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UGANDA: CONFLICT ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 2017

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National Overview

April saw a continued influx of refugees from South Sudan into Uganda taking a toll on the country and leading it to face one of the World's largest and fastest-growing refugee crises. Since conflict in South Sudan flared in June 2016, there has been a sharp increase in the number of people fleeing to the West Nile and Acholi regions of Northern Uganda. This unprecedented mass influx is placing enormous strain on Uganda's public services, local infrastructure and the already shrinking resources including land, firewood and water. As a consequence, Uganda has now become the top-ranking refugee-hosting country in Africa taking over Kenya and Ethiopia, with more than one million refugees in total.¹ Bidi Bidi refugee resettlement camp in Yumbe District that is hosting more than 280,000 refugees is now believed to be the largest refugee camp in the world.²

This month alone, more than four thousand (4000) refugees entered the district of Lamwo in Acholi sub region escaping fresh fighting in Imatong State of South Sudan adding to the more than eight hundred (800,000) thousand South Sudanese refugees that Uganda already hosts.³ Because of this influx, there is growing need for emergency response capacity; food, water, sanitation, and hygiene; shelter; health, and protection. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) says the crisis has stretched its resources, working with just 36 percent of the funds required to deal with a situation of such magnitude.⁴

In an effort to ease the increasing complex situation presented by the refugee influx the Government of Uganda (GOU) and the UN are planning to host a joint summit in Kampala in June 2017 to drum up financial contributions to UNHCR to continue to provide services to refugees and host communities.⁵ The influx of refugees is leading to a risk of tension and violence and there is rumbling of discontent.⁶ There is fear that some of these refugees might be carrying dangerous arms and weapons and security agencies are doing the necessary screening. Leaders also fear the spread of communicable diseases and the spread of animal diseases as some of the refugees are coming with livestock which is believed are not vaccinated.

¹ <http://opm.go.ug/category/news-and-events/refugees-news/>

² <https://www.ft.com/content/a2efa5ea-1557-11e7-b0c1-37e417ee6c76>

³ Ibid

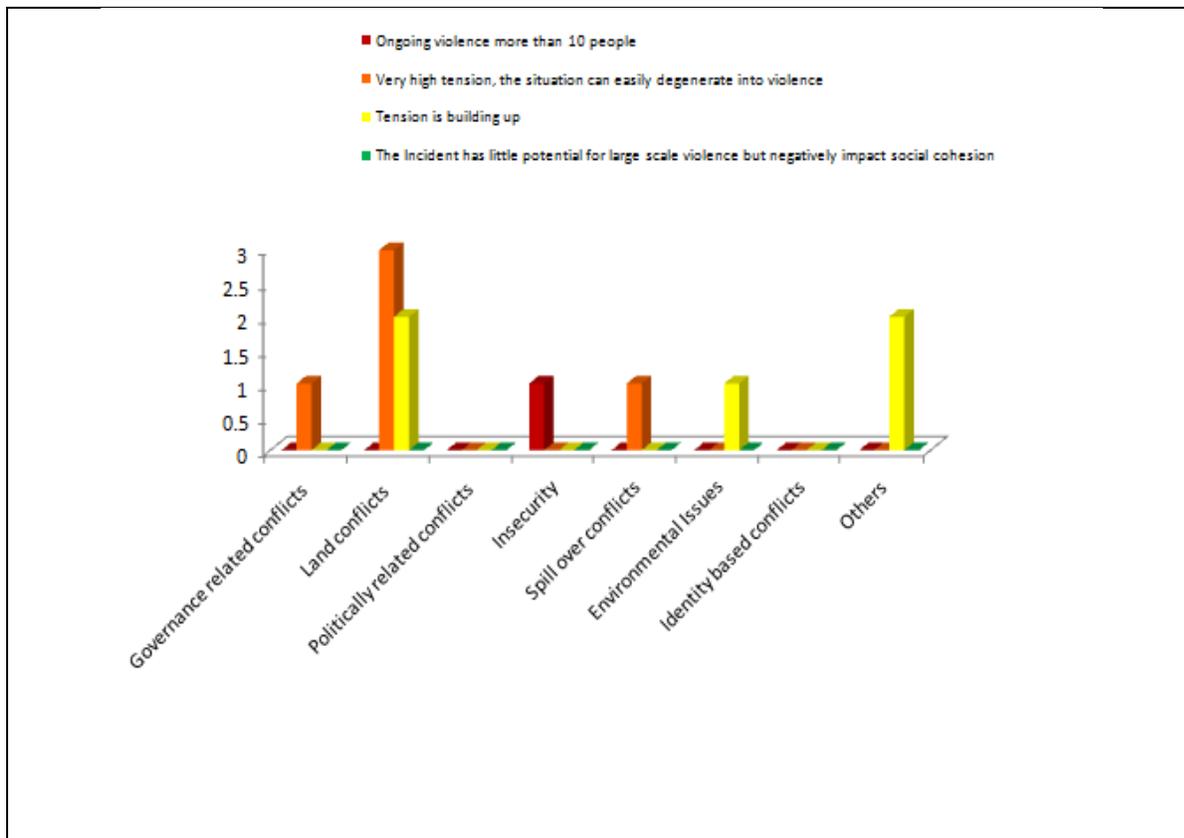
⁴ <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-03-07/uganda-has-been-welcoming-place-south-sudans-refugees>

⁵ <http://opm.go.ug/category/news-and-events/refugees-news/>

⁶ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor-Arua District

Host communities are also registering as refugees' in order to benefit from the special packs including relief food being given to refugees.⁷ This can be attributed to the severe famine in the region. The fact that refugees can access food but not the host communities is not going down well with some community members. Rising social tension between refugees and host communities has the potential to degenerate into secondary conflict in host countries. There is therefore need to manage any tension that might arise. The GOU and other stakeholders should design ways to strengthen positive refugee-host community relations and Integrate humanitarian and development programmes – these seek to balance assistance to both refugee and host communities, or integrate services provided to them

Below: Number of Reported Conflict Incidents, April 2017



Source: SAFE Conflict Monitoring Database: April 2017

⁷ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor-Yumbe District

Regional Overview

Northern Region

A land conflict between people of the Iteso ethnic group and the Acholi-Labwor tribesmen in the districts of Napak, Abim and Amuria has resulted into violent clashes that has seen many people attacked, fifteen (15) grass thatched houses torched and food crops destroyed⁸. The attackers suspected to be of the Acholi-Labwor group were armed with spears, bows and arrows. This is a long term conflict that began in 2012 and the land is claimed by the three districts. Police has been deployed heavily in the area to restore calm and prevent revenge attacks. The SAFE Program is aware that land is an important economic asset and source of livelihood which is closely linked to community identity, history and culture. Communities therefore can readily mobilize around land issues making land a central object of conflict. It is imperative that community leaders take a proactive lead to ensure growing tensions over land are resolved to prevent violent attacks, mob justice and revenge acts. SAFE's conflict monitors in the three districts will continue to monitor the situation on the ground.

Western Region

In Kisoro District, tension is growing following the presence of Congolese militias who raided over twenty (20) families in Nyamukimbo village, assaulted them and stole their property.⁹ This was the second time this year that the village was attacked by the militias. Community members are accusing security personnel of being lax at the border area and that is why militias easily enter the country and cause mayhem. The attacks have created fear; some residents have fled the village while some schools have been closed in fear of further attacks. In order to calm the situation and prevent further raids, the army has established a detach in Nyamukumbo village and a police post at Nteko village both in Nyabwishenyi sub county. The SAFE Program's conflict monitors based in Kisoro district will continue to monitor the situation on the ground and report any incidents to SAFE's conflict monitoring database.

⁸ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor-Abim District

⁹ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor-Kisoro District

Tension continues to rise in Isingiro District as GOU begins the process of opening up the boundaries separating Nakivale Refugee Resettlement Camp land from that of the host community following disagreement over boundary marks.¹⁰ In the March 2017 conflict assessment report, the SAFE program reported on an incident where more than three hundred (300) residents blocked the Kibingo-Rugaaga road adjacent to the camp main offices and pulled down posters of the various organisations working in the area. This followed radio messages by the district LC5 Chairperson Jeremiah Kamurari urging residents to go and claim back parts of the camp under an operation called “Operation Nakivale Nziima”. However in a twist of events, residents, most of whom accused refugees of encroaching on their land are instead crying foul over the demarcation exercise. It turns out that most of them had illegally acquired the land, and are now calling on GOU to reconsider the plight on those who encroached on refugee land. They accuse the LC 5 Chairperson of misleading them with his “Operation Nakivale Nziima.”¹¹ The GOU and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) should train communities on managing tensions over land. The SAFE program’s Isingiro-based conflict monitors will continue to monitor the situation on the ground.

In Hoima District, there has been an invasion by pastoralists on land where GOU intends to set up an oil refinery in Buseruka Sub County¹². The land is currently occupied by more than seventy (70) families who are cultivators and who are waiting to be relocated. The pastoralist’s livestock have invaded gardens and destroyed food crops belonging to the locals. The pastoralists claim they were cleared by GOU to graze in the area. Conflicts between cultivators and pastoralists in different parts of Uganda have been recurring for a long time, claiming lives of many innocent people from the two communities and creating major economic impacts to the nation. There is urgent need to mitigate this conflict. Local communities should work together to demarcate grazing areas and water sources for livestock in areas occupied by both farmers and pastoralists.

¹⁰ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor-Isingiro District

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor-Hoima District

Eastern Region

Tension in the Bukedi sub region continues to grow following a long standing boundary dispute between Budaka and Butaleja districts of which the SAFE program has continuously reported about.¹³ In March 2017, the GOU officially demarcated the border in to solve the conflict but attacks and counter attacks continue. Locals from Butaleja district who are of the Banyole ethnic group are accused of slashing food crops belonging to their counterparts from Budaka district who are of the Bagwere ethnic group. The Bugwere cultural leader (Ikumbania) John Wayabire accuses the police of escorting armed civilians from Butaleja to attack farmers in Budaka districts. Officials from both districts have now resolved that famers from both districts vacate the contested land to pave way for fresh demarcation. This conflict is one of the many border conflicts in the country that have increased due to the creation of new districts. The GOU should continue to clearly demarcate internal boundaries to avoid border disputes within Uganda. SAFE's Bukedi-based conflict monitors will continue to monitor the situation on the ground and report any tension and conflict incidents to SAFE's conflict monitoring database.

Central Region

Residents in districts that make up greater Masaka are living in fear following a spate of violent attacks by machete-wielding assailants. The area has for the last two months been characterized by insecurity in form of robbery, rape and house break-ins.¹⁴ Prior to the attacks, leaflets were dropped showing the villages that were to be attacked, and showing the amount of money each household should reserve for the attackers. Police has been heavily deployed in the area together with Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) soldiers. Members of Parliament led by the Leader of Opposition Hon Winnie Kiiza have tasked GOU to explain the high level of insecurity in the greater Masaka area.¹⁵ According to police records, the attacks have left a total of one hundred and forty four (144) casualties Eight nine (89) suspects have since been arrested.¹⁶ This is worrying trend and the GOU should contain the situation. The SAFE program will continue monitoring the situation.

¹³ March, September, October, December 2015, April, May, August, September, November, December 2016,

¹⁴ New Vision, April 4th 2017

¹⁵ <http://www.theugandatoday.com/news/2017/04/kayihura-rushes-to-masaka-over-insecurity/>

¹⁶ Daily Monitor, April 12th 2017

Map of Uganda Showing The Conflict Hotspots As Highlighted
In This Report



Source: <https://conflictmappinguganda.crowdmap.com/>

For Methodology used in writing this report and for copies of previous reports, please visit www.safeprogram.org