitments. Violent conflicts and insecurity in the region have produced a 1.5 million refugee

⁵⁰ <https://molg.go.ug/uaau/>

burden to the country,⁵¹ generating other conflict dynamics between refugees and host communities.⁵² Spillover effects also continue to undermine national security, including the perpetration of violent extremism and terrorism by Al-Shabaab.⁵³ Subsequently, the country's security apparatus and resources have been stretched beyond the limits necessary to effectively execute their mandate and related responsibilities, especially at the local community level.

For example the conflict in South Sudan has affected the peace and insecurity in the northern region and trade between the two countries due to insurgent attacks and unpredictable policy decisions by the government.⁵⁴ Following the DRC joining the East African Community (EAC),⁵⁵ troops from Uganda and Burundi were permitted to carry out operations in the DRC to help deal with the M23 rebel group⁵⁶, but also against the ADF in the case of Uganda. Referred to as Africa's 'smallest war',⁵⁷ tensions between Uganda and Kenya often escalate to threaten relations between the countries over control of a small rock, half the size of a football field, but very rich with fish in the surrounding deep waters. Uganda has also contributed the largest contingent as part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), to help fight Al-Shabaab and stabilize the country, together with the African Union, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone.⁵⁸

4.2. Relational dynamics:

These include identity-based conflicts, the youth bulge, violent extremism, and cross-cutting conflict dynamics.

Identity-based conflicts: While identity does not cause conflicts, differences and differentiation across identity groups have been central in the estimation of access to power and control of local resources. It further underlies the mobilization of insurgencies, and the formation and leadership of political opposition to redress the resulting disparities across the country. Uganda is a highly cosmopolitan society marked by over 52 ethnic groups, as well as foreigners. As of 2014, Uganda's multi-religious population was 45.1% Protestant (32% Anglican, 11.1% Pentecostal/Evangelical, 1.7% Seventh Day Adventist, .3% Baptist), 39.3% Roman Catholic, 13.7% Muslim, and 1.8% other⁵⁹. The major ethnic groups in Uganda include Baganda 16.5%, Banyankole 9.6%, Basoga 8.8%, Bakiga 7.1%, Iteso 7%, Langi 6.3%, Bagisu 4.9%, Acholi 4.4%, Lugbara 3.3%, other 32.1%.

This configuration shapes processes of differentiation and determines the distinction between regime insiders and outsiders, and helps to explain why, for example, the Baganda ethnic majority perceives itself to be constantly out-bid by the non-Baganda political majority. While the Baganda remain the indigenous ethnic majority, perceptions of systemic outbidding by the political majority of ethnic Others endure, when non-Baganda ethnic groups coalesce to dominate and control the

⁵¹ UNHCR Refugee Data Finder. <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>

⁵² Understanding conflict dynamics around refugee settlements in northern Uganda <https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/understanding-conflict-dynamics-around-refugee-settlements-northern-uganda>

⁵³ East Africa Regional Conflict and Instability Assessment. Final Report . March 2012. <https://land.igad.int/index.php/documents-1/countries/uganda/conflict-7/1187-east-africa-regional-conflict-and-instability-assessment-usaid-2012-1/file>

⁵⁴ The tragedy of Ugandan traders in South Sudan

<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/lifestyle/reviews-profiles/the-tragedy-of-ugandan-traders-in-south-sudan-1516800>

⁵⁵ The Democratic Republic of the Congo formally joins EAC after signing of the Treaty of Accession to the Community. <https://www.eac.int/press-releases/2411-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-formally-joins-eac-after-signing-of-the-treaty-of-accession-to-the-community>

⁵⁶ Supporting Dialogue and Demobilization in DR Congo. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/great-lakes/democratic-republic-congo/supporting-dialogue-and-demobilisation-dr-congo>

⁵⁷ Misingo Island: Africa's 'smallest war' - <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2019/2/18/misingo-island-africas-smallest-war>

⁵⁸ <https://amisom-au.org/uganda-updf/>

⁵⁹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/uganda/#people-and-society>

state at their expense. Increasing cases of land grabbing and dispossession at the hand of especially powerful non-Baganda in government confirm these perceptions. But also the increasing levels of poverty, unemployment, police brutality, and militarization of politics especially in Buganda region, poor social services, and the overall deterioration of livelihood conditions.

In Buganda still, the enduring conflict between the Kingdom and the central government threatens national stability and is currently exacerbated by the proliferation of cultural institutions, especially the recognition of the Banyala, Kooki, and Buruli as breakaway Kingdoms from the Buganda Kingdom. While among the Banyala, it has created disharmony, divisions, and animosity among previously sociable communities and groups, and their local political leaders. The restoration and recognition of Kingdoms and chiefdoms by the government was a welcome development across the country. However, sections of the Baganda accused the government of being behind the creation of these breakaway chiefdoms⁶⁰ to weaken the overwhelming influence Buganda has enjoyed at every stage of nation-building. This led to the 2009 Buganda riots⁶¹ recognizing the shrinking size of land, and political and economic opportunities available to indigenous Baganda, but with increasing threats to culture through which the Baganda perceive and structure their interactions with the state and ethnic Others. These continue to inspire the Baganda to strengthen their demand for federal status, perceived as helping fulfill their inherent right to self-determination.⁶²

These experiences influence perceptions of exclusion, discrimination, and injustice among the Baganda in comparison with other ethnic groups, but also the threat targeted to the group. McCarty et al. (1999) argue that, in advancing a model of coping among the youth, culture and stressor characteristics interact, with societal differences most likely to be found in situations where culture-specific norms become salient.⁶³ Similarly, the Nkobazambogo association was formed by Baganda students with branches around 35 academic institutions around the country, and functions to craft and advocate for social, political, and economic responses to grievances over discrimination, and seek to reclaim Buganda's entitlements from the state and to protect Buganda.⁶⁴ Similarly, and just like other ethnic groups, discrimination and injustice are reinforced by self-reinforcing perceptions of systematic exclusion of non-western region ethnic groups from key decision-making positions in government or the military, or accessing employment and other development opportunities.

The youth bulge: The bulge largely accounts for the vulnerabilities that render many youths susceptible to recruitment into violence, magnified by poor living conditions;⁶⁵ and historical injustices that manifest in everyday adverse social conditions to legitimize the use of violence to

⁶⁰ Matovu, Mohamed (2009). "Minority Rights Group International : Minorities in the News : Kampala Returns to Normalcy After Days of Ethnic Tension", n.d. <http://www.minorityrights.org/8128/minorities-in-the-news/kampala-returns-to-normalcy-after-days-of-ethnic-tension.html>. 15 September 2009

⁶¹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/09/10/uganda-investigate-2009-kampala-riot-killings>

⁶² Mulwanyammuli, Ssemwogerere Joseph (2012). He is a former Prime Minister in Kabaka's government. CBS Radio Interview on Kiriza O'ba Gaana Program on 30th July 2012, 7pm – 9pm

⁶³ McCarty, C., J. Weisz, K. Wanitmanee, K. Eastman, S. Suwanlert, W. Chaiyasit, and E. Brotman Band. 1999. "Culture, Coping, and Context: Primary and Secondary Control among Thai and American Youth." *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines* 40 (5): 809–18.

⁶⁴ <http://observer.ug/news-headlines/30796--baganda-youths-protest-sacking>

⁶⁵ R.Wamajji, PMubangizi. P (2022). The Annual State of The Youth Report 2022. Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs. Kampala

find redress. Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world,⁶⁶ with 78% of the population under the age of 35 and a high dependency ratio of 92, the second highest in East Africa, after Somalia.⁶⁷ While official unemployment rates are 9.85% for the country as a whole, 29.8% of youth aged 15-24 are not employed or enrolled in educational or training programs⁶⁸. Further, this population represents approximately 85% of workers in the informal sector which remains largely unregulated, unskilled, or poorly skills, and scores less in government priorities to help improve livelihood and working conditions.

The bulge continues to expand the labor force by 3.6% annually, yet public and private sectors remain unable to absorb this growth, which is also marked by low literacy levels, poor matching of education to market demands, and inequitable access to work opportunities. This is especially in communities with evident experiences of transgenerational grievances against the state e.g. in the central and northern regions of Uganda among the Baganda or Karamoja. The National Youth Policy recognizes that the lives of millions of youth are marked by poverty, inadequate education and work/employment opportunities, exploitation, diseases, civil unrest, and gender discrimination⁶⁹. Ultimately, youth have continued to play a central role in various manifestations of violence⁷⁰, including VE.⁷¹

Vulnerability to recruitment and attraction to perpetrate violence is amplified by the uncertainty of opportunities to improve livelihoods, historical narratives that motivate and legitimize violence to respond to discrimination, injustice, and exclusion, and deepening disengagement from participation in civic life. The experiences combine to explain the deepening sense of hopelessness among the youth, and their disconnection from public life or respect for the state and the rule of law. Some of the youth groups known to engage in violent criminality include the Kifeesi network of criminal gangs around Kampala and other urban areas,⁷² while the disbanded Local Defense Unit and Crime Preventers units established by the government⁷³ remain at large and have been implicated in numerous cases of murder, robberies, and extortion.

These, and other experiences, explain the increasing levels of youth participation in violent crime, intercommunal and political violence, and the preference to use violence as a tool to communicate their discontent with state authorities. Weaknesses in state institutions e.g. the police and local governments, to respond to grievances and concerns among the youth reinforce this lack of trust in government, and instead position it as an enemy of their aspirations and goals. This increases the supply of violent-ready youth on the market for elites, extremists, and other self-interested groups to manipulate, recruit, and deploy them to perpetrate crime and violence. The effects of COVID-19 on the economy in Uganda, including the closure of schools and loss of unemployment, expanded this pool among the youth providers of violence

⁶⁶ <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/special-reports/uganda-has-world-s-youngest-population-1497730>

⁶⁷ The World Bank, 2020. Tackling the Demographic Challenge in Uganda.

⁶⁸ International Labor Organization, 2021. Uganda Country Data. https://www.ilo.org/gateway/faces/home/ctryHome?locale=EN&countryCode=UGA&.adf.ctrl-state=lfid4jht81_4

⁶⁹ The National Youth Policy (2001). Ministry of Youth, Gender and Social Development, Kampala, Uganda.

⁷⁰ <https://www.insightonconflict.org/conflicts/uganda/conflict-profile/>

⁷¹ Child Soldiers in Uganda, by SOS Children's Villages UK. <http://www.child-soldier.org/children-in-conflict-child-soldiers-in-uganda>

⁷² <http://ugandaradiationetwork.com/story/kifeesi-criminal-gang-how-the-group-works>

⁷³ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/12/uganda-suspend-crime-preventers>

Violent Extremism: Growing threats and incidences of violent extremism demonstrate grievances that manifest at the community, government, and intranational levels. In Uganda, responding to this problem is skewed towards countering terrorist actions than prevention to terminate processes through which extremism is constructed. On its own, VE is not the problem, but a manifestation of it, because it is an outcome of apparent and often transgenerational conflict processes marked by discrimination and exclusion, held by a community or group. As is the case with LRA, these are often socio-political and economic conditions perceived to be overwhelmingly unjust. To the extent that actors claim to find no alternative but to construct very radical and extreme forms of ideologies, messages, and behaviors of violence and terror to communicate a countering political message. Similarly, there are high rates of unemployment among the youth in Busoga region have led to widespread vulnerabilities that the region is reported to be a recruiting ground for ADF and Al-Shabaab. During the process, aggrieved groups may tap into the influence of religion or culture to frame and promote extremist beliefs to help mobilize, recruit, and train their followers to perform actions to achieve their political goals. Muslims have fallen victim to this type of finding redress, while many of their leaders, associations, and human rights activists also condemn the heavy-handed military responses of government agencies following these attacks.

In Uganda, terrorist actions are reported to be the work of extremist groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda and ISIS,⁷⁴ Al-Shabaab, the Allied Defence Forces (ADF),⁷⁵ and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), is a terrorist rebel and heterodox Christian locally mobilized group founded in Uganda. Since the 2010 terrorist attack in Kampala that killed 74 people,⁷⁶ various attacks have killed or wounded many citizens, as well as damaging property and disrupting public peace.⁷⁷ The Uganda Police Force also reports the existence of many terrorist sleeper cells in Ntoroko, Luwero, Kampala, Bundibugyo, and Kanungu, and often cautions the general public to be vigilant and report any suspicious activities, considering that over 150 terrorist attacks have been intercepted so far.

Activists argue that the approach reinforces the cause of terrorism since security agencies often disproportionately target the Muslim community under cover of countering violent extremism. Additionally, undermining the fight against violent extremism are numerous accusations among the Muslim community and political opposition parties against the government that terrorism has been securitized to disadvantage Muslims, and politicized to target opposition leaders. Terrorism has been associated with a single religion (Islam) and many in government are reluctant to apply this label to acts committed by members of other faith groups like the LRA, despite pronouncements by the African Union. Human rights advocates also report that Muslims are often targeted for discriminatory treatment by security agencies.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ International Crisis Group, 2021. "The Uganda Attacks and Their Regional Implications." <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/uganda/kampala-attacks-and-their-regional-implications>

⁷⁵ The Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2019. "The Ever-Adaptive Allied Democratic Forces Insurgency." <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/the-ever-adaptive-allied-democratic-forces-insurgency/>. The ADF is a merger of three rebel groups – the Allied Democratic Movement, the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda, and the Uganda Muslim Liberation Army.

⁷⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jul/12/uganda-kampala-bombs-explosions-attacks>

⁷⁷ International Crisis Group, 2021. "The Uganda Attacks and Their Regional Implications." <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/uganda/kampala-attacks-and-their-regional-implications>

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Moreover, some of the attacks are reported to have been carried out by non-Muslims using Muslim names.⁷⁹ Initiatives to address the drivers of recruitment and participation in violent extremism remain rare and do not always succeed in addressing the stigmatization of affected communities. Internal divisions among security agencies, MDAs, community leaders, and CSOs over the interpretation of the problem; overlapping mandates; the lack of and/or competition for otherwise meager resources, the glaring capacity gaps, and the absence of effective whole-of-government effort are some of the challenges accounting for the persistence of this threat.⁸⁰ Likewise, while terrorism is consistently promoted as a threat to national security by the president,⁸¹ this threat is perceived in some circles to be manipulated to suppress discontent among communities over poor services, regime longevity, bad governance, biting poverty, unemployment, etc. which threaten the state to hold on to power.⁸² Moreover, given the overly-broad definition of terrorism by the Anti-Terrorism Act (2002), there are claims by journalists being reluctant to share information that might help with prevention because they claim to be targeted by law security agencies.⁸³

Cross-cutting dynamics.

Ugandans' peace and security landscape is marked by media, gender, substance abuse, and other dynamics influencing a range of conflict processes. For example, despite the multiplication of media houses, there are reports of a crackdown on media freedoms that limit the expression of especially alternative political opinions and the circulation of related information. In the days before, during, and the 2021 elections, the government shut down the Internet for five days and continued to block access to popular social media sites months after the elections.⁸⁴ The country is also facing serious challenges with HIV and AIDS leading to high numbers of child-parent or single-parent, yet poor and desperate homes.⁸⁵ Gender-based violence and inequality in accessing justice and other social services are on the increase despite affirmative actions that seek to redress historical disparities against women. Sexual and gender-based violence SGBV are common in all regions of the country, marked by spousal abuse, marital rape; child marriages and neglect; denial of inheritance rights over property and widow inheritance; cultural restrictions imposed on women and girls access to resources; widespread discrimination to access employment opportunities; Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting especially among Sabiny in the northern region;⁸⁶

There are also high rates of drug and alcohol abuse by men, but mostly among the youth, including those in schools and this is affecting their ability to comprehend and advance in their studies. For example, a comparative study conducted in Kampala and Gulu concluded that about 70.1% had ever used alcohol and substances. Only 39.1% used substances regularly. The commonest substance used was alcohol (23.3%), followed by kuber (10.8%), khat (10.5%), aviation fuel (10.1%), cannabis (9.2%), and cigarettes (5.9%).⁸⁷ Relatedly, and to reflect on the consequences of perceived political and economic exclusion, respondents from the Gulu district were twice more

⁷⁹The Question of Marginalization and Vulnerability to Violent Extremism in Uganda.

https://media.africaportal.org/documents/PCVE_Brief_Uganda_Second_Series.pdf

⁸⁰ Human Rights Watch, 2021. "World Report 2020: Uganda." <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/uganda#b7c67b>; U.S. Department of State, 2020. "Uganda 2019 Human Rights Report." <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1257566/download>

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² International Crisis Group. Uganda's Slow Slide into Crisis. 21 November 2017. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/uganda/256-ugandas-slow-slide-crisis>

⁸³ Namasinga, Florence Selnes (2022). Anti-terrorism regulation and the media in Uganda. Oslo Metropolitan University's Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

⁸⁴ March 2022. <https://verfassungsblog.de/os4-uganda/>

⁸⁵ Human Rights Watch, 2021. "Uganda Elections Marred by Violence." <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/01/21/uganda-elections-marred-violence>

⁸⁶ Durrant Valerie (1994). Impacts of AIDS on Women in Uganda. Women and International Development. Working Paper #249. Michigan State University

⁸⁷ Black, E., Obol, J.H., Akera, P., Awor, A., Shabiti, M.S., Fry, H. (2019). Prevalence and correlates of intimate partner violence against women in conflict affected northern Uganda: a cross-sectional study. *Conflict and health*, 13(1), pp.1-10

⁸⁷ Abbo C, Okello ES, Muhwezi W, Akello G, Ovuga E (2016). Alcohol, Substance Use and Psychosocial Competence of Adolescents in Selected Secondary Schools in Uganda: A Cross Sectional Survey. *Int Neuropsychiatr Dis J*. 7(2).

likely to use all substances as a result of high levels of poverty, hopelessness, and lack of clear opportunities for self-advancement. The same reasons also explain the increasing levels of domestic violence even in other parts of the country.

5. Recommendations:

The dynamics highlighted above are not stand-alone factors, but complex and mutually reinforcing conflict processes that require whole-of-government and whole-of-society responses to help deliver local peace and security in Uganda. In this case, a whole-of-government approach (structural) is built on coordination across systems and programs implemented by ministries, departments, and agencies of government, and a whole-of-society approach (relational) engages the shared ethical norms, principles, and values across CSOs, communities, and individual actors to respectfully gain their participation to achieve the shared goal of peace and security. The approach provides a programming framework to help ensure impactful peace and security strategies, processes, activities, and outcomes at structural and relational levels. It is also based on sufficiently inclusive programming, sensitive to all aspects of society, and where satisfaction of needs and interests of the actors are central to its success. To this end, both the formulation and implementation of policies and programs by the government, civil society, development partners, communities, and the victims themselves, should inevitably be people-centered. The following recommendations are not exhaustive, but provide initial entry points into appropriate programming to enhance peace and security in Uganda.

- Conduct peace and security resilience mapping - to identify vulnerabilities and existing strategies, tools, and structures that can facilitate prevention and resistance to violence, and determine any bouncing back opportunities grounded in local capacities. Such capacities can, for example, be estimated through internal factors e.g. the ability to take proactive action, self-regulation, conflict resolution, and problem-solving, and external factors can include institutional competencies to respond to grievances, peer and family environment, education, and how these function to promote or undermine peace and security. This will help determine cooperation and collaboration possibilities that peace and security programming can tap into across levels and clusters of actors to become more effective.
- Institutionalize multi-stakeholder programming through inclusive policies that facilitate structured collaboration between government, development partners, and CSOs to implement coherent strategies to engage any or a combination of these peace and security dynamics; build cross-sector partnerships; define clear and complementary roles; provide predictable resources for the implementation of embedded action plans. Action plans and related activities should incorporate local knowledge and practices of actors in local government, civil society, religious and cultural leaders, women, and the youth.
- Undertake inclusive and sustained dialogue as catalyst for establishing tailored security policy and peace infrastructures. Such dialogue is not once off event, but a series of opportunities designed to bring various stakeholders into ongoing conversations about structural and relational issues that undermine local peace and security. These can be

complemented by various infrastructural arrangements, e.g. Peace Parks thematically organized around peace and security challenges in the sub-region; early warning and early response centers to collect and provide data on conflict trends and craft responses towards prevention; memorialization programs to create public awareness and advance “Never Again” campaigns against violence; creation of regional peace and security hubs as spaces for political, religious, and cultural leaders, including women and youth, convene as stakeholders and engage in localized conversations to redress grievances and vulnerabilities, etc. Related processes and activities should seek to create cooperative arrangements among stakeholders to help redress persistent social, political, economic, and cultural vulnerabilities at the national, district, and civil society levels, and among communities and families. The goal is to ultimately demystify peace and security to become an integral part of policy development and implementation by local governments, public service, businesses, and the formal and informal sector actors.

- Undertake comprehensive VE vulnerability risks assessment and mapping of intervention spaces and opportunities for P/CVE, ensuring to engage with and redress contextual, causal, programmatic, and profiling challenges at national, community, and individual levels; provide appropriate peace and security guidelines to inform risk-sensitive P/CVE programming; avoid feeding into pre-existing power and resource disparities to reinforce stereotypes, stigmatization, fragmentation of interventions, and the lack of coordination; and warranting a fair balance between mitigation and countering measures where appropriate during programming.
- Incorporate peace and conflict sensitivity as overarching priorities during the achievement of law enforcement and other security sector goals, and the implementing related programs at national and community levels; creating an enabling environment for stronger multi-stakeholder collaboration to respond to issues of identity, recognition, human security, and personal development across communities; establish inclusive mechanisms that respond to unique claims over land, historical injustices, oil and mineral exploitations, compensation, restitution, and re-settlement; and strengthen local approaches to problem-solving, relationship-building, resilience-building, and promote such prioritization and coordination with development partners.
- Support the mainstreaming of tailored capacity building for peace and security – through the adoption and integration of continuing training programs, with predictable financing, to facilitate interaction between stakeholders to share lessons learned and best practices. Training should be targeted, providing skills and guidelines on sensitivity and enhancing peace and security through the mandates and scope of work of national and local governments, CSOs, academia, cultural, and religious institutions. Related strategies should ensure to respond to changing peace and security demands across time and place, and improve technical implementation of tailored activities, including advocacy, civic participation, and stakeholder engagement. To this extent, mainstreaming can involve ongoing implementation of deliberate activities to create awareness and enhance relevant skill sets and abilities among actors at national, community, and CSO levels. The goal is

to deliver real-time responses to threats and risks of violence, effectively utilize material, human, financial, and physical resources; and strengthen communities to effectively participate in civic life, and oversee local peace and development.

- Institutionalize information-sharing – better coordination and sharing of information is necessary to ensure that the choice of interventions matches the expressed need for peace and security at national, community, and individual levels. The sectors and networks with crucial roles to play in information sharing about risks and threats of violence, avenues, and opportunities for resilience and redress, etc., include the parliament and other policy actors; defense, justice, and law enforcement; the media and other technology centers, education, religious and cultural, institutions, and CSOs. This should also involve creating awareness through websites, mass messaging, etc. about rights and opportunities to redress adverse conditions at the local level e.g. land and its regulatory framework, and the dissemination of peace and security information in local languages.

6. Reimagining Peace and Security Programming in Uganda.

Peace and security present a 50 years challenge for Uganda, and yet traditional approaches to related support are sector-specific, exclusively thematic in terms of the terms of such support, and highly project-centric in terms of objectives, timelines, and geographical scope. While the determinants of this approach may be out of the reach of the government and CSOs to influence, this analysis proposes to rethink peace and security programming at two levels:

- i. Support for peacebuilding should provide comprehensive coverage of a fair amount of capacity-building – skills, infrastructure, and material resources, over a fair period, just like for the support given to the military or police, to ensure it is well institutionalized to produce local-level impacts with enough evidence to influence policy changes at the national level.
- ii. Support the implementation of initiatives that seek to build synergy across security, political, and development programming, and increase collaboration between related actors from formal and informal institutions and sectors. For example, in the form of raising awareness and strengthening coordination towards well-localized programming for peace as security, and vice versa.

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