

## UGANDA



### BASIC INFORMATION

<b>Population:</b>	28.8 million inhabitants (2005)
<b>GDP:</b>	8,712 million dollars (2005)
<b>GNI per capita:</b>	280 dollars (2005)
<b>HDI:</b>	0.502 (145 <sup>th</sup> ) (2004)

### BACKGROUND TO THE CONFLICT

Continuing cycles of armed conflict have plagued parts of Uganda since the **National Resistance Movement** took power in 1986. Some 20 known groups have resorted to violence since then, the most notorious being the **Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)**, which continues to operate in northern Uganda. The Lord's Resistance Army has been operating for nearly 18 years, since the current Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni came to power forced conscriptions, atrocities against civilians, large-scale abductions of children and the forced marriage of abducted women and girls with male soldiers. It is believed that twenty thousand children have been abducted into the LRA, apart from the 1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The armed conflict taking place in the north of Uganda was in the same situation at the end of 2006 as in the two previous years: fragile peace talks between the Government and the armed opposition group LRA hanging by a thread due to the distrust between the parties; although in this new opportunity some advances were made.

It mustn't be forgotten that Uganda remains in the Great Lakes African region, so its border with DR Congo has caused the aid of Ugandan people to the opposition armed groups of the neighbour country, fact that oblige to take in account its repatriation.

### PEACE AGREEMENTS / PROCESS

Following persistent calls for a peaceful resolution of the armed conflict in the country, the Parliament of Uganda enacted a comprehensive **Amnesty Act on 1 January 2000**, which the GoU endorsed on 17 January 2000. Since then, any Ugandan wishing to abandon rebellion will be granted amnesty, without risk of criminal prosecution or punishment in a national court for offenses related to the insurgency.

The Amnesty Act has received broad support from Ugandans and is widely perceived as a vital tool for breaking the cycle of violence and promoting reconciliation in Uganda. National efforts to implement the Amnesty Act have received support from various donors and international organizations. As a result, the GoU is expecting to demobilize and reintegrate a number of combatants who have been associated with insurgent movements.

In **August 2006**, the Government and the LRA signed a **ceasing of hostilities agreement in Juba** (southern Sudan), which, in order to bring about the end of military actions, obliged the Ugandan Government to guarantee the free transit of LRA members or the supervision and

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protection of the holding areas by the Sudanese SPLA (*Sudan People's Liberation Army*), among other aspects.

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## INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

The International Organization for Migration supported the work of the Amnesty Commission from 2002 to 2004 through the Integrated Project for the Return and Reintegration of Reporters and Dependents funded by USAID, UNICEF and EU. In addition to building the capacity of the Amnesty Commission through database development and management and the provision of technical support on sensitization and information outreach, the project allowed for the screening, documentation, registration and medical assessment of reporters in Uganda as well as the repatriation and referral of reporters and abducted children stationed in Kenya and Sudan. In addition, reporters have been assisted through vocational training and income generating activities in established business enterprises.

The United Nations Development Programme acted as the lead interlocutor for the Amnesty Commission in the preparation of the repatriation of 600 reporters associated with WNBK from DRC in 2003/2004 and other displaced. During the period from 2005 to 2006, UNDP has also continued to support the work of the Amnesty Commission as part of its broader project to establish a secure environment for recovery and development in northern and northeastern Uganda. The four main components of UNDP's support to the Amnesty Commission are:

- To promote the Amnesty Act by widening the reach of information to LRA rebels in particular and by preparing communities to receive reporters;
- Based on viable economic reintegration opportunities, to undertake the reintegration of an initial 400 reporters;
- To support the wider resettlement of reporters through housing, water and sanitation, in coordination with relevant authorities and other development and humanitarian organizations; and

UNICEF has provided support in the reintegration of child reporters and WFP has provided food to reception centers. The Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP) has supported the Amnesty Commission since January 2005, through a project which builds the capacity of the Amnesty Commission.

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## DDR STRUCTURE

### **Background to the DDR process:**

The current DDR process should not be confused with the earlier demobilization and Force reduction of 36,358 soldiers of the estimated 90,000-member strong National Resistance Army that took place from 1992 to 1995.

### **Type of DDR:**

Demobilisation and reintegration of the opposition armed groups, with repatriation of combatants from DR Congo.

### **Basic principles:**

The current DDR process is also distinct from a potential national demobilization and reintegration programme, which the GoU has the intention to pursue, depending on the outcome of the Defence Review process and the termination of the conflict in northern Uganda. The Amnesty Commission is nevertheless expected to continue to be responsible for the demobilization and reintegration of *irregular* forces once the national DDR programme is approved.

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Within the framework of the Amnesty Act, any Ugandan who has been involved in the insurgency against the GoU at any time since 26 January 1986 can apply for to amnesty and is consequently eligible for demobilization and reintegration assistance.

### **Enforcing bodies:**

The Amnesty Commission is the body established by the Parliament to provide overall leadership, guidance and coordination in the implementation of the amnesty. In addition to performing this quasi-judicial function of granting amnesty and issuing certificates of amnesty, the Amnesty Commission is also tasked with:

- Raising awareness of potential reporters and sensitize the public on the Amnesty Act;
- Facilitating and monitoring demobilization, reintegration and resettlement of reporters;
- Promoting dialogue and reconciliation within the framework of the Amnesty Act 2000.

The Amnesty Commission is composed of a Chairperson (a judge of the High Court or a person qualified to be a judge of the High Court) and six other members of high moral integrity appointed by the President with the approval of the Parliament. The Amnesty Commission appoints a Secretary and officers and employees in consultation with the Public Service Commission.

The Amnesty Act also established a Demobilization and Resettlement Team (DRT), demobilize, resettle and reintegrate reporters within their communities. The Amnesty Commission fulfils its mandate mainly through implementing partners: governmental institutions, national NGOs, international NGOs and international organizations

### **Groups to be demobilised:**

Initially, the program planned to demobilise 15,000 militias, but in January 2006 the amnesty was granted to 19,000.

### **Vulnerable groups:**

The Amnesty Act is silent about the age of the person to be granted amnesty. After careful consideration, the Amnesty Commission concluded that only children over 12 years old can qualify for amnesty, since this is the age of criminal responsibility in Uganda. Child rights advocates expressed concerns that granting amnesty to children would incriminate children who are victims of the insurgency, particularly those abducted by the LRA. The Amnesty Commission argued that granting the amnesty to children over 12 years old was necessary to protect them against criminal charges.

All reporters have been receiving the same in-kind assistance package and cash assistance fund. Women are estimated to be about 20 per cent of the number of reporters, whereas children constitute 29.2 per cent of reporters. The Amnesty Commission recognizes the importance of providing women and girls, especially mothers and expectant mothers, with extra assistance in accordance with their needs. The Amnesty Commission also recognizes that the identification and screening of children reporters must be child-friendly and that children reporters should be provided with extra assistance to children reporters in accordance with their needs.

### **Budget:**

The work of the Amnesty Commission and its implementing partners was financed by the Government of Uganda and direct bilateral contributions from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Great Britain, Italy, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, the United States and the European Union from 2000 to 2004. However, this funding was mainly directed to the UNRF II process. The Amnesty Commission has therefore been largely unable to deal with the stream of reporters that have applied for amnesty during this period. As a result, the number of backlog reporters still to receive reinsertion and reintegration assistance has been high.

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The IOM/USAID/UNICEF/EU support totaled US\$ 694,004 during the period 2002/2004. The UNDP assistance amounts to US\$ 300,000 in 2003 and US\$ 553,774 in 2005/2006. The MDRP trust fund grant of US\$ 4.2 million was declared effective in January 2005. The first disbursement of approximately US\$ 1.3 million was released in March 2005. The MDRP grant has contributed to redressing the financial situation of the Amnesty Commission, which until 2004 suffered from funding shortages that prevented it from fulfilling its mandate. At the end of February of 2006, Norway Government with 297,000 dollars for the reintegration of former combatants.

### Timetable:

The Amnesty Act was approved in January 2000, but part of the activities of reintegration weren't held until the period 2002-2004. Nowadays, the Act was recently extended for a period of two years.

### Other issues:

- **Justice:** The amnesty provision doesn't allow any judicial measure.
- **Security sector reform:** It still doesn't proceed waiting the end of the conflict at the north of the country. However, this aspect is being contemplated in the Defence Review. Todavía no procede a la espera de la finalización del conflicto al norte del país.

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## DDR STAGES

### Demobilisation:

The processing of reporters has taken place mainly in reception centers. It includes a range of activities:

- Surrendering of weapons, which is a pre-condition for receiving amnesty. All weapons received from ex-combatants are handed over to the military and other security personnel;
- Identification and screening of reporters to identify genuine and eligible reporters and collect personal information in support of reinsertion and reintegration programmes;
- Issuance of the Certificate of Amnesty, generally within three weeks of reporting;
- Provision of gender sensitive psychosocial support to reporters;
- Determination of health status through medical assessments;
- Distribution of in-kind assistance packages (1 mattress, 1 blanket, 1 jerry can, 1 plastic basin, 2 saucepans, 2 sets of clothing, 2 hand hoes, 1 panga, 1 axe) and cash assistance funds (support fund of US\$ 122.00, medical costs of US\$ 10.50, transport home of US\$ 10.00); and
- Provision of counselling and referral services as regards reintegration options.

The Amnesty Commission has not directly managed reception centres, except where there are no specialized agencies capable of assuming the task.

### Reintegration:

- *Social reintegration:* it has been mainly achieved by promoting reconciliation or reporters with their families and communities. This work has been carried out through traditional reconciliation mechanisms, religious meetings and community-welcoming gatherings.
- *Economic reintegration:* primarily through counselling and referral to vocational training and income generation opportunities offered by specialized institutions throughout the

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country. In 2005 the Government announced the provision of arable land to ex-combatants.

By July 2005, around 11,500 combatants were still waiting to join the reintegration programme, which almost came to a halt after two years of insufficient funding. It should also be stressed the relevance of repatriation, in which MONUC is playing an essential role, with the confirmed return since 2003 of over 500 ex-combatants from DR Congo and Sudan.

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### EVOLUTION OF THE DDR PROCESS

As of January 2006, over 19,000 reporters had been granted amnesty, out of which 10,400 have received initial reinsertion assistance. The Amnesty Commission has struggled to increase its capacity to perform the responsibilities it has been tasked with. The number of backlog reporters who have not received reinsertion assistance has remained high, oftentimes putting the credibility of the Commission and the amnesty process at risk. The Commission has relied mainly on implementing partners to promote the social and economic reintegration of reporters, from governmental and civil society actors to international organizations and NGOs.

In short, on a day to day basis it can be seen that the ex-combatants of the LRA have received a very reduced amount of assistance from the Government and the donors, as well as arriving two years later than promised, with the result that greater incentives are needed for the demobilisation of these combatants, such as university education and training in aspects of business management.

In addition, in March 2006, the MONUC detected that the LRA factions in the DR Congo were beginning to fragment into three subgroups which were taking on characteristics more similar to armed bands, more focused on daily survival.

At the end of April, the Amnesty commission entered the final phase of reintegration packages for some 15,000 combatants, estimating that this would end at the end of June. Up until then, it was estimated that this donation had already been made out to 8,598 ex-combatants, while another 3,997 had received financing from other sources.

With regard to the ADF/NALU combatants in DR Congo, the Government continues to extend the amnesty that it is offering, while the MONUC provided an office for the Amnesty Commission in the Congolese region of Northern Kivu, financed by the Irish Government. By the end of May 2006, 14,688 demobilised combatants had been counted, 96% of those expected, with 766 more during this period of time.

In June 2006, the Armed Forces began the forced disarmament of the Karamajong community, situated in the north-east of the country, in order to reduce the armed violence existing there. The following month, the suspension of operations was announced owing to the investigations being carried out by the Government as a result of accusations of abuse in performing this process. The Minister of Defence, R. Nankabirwa gave assurances that if the accusations were confirmed and the aggressors identified, they would be face legal proceedings. Subsequently the residents in the internally displaced people's camps in the region of Teso demonstrated their unhappiness with the slow progress of disarming the Karimojong militias. Local leaders insisted that the security provisions for the IDP were insufficient, making them vulnerable parties.

At the beginning of November, the UPDF (*Uganda People's Defence Force*) recommenced disarmament activities in the Karamoja region. This restart took place a week after the death of 22 people, among who were 16 members of the UPDF, following an attack by armed opposition groups. This disarmament programme has been under implementation since 2004, during which time 19,000 weapons have been collected out of an estimated total of 30,000.

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At the end of 2006, 16,133 demobilised combatants were counted, 105% of those expected, and 14,146 rehabilitated (92%). In addition, the Minister of Defence, C. Kiyonga, announced an intensification of the disarmament exercises in the Karamoja region by means of an increase in the number of troops and the hypothetical use of force. This decision had the backing of the UPDF and the Commander of the Armed Forces, A. Nyakairima. It has been calculated that between 500 and 800 combatants continue to use armed violence throughout the region.

### ASPECTS TO BE EXAMINED

#### Planning:

- Lack of planning of combatants to demobilise.
- Partial demobilisation at the IDP camps.

#### Financing:

- Lack of resources of the Amnesty Commission, risking the process and obliging to emergency resources.

### SOURCES

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LA ESCOLA DE CULTURA DE PAU FUE CREADA EN 1999, CON EL PROPÓSITO DE ORGANIZAR VARIAS ACTIVIDADES ACADÉMICAS Y DE INVESTIGACIÓN RELACIONADAS CON LA CULTURA DE LA PAZ, LA PREVENCIÓN Y TRANSFORMACIÓN DE CONFLICTOS, EL DESARME Y LA PROMOCIÓN DE LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS.

LA ESCOLA ESTÁ FINANCIADA BÁSICAMENTE POR EL GOBIERNO DE CATALUNYA, A TRAVÉS DEL DEPARTAMENTO PARA UNIVERSIDADES, INVESTIGACIÓN Y SOCIEDAD DE LA INFORMACIÓN, Y DE LA AGÈNCIA CATALANA DE COOPERACIÓ AL DESENVOLUPAMENT DE LA SECRETARIA DE COOPERACIÓ EXTERIOR. TAMBÉN RECIBE APOYOS DE OTROS DEPARTAMENTOS DE LA GENERALITAT, DE AYUNTAMIENTOS, FUNDACIONES Y OTRAS ENTIDADES.