Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army: the New Order no one ordered

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Contents

Acronyms

ACRIS	Abducted Child Registration and Information System
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
APG	Acholi Parliamentary Group
ARLPI	Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EDF	Equatoria Defense Force
FEDEMU	Federalist Democratic Movement of Uganda
FUNA	Former Uganda National Army
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoU	Government of Uganda
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
HSMF	Holy Spirit Mobile Forces
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPFC	Inter-Political Forces Coalition
KM	Kacoke Madit
LDU	Local Defence Unit
LRM/A	Lord's Resistance Movement/Army
NCC	National Consultative Council
NIF	National Islamic Front
NRM/A	National Resistance Movement/Army
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SSDF	Southern Sudan Defense Force
UN OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
UN	United Nations
UNLA/F	Uganda National Liberation Army / Front
UNRF	Uganda National Rescue Front
UPA	Uganda People's Army
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces
UPDM/A	Uganda People's Democratic Army / Movement

Abstract

The conflict in Northern Uganda is now in its 17th year. It pitches a rebel group, the so-called Lord's Resistance Army, against the Ugandan government and against its own people, the Acholi. The robustness of the conflict as a semi-permanent feature of the Ugandan condition for such a long time indicates that the forces working against peace appear to be stronger than the forces working for it. To understand the conflict, the complex genesis of the Northern war must be understood. It must be adequately explained why the insurgency occurred at all, why it did not occur at an earlier time and why it persists to this day. These conditions, once clarified, must be complimented by an analysis of the character of the LRA rebellion itself, often oversimplified and described in terms of its assumed millenarian character (with reference to the biblical Ten Commandments). The following analysis will first establish a brief historical perspective to the conflict in the North. It will then analyze the emergence of the conflict in terms of root causes and situational factors, and look at the question why the LRA rebellion adopted the format it did and why the war persists for all these years. It will finally look at the question of what next.

In looking at the social disorder the NRM became heir to in 1986, the paper examines the root causes and advantageous circumstances that gathered force in a state of social turmoil without credible political leadership. It first traces the militarization of politics in Uganda, the increasing weight of the military in social and political interaction, and then looks at the progressive deinstitutionalization of politics, also considering the North-South opposition within the context of Uganda's fragmented politics. While it is not correct to read this antagonism as a root cause, nor helpful to wield such a categorization as framework for a causative analysis, since it is too ambiguous, it is important to understand it as a template to selectively interpret the intentions of others. To do this the paper looks through the template at the expressed grievances in relation to essential survival strategies. It then looks at the political vacuum that existed in Acholi society after the downfall of the Okello regime, and at a number of factors that facilitated the operational capacity for rebellion, which are the proximity of Sudan, the proliferation of small arms, a large Acholi Diaspora, and a substantial number of former UNLA troops.

The way out of the quandary took the shape of a deliverance couched in religious discourse. To that effect, the paper takes a closer look at how Alice Lakwena's insurgence was configured. The emergence and transformation of the LRA can only be made comprehensible in its relation, even opposition to, the HSMF. Consideration of the genesis and downfall of the HSM helps us to look at the LRA as a radical structure of rejection: the extent to which it is or has been a movement to reconstitute the moral order and how war figures in it, and how its nature and composition have changed over the years. The paper argues that the LRA is a more conventional guerilla army than the HSMF ever was, but that the religious (millenarian) justification for violence

remains, if not dominant, extremely significant. In order to contextualize this violence, it is necessary to look at possible meanings of the wholesale use of terror. The final part of our argument contends that very quickly, as the character and composition of the movement evolved to include the wholesale use of terror and kidnapping of children, the LRA became increasingly ensnared in a series of internal contradictions that it has proven unable to master. The result is that through its actions, the LRA has exacerbated the process of dehumanization it set out to counter.

Finally, the paper reflects on the reasons for the continuation of the conflict, which are many and deep. Basically there are three possible groups of answers, the support structure for the LRA, the problems the UPDF faces in fighting the war, as well as hidden motives, and all of these have a sediment of truth in them.

'Either they have done it, or it is being done to them'

Kacoke Madit

Introduction

The conflict in Northern Uganda is now in its 17th year. It pitches a rebel group, the so-called Lord's Resistance Army, against the Ugandan government and against its own people, the Acholi. All parties to the conflict have demonstrated a brazen disregard for human rights and international humanitarian law. The mutilation and summary execution of non-combatants, the abduction of children and adults for use as foot soldiers, sex slaves and porters, the rounding up of civilians in camps – 1,200,000 by the end of September 2003 - have measured the cadence of this conflict with the regularity of a metronome. Despite the blustery rhetoric of the UPDF, 'Operation Iron Fist' has been unable to significantly harm the LRA. Instead, it has brought the LRA rebels from their camps in Southern Sudan to permanent residence on the doorsteps of the Acholi population.

Apparently, the realities of this conflict seem far away from any Lord's moral dictates. The rebels' vision of an alternative society is poorly articulated to say the least, just as rampant atrocities undermine the credibility of the LRA as a popular political protest. The LRA has also proven remarkably resistant to military defeat. As one article puts it, *"common wisdom used to be that the reason for the LRA' survival was Sudanese sanctuary - but now it's hard to see what the problem is. The LRA is just a couple of kids and a few fanatics, and they ought to be extracted pretty easily"*[1]. This opinion reflects the two fundamental ideas invariably put forward in attempts to analyze the conflict: kids and fanatics. The presentation of the war as being principally waged around children who need to be reintegrated or brought back under control diverts attention from the internal dynamics which sustain the conflict[2]. Demonisation of the LRA leadership is another well-frequented diagnostic route, conceptualizing terror in universal frames lacking fundamental explanations. Inevitably, terms as barbarism, savage, etc. do spring to mind when an explanatory framework seems to elude rational analysis. Yet few studies on terrorism focus exclusively on personality. The logic which concludes that heinous acts are heinous because the perpetrators are barbarians consigns the conflict to the dustbin of irrelevance. It is as good as saying that, apart from getting rid of the barbarians, not a lot can be done. Using terms as 'anarchy', 'chaos', 'uncivil wars', (Kaplan 2000, Shawcross 2000) simply begs more questions and must be rejected in favor of an approach that analyses the conflict in light of the dynamics of social exclusion. For Baudrillard, 'Evil' means the principle of irreconcilability, releasing the 'energy of the rejected' to undermine the virtual consensus that prevails[3]. What indeed are the ideas and communities of support behind the violence? Attempts to answer this and other questions must be grounded in

[1] Harman Danna, Terror tag shifts Uganda's war, Christian Science Monitor, p. 6, 26/08/2002

[2] Dolan, C., Protracted conflict, elusive peace, initiatives to end the violence in Northern Uganda: Which children count? The politics of children's rights in northern Uganda, Accord, 2002

[3] Baudrillard, J., The transparency of evil: essays on extreme phenomena, Verso, London/New York, 1993

a historic appreciation, without painting the issues in black and white. It is clear that the villagers who are trapped in the conflict zone cannot draw easy conclusions about who is right and who is wrong. As Afako states, *"anyone could be subjected to the conditions that produced the perpetrators of the crimes experienced in the conflict"*[4]. As with all conflicts, the reality is one of a series of dilemmas, and these must be reflected in the analysis.

History does matter. It has been the tragedy of Ugandan politics that violence became a solution of first rather than last resort, in which every war can be justified since it is always embedded in a history of attack and counterattack, of suffering and revenge. Uganda was a fragmented society in more ways than one at the eve of independence: religious, economic, racial, ethnic and linguistic divisions crisscrossed society. Yet we cannot assume a historic determinism that points from the various fault-lines at independence to the current North-South antagonism as its only logical conclusion[5]. At the core of the conflict lies the failure of subsequent Ugandan leaders to construct and consolidate a modern state that legitimizes and promotes collective aspirations, and to wield the magnitudes and levels of power a modern state conveys, other than by divide-and-rule tactics. The perception of various communities that their environment was already violent, that they have been violated by the state, and that violent acts are therefore simply responses to the violence they have experienced, is a significant feature of Ugandan politics. According to the *'Acholi,'* they have been singled out and treated by the current dispensation as a negative force, because of their numerical majority in Obote's army. They were associated as a group with the excesses of that particular regime and forced to bear the guilt, unlike the architects of state security and government policies or the civil service bureaucrats that profited economically or otherwise from the same regime. This has led to the emergence and consolidation of an *'Acholi'* nationalism expressed in terms that are antagonistic to the Museveni government and, in its more extreme manifestations, the Ugandan state, when assertions of ethnic identity are made with uncompromising ferocity. Prophesies of suffering and retaliation have become self-fulfilling and self-reinforcing as the conflict takes its course, getting 'locked in' into the development of the modern Ugandan nation. Certainly, the 17 year old conflict has left a legacy of widespread economic and social damage, while the heavy-handed military tactics of the UPDF strengthen the perceptions among the Acholi that the Government ascribes little value to the lives of their children. A recent UN OCHA mission *"noted with concern that UPDF statements on the LRA refer almost exclusively to the 'rebels', even where those who may have died in clashes are very young children[6]".*

To a certain extent, Ugandan public opinion has been able to ignore the war for so long because it's not on the road to anywhere vital, except towards more turmoil on the other side of the Ugandan-Sudanese border, and because the Nile and Lake Kyoga limit southward 'contagion'. Also, the Acholi region does not hold known strategic reserves of any particular resources, as vast war-torn regions of the DRC for example do. In the future though, all that

[4] Afako, B., Reconciliation and justice: Mato oput and the Amnesty Act, Accord, op.cit.

[5] By use of the Miklukho-Maklai ethnolinguistic fractionalization index, one can easily demonstrate that, rather than being a 'bipolar' country, Uganda ranks as one of the world's most fractionalized countries, second only to the DRC5. This ethnic fragmentation, according to Collier, should actually be a factor in favour of a less conflict prone society (Collier, P., The challenge of Ugandan reconstruction 1986-98, World Bank, 20 p., draft November 1999).

[6] OCHA Regional Support Office for Central and East Africa, Mission report Uganda 9-11/04/2003, p.6

may change as the oil wealth of southern Sudan will be unlocked, pending a peace settlement between Sudan's government and the warring factions. To a certain extent, such a scenario has started to unfold as the sudden eastward spread of the LRA since July 2003 into the neighbouring districts of Teso is sounding distinctive alarm bells at the national level. As for now, the political, social, and economic marginalization of the three Acholi districts of Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader from mainstream development is distinctly measurable. On the one hand, the Acholi region, apart from Karamoja, is the laggard of the nation in terms of any basic human development indicator. Household incomes in the North when compared to the rest of Uganda are not only low. The proportion of households below the poverty line actually increased from 1997 to 2000 contrary to other regions[7]. On the other hand, the Acholi community votes overwhelmingly anti-Movement, hence anti-Museveni, in local, parliamentary and presidential elections. During the 1996 presidential elections, the LRA even declared a unilateral ceasefire to allow people to campaign and vote for the Inter-Political Forces Coalition opposition led by Paul Ssemwogerere.

[7] Challenges and prospects for poverty reduction in Northern Uganda, MoFPED, March 2002

The following analysis will first establish a brief historical perspective to the conflict in the North. It will then analyze the emergence of the conflict in terms of root causes and situational factors, and look at the question why the LRA rebellion adopted the format it did and why the war persists for all these years. It will finally look at the question of what next.

Timeline of the conflict

To facilitate a close examination of the northern conflict, a familiarity with its main events is indispensable. Describing its history in meticulous detail is impractical considering the large number of events over a period of 17 years. In the timeline presented in annex 1, we attempt to give a synopsis of the conflict and its main markers, with particular attention to the initial phase after 1986. This period, extraordinarily confused and volatile, is essential to appreciate the roots of the LRA rebellion[8]. Precision is not always possible and some of the timing is therefore indicative. Examples are the start of the Sudanese government support to the LRA, which may actually have started before the peace-talks episode in 1994 rather than after it, or the beginning of large-scale kidnapping. Even before 1991 some kidnapping occurred. The point here is to appreciate the aspect of escalation: what seems new is tied to an elemental change in conflict dynamics which may have been fermenting for some time.

[8] Kony's group started as the Holy Spirit Movement, was then known briefly as the Uganda People's Democratic Christian Army, to finally settle on the Lord's Resistance Army.

The timeline reveals three aspects of the conflict very clearly. First, it makes apparent the three-pronged strategy the Government has been following, via the various reversals of strategy. These appear to be not so much reversals, as different aspects of the same overall strategy depending on what seems to offer the best chances of success: to apply substantial military pres-

sure on the insurgents, to sow discord and thin out their ranks with offers of amnesty, and to revive the political process through negotiations. Sometimes, as in the early period of 2003, all three dimensions are in force simultaneously: an Amnesty Act is in place, and operation 'Iron Fist' is ongoing but suspended in one sub-county in Pader district to allow contacts between rebels and government. Even during the promising period in 1994, when the LRA and the NRM/A talked face-to-face, Minister of State for Pacification of Northern Uganda, Betty Bigombe, was directed to continue her initiative without compromising army operations, *"which would continue as though no contacts were being made and would, in fact, be intensified to further weaken the rebels"[9]*. In between the cracks of these reversals, as we shall see, lie as many missed opportunities for peace. The various reversals give the conflict a cyclical quality. A certain feeling of déjà vu, of history simply repeating itself without a single notch gained on the learning curve, is not altogether unfounded. Large military operations such as 'Operation North' and 'Iron Fist' have repeatedly proven disastrous in escalating the conflict and exacerbating the humanitarian situation, yet are trotted out at regular intervals as the 'final blow' to the insurgency. Announcements of deadlines for victory, which came and went, have repeatedly been made by the GoU. And just as Salim Saleh, commander of the Reserve Force of the UPDF figures prominently in the Presidential Peace Team now, and Museveni is encamped in Gulu, so did Saleh get the brief in 1995 to end the conflict by any means, and did Museveni relocate to Gulu to supervise military operations.

Second, although the parties to the conflict have basically remained unchanged since 1988, their character and composition are dynamic. The ebb and flow of the conflict cycle is typified by various escalations. These escalations are marked by the start of Operation North in January 1991, the collapse of the peace talks in February 1994, the vote to escalate the conflict by the 6th Parliament in January 1997, the conclusion of the Nairobi peace accord between the Governments of Sudan and Uganda in 1999, and the start of Operation Iron Fist in April 2002. Most of these 'markers' entailed an important change in the dynamics of the conflict. All in all four distinct periods can be characterized. The first is from 1986 to 1991; it is marked by the simultaneous existence of several Acholi insurgent groups, apart from the UPDA drawn to non-conventional 'holy spirit' tactics, and the decisive ascendancy of Kony by the end of 1988. Although Alice Lakwena's father, Severino Lukoya, attempted to occupy the void created by the defeat of the HSMF in 1988, it was Kony who managed to fill the political vacuum. In the wake of Operation North in 1991, which marked the start of the second period, Kony accelerated the wholesale use of terror against civilians he then started to accuse of collaboration with the NRA. This period came to an end in early 1994, with the peace talks led by Betty Bigombe. After the failure of the negotiations, the LRA re-emerged as a 'freelancer' for the Sudanese government (GoS), which used the LRA in its fight against the SPLM/A, itself openly supported by Museveni. This period, which lasted until 2002, indicates a marked escalation of the conflict. The Northern conflict became embedded in regional dynamics;

[9] O'Kadameri, B., LRA/ Government negotiations 1993-94, Accord, op.cit

the GoS secured Kony's logistics rendering the conflict more lethal with the introduction of more powerful and sophisticated weaponry such as landmines and rocket-propelled grenades. At the same time the mass-abduction of children to be trained and 're-socialized' in rear-bases in southern Sudan grew to be the trademark of the LRA. Throughout this long period the conflict experienced spikes, such as the particular intensive strikes by the LRA from 1997 to 1999. Finally, the Nairobi peace accord between the governments of Uganda and Sudan in 1999 signals the commitment - in theory - of both governments no longer to support opponents of each other's regime. Within a week of signing the agreement, which stipulates in point 3 the provisions to disarm and disband 'terrorist groups' (by implication the LRA), the LRA launched new attacks[10]. More recently, a separate protocol allowed the UPDF to launch operation 'Iron Fist' in April 2002 against LRA bases in Southern Sudan. This operation marked the end of a relatively peaceful period. The rebels, who had crossed back into southern Sudan with the outbreak of the Ebola crisis in Gulu in 2000, were now forced back into Northern Uganda and intensified attacks, causing an unprecedented intensification of the humanitarian crisis.

[10] Nairobi Agreement between the Governments of Sudan and Uganda, 8 December 1999, point 3.

The third aspect of the conflict is that, however much we would like to paint Kony as evil incarnate, terror as an instrument of war is neither a Kony invention nor monopoly. What is new is not the nature of the violence, but its scale. Even the distinction between victims and perpetrators is not as cast-iron as some rudimentary analysis would make it appear; some people have been involved in this conflict at various times as rebel, at times even different rebel groups such as the HSMF and the LRA, army soldier, and civilian. Terror has been used throughout the conflict by all parties, including the various Acholi insurgent groups against their own people. In early 1987, as the HSMF mobilized the population and received substantial donations in kind and cash, the UPDA feared for the security of their logistics and punished the population extremely viciously for its support of the HSMF. The HSMF is known to have organized *'Operation Coy'* in July and September 1987 to flush out soldiers and supporters of the UPDA, many of whom were killed with machetes. The Kony rebels attacked various brigades and even the headquarters of the UPDA in 1987, and there was bitter rivalry between Kony and Alice Lakwena after Lakwena ridiculed Kony during his visit to Alice's temple in Opit in early 1987[11]. The NRA as well is not free from accusations of terrorizing the Acholi population. Latigo asserts that elements of FEDEMU, based in Tororo, were deployed to the North in 1986 and exacted a great deal of suffering and death on captured UNLA soldiers and civilians[12]. In one notorious case in August of 1986, 40 people were murdered in Namokora in Kitgum, the home village of Tito Okello[13]. Other infamous events are the executions by the NRA of 97 civilians at Kona Kilak in July 1987 and of 40 civilians at Koch Goma in June 1988. Judging from a report by the Acholi members of Parliament, 'Operation North' provided no relief: people were buried alive by the NRA and soldiers of the NRA mobile battalion 'Gunga' raped men and women in the presence of their families[14]. The impact was such that the rape of men subsequently came to be known in Acholi as *'tek gunga.'*

[11] Behrend, H., Alice Lakwena & the Holy Spirits, James Currey, Oxford, 1999, 210 p

[12] Kacoke Madit, 1997, op.cit.

[13] Lamwaka C., The peace process in Northern Uganda, ACCORD, op.cit.

[14] Human Rights Watch, The scars of death: children abducted by the LRA in Uganda, September 1997

Analysis of the conflict

The genesis of the Northern war is complex. We must adequately explain why the insurgency occurred at all, why it did not occur at an earlier time and why it persists to this day. However disagreeable this may seem, it is important to try and look at the war from the other side of the looking glass as it were, broadening the perspective rather than enlarging particular aspects and blurring the rest. Is Kony a vehicle for those social forces that have bedeviled Uganda and made it prone to conflict, or is it the other way round? These conditions, once explained, must be complimented by an analysis of the character of the LRA rebellion itself, often oversimplified and described in terms of its assumed millenarian character (with reference to the biblical Ten Commandments).

To do so we will first look at the root causes of the conflict, the deep-rooted factors that provoked an attempt to alter the status quo by violence rather than by political means. Then we analyze the situational factors involved, the factors that facilitated the waging of war, to conclude with an appreciation of the format the rebellion finally adopted.

Root causes

First, in looking at the social disorder the NRM became heir to in 1986, we trace the militarization of politics in Uganda, the increasing weight of the military in social and political interaction. Uganda's post-colonial experiments of state-building were based on the army as an instrument of domestic politics. Domestic politics itself was increasingly a function of ethnic retaliation. This not only hardened ethnic boundaries, but created a sizeable and almost unemployable class of lumpen militariat, which solidified violence as a means of interaction in society. We then look at the progressive deinstitutionalization of politics. By the time the NRM took over, personalized rule and the absence of institutional channels to challenge the government other than by force and at the peril of one's life had become entrenched. After the NRA victory, an immediate administrative and later legal ban on political activities made it unfeasible to challenge the authority of the NRM, and an initial attempt to set up a broad-based Movement government of national unity crumbled under mounting differences. Even had there been a genuine and lasting political opening, in 1986 the Acholi had no credible representative on the political front to symbolize their voice. We then consider the North-South opposition within the context of Uganda's fragmented politics. We argue that while it is not correct to read this antagonism as a root cause, nor helpful to wield such a categorization as framework for a causative analysis, since it is too ambiguous, it is important to understand it as a template to selectively interpret the intentions of others. To do this we look through the template at the expressed grievances in relation to essential survival strategies.

Militarization of politics

At the core of Uganda's post-colonial political development lies a double dilemma. On the one hand security forces acquired lives and identities of their own, with civilian control non-existent. Even in 2002, the Porter Commission mulls over *"a deliberate lie by Uganda's Acting Army Commander, displaying an arrogance and contempt of civil authority similar to that which has been displayed by other witnesses in the UPDF"*, to conclude that *"the UPDF appears to do whatever it likes, even when specifically told not to by its Commander in Chief"*[15]. On the other hand, competition over which ethnic group would form the constituent core of the security forces drove a history of violent political change.

In theory, defense is an archetypal public good, meaning people cannot be excluded from its enjoyment. The modern nation-state is at once the reference point for its production and consumption: it establishes a national army, while its geographical boundaries indicate the boundaries of enjoyment of this public good. In practice, Uganda's modern history has been an example of the state using its authoritative mechanisms to identify and exclude from its enjoyment groups of people that are comprised within the national boundaries. This history of marginalization has been driven by the selective composition and use of the army, turning the military into a vehicle of domestic politics: *"All successive regimes in Uganda have grossly misused the military to achieve their selfish aims"*[16]. In the Uganda scenario, where the state became the instrument of violent retaliation in the arena of domestic politics, the military turns out to be a public good for some ethnic groups but a public bad for the 'internal outsiders'; they cannot exclude themselves from the destructive impact of the public bad. The situation, as in Uganda's case, becomes more destructive as the boundaries between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', those ethnic groups that experience the military as a public good or bad, radically shift over time. The following concise overview is particularly concerned with examining the competition, since the birth of the Ugandan state, for the exclusive claim over the country's security forces. Initially, such control was subject to a political struggle. Since Amin's coup in 1971, the question of who controls the composition of the army and the use to which it shall be put has been subject to a military struggle. In theory, the elections of 1996 brought this competition back to the political realm, although the 'big tent' system of the Movement, as the National Resistance Movement has been re-christened, narrowly demarcates the options.

It is common knowledge that the Obote I regime inherited from the British after independence a colonial army composed of mainly low-skilled Northerners (Langi, Acholi, West Nile)[17]. Obote I (1962-71) lost no time in launching the post-colonial tradition of using the army to alter the political status quo by selective state-sponsored violence. He suppressed the political power of mainly the Baganda by ousting the Kabaka and by abolishing not only federal institutions gravitating around Buganda but the other kingdom-states

as well. After the overthrow of Obote I, General Amin (1971-79) changed the composition of the army radically in favour of his own people (Kakwa and Sudanic people) by mass murder of the Acholi and Langi contingents. The army was then used to weed out dissidents using widespread state-sponsored terror. After the Tanzanian Army invasion, a Military Commission (1979-1980) presided over an extraordinarily fluid period. Acholi and Langi soldiers went on the rampage in West Nile to avenge the former Amin killings. Amid reports of fraud, Obote was returned to power in an election in 1980. This did not end the period of extreme instability and mass murder, but resulted once again in a radically altered composition of the army, returning the Acholi and Langi to a position of prominence. The UNLA as it was now called, then proceeded to fight various insurgencies not only via military confrontations, but especially by targeting their popular bases wielding terror as an instrument of war. Obote's main concern was the NRA led by Museveni, the Secretary for Defense of the previous Military Commission. The NRA, which consisted mainly of Banyankole and ethnic Tutsi from Rwanda, nevertheless enjoyed the support of other ethnic groups such as the Baganda. An Acholi General, Tito Okello, disgruntled with the higher status Obote had seemed to bestow on his Langi tribesmen in the army, deposed Obote in a coup in 1985. Upon seizing power, Tito Okello urged all political parties and insurgent groups to join the new government, i.e. Military Council. The NRA/M refused to join, and between August and December 1985 Okello and the NRA/M discussed and concluded peace in Nairobi. Museveni nevertheless continued his military campaign. In January 1986, the NRA seized Kampala and Museveni came to power by decree as Uganda's eight President, the sixth consecutive leader in a period of a mere 7 years. For the first time however, socio-economic, political, and military power were all concentrated in the south. Violence typified the social turmoil in the North after the NRA take-over. In January and February 1986, the retreating UNLA mobilized and armed the local population of Gulu and Kitgum to resist the advancing NRA by force. This attempt was defeated and in March the NRA took effective control of Gulu and Kitgum towns. Problems were compounded by the integration into the NRA of other irregular troops with a poor reputation, such as FEDEMU, and their subsequent posting to the North, which mirrored earlier troubles of UNLA soldiers' misconduct in the Luwero triangle. The UPDA meanwhile had re-entered Uganda from Sudan and started a guerilla war. In the East, the Iteso organized the UPA to wage their guerilla war against the NRA

Two points are important to note from this synopsis. First, the frequent changes of composition of the Ugandan military, combined with its tendency until recently to attract mainly low-skilled persons, led to a sizeable *'lumpen militariat,'* a class of ill-trained soldiers and officers with no discernible skills and very low discipline[18]. Recently, with regards to the current UPDF, the report of the Porter Commission is informative in its conclusion that there is *"a deep-seated indiscipline throughout the UPDF which requires further investigation and a full review of the capability, discipline, and honesty of officers"*[19]. It goes on to recommend towards the Defence Review *"a care-*

[18] Kandeh, J., What Does the 'Militariat' Do When it Rules? Review of African Political Economy, Vol. 23 No. 69, September 1996, pp387-404

[19] Porter, op.cit., p.23

ful assessment of the ability, intelligence, and educational achievements of particularly, officers. Some of those who have given evidence before this Commission have barely been able to make themselves understood, even to the rank of Major", and *"a stringent examination of the capacity of the officers to fill his office as a professional soldier"*[20]. It is important to appreciate that this problem is but the present emanation of an old sore which stems from the earliest days of the modern Ugandan state and the formation of its national army. In his informative autobiography, Rwehururu for example, a Major in Amin's army who went into exile and launched a rebellion in West Nile in the early eighties under FUNA (Former Uganda National Army), expends pages to clarify how uneducated army privates and assorted types from West Nile region swiftly rose through the ranks of Amin's army; among them a prison service tractor driver (Gowan) who became Chief of Staff by the time Amin was ousted[21]. These were a problem both in and out of the army, frequently degenerating into gangs of thugs. Many Ugandans today still remember the 6 month reign of Tito Okello for the way the *lumpen militariat* divided and ruled the streets of Kampala in an atmosphere of total lawlessness. Collier finds that the best proxy measure for the opportunity cost of rebellion is the endowment of human capital[22]. In other words, the less educated people are, the less they have to lose by waging rebellion. As we shall see, the return of many of these former UNLA soldiers to their villages in Acholi as they re-treated north after the NRA victory was part of the trigger of the insurgency. Predictably, a subsistence economy under duress unable to absorb a large influx of low-skilled labour implies a low opportunity cost of participating in rebellion. Apart from weapons handling, most retreating UNLA soldiers were unskilled and unable or unwilling to adapt to regular village life, and formed a fertile recruitment ground for the UPDA, the HSMF and Kony. Soldiers seemed to join new rebel groups at the spur of the moment without any sense of purpose. The entire autobiography for example of Colonel Rwehururu does not reveal any purpose of that rebellion, other than that *"launching such a war would serve as an announcement to the world that we were very much alive and active"*[23].

Second, Amin's order for Acholi and Langi officers and enlisted men to return to barracks only to be massacred, firmly introduced competitive retaliation on an ethnic basis. The genie has proven difficult to put back in the bottle. Uganda's modern history for 25 years had been one of ethnic cleansing and reprisals. Generally speaking, a state authority that seems unable or unwilling to guarantee the security of all citizens, but rather uses the army selectively to further its own political and security agenda at the expense of some ethnic groups, forces the latter to ensure their own security. In return, ethnic boundaries have hardened in a self-reinforcing process of increasing mutual distrust. Each group is led to formulate a worst-case analysis of the others' intentions, while demagogic leaders dominate the political space by selectively using the historical record to drive the analysis. The UNLA had not been illustrious for its discipline, especially in the Luwero Triangle while battling the NRA. In 1983, under the cover of *'Operation Bonanza',* Obote

[20] Porter, op.cit., recommendations re. UPDF and the ongoing Defence Review, No. 44.4.1 and 44.4.2, p. 203

[21] Rwehururu, op.cit., p.55-62

[22] Collier, P., The challenge of Ugandan reconstruction 1986-98, World Bank, 20 p., draft November 1999

[23] Rwehururu, B., Cross to the Gun, Monitor publications, 2002, p. 150

unleashed the UNLA to wreak havoc on the local Baganda population. The ICRC claimed that no less than 300,000 people died and that a third of the region's population could not be accounted for by 1986. After the capture of Kampala, the NRA was busy consolidating its victory throughout the country and integrating former opponents into its ranks. In the situation of considerable anarchy that prevailed, Baganda agitated violently against the Acholi and Langi who were trapped in the south. Now the Acholi feared it was only a matter of time before Museveni's soldiers opened the floodgates of revenge. Those that fled north brought rumors of ethnic retaliation, endorsing the reading of a worst-case scenario and catalyzing support for a newly formed insurgent group based in Sudan, the UPDA.

Driving this narrative of attack and counterattack lays the issue of distrust, a feeling of 'betrayal'. To understand the insurgencies in Acholiland, it is important to see what the nodes of the growing distrust were, and how they found concrete expression in a selective reading of the intention of others. Out of the accounts of betrayal of the Acholi by the 'national' government, three points stand out[24]. The UPDA reflected each of these elements in the grievances it brought to the negotiation table in 1987. First was of course Amin's order in 1972 for all troops to report to barracks, only for the Acholi and Langi enlisted men and officers to be massacred. Many Acholi believed to hear an echo of this experience when the NRA ordered Acholi people to lay down their arms and ordered UNLA soldiers back to barracks in 1986. It didn't help matters when the ex-soldiers who did respond to the order were indeed detained and severely mistreated, and sent to re-education camps in the south[25]. Second, and cited in the 1998 Bedo Piny as well as in the 1997 Kacoke Madit meeting, was the contravening by the NRM/A of the Nairobi Peace Accord of 1985: *"The Acholi paved the way for Museveni by overthrowing Obote, and Museveni paid us back by betraying us"*[26]. Finally, contrary to NRM assurances and at a time when goodwill was at a premium, the 1988 peace treaty between the NRM and the UPDA was followed by major military operations to 'annihilate' the remaining rebels[27]. Part of the strategy of the 1988 counter-insurgency campaign was to deny the rebels access to food by destroying civilian food stocks and domestic animals. What is more, on suspicion of plotting a coup, a number of renowned ex-UPDA rebels such as Mike Kilama were killed or arrested and perished later in prison[28]. The civilian population suffered extreme brutality at the hands of the NRA during this period.

Deinstitutionalization of politics

The core of the colonial experience in Africa is the same as elsewhere: effective foreign conquest requires establishing, maintaining, and stabilizing control over the social and political order of indigenous societies, by involving a system of active local auxiliaries. In this, Uganda's colonial experience has its own historical particularities. Independence found Uganda with an entrenched racial division of economic function and privilege, keenly felt

[24] Heike Behrend includes an event in 1913, when the British finally 'pacified' the Acholi with the defeat of the Lamogi rebellion. The Acholi were promised that they could keep their rifles after registration, only to find that these were then publicly burned; Behrend, H., Alice Lakwena & the Holy Spirits, James Currey, Oxford, 1999, 210 p., p.17

[25] Nyeko, Accord, op.cit.

[26] Quoted in De Temmerman, Els, Aboke girls: Children abducted in Northern Uganda, Fountain Publishers, Kampala, 2001, p.108

[27] An interesting side note here is that Kony had requested in a letter to NRA colonel Kuteesa to initiate talks with the NRA at the same time as the UPDA. The initiative collapsed when NRA mobile forces attacked Kony before talks could begin.

[28] Lamwaka, C. H., Civil war and the peace process in Uganda 1986-1997, East African Journal of Peace and Human Rights, Makerere University Human Rights and Peace Centre, vol.4 No.2, 1998, p.159

religious divisions, and a widespread resentment of preferential treatment accorded to the Baganda, in contrast to British policy towards northern Uganda. The northern region served mainly as a reservoir for cheap labour, from which Britain recruited its soldiers. Uganda's post-colonial attempts to adopt social transformative goals and create new political structures for popular mobilization rapidly ran into obstacles posed by the colonial legacy: tensions between a developed center and underdeveloped north, northern dominance of the military, and full or partial federal status for a number of southern kingdoms. By 1969, Obote had not succeeded, if that was his intention in the first place, in transforming the UPC from an anglicized mainly Langi dominated organization into a broad-based mass political party. Rather he abolished the 1962 constitution, the four southern kingdoms, banned all opposition groups, and strengthened his executive powers. In so doing, he effectively deinstitutionalized politics; the expression of political dissent was driven into extra-institutional avenues. The trend towards central authority, personalized rule, and coercive strategies to deal with any challenges to central authority was further magnified and entrenched in all subsequent regimes.

How did this context evolve once the NRM seized power in 1986, especially as regards the North in those early days which were so crucial to the genesis of the northern conflict? After all, Museveni did go to the bush because he felt there were no available institutional means to address people's concerns with the state, justifying his bush-war as more than a struggle for power. The ten-point programme of the NRM clearly established a vision of a more democratic and representative form of governance. How feasible was it in practice to challenge the authority of the NRM, and how broad-based was the attempt to set up a government of national unity? In the early NRM period, the unelected National Resistance Council was established to govern during an interim period scheduled to last not longer than 4 years, during which a ban on political party activity would be in effect. In 1989 Museveni extended the interim period for another 5 years. Later, this administrative ban on political activities other than those tolerated by the NRM was translated into a legal ban. The Constitutional Assembly Election Act of 1993 specified that any candidate attempting to use sectarian grounds for election purposes, and sectarianism included political parties, would be disqualified. The activities of political parties are still proscribed under the 1995 constitution[29]. One could therefore only engage in political activities within the tightly proscribed NRM framework, which does not allow to politically challenge the framework itself, since doing so would require one to place oneself outside of the 'big tent' Movement and therefore, a fortiori, wide of the tolerable mark. The NRM was ready to effectively back up by force its restrictions on political activity, as it demonstrated during a number of occasions when parties or civil society organizations attempted to hold rallies. In terms of inclusiveness of the new coalition government, initially Museveni did set up a coalition Movement government of national unity and a national army that included members of various former political and armed opposition groups. There were two drawbacks to this.

[29] The Political Organisations Act of 2002 placed restrictions on the opening of district offices and the organization of rallies and other gatherings by political parties. Meanwhile, the National Executive Committee of the Movement has recommended the freeing of political parties, although government considers this subject to a referendum, which in itself would be contrary to the inherent right of freedom to associate.

First, as one observer puts it while discussing the integration of surrendering irregular troops into the NRA, *'some ex-UNLA soldiers who surrendered to the NRA were removed to remote detention camps in western Uganda. The courtesy that appeared to be extended to UMF and FEDEMU soldiers was not extended to the UNLA'*[30]. Other sources confirm the abusive language and vilification of the Acholi by NRM heavies. It was mentioned as one of the sources of the northern conflict in the Bedo Piny peace meeting in 1998 (see timeline). Apart from apparent dissonants in creating an army of national unity that involved Acholi UNLA soldiers, there was a problem on the political side as well. There was no political Acholi movement to integrate. Tito Okello had been overthrown and fled the country. The Uganda People's Democratic Movement (UPDM) based in London and led by Otema Alimadi, an Acholi, did not appear to be coordinated with the UPDA military wing, based in Sudan, nor did it enjoy widespread support from the Acholi people[31]. This political vacuum created opportunities for personalities such as Alice Lakwena and Joseph Kony to proliferate, an aspect we will come back to later. In addition, whereas initially the NRM was broad-based, the coalition grew narrower over time as partners such as the DP and UPC eventually withdrew, citing differences on - amongst other things - continuing instability in the North (note).

In theory, the 'big tent' idea was set up to promote national unity. Its effect has been to neutralize or co-opt political opposition and cancel political difference, the very essence of politics. In the absence of original political debate, the state becomes desocialized: society implodes into the state. The state no longer works on the basis of political decisions, but on the basis of *'intimidation, dissuasion, simulation, provocation, or spectacular solicitation'*[32].

The North-South divide

The North-South divide is not God-given. Politics has redefined and focused Uganda's numerous differences and projected these onto a specific faultline. This however, does not deny the reality of the North-South antagonism as it now exists. So far we have argued that ethnic polarization is a concrete product of Uganda's modern history: a highly fragmented society, built on a divisive colonial legacy, where the military came to control domestic politics and block all channels of popular political expression. As all ethnic identity, African ethnic identity is not a given but a shifting phenomenon that is contextually defined. Ethnographic histories for example of 'the Acholi' as a people show clearly how ethnic boundaries, and the understanding of them, formed and shifted over the years from a society where identity was originally defined in reference to the clan. The pattern of violent ethnic retaliation has firmly cast Uganda's polarization as a North-South divide, and 'locked in' its boundaries as a reference point or template for the expression of grievance. Yet if groupings such as "tribe" or 'ethnic group' are not concrete categories of political behavior, how much more so for geographic entities such as 'North'

[30] Ben Ochora Latigo, Kacoke Madit, 1997; UFM/A (Uganda Freedom Movement/Army) and FEDEMU (Federal Democratic Movement of Uganda) were Buganda based rebel groups. According to Latigo in the same article, *'the latter had a particularly bad reputation for harbouring Kampala thugs and criminals.'*

[31] The UPDM leadership in exile were called 'opportunists' by the UPDA, and were excluded from the negotiations that led to the Pece peace agreement with the NRM/A in 1988. Not surprisingly, the UPDM denounced the talks and concluded a separate peace agreement with the NRM in Addis Abeba in 1990.

[32] Baudrillard, op.cit., 1993

and 'South'. What then are the 'northern' perceptions of marginalization in referring to the antagonistic interaction between North and South? What are the elements that underlie perceptions of *'the culture and society in northern Uganda being near total disintegration'?*[33]

[33] Phrase used by the self-styled spokesperson of the LRA, James Obita, at the Kacoke Madit meeting of 1998.

In this section I want to show how these grievances find concrete expression in a selective reading of the intentions of the 'significant other', ranging from suspicions that government lacks a firm commitment to development in the North to the belief that government is actively working to under-develop the North. More particularly, how social marginalization is expressed in terms of grievances concerning essential survival strategies. Within a subsistence economy, the use of all three production factors of land, labour and capital is closely intertwined and carefully calibrated to serve as economic and social coping mechanisms that affect the household as well as community level. Disabling the use of one, such as land, hinders the use of other factors and puts at risk the very existence of the household and, at the aggregate level, the community. To get a sense of these grievances, Acholi voices are important, and a number of arguments put forward at the Kacoke Madit (KM) meetings are very helpful in this regard.

About land, Ochora Latigo, coordinator of the KM, has this to say: *"There has been some speculation in East Africa that the Tutsi led rebellion is a master plan, with Uganda at the center, to establish a Tutsi nation. To some, this helps explain President's Museveni's reluctance to end the LRA rebellion. The continuation of the war can depopulate vast segments of Acholiland and prepare it for resettlement by ethnic groups in the South who are land-starved. This might sound far-fetched, but it is a topic of considerable distress among the Acholi community.'*[34] Traveling through the districts of Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader, one is indeed struck by the 'emptiness' of the land. As the Gulu District Local Government Development Plan 2001-2004 establishes, a total of 10,301 sq. Km of arable land make up 87.4% of the district land area, yet less than 10% is cultivated yearly. The underlying fear is how land rights under a communal tenure system can hold up and be protected against encroachment by 'foreigners' in the face of depopulation and a seemingly empty land[35]. Another contribution in the same KM meeting therefore calls for the constitutional recognition of Acholi customary communal land ownership regimes, grazing, and hunting commons as a key element in a definitive peace settlement. In this regard, the fears expressed in Acholi about the current Land Act indicate mistrust about the intentions of Government on land ownership[36].

[34] This is a reference to the time Museveni was Minister of Defense in the Lule/Binaisa UNLF government. He recruited some 4000 people in the UNLA, a number of which were Rwandese Tutsi refugees from established UNHCR camps in Uganda. After the botched parliamentary elections in 1980, a section of the UNLA recruited earlier by Museveni joined the NRA with their equipment. In retaliation, the UNLA targeted Bahima and Banyarwanda living in Luwero and Ankole, of which a total of 30,000 perished (HRW, 97). The official UPDA grievances also included a reference to 'foreign elements of Rwandan refugees in the NRA and government'.

[35] These sentiments contain echoes of Africa's experience with land-grabbing by the colonial powers, which generally did not recognize unoccupied land as being effectively owned.

[36] Larubi, Lucy, Highlights of 'conflict and means of livelihood research', in COPE working paper 32, Peace research and the reconciliation agenda, ACORD, April 2000, p.21

In terms of labour, the GoU policy of assembling people in what are called 'protected camps' is understood with reference to the colonial policy of earmarking the northern districts as a labour reserve for the sugarcane and tea plantations. The so-called Secretary for External Affairs of the LRA at the KM meeting of 1998 stated that *"northern Uganda is being prepared, moulded and steered to become the land of the illiterates (...). This region*

will definitely be the leading source of cheap, unskilled labourers, in fact slaves unless something is done urgently to reverse the trend". In addition, the London-based Acholi Association (organizer of the KM) observed that the *"policy of protected villages is converting self-sufficient farmers into destitute aid dependants",* a sentiment that is frequently echoed in discussions. In what seems to be a reference to the alleged abuses by the NRA mobile battalion 'Gunga', another submission to the KM meeting goes as far as to allege a deliberate policy of rape by hand-picked HIV-infested government soldiers. Even though these elements may figure prominently in the outlook of at least some Acholi, the Acholi are not blind to the effects the LRA tactics are inflicting on society. Other submissions in the same KM meeting also lay blame on the LRA in destroying the fabric of society and a generation of Acholi children, its future human resource base, by abducting them and turning them into traumatized killers by forcing them to the battlefield. From these various angles, the earlier noted finding that the best proxy measure for the opportunity cost of rebellion is the endowment of human capital, strikes a chord. Both LRA tactics and the government response of regrouping civilians are reinforcing a trend of bringing down educational standards in Acholi.

As in many other subsistence economies in Africa, capital is accumulated in the form of cattle. The near total destocking in Gulu and Kitgum districts is frequently referred to as one of the tragedies of the war. De Temmerman cites an Acholi voice as saying that *"it was the ultimate proof of Museveni's strategy to wipe out the people of the North. For the cows were everything to the Acholi: they were the basic source of their diet, they were used as draught animals, and they served as dowry and were used for the settlement of disputes"*[37]. Westbrook, on the basis of an interim report by the Kitgum District Peace Initiative, asserts that the cattle population in Kitgum fell from 156,667 in 1986 to 3,239 in 1998 while, in the same period, the national cattle population increased from 3 to 5.6 million[38]. The replacement cost of the plundered cattle herd alone is estimated at roughly 25 million US $[39]. Apart from serious economic consequences, it destabilized the social fabric as animal raising was the traditional contribution of men to the household welfare. The household economic burden now fell squarely on women's shoulders, while men resorted to heavy drinking[40]. Destocking took place in several ways. People voluntarily surrendered some of their cattle to the troops of Alice Lakwena, on the basis of chits that would guarantee a refund once the HSMF took power. Second and more important was the tremendous hemorrhage of cattle from the local communities due to the cattle rustling activities by the neighboring Karamajong tribe and the NRA. A point highlighted by Behrend depicts the confusion regarding the identity of the cattle thieves, in noting an often repeated accusation that NRA soldiers disguised themselves as Karamajong cattle raiders. It is impossible ex-post to establish the degree of involvement of the NRA either in stealing or allowing others to steal Acholi cattle. The fact that the Karamajong had previously failed to enter Acholiland apart from the areas of neighboring clans in Kitgum, but were now able to reach Gulu district unimpeded, is enough proof of com-

[37] De Temmerman, E., op.cit., p.109

[38] Westbrook, D., The torment of Northern Uganda: a legacy of missed opportunities, The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution, Issue 3.2/June 2000

[39] Gersony, R., The anguish of Northern Uganda, USAID, August 1997, p.27

[40] ISIS-WICCE, Women's experiences of armed conflict in Uganda Gulu district 1986-1999, Kampala, July 2001, p.38

plicity for many[41]. The fact that NRA Commander Fred Rwigema, an ethnic Munyarwanda and very close to Museveni and Kagame, held the post of Gulu Resident District Commissioner during 1987, convinced many once again of a 'Tutsi' plot. A conviction that destocking was a deliberate government policy is therefore firmly entrenched, reasoning that it allowed the NRA to eliminate the most plausible endowment source for the continued sponsoring and hence possible escalation of the rebellion[42].

Looking at these arguments, perceptions of marginalization evidently present a picture of differentiation in Uganda that is not necessarily complete or accurate. An exercise presented in table 2 and 3 in annex shows that the pattern of economic differentiation in Uganda is more complex than a straightforward North-South antagonism.[43] Yet the 'North-South' divide has evolved as a template to selectively interpret the intentions of others. Some of the views represented above are extreme, tantamount to seeing the war as a plan to exterminate the Acholi. Not every person in Acholi would interpret the meaning of the war as a plot by the 'Tutsi' NRA (or UPDF) to exterminate the Acholi as an ethnic group by confiscating their land, rendering them unproductive or subservient by obfuscating their literacy skills and infecting them with HIV, and eliminating their capital base by stealing their cattle. Vice versa, equally strong views may be expressed by 'Southerners'. To give but one example of an opinion coming from a very influential 'Southerner', Lt. General James Kazini of the UPDF attributes the abuses of Acholi people by the UPDF to the pathology of Acholi society in general, stating that *"If anything, it is local Acholi soldiers causing the problems. It's the cultural background of the people here; they are very violent. It's genetic."*[44]. These are simply the most selective readings the use of the template can produce. In our analysis however it is not the accuracy of the arguments that matters, but rather the insights offered into perceptions and the type of latent mobilizing power they convey for an entire generation brought up in IDP camps.

Situational factors

What are the factors that facilitated attempts to alter what the Acholi saw as an untenable status quo by force rather than political settlement in the period the NRA took power? We look at the political vacuum that existed in Acholi society after the downfall of the Okello regime, and at a number of factors that facilitated the operational capacity for rebellion, which are the proximity of Sudan, the proliferation of small arms, a large Acholi Diaspora, and a substantial number of former UNLA troops.

Politics abhors a vacuum. The first element that enabled rebellion rather than a political settlement of the Acholi with the NRM, was a leadership vacuum in a situation of extreme upheaval. Tito Okello, unable to contain threats to his authority, had been discredited as leader and fled the country. The UPDA was based in refugee camps in Sudan, without clear coordination

[41] Human Rights Focus (HURI-FO), Between two fires, p. 5, February 2002

[42] Personal discussions; For a comparison with the alleged complicity of the NRA in Karamoja cattle rustling in Teso, see: Oballel Omoding, Mukura: lessons after 10 years, The Monitor, 11/07/1999

[43] The tables 2 and 3 give an overview per district of pupil/teacher and pupil/classroom ratios, as well as the percentages of the population that have access to a safe rural water supply. The figures are ranked and the districts of the North (West Nile, Acholi, Langi, Karamoja) are highlighted, showing that there is no clearcut pattern in which northern districts end up invariably on one side of the league table with the worst indices. The tables were adapted from table 3 and annex 3 in: Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Post-Conflict Reconstruction: the Case of Norther Uganda, Discussion Paper 7 for the Consutative Group meeting of May 2003, April 2003

[44] Human Rights Watch, op.cit., 1997

with its political wing the UPDM, based in distant London. Both the UPDA and UPDM did not enjoy widespread support of the Acholi people: clan leaders actually appealed to the UPDA not to start a war at home[45]. The UPDA consisted of a number of brigades, which were greatly expanded when former UNLA soldiers joined after the fall of Gulu and Kitgum. Once it did re-enter Uganda, the overall commander Odong Latek had difficulties coordinating and controlling his troops which operated in quasi-independent units. All told, the situation was without clear military or political leadership on the Acholi side.

It would be wrong to simply consider these facts as extraordinary coincidences, Murphy's Law on a bad hair day. Embedded in the leadership crisis loomed a deeper rooted generation-gap. The existing generation of Acholi leaders had been incapable of protecting Acholi interests, and showed little imagination in dealing with the crisis. When an Acholi managed to achieve state power, a first in Ugandan history, he was routed after a mere 6 months. The armed response fabricated by former UNLA elements was unimpressive, badly coordinated, and by and large turned out to be little better in its malignancy towards civilians than the reported misconduct of NRA troops. The UPDM was entrenched in a far-off place, and could not genuinely claim to represent the aggregated political voice of the Acholi. Traditional leaders were unable to appease and exorcise the 'cen' (bad spirits) and witchcraft that plagued the land with the return of the UNLA soldiers after Okello's fall, with escalating tensions between people as a result[46]. They also advocated heeding the call for the ex-UNLA soldiers to return to barracks, only to find that many of those who responded were maltreated or disappeared. Then the elders, having anointed Kony, subsequently abandoned him. In a telling incident during the NRA-LRA peace talks of 1994, at one meeting LRA Commander Arop threatened to harm elder Anania Akera, *"claiming that Akera was one of those who 'pointed his penis towards the bush and cursed us' - traditionally the ultimate curse a father can perform against his offspring"*[47]. According to the same source, Kony claimed in his meeting with Betty Bigombe on 11 January 1994 that apart from three elders he could trust, *"the others were bloodthirsty people who had failed to guide the people in Acholi in its most serious hour of need".* In this vacuum, Alice Lakwena and Joseph Kony, young people in their twenties, stood up as leaders to offer a holistic solution that drew on the Acholi cultural archive to reinvent traditions of healing and cleansing (see further). In so doing they established a new social hierarchy that successfully mobilized the population during the late eighties. It was not until Alice Lakwena was well and truly beaten that Kony was able to hug the limelight by himself.

In addition to a leadership vacuum, the combination of a number of elements directly supported operational capacity of insurgents in the North. First, the proximity of Sudan, a huge country with its own share of rebellion and tenuous or no government control of the southern part bordering Uganda. Such a situation allowed cross-border operations and establishment of safe

[45] Ochora Latigo, Kacoke Madit, op.cit.

[46] Since not only death in war, but also death from AIDS, which had spread to a terrifying degree throughout Acholi, was interpreted in the idiom of witchcraft, Acholi was transformed into a land where everyone suspected and tried to harm everyone else. For accusations of whitchcraft not only reflect. But also generate, social tensions' (Behrend, op.cit., 1999, p. 27).

[47] O'Kadameri, B., op.cit

havens and bases on Sudanese territory. Not only that. In the early nineties the SPLM/A, with direct US and Ugandan support and with Operation Lifeline greatly expanded in Southern Sudan, was regaining military ascendancy in Southern Sudan after years of damaging internecine warfare[48]. In retaliation for GoU support for the SPLM/A, the GoS started to aid the makeover of what had been a motley group of rebels into a coherent, well-supplied military enterprise. The LRA and its use of terror in a way became the ultimate fifth column of the Sudanese army: a clandestine, cost-effective force used to destabilize the SPLM/A and Uganda. Until the signing of the Nairobi Peace Agreement for example, the LRA had a well-established permanent camp in Nsitu south of Juba and even an office in Juba town.

Second, access to arms was easy, even before direct support to the LRA by the Sudanese government. The issue of arms proliferation is obviously greatly related to the quick succession of wars in Uganda and neighbouring countries, especially Sudan. The bulk of UNLA soldiers were not demobilized but fled North with their arms, feeding these into the UPDA rebellion. Light weapons were also circulating freely in a regional market with wars going on simultaneously in Southern Sudan, Uganda, and the Horn (Eritrea, Tigre...), and with the regime in Somalia collapsing and flooding the market. A 2001 Oxfam report asserts that *"the valley that runs between the Kidepo national Park and the Nangeye Mountains of Southern Sudan is the funnel through which small arms pour into Uganda".* Desertions by members of the Local Defense Units and UPDF are another source of weapons flows to the local communities. The biggest triggers without doubt however, have been the long conflicts in Sudan and the DRC. Recent case-studies on the flow of small arms in the border areas of Uganda, the DRC, and Sudan establish the sources of small arms as the 1989/1990 battlefields in central Equatoria, the successful ambush on a GoS military convoy in Livolo in the Ugandan border area in 1997, the desertion of garrison towns by GoS troops, and the split that occurred in the SPLM/A forces after Torit town fell to the Khartoum government in September 2002. The research also establishes the important role played in the trade by SPLM/A deserters and the Sudanese IDPs in Uganda. The result is that an AK 47 goes for as little as Ush 25,000 (approximately 12 $) in the Sudanese border town of Kajo-Keji[49]. Clearly, prices are going to fall further with the demise of the NURF II and the reintegration of its estimated 2400 rebels in West Nile, canceling part of the market demand.

Third, the rebellion could tap into the economic and political resources of a large Diaspora of Acholi with a history of strained relations with the Museveni government. Many of these had gone into exile in the early years of Amin. When, for example, the UPDA signed the Pece Peace Agreement with the NRM/A, the UPDA faction led by Latek continued to receive support from the UPDM. Obita, the self-styled LRM Secretary for External Affairs from 1996 to 98, also describes how a particular London-based Acholi businessman by name of Powell Onen Ojwang, persuaded the LRA High Command in 1997 to prioritize an increase in military capacity and offered

[48] Bradbury, M., An overview of initiatives for peace in Acholi, Northern Uganda, Reflecting on Peace Practice Project, The Collaborative for Development Action, October 1999, p.4. In 1996 for example, 20 million US$ of military equipment was sent to Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Uganda, to help overthrow the Islamic regime in Sudan (Washington Post, 10/11/1996, page A34).

[49] Larjour Consultancy, South Sudan case study covering a number of counties in Central and Western Equatoria, December 2002; CEFORD, small arms proliferation in the border areas of Uganda: a case study of West Nile Districts, December 2002.

to finance it[50]. Obviously precise data on the extent of such financial support are not available. To give an idea of the potential offered, the best place to look is the area of capital flight. The estimates of Collier et al indicate that by 1986 some 60% of private wealth in Uganda was held abroad[51]. Other authors estimate the total capital flight in Uganda over the period 1970-1996 at a total 3,316.1 million US $ (real terms 1996 value), including imputed interest earnings, or an average annual capital flight of 3.1% of GDP[52]. By 1997, the Ugandan government had turned the tide on capital flight, yet an estimated 50% of private wealth remained abroad[53]. Although the above data are anecdotal and circumstantial and do not establish a conclusive link between capital held abroad and the financing of rebellion, other experiences such as the case of Somaliland do show the potential of such links[54]. In any case, during the Consultative Group meeting between donors and the GoU in May 2003, the Prime Minister called upon donor countries to suppress financial support for the rebellion from the Ugandan Diaspora in their home countries.

Finally, there was the huge stock of former UNLA soldiers, important as a catalyst of rebellion because it formed a fertile recruitment ground for rebel movements and created social turmoil. There are no straightforward and reliable figures on troop strength of the successive Ugandan armies, and certainly not of the UNLA at the time of its folding[55]. Obviously, it is also not clear how many men came from the Acholi districts. Just to give an indication, from 1992 to 95 Museveni demobilized 30,000 troops from an army of approximately 50,000[56]. The number of UNLA soldiers returning to Acholiland can safely be assumed to be ten thousand at a minimum. There had been no demobilization: the soldiers simply packed their arms and fled north. Inherent in the nature of this *lumpen militariat*, education was not much in evidence, and so affected the opportunity cost of participating in rebellion. As a rule, the adjustment from military to civilian life throws up tremendous challenges when soldiers have low professional qualifications and limited non-military skills. These men had less to lose by joining rebel movements than their peers with a higher stake in regular economic exchange. At the same time, the economic situation in Acholi was in a tailspin. Peasants experienced increasing economic hardships, caused by the isolation of the region from the rest of the market. It is important to recall the economic context of 1986, with per capita GDP 60% below its level of 1970, and with inflation at 240%. By 1987, exports other than coffee had ceased, while the external debt service was more than 50% of exports[57]. Immediate conditions were exacerbated by structural adjustment measures which the IMF imposed in 1987, with a loan from its Structural Adjustment Facility. People claim to have lost their cash savings for example as a result of the currency change. As an immediate result of the privatization programme, some 350,000 government workers were retrenched, and with the private sector not expanding fast enough to absorb these numbers, unemployment increased sharply[58].

[50] Obita, J.A., First international peace efforts 1996-98, Accord

[51] Collier, P., A. Hoeffler and C. Pattillo, Flight capital as portfolio choice, Development Research Working Paper 2066, World Bank, 1999

[52] Boyce, J.K., Ndikumana, L, Is Africa a Net Creditor? New estimates of capital flight from severely indebted Sub-Saharan African countries, 1970-1996, University of Massachusetts, p.40-41

[53] Collier, op.cit.,1999

[54] Leenco Lata, Inter-state politics and its impact on insurgency and the flow of arms into and within the Horn of Africa, International Resource Group Conference, Mombasa, Nov.6-9, 1996

[55] One aspect was the opportunity for corruption created by a large number of 'ghost soldiers'.

[56] A number of these were later remobilized to fight the LRA, ADF, to be sent to the DRC, and to create the 5th division in 2003.

[57] IMF Survey, Ghana, Senegal, and Uganda adopt bold reforms, November 1996.

[58] Naiman, R., Watkins, N., A survey of the impacts of IMF Structural Adjustment in Africa: growth, social spending and debt relief, Center for Economic and Social Policy (CEPR), April 1999

The severity of these measures was such that they were reversed after local and international pressure. It is said for example that Alice Lakwena opposed tax tickets and currency devaluations. The combination of these various elements created a negative economic spiral, which locked in favorable conditions for future rebellion. Ex-soldiers with low skills engaged in rebellion because the opportunity costs for them were lower. By so doing they affected economic growth and education, lowering the opportunity cost for future rebellion across society. With no employment opportunities, lack of food and physical security, weapons increasingly had an economic as well as security value for those who possessed them. These are principal aspects of the famed adagio that 'in war the bad economy chases the good'. We noted already the gradual neutralization of politics. With the additional progressive surrender of traditional tasks of the state, security becomes the basic principle of state activity.

Related to this is the status in village life of those UNLA troops who had returned. Behrend describes how the lack of discipline and restlessness of returning UNLA troops made them into 'internal strangers' in Acholi society. A form of witchcraft which exists in Acholi is *kiroga*, associated with spirit possession and practiced primarily to take revenge. On demand, a spirit medium can instigate a *cen,* the vengeful spirit of a person who has died a bad death, to inflict on the victim insanity, infertility, disease, or death[59]. During the civil war, the UNLA soldiers had killed, tortured, and looted in Luweero. As they went back to Acholi they carried with them *cen*, the bad spirits of those maimed and killed, jeopardizing the lives of those who had remained in Acholi. Many soldiers refused to submit to purification rituals by the Acholi elders, an aspect of the generation struggle, which left the *cen* unreconciled and turned the soldiers into 'internal strangers' to be feared and shunned.

[59] Behrend, op.cit.,p.26

So far we have examined the root causes and advantageous circumstances that gathered force in a state of social turmoil without credible political leadership. The way out took the shape of a deliverance couched in religious discourse. In the next part we will take a closer look at how Alice Lakwena's insurgence was configured. The emergence and transformation of the LRA can only be made comprehensible in its relation, even opposition to, the HSMF.

The Format of rebellion

Millenarian movements and the use of violence

Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement was the product of elements of missionary Christianity interacting with indigenous cosmology, a product which turned millenarian (referring to expectations from God of imminent salvation). Millenarian discourse and rebellion seem strange bedfellows, an oddity which seems at first glance best left to the investigative scalpel of

anthropologists to dissect. In actual fact, religion and violence are not such an odd blend. Until the nineteenth century, religion provided the only acceptable justifications for terror.[60] *"Images of death have never been far from the heart of religion's power to stir the imagination'*[61]. Historic parallels demonstrate that a millenarian discourse is an excellent framework for political and social rebellion against an established order, and for nationalist revival and the restitution of identity. We don't have to go back to the time when Jewish zealots murdered their compatriots and Roman soldiers, and poisoned the wells of Jerusalem. The Belgian colonial powers in Congo for example, had to deal with a number of millenarian movements, *Kitawala, Anioto, Maji-Maji* and others, just as the Nandi uprising against the British colonial powers in Kenya was led by the spirit medium and diviner Koitalel Arap Samoei. Alice Lakwena's uprising shared a common core of beliefs with all of these: the struggle against sorcery, the purification of society, the rejection of coercive elements of (colonial) rule such as taxes, the establishment of new hierarchies that countered customary and local authorities etc. Most of these movements articulated power by using terror to illustrate the limit of the political and administrative sphere. For instance, the *Anioto* or 'Leopard Men' active in the area around Beni in the 1920's and 30's, articulated power by attacking at all hours and invoked terror through indiscriminate victim selection. This demonstrated the inability of the authorities, colonial as well as customary, to protect their people from terror, as well as hurting their 'wealth in people'[62].

Contemporary parallels of alternative violent ideologies of public order, rooted in religion, are easy to find. Suffice it to cite the examples of Islamic fundamentalism, the racist vision of the *Aryan Nation* in the US, or the Jewish terrorism of *Gush Emunim*. In Uganda as well, millenarian movements other than those in the North have been active, with equally devastating consequences. The mass-suicide or murder of more than 300 people in Kanungu in South-West Uganda in March 2000 is still fresh in the mind. They were led by a number of ex-communicated Catholic priests, nuns, and an ex-prostitute who claimed to act as a medium for messages and rules sent by the Virgin Mary. Purportedly, one of the messages was the destruction of the World and the selection of the chosen few to be taken to heaven on 17 March 2000. In an entirely different league but illuminating all the same is the preference for prayer-rallies as format for mobilizing people to protest for example the continuing war in the North. The expression of intense religious belief conveyed through such rallies is an aspect beyond analysis. One cannot evade the question however whether their popularity as instrument for spontaneous mobilization is not a feature of the de-institutionalization of politics in Uganda. Politics as such does not disappear but simply searches another outlet through an alternative discourse.

[60] Rapoport, fear and trembling: terrorism in three religious traditions, quoted in: Hoffman, B., Holy terror: the implications of terrorism motivated by a religious imperative, RAND paper P-7834, 1993.

[61] Juergensmeyer, M., Terror in the Mind of God: the global rise of religious violence, University of California Press, 2003, 336 p.

[62] Cyrier, J., Anioto: Putting a paw on power. Leopard men of the Belgian Congo, 1911-1936, 4th Annual Graduate Student Conference for African Studies, 12/09/1999, Michigan

The Holy Spirit Mobile Forces

We already noted the type of witchcraft known as *kiroga* and the cen brought back by returning UNLA soldiers who refused to submit to purification rituals. The two elements complemented each other in a sort of catch-22 situation. Cen increased the fears of *kiroga*, and the increase in witchcraft increased the impurity of the moral order in Acholi. The elders, unable to enforce attempts to reconstitute the moral order, interpreted this breakdown as the cause of catastrophes: the civil war, AIDS, the loss of state power, and increasing distrust between the people. It now lay with a 'prophet' to establish a new discourse and dissolve the vicious circle[63].

[63] Behrend, op.cit., p.29-30

Alice Auma, who was a spirit medium in Kitgum, proclaimed that the spirit Lakwena ordered her in August 1986 to stop healing and raise an army called the 'Holy Spirit Mobile Forces' to wage a war against the evil overtaking the land. In fighting a war against an external enemy (the NRA), Alice Lakwena mobilized, reintegrated and rehabilitated the internal enemies (the impure UNLA soldiers and sorcerers). After undergoing a range of rituals that united elements of Christian and traditional rites, at times even from Islam, the Holy Spirit soldiers were considered pure or *maleng* (sanctified) and invulnerable in battle. If they were wounded or died on the battlefield, it was because they were no longer pure by violating any of 20 rigidly proscribed 'Holy Spirit Safety Precautions' which would create a new humankind[64]. The mode of warfare of the HSMF was governed by the Holy Spirit Tactics, a mode of conducting war that disregarded all military principles, led by a range of spirits, chief amongst them Lakwena. It was a 'magical war' against war, using a mix of modern warfare, praying and rituals, which allowed Holy Spirit soldiers to adhere to the commandment not to kill, since it were the spirits that guided bullets to their targets. Even elements of nature such as stones, bees and snakes were considered allies of the HSMF[65]. Although in the end the HSMF was defeated a mere 80 km from Kampala, Alice Lakwena transformed Uganda's history by laying a blueprint for the unfolding rebellion of Kony. To put into perspective the emergence of the LRA, a number of essentials from Lakwena's outline need to be stressed. These are the understanding of war as a healing process, the uniqueness of the HSM features combining elements of a military organization and cult, and the rapidly changing character and composition of the HSMF.

[64] Ibidem, p.45-48

[65] Ibidem, p.56-64

The Holy Spirit Movement was an attempt to reconstitute the moral order based on the formulation of an alternative theory of social tensions and power relationships. This formulation used the idiom of religion and ritual or, as Behrend calls it, *'edification by puzzlement'*. Waging war was understood as an ordeal, but nonetheless a necessary instrument in the process of cleansing or purifying to separate the just from the unjust to create a healed rather than suffering community. A pre-condition to be purified or 'rendered just' *(maleng)*, was to accept guilt and undergo the rituals of cleansing. Terror was used for example against those UPDA rebels that refused to undergo the ritu-

als and join the HSMF, because they obstructed the realization of a vision of a new society. Death or injury on the battlefield was the price one paid for not remaining *maleng*.

Also, the blueprint Alice Lakwena laid out was unique. Was it a cult or a military organization? It contained elements of both, but also transcended these. Lakwena established the HSMF for the purpose of war to enable the spread of a cult, which contained important emancipatory elements. On the one side the HSMF was rigidly organized in 4 companies, each of which was sub-divided in a number of platoons, themselves consisting of 3 sections each. The headquarters company was divided into departments, which catered for intelligence, munitions and weapons store, logistics etc. The command structure consisted of an overall Commander of the Forces (CF), with Officers in Command (OC) of the companies, and platoon and section commanders. Each of these had a Second in Command (2IC)[66]. At the same time, the spirit *'Lakwena'* was the overall Chairman of the Movement, with different spirits known as *'Wrong Element', 'Ching Po',* and *'Franco'* chairing the various companies. The role of Alice Auma was to mediate in the dialogue between these spirits and their Movement. Other recognizable cult elements consisted of the use of rituals that allowed 'God's Might' to be manipulated for specific ends, and the creation of a temple in Opit (Kitgum) as the center of a crusade to morally rehabilitate the entire population of liberated territories by establishing 'spirit yards', stressing the observance of the 'HS Safety Precautions', and persecuting sorcerers and witches. Moreover, after the destruction of the Amin years, the HSM acted in more ways than one as the forerunner of a modern emancipatory movement, with connotations of popular election, oversight, accountability, and affirmative action. To give some examples, the spirit Lakwena chose a woman to lead his movement because women were oppressed; the commanders at various levels of the HSMF, meeting minimum educational standards, were elected by the soldiers and were 'overseen' by a spirit; the headquarters company established a separate 'Women's Office' and 'Children's Office'; and a 'War Mobilization Committee' functioned as a decentralized structure with layers from district to village level to mobilize logistics for the war effort, issuing receipts for each donation.

Short-lived though the HSM was, during its military campaign its composition and to a certain extent its character evolved. Originally an Acholi movement, incorporating Langi as it went, the Teso became its largest contingent at one time. The HSM was able to cross ethnic boundaries in the 'North' but proved unable to maintain this feature when it crossed into the 'South'. As it largely depended on its mobilizing capacity, the 'hardness' of ethnic boundaries after decades of ethnic retaliation spelled its undoing once it crossed into 'Southern' Busoga territory. Where originally it consisted mainly of former UPDA rebels, peasants, students, and schoolchildren joined as the 'Mobile Forces' marched south. Behrend suspects that about half of those lost their lives in the various battles and the violent aftermath and retribution against the remaining HSMF 'soldiers' after their defeat[67]. The rapidly chang-

66 Ibidem, p.52

67 Ibidem, p.68

ing composition may also have caused a change in character over time. The UPA was a rebel movement active in the Teso area. The unprovoked killing of a number of its leaders on orders of Alice Lakwena broadened the hostile dynamics that already existed between the HSMF and the UPDA and Kony. Where originally women had successfully played a major role in all aspects of the war, including battle, social reality caught up with the HSM and women were increasingly relegated to the kitchen. Where the HSMF soldiers encountered hostility of the local population, such as in the town of Mbale on the way south, they resorted to violence to obtain provisions. In the end and unlike the LRA, its short life-span may have saved the Holy Spirit Movement from itself and the internal contradictions it was increasingly unable to master.

The Lord's Resistance Army

The previous look at the genesis and downfall of the HSM helps us to look at the LRA as a radical structure of rejection: the extent to which it is or has been a movement to reconstitute the moral order and how war figures in it, and how its nature and composition have changed over the years. We will argue first that the LRA is a more conventional guerilla army than the HSMF ever was, but that the religious justification for violence remains, if not dominant, extremely significant. The LRA sees its struggle against the GoU as a divine cause that is being directed and guided by God through his prophet Kony, a former altar boy who joined the UPDA as a 'spiritual mobilizer' in the UPDA's 'black battalion' in Gulu in early 1987[68]. This is expressed not so much in the words of Kony or other LRA leaders. Kony hardly ever speaks publicly, and in this he resembles Velupillai Prabhakaran, the elusive leader of the 'Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam, who is an enigma even to his most loyal commanders and has murdered many of them for suspected treason[69]. On the occasions when a direct record of Kony's statements was possible, he did not elaborate on the spiritual aspect of his struggle[70]. In the absence of a reliable spokesperson for the LRA, the spiritual aspect of the struggle is mainly pieced together from the reports of escapees and the visible characteristics of LRA practices: the interpretation of the war as ordained by spirits through a prophet, the importance of supporting rituals, the transcendent moralism justifying wholesale acts of violence as against the 'conventional' secular terrorist principle of the minimum force necessary, and the ritual intensity with which these acts are committed. We then look at possible meanings of the wholesale use of terror. The final part of our argument contends that very quickly, as the character and composition of the movement evolved to include the wholesale use of terror and kidnapping of children, the LRA became increasingly ensnared in a series of internal contradictions that it has proven unable to master. The result is that through its actions, the LRA has exacerbated the process of dehumanization it set out to counter.

[68] Nyeko, B., Okello, L., Profiles of the parties to the conflict, Accord,

[69] Hudson, R.A., The sociology and psychology of terrorism: who becomes a terrorist and why?, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, September 1999, p. 70

[70] Transcript of telephone call to radio call-in programme at FM Mega radio station in Gulu on 28/12/2002, at www.africafront.com/

Spiritual warfare

In the early years, Kony's troops seemed to have used a version of 'Holy Spirit' tactics identical to that of Lakwena. This aspect was, however, much less clearly articulated and in the public eye than the vision of Lakwena, and therefore more ambiguous from the start. All the same, a drastic change occurred with the signing of the peace accord between the UPDA and the NRA. The defiant UPDA commander Odong Latek joined Kony in 1988 rather than opting for peace. They declared their intention to continue fighting in a joint letter, which marked them out as having a much more Acholi nationalist vision than did Alice Lakwena, whose vision was that of radically transforming society, starting with Acholi and moving beyond. This UPDA connection is important in appreciating the nature of the LRA. It establishes an unbroken link with those non-purified former UNLA soldiers, the so-called 'internal strangers' in the idiom of Alice Lakwena. Remember that the HSMF and the section of the UPDA that refused to join her and stood in the way of her vision, were bitter enemies. These soldiers, tainted by their former UNLA connections, had refused to be 'spiritually rehabilitated'. Now they refused to be formally integrated under a peace agreement with the NRM/A. In other words, it was the very hard core of the UNLA lumpen militariat that teamed up with Kony to consolidate what would become the LRA. Several authors point out that the peace accord between the NRM/A and the UPDA brought the bulk of the UPDA back into the fold, but that those with the least education and the least to lose remained in the bush, confirming the suspicion that the previously discussed element of opportunity costs, 'having nothing else to do', was a real factor in consolidating this alliance. According to Charles Alai, a founder member of the UPDA (and in 1996 Minister of State for Public Services): *"when we (UPDA) came out, we had already disagreed with Kony and he took the most deadly and primitive officers with him"*[71]. To this day, the commanders closest to Kony such as Tabuley and Vincent Otti, are part of this UNLA/UPDA legacy in the LRA. This is significant for two reasons: they convinced Kony of favoring tested guerilla tactics over Holy Spirit tactics, and they brought with them an accomplished military experience of using terror as an instrument of war. Currently, the LRA is definitely structured along a military format with a strict hierarchy, albeit one that reflects its preference for guerilla tactics rather than the use of large formations favored, to its detriment, by the HSMF. Like a regular infantry army, the LRA has 5 brigades named Stocree, Sinia, Gilva, Shila, and Control Altar[72].

Even so, it would be a mistake to dismiss out of hand the force of the rebel's beliefs. A number of elements seem unambiguous from countless debriefing reports given by children who escaped from the LRA. First, like Alice Lakwena and the HSMF, Kony does not function in his own capacity, but as 'loar' or messenger of the spirits[73]. Operational orders from the spirits are passed by Kony to his military commanders. Kony introduced new and totally different spirits from those that guided Alice Lakwena, the novelty corresponding to his claims of supremacy. Their character and duties how-

[71] New Vision, Alai speaks his mind on North, 27/03/1996, p.20, quoted in: Westbrook, 2000, op.cit.

[72] Nyeko, B., Okello, L., Profiles of the parties to the conflict, Accord,

[73] Lubega, H., Serve God or be beheaded: an LRA rebel's story, The East African, 15/07/2002

ever are recognizable. They include a female Chief of Operations called Silli Silindi, a Korean Deputy Chief Ing Chu, who makes sure that hostile bullets only hit the sinful LRA soldiers and who commands an imaginary jeep battalion, two Americans named King Bruce and Jim Brickey, and the spirit of Juma Oris, the deceased interior minister under Idi Amin[74]. Whether these elements are fact or fancy is irrelevant here. What matters is that people believe it to be true. There have been documented cases where abductees were reluctant to take advantage of first rate opportunities for escape, a factor that some attribute to the fear of Kony's spiritual powers and to which they ascribe the limited success of the Amnesty Law so far[75].

Second, the famous 'ten commandments' are reminiscent of Alice's Holy Spirit Safety Precautions, and her vision of maintaining the 'purity' of society through strict adherence to them. It is important to see that in essence Kony's vision is not orthodox Christian, as is often argued on the basis of his alleged intention to rule society based on the 'biblical Ten Commandments', but that it is a system that is unorthodox, in conflict with the body of essential teachings regarding beliefs and practices to which the LRA compares itself. Although the edicts are identified with Moses' Ten Commandments, they are more an adapted allusion to a traditional practice of the Acholi elders to draw up a catalogue of prohibitions in times of crisis, the observation of which was supposed to cure a disturbed moral order[76]. In addition to these formal edicts laid down by the 'laor' claiming divine instruction, there are the ad hoc rules proclaimed by the various spirits, such as orders not to cook with oil from the yaa tree, sudden orders to refrain from sex, orders to let the rainwater run over one's face for four minutes...[77] As with the HSM, when a copy of the Koran was purchased when traversing Muslim areas in Iteso, allowance is made for some flexibility in the rules to incorporate new developments. Having a holy day on Friday and not breeding pigs or eating pork is an obvious nod towards the religion of Kony's main backers, while the prohibition for Acholi of living near roads or in camps serves tactical purposes of the LRA.

Like the HSM, elaborate rituals that include spirit yards and shea butter oil perform an essential function in the outlook of the LRM/A, reflecting an awareness that 'it is rituals that create beliefs and not the other way round'[78]. In addition to intricate induction rituals, escaped abductees relate that they are not to take cover and must stand up while walking into fire, exactly like the Holy Spirit soldiers, in the belief that 'holy water' will protect them as long as they respect the spiritual, hence divinely ordained, commands. From this viewpoint, caring for the wounded is tantamount to complicity in not respecting the command. In a speech Kony reportedly made in base-camp in Sudan, he threatened to destroy Lacor hospital near Gulu, because wounded people *"were cared for there, instead of dying"*[79]. Other examples reminiscent of the Holy Spirit tactics are rife: *"You also have water, they call it 'clean water', and they pour it into a bottle. If you go to the front, you have a small stick, and you dip it into the bottle and fling the water out. This is a river and drowns the bullet that might come to you"*[80]. However, the ritualized extreme

[74] Chang, A., Horror in the Jungle, ABC News, 04/11/2002

[75] Personal interviews, May 2003

[76] Behrend, H., op.cit., p. 161

[77] De Temmerman, op.cit., p.51

[78] Diken, B, Carsten, B., Zones of indistinction - security, terror, and bare life, Dep't of Sociology, Lancaster University, January 2002

[79] Amnesty International, Breaking God's commands: the destruction of lives by the Lord's Resistance Army, September 1997, p.6

[80] Human Rights Watch, op.cit.,1997

violence children are forced to mete out on others very soon after abduction, is very different from any practices the HSMF was associated with. There are many crushing testimonies of children narrating how they were forced to kill some of their peers by means of axes, knives, or sticks[81]. Meant as a tool to break down resistance to LRA authority, to destroy taboos about killing and to implicate the child in criminal acts, it crowns the annals of LRA-inflicted trauma of the Acholi community.

The use of terror

Religious terrorism, as opposed to 'secular' terrorism motivated by political gains, assumes a transcendental dimension. They are not fighting within the rules of society as they exist, but reject these rules[82]. Religious terrorists regard violence not only as a necessary expedient for the attainment of their goals, which can be religious, racial or ethnic purification, but as divinely decreed and hence morally justified almost as a sacramental act[83]. To use a colloquial turn of phrase, violence is not only a struggle to 'win the hearts and minds' of the people, but also their souls. This may explain the enormous disparity between ends and means, between the number of people killed and maimed and the purported transformative goal behind Kony's vision, since violence tends to be viewed as an end in itself while the desired political change remains nonspecific, to put it mildly.

Although drawing parallels with other experiences of religious or millenarian terrorism helps us to grasp the intensity of the violence in Acholi, the violence itself must be contextualized. One of the main characteristics of the war is that it is about the control of population, rather than territory: the government forces people to move, the LRA tries to abduct them. Control of civilians is a key strategic objective for both the UPDF and the LRA[84]. Central to the conflict therefore is the issue of how sovereignty (power) works and how a political space is constructed and delimited, and this struggle for legitimacy involves the population as the object of the struggle. The sovereign is the one who decides over the state of exception, the distinction between 'law' and 'unlaw', the areas where the rule of law is applicable or not: *"we do not begin with the sovereign who decides on the state of exception; on the contrary, the one who can declare a state of exception is sovereign"*[85]. In this sense, sovereignty is demonstrated through an act of abandoning subjects outside the rule of law, where humans can be killed without the commission of homicide, without the executioner facing any legal sanctions.

To understand this better we need to make a small detour via the Principal-Agent dilemma as espoused in economic and political theory. One of the features of a modern complex society is that people (principals) have to trust others (agents) to carry out their wishes. Examples are political representation of the people (principals) by elected members (agents), or the directors of a company who are themselves agents of the shareholders (principals).

[81] See for example Amnesty International, op.cit., p.14

[82] Note how this has a bearing on the interpretation of human rights law as man-made rather than God-given.

[83] Hoffman, B., 1993, op.cit., p.2

[84] Amnesty International, Breaking the circle: protecting human rights in the Northern War Zone, March 1999, p.1

[85] Diken, B., Laustsen, C.B., 2002, op.cit., p.2

The dilemma resides in the fact that principals cannot ensure that their best interests are served by their agents, because of asymmetric information between the two sides. The greater the divergence between preferences of the agents and principals, the greater is the so-called 'agency loss'. The solution requires some way for the principals of monitoring the performance of their agents, and/or incentives for the agents to behave in the principals' interests. In a modern democratic state, the elected government consists of politicians that act as agents of their constituents, but the government as a whole is supposed to take to heart the interests of all citizens as enshrined in a state's constitution, and can therefore be considered to function as the agent of all citizens. Likewise, a terrorist movement motivated by political gains caters to the expectations of a particular constituency variously composed of actual and potential sympathizers (which can be defined in many ways, be it by way of ideology, nationalism etc.).

The dilemma for the population of Acholi now is twofold; the LRA is definitely not their agent, because the minimum expectation a principal would have towards the actions of an agent is that it respects their preference to stay alive. In the same vein, the government of Uganda does not act as the agent of the Acholi. In the Ugandan case under the 'big tent' Movement idea of government, all citizens are considered members of the so-called Movement, which is the political principal. The Acholi themselves, through their voting preferences massively rejected the Movement both in the presidential and parliamentary elections of 1996 and 2001. In what follows we shall argue that the Principal-Agent relation of the Acholi people both with the Movement and the LRA is reversed. The Acholi are not so much the principal as the agent in its relation with the government and the LRA. The Movement as principal expects the Acholi as agents to be aligned with the Movement's expressed preferences, and must ensure that divergences are minimized through monitoring, made easier by grouping the population in camps, and positive and negative incentives. The "agency loss' of Acholi would be disastrous in a fragmented country with many centrifugal tendencies. The LRA, intent on creating its self-proclaimed 'New Order', is the principal that must ensure that the Acholi population caters to its preferences through monitoring and negative incentives, of which terror is a mainstay. Failure of the LRA to contain 'agency loss' would spell the end of their envisaged new society. *'Between two fires'* indeed, as the title of a study on the human rights situation in 'protected camps' aptly suggests[86]. As the villagers experience every day, falling victim to one group does not necessarily shield one from attack from their enemies.

Government controls the Acholi and not the other way round. Although the GoU has never declared a 'state of emergency' or 'exception', save for the period when 'Operation North' was conducted in 1991 and large areas of the North were cordoned off, the Acholi districts are effectively in a state of exception as marked by the forced movement of the population in so-called 'protected camps'[87]. In September 1996, the UPDF announced that everyone should relocate to the trading centres where the Army detachments were

[86] Human Rights Focus (HURI-FO), Between two fires: the human rights situation in protected camps in Gulu District, 2002, 85 p.

[87] Or 'protected barracks' as some have called them. The detachments are usually at the centre of the camp.

located. This was not long after the presidential elections of 1996, in which the Acholi threw their weight 'en masse' behind the opposition candidates. Although humanitarian concerns were given as rationale for this development, basic amenities were not in place. Senior UPDF Commanders talked about the destruction of the "intelligence of insurgency" and the removal of soft targets and logistics for the survival of the rebels[88]. In this sense, the state of exception, disorder, was granted a permanent and visible localization, where the authority monitors individuals immobilized on the edge of society so to speak. These camps signal that the state of exception has become the rule, as well as signaling the potentiality of abandonment, of being placed outside the rule of law as distinct from the mainstream of Ugandan society. This is not imaginary, as a look through reports documenting human rights violations against displaced persons by Ugandan government forces confirms. These abuses range from arbitrary arrests, torture, killings, sexual offences etc[89]. The basic strategy involved is to exploit people's distrust for the sake of making them compliant with the state's rules. To economize on information costs, the government relies on a self-reinforcing mechanism, namely control of deviant behaviour by the people themselves. The protected camps are protected by homeguard units, recruited at the grassroot level and trained for 3 months, and commanded by officers from the regular army force. A massive recent recruitment drive by the army brought in 7000 new homeguards[90]. As Platteau asserts, such a strategy comes down to *"vesting prosecutorial powers in the public….the distrust hereby created unavoidably gives rise to severe excesses or injustices and spills over into all spheres of human interaction"*[91]. As the grouping of people in rural areas is never watertight, the government forces have had to invest in pre-emptive risk-management through continuous, mobile forms of surveillance, the so-called Mobile Unit which traverses the countryside.

What the LRA, under the absolute control of Kony, has in common with the HSMF, is that it sees itself as the righteous few, those that are at once the activists and constituents of their movement. They are outsiders from what they see as a virtual world, and terror is a traumatic intervention of the "real" into the "virtual" world. For the LRA as for the HSMF, the population of Acholi is a potential constituency for their vision of a renewed and purified society, but the potential can only be realized by passing through the suitable rituals and continuing to adhere to the commandments. Even having undergone the induction rites, one is therefore always at risk of being unmasked, through a violent death on the battlefield or other, as not really belonging to the constituency of renewal. Continued violence is for that reason a fundamental condition for renewal and cleansing. Terror is also very much the mainstay of control of the potential constituency. The LRA needs the population of Acholi to act as its agents, and not to betray them actively or even passively, by enjoying too much the good life under Museveni. People are frequently warned not to go and live in the IDP camps or join the homeguards. Being suspected of acting as informer for government forces carries the death penalty. In January 1997 for example, the LRA attacked a number

[88] HURIFO, op.cit., p.18; Justice and Peace Commission of Gulu Archdiocese, Let my people go: the forgotten plight of the people in the displaced camps in Acholi, 2001, 36 p.

[89] HURIFO, op.cit., p.43-52; ISIS-WICCE, op.cit, 2001, p.28

[90] Father Carlos, Kitgum: slow silent death, quoting Rupiny

[91] Platteau, J-P., Behind the market stage where real societies exist - Part II; the role of moral norms, Journal of Development Studies, Vol.30, No.3, April 1994, ppp.753-817, Frank Cass, London

of villages in Kitgum, killing 400 people and destroying their granaries. Until that time, unlike Gulu District, Kitgum had been largely spared and some development activities were proceeding well as in the neighbouring districts of Lango and Apac. According to the accounts of some former abductees, *"the LRA is avenging the population of Kitgum for its alleged cooperation with the UPDF"*[92]. Another example is the vicious campaign the LRA conducted against suspected members of government-sponsored local militia, the Arrow Brigades, in the early nineties in the aftermath of 'Operation North'. The rebels, enraged about the 'treason', cut of the ears and lips, padlocked mouths and gouged out the eyes of suspected collaborators, mutilating them to point them out as turncoats. As Kony stated, *"the Bible says that if your hand, eye, or mouth is at fault, it should be cut off"*[93].

More than retaliation, terror is a vehicle to project power towards the Ugandan state by creating a state of exception and immobilizing the population on the edge of society effectively enough to enforce a distinction between 'law' and 'unlaw', where rules other than those set by the LRA do not hold. Unlike the UPDF which is able to immobilize the population through spatial confinement, the LRA must immobilize the population through fear. To be effective, indiscriminate terror must be more than a threat, something which, tragically enough, is confirmed in the daily litany of atrocities reaching the newsrooms. At the same time terror generalizes responsibility through the logic of the hostage or abductee: *"the hostage is a truly sacral fetish object, a naked, formless body which is absolutely convertible"*[94]. Since anybody can be hit, anybody can be blackmailed by terrorism. What is noteworthy here is that both UPDF and the LRA rely for their monitoring of the population on self-enforcing mechanisms that exploit people's distrust for the sake of making them compliant with the proscribed rules, resulting in an a-social network where the social space where sympathetic interaction occurs is utterly destroyed. The UPDF relies on the recruitment of local homeguards, frequently very young. The LRA relies on the abduction of children to create a negative a-social network of support *"by using the children as pawns to prevent their parents and other relatives from supporting the government"*[95]. The LRA stole a child from almost every extended family in Acholi, so now *"your own child is living as a rebel. So if the rebels come through and demand food or information, it is not only your fear for yourself, you think also of your child, and hope that your own child is not hungry"*[96]. In this sense it is interesting to find Kony expressing himself about the 'trickery of UNICEF taking our children away', in reference to the efforts to reintegrate escapees[97].

Internal contradictions

The type of warfare conducted by the LRA produces its own internal contradictions, separating the rebellion ever more from its initial intent to produce a purified society. Originally waged to set society free from evil, it uses the idioms of witchcraft (rituals, spirit possessions) to produce a situation

[92] Latigo, Ben, Acholi: victims of the Northern war and isolation, presentation in Kacoke Madit of 1998; It is worthwhile to note that precisely this argument is used by President Museveni with regards to the resistance in Teso against the LRA, and would have lured the LRA there in the first place: '... a large number of schools, health centers, boreholes, rural roads etc. It is this development that has actually mobilized the people in Teso and Lango. They cannot countenance any criminal idiot disturbing their development on account of greed for power outside of the constitution" (Museveni, Arrow boys are UPDF reserves, The Monitor, 08/09/2003, p.11)

[93] Nyeko, B., Profiles of the parties to the conflict, ACCORD; quoting Kony during the peace talks of 1994

[94] Diken, B., Laustsen, C.B., 2002, op.cit., p.8

[95] Behrend, 1999, op.cit., p.194

[96] Interview quoted in Human Rights Watch, 1997, op.cit.

[97] Otto, Patrick, Implementing the 1999 Nairobi Agreement, ACCORD: citing a discussion between Kony and Carter Centre representatives in Juba in 1999

where killing and suffering are not cleansed. To the contrary, the situation is now understood by many in Acholi to be similar to 1986, when the unreconciled cen (bad spirits) of all those wasted lives jeopardized the existence of every person in Acholi. *"The power of a jok (spirit) used for personal gain in private and for destruction constitutes witchcraft"*[98]. Kony uses his spirits for vengeance and killing, and so turns into the thing he is fighting, an ajwaka, the most feared of witch doctors. These contradictions are sucked into a negative spiral powered by the built-in propensity for incremental violence. The public and media have become inured or de-sensitized to the unending stream of terrorist violence, and therefore ever higher levels of lethality are needed. An absolute zenith was reached by the mass killings in Pader in October 2002, where victims of at least one massacre were reportedly chopped up and cooked by the rebels, who then tried to force the villagers to eat the remains. In this sense, terror is indeed, and ever more so, *"an event without consequences"*[99]. The lethality is itself built on a recipe that blends children, stolen from their families, and a surplus of light and very deadly weapons sucked in from the wider regional conflicts. The use of children as pawns to create an a-social network of support, combined with the exploitation of distrust, the so-called network of 'collaborators', as a mechanism of self-monitoring imposed by the LRA, in turn perpetuates the social breakdown. The LRA uses young girls as objects in a reward system for their commanders, while the UPDF encourages the practice for girls and young women to turn into 'camp followers', in the absence of anything better for them to do in a broken-down society. In the long run, the distrust created by these episodes gives rise to severe excesses, and fear and suspicion infiltrate into all spheres of human interaction.

Why does the war continue?

As with the other aspects of the conflict, there are no hard and fast answers to the above question, indicating that the reasons for its continuation are many and deep. Basically there are three possible groups of answers, and all of these have a sediment of truth in them. Either the LRA is strong, because it is supported by the local population and/or supported from the outside. Or the UPDF is weak because of internal failings and/or competing demands put before it. Or we are all missing the big picture, and the war in the north is a façade for other goings-on, such as supporting the SPLA at the political level and/or doing well out of war at the level of individual officers/commanders, just as it provides opportunities for political posturing for politicians in a 'peace-seeking' role.

In what follows, we shall take a look at the support structure for the LRA, the problems the UPDF faces in fighting the war, as well as hidden motives. The issue of collaboration of the local population is perhaps the most contentious and ambiguous element of the war. Both parties use it in their fight for control of the population: accusations are lightly made with

[98] Behrend, H., Is Alice Lakwena a Witch?, Hanson and Twaddle, eds. Changing Uganda (London: James Currie, 1991, p.173)

[99] Baudrillard, J., Fatal Strategies, Paris, Semiotexte/Pluto, 1990

extremely harsh retribution for those accused. With regards to international support, the involvement of Sudan in the war had achieved the status of 'conventional wisdom'. In the course of 2002 some new dynamics surfaced that may point to a wider regional setting than was hitherto understood, demonstrating that the conflict signals as much the broader political dynamics at the regional level as it reflects internal Acholi dynamics. As to UPDF weakness, the fault seems to be a combination of tactical issues, particular to the war in the North, with a number of structural weaknesses. The UPDF defensive tactics in Acholi are built around the localization of defense, the homeguards and protected camps, connected by mobile UPDF patrol units. The drawbacks of such a set-up are coupled with more structural issues within the UPDF as unearthed by the Porter Commission of Inquiry. Finally, there is evidence of both UPDF and LRA conduct that underscores the reality of vested economic interests in a continuation of the conflict, although the issues of control over the extraction of (mineral) wealth or the manipulation of relief aid are not as clear as in other civil wars.

LRA support

Support to the LRA can be understood at the level of the Acholi population, whether local or exiled, as well as support embedded in wider political machinations. With regards to the local population, the record is extremely ambiguous. There are reports that *"some villagers, especially in Kitgum and Pader, do follow the bandits into their hideouts and donate goats and fowl. Some even chat up the commanders and share meals"*[100]. The government adds its piece by regularly arresting 'collaborators' and even releasing lists of alleged financiers and collaborators, as it did in August 2002 with a list published in the monthly army magazine 'Tarehe Sita'[101]. Such allegations tend to clash with reports of the deliberate targeting of civilians by the LRA for perceived lack of support, such as the massacre of 490 civilians in Lamwo in January 1998. In discussions with people in the North, in particular government representatives are wont to claim that there is an active level of support or 'collaboration' - a loaded word if ever there was one - for the LRA, different from local support emanating from being tied into the depicted a-social network, or support grounded in fear. To take hold of the principal-agent lingo again, what they are actually saying is that the LRA is acting as the agent of at least part of the Acholi constituency, its principal, rather than the other way around. This is actually overstating the case. It may indeed be correct to say that the Acholi don't trust the UPDF. A glance at the fieldwork findings of an exercise involving 150 people from 11 different communities, may give enough indications why, judging from the number and nature of abuses from the NRA (later UPDF) experienced at a personal level, next to the not less innumerable abuses endured from the UPDA, HSMF, and LRA[102]. The fact also remains that most officers of the UPDF in the North are from the southern part, whereas the local population is connected through kinship ties to LRA rebels, whether these are established through abductions or otherwise[103]. Yet

[100] New Vision, Kony's Weird World: Onapito Ekomoloit, 04/10/2002

[101] The Monitor, Army releases list of rebel collaborators, Alex Atuhaire, 16/08/2002

[102] Dolan, Chris, What do you remember? A rough guide to the war in Northern Uganda 1986-2000, ACORD, COPE working paper no. 33, April 2000, 28 p.

[103] The daughter of traditional leader Rwot Aywak in Pader for example, is married regularly - with brideprice - to Commander Tabuley.

the link from this distrust of the government and UPDF to substantial operational collaboration of the Acholi with the LRA is not proven. On the whole it would be just as correct to say that most people are opposed to the war, and in this sense opposed to both sides in the conflict. Besides, government reports of collaborators should also be treated with a grain of salt. There is the detention without charge or trial and torture of suspected rebel collaborators in rural detachments. When charged, suspected members of armed opposition movements and so-called 'rebel collaborators' are often charged with treason. This precludes granting of bail for 360 days, so that suspected opponents of government can be held for long periods without trial. Hence not every person charged with treason is inevitably a collaborator.

In terms of outside support, the LRA have traditionally been one among several militia groups, such as the Equatoria Defense Forces (EDF) and the Southern Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF), used by the Sudanese army to fight the SPLM/A. Through the Nairobi agreement of 1999, Uganda and Sudan have committed to the cessation of support for hostile forces on each other's territory. A protocol between the two states supports 'Operation Iron Fist' by allowing the UPDF to operate south of an agreed 'red line' in its pursuit of the LRA in Sudan. Distrust between parties however remains formidable. The capture of Torit by the SPLA in September 2002 must have raised a few eyebrows in Khartoum, regarding the keenness of the UPDF to dissuade the SPLA from such attacks. Remember that this offensive was waged during the GoS-SPLA peace talks in Machakos (Kenya), with the UPDF operating a little south of Torit on a special Sudan government authorization. In late September, Sudanese government forces bombed the UPDF in Palotaka, to the south of Torit, an incident later claimed to be an 'accident' by the GoS. Vice versa, suspicions that the GoS, directly or through its proxy militia, has tacitly continued to support the LRA, or has once more started doing so after renewed SPLA activity, are openly aired in the Ugandan press and just as vigorously denied by the GoS. In an interview with CNN, Museveni *"accused Sudan of secretly arming the LRA and fuelling the insurgency in northern Uganda in a bid to expand her borders"*[104]. Whether these accusations are surefire is hard to verify, although there are persistent messages about the good quality of weaponry and uniforms of the LRA.

[104]The New Vision, 'Sudan re-arms Kony Fighters', 16/06/2003

The Sudanese connection is however only one element in a complex set of regional and international relationships. The fact that the LRA is without a recognizable political wing, has spurred on various groups to try and commandeer the military strength of the LRA for their political agenda. In this one should consider that the LRA is presently the only operational rebel group in Uganda, after the defeat of the ADF and the peace agreement between the GoU and the NURF II. Formerly, there was talk about connections between the ADF and the LRA, both allegedly supported by Sudan. More recently, there have been rumors of a link between former presidential candidate Col. Kizza Besigye's Reform Agenda and the LRA. One of Besigye's former aides, James Opoka, supposedly made contacts with the LRA, and the government

press declared he may have been executed in March 2003 together with ten other LRA rebels. *"Sources said those executed rebels were trying to link up with some Reform Agenda members to groom a political leader without Kony's knowledge. Sources said Kony was outraged by the move and ordered the immediate execution of the 10 rebels"*[105]. Government has consistently asserted a link between the Reform Agenda and a new and obscure rebel group called the 'People's Redemption Army' (PRA) allegedly backed by Rwanda through its proxies in Eastern Congo (RCD Goma). The least the disclosures about a suspected link between the Reform Agenda and the LRA makes clear then, is the possible embedding of the continuation or resolution of the war in Acholi in wider regional relations than was so far believed.

Internal problems of the UPDF

The internal problems of the UPDF are no secret. As one article puts it, *"troop registers were greatly inflated and soldiers unprepared. Commanders were corrupt, salaries were late and low, and there was little incentive to anyone to fight... Buses leaving Gulu are routinely stopped and searched in an attempt to catch the many army deserters"*[106]. For most of the duration of 'Operation Iron Fist', ongoing since March 2002, President Museveni has been encamped in Gulu to oversee the operations himself. With the LRA in June 2003 entering far-off districts such as Katakwi and Adjumani for the first time since 1991, President Museveni felt compelled to give a personal account of events in the press. One of the concerns he tackles in the statement is that of indiscipline and laxity in the army, citing drunkenness as one of the contributing factors[107]. Similarly, according to the Monitor newspaper, the LRA gave advance notice to the UPDF of an impending attack in Mucwini (Kitgum), where 70 civilians were massacred in July 2002 after the UPDF apparently disregarded the message, while the New Vision reported the rounding up by the garrison commander of 68 soldiers in Gulu town for bad behaviour in the same month[108]. Although the state of affairs cannot be compared to the excesses of Amin's army, it is clear that these issues do not inspire confidence in UPDF alertness and discipline.

This is to a certain extent related to the way counter-insurgency is structured around uneducated and poorly trained homeguards in rural army outposts where the army officers-on-duty are often absent. As the Porter report establishes with regards to the conduct of the overall Commander, Kazini, in the DRC, *"in the matter of control of his commanders in the field, investigation, follow-up and disciplinary action in relation to complaints under this officer's area of command were suspiciously weak"*. The swift and non-transparent verdicts delivered by the mobile court-martials in those rare cases where abuses and episodes of indiscipline committed by army grunts are tried, and the immediate carrying out of executions, do not alleviate doubts about the army's effectiveness. There is still no law that regulates minimum requirements and promotion within the army. A frequent complaint

[105] The New Vision, Opoka dead?, 13/03/2003

[106] The Christian Science Monitor, Terror tag shifts Uganda's war, op.cit

[107] The New Vision, Museveni explains Kony rebel attacks, 20/06/03

[108] Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, War of Words, February 2003, 33 p.

from the President as overall Commander of the UPDF is donor pressure to curtail military expenditures, leaving it with no or obsolete crucial equipment such as attack and troop transport helicopters. To the extent that this is correct, there are questions again about tactics. As Major General Tinyefuza cautioned Parliament in 1997, *"when you start shooting tanks at rebels, then you know you are in trouble".* In terms of the pressures on the army and the implied effects on its performance, these have been well-documented. The army presence in the DRC for example, only recently withdrawn, and additional conflict dynamics related to Karamajong cattle rustling and small arms trade, have strained the capacity to respond effectively to changes in conflict dynamics. The UPDF's ability does not seem to have been beefed up by the creation of the 5th Division, nor through across the board cutbacks of 23% on all government programmes in favour of an increase in defense expenditures in the fiscal year 2002-2003, or the highly publicized US contribution of 3 million $ to 'fight terrorism in the North'[109].

[109] New Vision, USA gives $ 3M to fight Kony, 10/01/2003

Doing well out of war

An added factor keeping alive the conflict is that the war over time has *"become a lucrative source and cover for clandestine income for high-ranking military and government officials and other profiteers"*[110]. Have the government and the LRA, or factions within them, developed a vested interest to keep the war going? Ostensibly, the economic motivations behind the persistence of the war are not as apparent as they are for example in the eastern DRC, with its prize of gold, timber, and coltan, or the case of Sierra Leone's or Angola's 'blood diamonds'. Still in a town like Kitgum, cut off by the threat of rebel ambushes and with a high rate of infant malnutrition, casual observation of the shops and bars finds them well-stocked with most amenities such as hardware, food and drugs, while beer is certainly not an article lacking in supplies. Curiously, unlike the WFP convoys, the distribution of a bulky item such as beer seems not to attract the notice of the LRA. Similarly, new buildings are going up in Kitgum as well as Gulu. The LRA has routinely looted food and valuables from the rural population when it is on the move. At the start of 'Operation Iron Fist' for example, the LRA fled from Juba to the safety of the Imatong Hills just across from the Ugandan border. There it ransacked and razed to the ground at least 6 villages, killing more than 470 villagers, and attacked a number of IDP camps. In Uganda, it habitually extracts surpluses from the rural population, either by looting any food stocks and valuables, which are then portered by adult abductees, or by forcing adults sleeping in the bush to 'pay the lodge', a fee of Ush 10,000 (US$ 5) at the peril of being abducted.

[110] Otunnu, Ogenga, Causes and consequences of the war in Acholiland, ACCORD

President Museveni has consistently maintained in public that the war in Acholi was about personal enrichment of the rebel leaders, 'parasites of society', fighting for a style of life they could not afford through 'legal toil'[111]. Yet suspicions of vested interests are not related to one side of the conflict

[111] These particular allusions were made in his address to parliament in 1997. He maintained the same critique in his State of the Nation Address (SONA) to parliament in June 2003.

[112] Perrot, S., Entrepreneurs de

uniquely. As in other situations, some people within the army would profit directly or indirectly from the conflict. We have already flagged the theft of all cattle from Acholi in the period 1987-88, at an estimated value of 24 million US$, in which the NRA was at least passively involved by not preventing it. Other classic examples are the 'mundane' forms of corruption, such as padding the records with a number of ghost soldiers, more than 10,000 according to an army audit in 1997, or the army fuel to which a green colorant had to be added to prevent its sale to civilians[112]. In 1997, the president criticized the monthly disappearance of 400 million Ush of funds destined to finance the government's war effort in the North[113]. And if the experiences of the army's conduct in the DRC are anything to go by, the report of the Porter Commission on ill-gotten wealth in the DRC may yield some noteworthy clues. It finds no conclusive evidence of a number of allegations made in the UN report[114], but with regards to a particular form of racketeering states categorically that *"there is no doubt that as a matter of practice 'Security/Intelligence Funding' was imposed on RCD, businessmen and companies, or that General Kazini's regret was that his commanders were likely to take the money for themselves, rather than accounting to him"*[115]. Yet the biggest trophy for unscrupulous army officers in keeping the war going may have less to do with the nature of some of the above manipulations, and more with the war providing a rationale for increased defense expenditures which can then be subjected to dodgy procurement practices, as the saga of the junk helicopters suggests. Incidentally, classified expenditures under the defense budget are not subject to any civilian control procedures, including the scrutiny of the Attorney General. To avoid vested interests from becoming too entrenched, both Museveni and Kony rotate the contingents of commanders and combatants. The regular rotation of top posts in the UPDF is well-known. It is said that the same applies to the LRA, with brigades being shifted around the north. Some even link the flare-ups in LRA violence in particular places to the effecting of these transfers on the ground.

A concern for the donor community is whether their support will not in itself grow to be a prize in the conflict. So far, the manipulation and taxing of aid has not been an apparent strategy of the parties to the conflict, although at one time rumours circulated that it did play a role in financing the local election campaigns of early 2002. Up to now, the LRA has burned rather than looted relief aid coming in, as was the case with a truck filled with non-food items ambushed on the Gulu-Kitgum road or the ambush of a WFP convoy carrying 300 tons of food aid in September 2002. Targeting food aid may well become a strategy with the current huge displacement of the population, combined with the LRA's loss of its rear base in Sudan, forcing it to be on the move in an environment where all food has long gone. On a different note but related, is the question for donors whether the monetization of the Amnesty process through the provision to returnees of packages of non food items and cash, will not undermine the very process of reconciliation and reintegration the amnesty is supposed to promote. It is reported for example that in 1994, when for a moment it seemed as if Betty Bigombe might bring home 'the head

l'insecurite: la face cachee de l'armee ougandaise, in Dossier: l'Ouganda, une puissance regionale?, Politique Africaine No 75 - Octobre 1999, pp.60-71

[113] The New African, October 1997

[114] Final report of the panel of experts on the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth of the DRC, UN Security Council, October 2002

[115] Porter Commission, op.cit, p.202, 43.4

of the elephant' (peace), some youngsters joined the LRA so as to benefit from whatever amnesty package might be provided for ex-combatants in a formal peace settlement.

Is no loaf better than half a loaf?[116]

No words can do justice to the obscenity of the war in northern Uganda. The LRA is in total breach of the human rights standards that the world community has defined in international law. The use of the community's own children and the lack of an explicit agenda for the violence epitomize the ultimate depoliticization, even depriving the victim of the possibility of ascribing responsibility for, or understanding of, the anguish suffered. At the same time, the conflict offers us a strident vision of the state in extreme circumstances.

The robustness of the conflict as a semi-permanent feature of the Ugandan condition for the last 17 years indicates that the forces working against peace appear to be stronger than the forces working for it. This seems to give emphasis to contextualizing the conflict within a broader strategy of violence legitimization; *"At a time when the state's very statehood is being challenged, the attack, even as it undermines the sovereign's hold, provides it with a unique opportunity to performatively reassert its centrality along the lines of the protego ergo obligo"1*[117].

In this light the way forward is unambiguous, and has been repeated ad infinitum. The best anti-terrorism strategy is an expansive approach of democratic, social and political change by non-violent means, complemented by an equally expansive approach to augment the opportunity cost of rebellion by increasing the endowment of economic and human capital.

An important and commendable aspect over the years have been the efforts to create a common space through dialogue, in order to reduce the levels of violence sufficiently so that normal means of social and political conflict resolution can come into play. In these attempts to create an environment in which the LRA rebels can lay down their arms, through strengthening of social institutions and mechanisms for conflict resolution, civil society institutions have been a testimony to the ability and willingness of local people to contribute to peace. Their efforts serve as an emergent model of collaborative problem solving at the local level, especially as some of these initiatives constitute an important departure from the legacy of religious polarization and partisanship, as demonstrated by the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative. Single-handedly, these organizations have made the case of the abducted children in Uganda a 'cause célèbre' in the child rights movement and the campaigns against child soldiers. On the other hand, many of the strategies are still new and untested, and at times there seem to be no clear distinctions between the objectives of humanitarian, development, human rights, and conflict resolution agencies, so that potential contradictions are not always recognized. In addition, and as Bradbury put it, *"the simplicity of*

[116] Reference to a question tabled in a Kacoke Madit presentation about peace or continuing conflict?

[117] Megret, F., War? Legal Semantics and the Move to Violence, European Journal of International Law, Vol.13 (2002) No.2, pp.361-401

much analysis neglects the wider forces at play"[118]. This is especially the case where it concerns the LRA on the one hand, how it is constituted, its relation with the local population, and the mix of military and political strategies of government on the other. There seems to be a pronounced degree of unawareness for example of the balance of forces and the abuses meted out on the other side of the border, involving Sudanese Acholi as perpetrators in one of the various militia such as the EDF, or as victims, for example the hundreds of people that perished in the massive LRA attacks near the Imatong Hills in September 2002. However important the efforts of civil society are in psycho-social counseling and community-based reconciliation, there is a need to look beyond the problems of Acholi social institutions and the psychological behaviour of the Acholi, and recognize the politics of the situation at national and regional level.

In attempting to create local institutional mechanism for dialogue to overcome resistance of the conflict to negotiated settlement, a number of dilemmas stand out. First is the difficulty of advocating for a peace settlement to which the key may lie with parties beyond the reach of local actors; the LRA ability to act independently from the GoS for example is unclear. Second is the difficulty to develop a common language to bridge the very different worldviews of the parties to the conflict. How to develop an agenda for negotiation and settlement with a rebel group that stresses a spiritual/millenarian dimension of 'cleansing' and 'liberation' and that keeps on hammering the point of historical wrongs?[119] One of the main attempts to overcome this dilemma, and develop a system of interlocutors between the rebels, government and the local population, has been the resurrection of the traditional leaders, in essence the re-creation of the system of clan leaders *(rwodi)* and the anointment of a new set of rwodi. There are definitely questions about the effectiveness of the reinvention of traditional leadership structures of male elders in a context of war and profound cultural change, with almost the entire population displaced and a generation of youngsters brought up in conditions that are very far removed from those that enabled the functioning of those leadership structures. It seems to bring to the fore the generational aspect that is inherent in the conflict, where elders were seen to be ineffective or worse, to have abandoned their responsibilities in the first place, at the very start of the conflict. Not surprisingly, it is seen by some as an attempt by male adults to re-establish control. How much credibility the Acholi people do give to these reinvented structures is unclear. The main question perhaps relates to how these structures interact with a new generation of outspoken political leaders from Acholi - in parliament, in the local councils - and whether it allows these political leaders to effectively fill the long-standing leadership vacuum through political competition.

Whatever admiration and/or criticism one may reserve for civil society initiatives to help bring an end to the conflict, the government of Uganda remains a key player. How to dispel the distrust its actions and statements generate is perhaps the main question in establishing a climate conducive

[118] Bradbury, M., 1999, op.cit., p.32

[119] It is useful at this juncture to point out how little civil society itself seems to base its interventions upon a profound anthropological knowledge of Acholi society. Those documents of civil society organisations that take the trouble to understand the worldview of the LRA and how it is grounded in the local culture, seem exceedingly rare.

to a peace settlement. A number of factors do not seem overly conducive to establishing a climate of growing trust. First, it continues to maintain an artificial distinction between 'rebels killed' on the battlefield by the UPDF and 'children rescued' from the LRA, although both categories effectively cover the same group of abducted children pressed into battle by the LRA. Notwithstanding this, in his letter to the editor in the New Vision of 20/06/03, president Museveni insists on referring to the rebels as 'bandits' and 'terrorists'. At the same time, there are continuing allegations that the UPDF keeps on recruiting children for auxiliary forces such as the 'homeguards'. In its latest report on the LRA conflict, Human Rights Watch calls unambiguously on the GoU to apply international standards for escaped, demobilized, and captured children, and to stop recruiting children for auxiliary forces[120]. Second, it is exceedingly hard to come by trustworthy information on the progress of the military campaigns, and independent verification by the press has hardly been encouraged by the temporary closure of the Monitor newspaper for publishing allegedly false information regarding an army helicopter gunship which it reported was shot down. On 20/12/2002 the government stated that only 514 LRA fighters were left, and that 'elimination' was just a matter of weeks away. Taking into account the UPDF's own tally of rebels killed, only 210 should have remained by the month of June, when the LRA expanded its campaign to the Iteso and West Nile region. Third, in agreeing to talk to the LRA as was the case during the cease-fire which the government declared in March 2002, the government does not appear to be acting in unison. As one person put it, *"when the grass is short the government wants to talk, when the grass is long the LRA wants to talk".* Some spokespersons strongly advocate for a negotiated settlement, while others simultaneously push to 'meet fire with fire'[121]. As O'Kadameri states with regards to the Betty Bigome - LRA talks in 1994, *"at no time were the top army leadership including the President, willing to tell Bigombe unambiguously that she was doing the right thing and had their full support"*[122]. The appearance and interventions in Gulu of a government-sponsored paramilitary force, the 'Kalangala Action Plan' of former presidential advisor Major Kakooza Mutale, best known for its arm-twisting interventions during the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2001, is a show of contempt for the efforts of local authorities to build more trust between them and the rural people and throws up questions about the sincerity of government in pursuing peace in the North[123]. Finally, maintaining the 'state of exception' - absence of arrest processes that guarantee fair trial and put the judiciary firmly in charge, and of investigations of acts of torture and ill-treatment of detainees - as the de facto norm in the Acholi districts, cannot enhance a climate conducive to gradual trust-building. Ending war means creating justice.

The last point brings us directly to the main dilemma the government faces in establishing relations with the LRA, that of balancing human rights, justice, and peace. It must for example balance the pursuit of democracy and justice and the endeavour of securing the cooperation of those who stand to lose from democracy and peace, as it must balance its position against hu-

[120]Human Rights Watch, Uganda, Abducted and Abused: Renewed conflict in Northern Uganda, Vol.15, No 12 (A), 2003

[121]UN OCHA report, 2003, op.cit.

[122]O'Kadameri, op.cit.

[123]This force has been accused of abducting a number of prisoners charged with treason from their cells in Gulu and dumping them on the steps of the Uganda Human Rights Commission office in Kampala. It is suspected of being involved in the abduction of a number of prisoners charged with treason in Gulu in September 2002, fatally shooting one, and passing them on to the army barracks in Gulu.

man rights abuses without compromising potential links with the LRA. The blanket amnesty in place provides for the crimes of the leadership of the LRA to be overlooked, so as to incite them to commit to the search for peace. Yet experience elsewhere has shown that if serious crimes are not confronted, peace and justice remain illusive. Precisely there is where the current amnesty provisions under the Amnesty Act remains silent; it does not allow for a process of public acknowledgement of offenses committed. In addition, it does not consider abuses by security forces against civilians or LRA abductees pressed into combat. For this reason, the amnesty is considered as an asymmetrical instrument in the hands of government. This seems an ominous oversight, given that civil-military relations lie at the heart of the problem of the northern conflict. An alternative would be to examine the record of LRA commanders and senior UPDF officers for the abuses committed via a different type of reconciliation process that builds enough consensus about justice, along the lines of the South-African experience with its 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission'.

In terms of lowering the opportunity cost for war through raising the endowment of economic and human capital, the government and the international community have cooperated in a number of programmes, as they are now cooperating to rehabilitate economic and social infrastructure under the NUSAF framework. The dilemma here is of course the issue of rehabilitation and development in an environment that can only absorb relief aid. Yet the issues are pressing, as they concern some of the fundamental internal dynamics that sustain the conflict. The children that are being pushed by the conflict into early marriages, prostitution, or into government auxiliary forces are an example of the need to improve the context of lack of adequate economic and educational opportunities. Recapitalizing the economy of the North is imperative as well when considering the loss of all cattle. An agro-pastoral economy can simply not function while the population is confined to IDP camps. One of the constraints for example on a modern rendition of the traditional reconciliation process or 'mat oput' is the difficulty of paying compensation, due to loss of cattle. In addition to official cooperation, the private sector definitely has an important role to play. Earlier we already pointed out the critical role of the Acholi constituency in the Diaspora, and the reality that a significant amount of Uganda's wealth is still held abroad. To put the potential of the private sector into perspective, some people would claim that the private mobile telecommunications provider MTN has done more to increase dialogue amongst the Acholi and between the Acholi districts and the rest of Uganda than anybody else, simply by extending their services to the districts of Gulu and recently Kitgum.

War was never declared. It is not easy to see the point at which it can be considered ended. One can suspect that this will not be the case as long as all children are not returned or have not been accounted for. In large traits, the situation is now similar to 1986, when the Acholi people stopped expecting help from political processes to stem the growing marginalization and

culpabilization, and turned to their cultural archives to come up with a truly unique solution, the Holy Spirit Movement/Mobile Forces. In a sense, as in Karamoja, but with its own distinct make-up, it was a definite move towards community ownership of security. The traces of this solution which long ago succumbed to its own contradictions, cross-bred with UPDA experiences and fertilized in a regional setting of cross-border antagonisms, are what brought the situation full circle. The need is for an anti-terrorism drive of the highest order, an expansive approach of democratic, social and political change by non-violent means. Yet fears are that the government will stick to a counter-terrorism strategy. There is the familiar danger, under the all-encompassing banner of `security', of the further militarization of the polity and a reduction in civil liberties.

Table 1:   Timeline of the conflict

Dateline	UPDA	HSMF	LRA	NRA-UPDF
January 1986				NRA topples Okello governmen
May 1986				Fighting in the North with fleeing UNLA troops; Gulu and Kitgum declared war zones
August 1986	First incursions by UPDA from Sudan			
October 1986		HSMF attack Gulu and are defeated		
November 1986	Alice takes over 150 troops from UPDA and successfully attacks NRA at Corner Kilak (Kitgum)			
December 1986		Attack against NRA in Pajule; from there on to Lira, Soroti		
February 1987			Kony and his people kidnap UPDA divi-sion commanded by Okello Okeno; more UPDA soldiers joined Kony from 80th brigade later	
March 1987				First protected camps for civilians created in Gulu
June 1987				GoU declares amnesty for rebels willing to surrender
July / September 1987		'Operation Coy' to flush out UPDA		
November 1987		HSMF defeated near Lira	Kony attacks UPDA HQ near Pawel Owor	
January 1988		Alice's father (Severino Lukoya) attempts to con-tinue HSMF in Kitgum	Kony attacks 115th brigade of UPDA and integrates it into his force	
March 1988	Peace negotiations with NRM		Lukoya joins Kony, as well as Lukonyomoi of United Uganda Godly Movement (UUGM)	Peace negotiations with UPDA
May 1988	Peace treaty with NRM		Overall commander of UPDA, Odong Latek, joins Kony with 39 soldiers	Peace treaty with UPDA
June 1988				Start of major operations by NRA against remaining rebels
February 1989				Museveni declares 3 month moratorium on military operations near Gulu; after failure, NRA intensifies assaults and moves people back in camps
April 1991				Military 'operation North' to end insurgency
July 1991			Major revenge killings and atrocities against citizens	'Bow and Arrow' citizens brigades induced by NRM

January 1994			Peace talks started, led by Betty Bigombe; talks break down after President issues ultimatum for conclusion in 7 days	
1994			Sudanese support for Kony; mass abductions of children start	
February 1996			Heavy offensive of LRA in Gulu	
June 1996			Kony spreads the message that if Paul Ssemwogere of DP becomes president, he will lay down arms	Presidential and Parliamentary elections; Museveni elected, but receives only minority support in Acholi
January 1997			Kony starts a series of heavy attacks on Kitgum population; into 1999 heavy atrocities by LRA against Acholi	Parliament recommends escalation of military efforts to end war
March-June 1998	The Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative present a memorandum for peace to Museveni and hold Bedo Piny, a 3 day consultative meeting to focus on ending the war			
September 1998				Amnesty Act is published in Uganda Government Gazette
December 1999				Signing of Nairobi Peace Agreement between Uganda and Sudan
June 2001			Local peace talks in Gulu under auspices of District Reconciliation and Peace Team (which end in failure)	
April 2002				UPDF launches operation 'Iron Fist' against LRA in Sudanese territory after agreement with Government of Sudan; this shatters a 2-year period of relative peace
Jan 2003 onwards			Unilateral cease-fire by LRA, responded to with limited cease-fire by GoU; nomination of Presidential Peace Team and attempts to start negotiations; large-scale violations and failure; expansion of conflict in Teso and West Nile	

Table 2: Progress in Service Delivery in Government Primary Schools using selected indicators

District	Pupil teacher Ratio		District	Pupil Classroom	
	2000	2002		2000	2002
Nakapiripiriti	-	81	**Yumbe**	-	189
Kamuli	68	70	Mayuge	-	179
Kyenjojo	-	69	**Pader**	-	150
Pader	-	69	**Nakapiripiriti**	-	132
Bugiri	-	66	**Arua**	184	124
Kitgum	67	64	Iganga	145	123
Kayunga	-	63	**Apac**	112	122
Mayuge	-	63	**Kitgum**	144	119
Nebbi	74	63	**Kotido**	143	117
Pallisa	75	63	Bugiri	-	114
Gulu	76	62	Kyenjojo	-	109
Tororo	62	62	Kayunga	-	109
Iganga	71	61	Kasese	111	108
Kotido	93	61	Kabarole	104	106
Apac	70	60	Kamuli	114	105
Jinja	63	58	Soroti	146	105
Kalangala	33	58	Bundibugyo	209	105
Bushenyi	67	57	Mbale	103	105
Busia	65	57	Pallisa	164	104
Kamwenge	-	57	Jinja	130	103
Arua	90	56	Tororo	132	102
Kabarole	71	56	Mbarara	69	102
Ntungamo	61	56	Kanungu	-	100
Sironko	-	56	Busia	149	97
Soroti	61	56	Sironko	-	95
Yumbe	-	56	**National Total**	106	94
Bundibugyo	68	55	Kiboga	114	94
Kibaale	62	54	Katakwi	109	94
Mbale	64	54	Kalangala	54	93
National Total	65	54	Mubende	101	92
Kumi	59	53	**Nebbi**	117	91
Mubende	58	53	**Gulu**	140	91
Kanungu	-	52	Kamwenge	-	91
Kasese	68	52	Masaka	90	91
Moroto	91	52	Sembabule	102	91
Mpigi	53	52	Ntungamo	88	89
Nakasongola	69	52	Kibaale	95	87
Hoima	63	51	Kumi	121	87
Luwero	63	51	Nakasongola	127	86
Mbarara	55	51	Mpigi	81	84
Kisoro	68	50	Kapchorwa	147	83
Lira	53	50	Mukono	103	82
Adjumani	67	49	Rakai	91	82
Kiboga	64	49	Masindi	104	81
Moyo	68	49	**Moroto**	174	78
Katakwi	67	48	Kabale	73	77
Masindi	73	47	Kisoro	91	76
Kabale	57	46	**Lira**	78	75
Kapchorwa	68	46	Bushenyi	75	74
Rukungiri	59	46	Hoima	81	72
Kampala	51	45	Luwero	99	72
Mukono	59	45	Wakiso	-	71
Masaka	59	43	Rukungiri	75	65
Sembabule	55	42	Kampala	83	61
Wakiso	-	42	**Adjumani**	89	59
Rakai	61	37	**Moyo**	82	58

Source: Ministry of Education and Sports Factfiles 2000 and 2002

Table 3: *Rural Safe Water coverage in Northern Uganda*
and other districts during 2000 - 2002 (%)

District	Water Coverage in 2000	Water Coverage in 2002
Moyo	86.6	74.2
Nebbi	69.1	73.6
Adjumani	58.9	66.3
Moroto / Nakapiripiriti	30.1	63.0
Kotido	58.0	61.6
Arua/Yumbe	55.7	57.0
Lira	50.3	52.8
Gulu	47.5	51.1
Jinja	47.1	48.2
Apac	43.7	47.0
Toror	45.8	46.2
Kamuli	44.3	44.2
Kalangala	36.4	44.2
Kitgum/Pader	40.5	43.3
Katakwi	35.9	38.6
Kumi	26.8	37.5
Kisoro	31.7	36.4
Mubende	30.5	35.1
Masaka	29.6	34.4
Pallisa	25.5	30.6
Sembabule	18.8	25.2
National Average	49.9	54.8

Source: DWD; Water Sector Review, Sept 2002

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