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UGANDA: CONFLICT ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 2017

Issue Date: 12th JULY 2017

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National Overview

Tension is very high in Adjumani and Amuru Districts following violent clashes over a longstanding land conflict in Juka Village, Apaa parish that is claimed by the two districts. A group of men armed with bows, arrows, spears and machetes and allegedly from the Madi ethnic group attacked the area occupied by members of the Acholi ethnic group, killing nine people and severely injuring more than twenty one (21) people.¹ One hundred (100) grass thatched houses were also torched, and several acres of food crops destroyed. Many of the residents have now fled the area fearing further attacks, while a number of people are missing. The Prime Minister of Uganda had to rush to the area on a fact finding mission and to call for calm.²

Conflict over the contested piece of land in question is part of the forty (40) square kilometers the Government of Uganda (GOU) demarcated amidst heavy security in 2015 and handed to Adjumani district local government following years of dispute with Amuru district leaders. The Amuru district authorities did not agree with the demarcation and vowed not to recognize it. The residents claim that GOU has a sinister motive to give away the land to an investor in disguise of demarcating the boundary between the two districts, a claim which the government denies.³ Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) which manages game reserves is also laying claim to some of the land.

This is not the first violent incident on the disputed land this year. In March 2017, a group of more than ten (10) members allegedly from the Madi ethnic community armed with machetes, spears, bows and arrows invaded Juka village in Apaa parish attacking the community and killing one person.⁴ There have been other violent incidents in the area and the SAFE program has repeatedly reported about them in various monthly conflict assessment reports.⁵ In April 2015, a group of female elders from the region undressed before a host of cabinet ministers who had gone to the area to demarcate the land.⁶ In Northern Uganda, the act of undressing in public is one of the highest forms of protest against real or perceived injustice. They were protesting GOU's compulsory demarcation between Adjumani and

¹ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitors, Adjumani & Amuru Districts

² <http://nbs.ug/prime-minister-rugunda-rushes-to-gulu-over-apaa-clashes/>

³ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor-Amuru District

⁴ USAID SAFE, Conflict Assessment Report, March 2017

⁵ USAID SAFE Monthly Conflict Assessment Reports; May 2014; Jan, March, April, September 2015; March 2017

⁶ <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Women--undress---Migereko-Gen-Aronda/688334-2689156-y46f4c/index.html>

Amuru districts. It is believed that the forced demarcation of 2015 put an end to the relationship between the Acholi and Madi communities who had previously lived together in harmony. Each community is now living in trepidation of the other and fear to cross the Zoka river boundary for fear of being attacked.⁷

The June 2017 attack comes at a time when the planting season has begun but because of the attacks, community members are not able to plant crops raising fears of more food insecurity after a long dry spell. Security personnel from the police and army have been heavily deployed in the area, while two police posts have also been established in the area to prevent further attacks. Although there haven't been any further attacks since June, the situation is very tense and volatile. There is also fear following a decision by some of the community members to form a vigilante security committee equipped with bows and arrows which they say is for self defence and this could escalate the situation. There is a risk of increased violence if a solution is not sought.

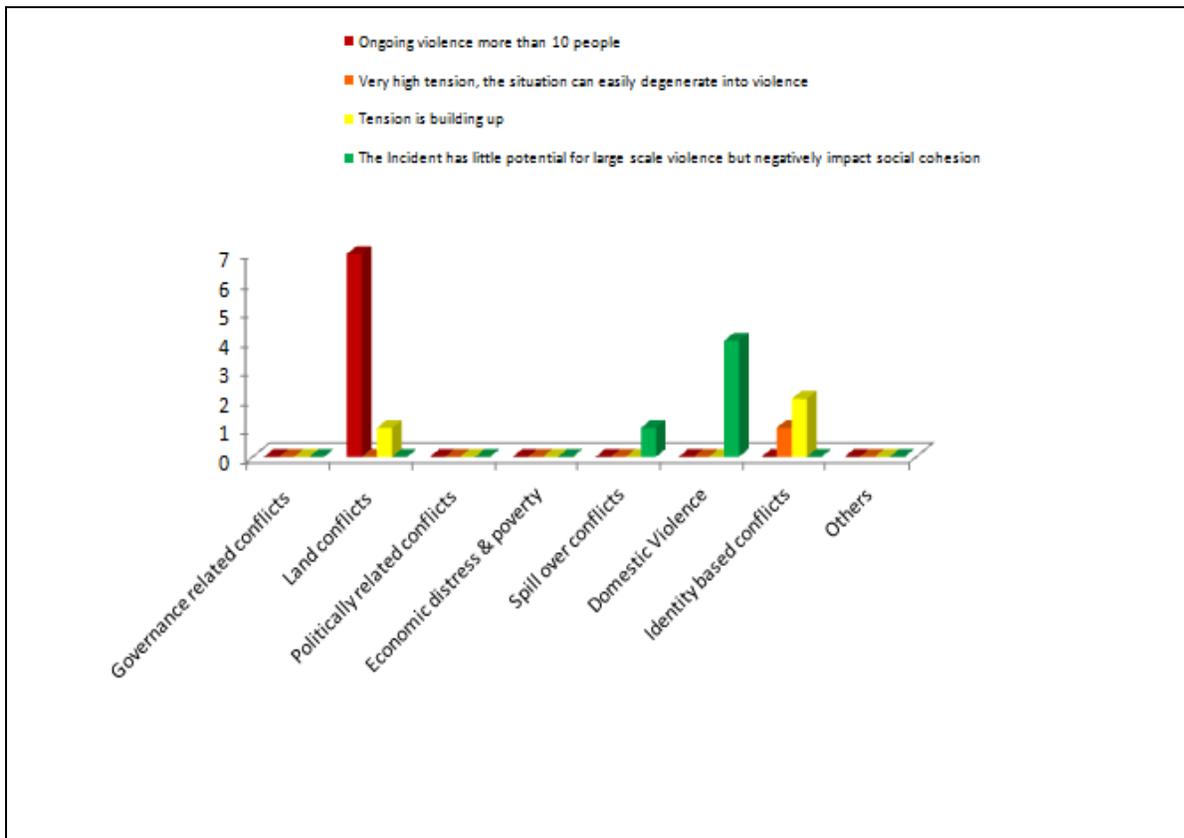
Land conflicts in Northern Uganda, especially the Acholi sub region, increased after the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) war when the community which was previously internally displaced returned to settle in their ancestral land finding lost boundaries and demarcations. Understanding the role land plays in the conflict can help GOU develop strategies to ease tension among the two groups, and potentially avoid violence and the poverty trap that comes from recurring conflict incidents. Failure to address these core issues may increase the likelihood of conflict and perpetuate poverty. There is urgent need by GOU, district authorities and all other key stakeholders to focus on reducing land tension in Apaa in the short run by improving land governance, strengthening dispute resolution, and enabling local communities to pursue their rights and engaging various civil society organizations (CSO) in this process. There is the need for urgent dialogue to prevent occurrence of further attacks and to get a sustainable solution to this long standing conflict.

USAID SAFE's conflict monitors in the area will continue to monitor the situation on the ground and report any incidents to SAFE's conflict monitoring database.

⁷ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitors-Adjmani and Amuru Districts

Below: Number of Reported Conflict Incidents, July 2017

Source: SAFE Conflict Monitoring Database: July 2017



Regional Overview

Northern Region

In Lamwo district, tension is rising following increased incidents of cattle rustling from armed rustlers believed to be from South Sudan. Incidents are mainly in the sub county of Madi-Opei which is at the border with South Sudan. Local council (LC) officials are also blaming some of the raids on South Sudanese who came to the district as refugees.⁸ Lamwo currently hosts more than twenty five thousand (25,000) refugees and a new refugee camp has been set up in the area. These incidents are causing animosity between the refugees and host communities who believe the refugees are abusing their hospitality. District authorities are now on high alert and have deployed security agents to the affected areas.

⁸ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor- Lamwo District

Still in Lamwo district, tension is rising following violent clashes amongst South Sudanese refugees of different ethnic groups.⁹ Members of the Langi and Acholi of Pajok, and those of the Nuers and the Baris ethnic group attacked members of the Dinka ethnic group accusing them of being behind the conflict in South Sudan. This incident took place at Palabek Ogili Resettlement Camp. Police had to be deployed in the camp to calm the situation. Tribal divisions can follow refugees across borders causing tension, and can cause fear among the host communities. It is believed that on a daily basis, about eight hundred (800) refugees enter Lamwo District through the boarder points of Ngomoromo, Aweno- Olwiyo Madi Opei and Warigo.¹⁰ The United Nations High Commission (UNHCR) officials and those from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) are trying to put measures in place to ensure harmony among the refugees.¹¹

Eastern Region

Tension is rising in the Teso region following a long standing land conflict between Soroti University and the surrounding community of Apuuton Village in Arapai Sub County in Soroti district.¹² It is alleged that this month, University Authorities hired men to destroy property belonging to the community members claiming they had encroached on the University land. Area Members of Parliament (MPs) had to rush to the area on a fact finding mission and to restore calm. This is not the first time that the two parties are clashing. In June 2015 a group of women stripped naked and lay in the middle of the road accusing Soroti University of trying to take their land. Police were dispatched to the area and fired live bullets and tear gas in an effort to disperse the nude protestors. The dispute between the two parties is also before the Uganda High Court sitting in Soroti district. It is imperative that there is an opportunity for both parties to resolve this land dispute, not only relying on court, which might have its own limitation, but also on traditional authorities and NGOs through use of mediation and/or arbitration.

⁹ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor-Lamwo District

¹⁰ <https://uganda.lutheranworld.org/content/unexpected-refugees-pushing-lamwo-breaking-point-106>

¹¹ Ibid

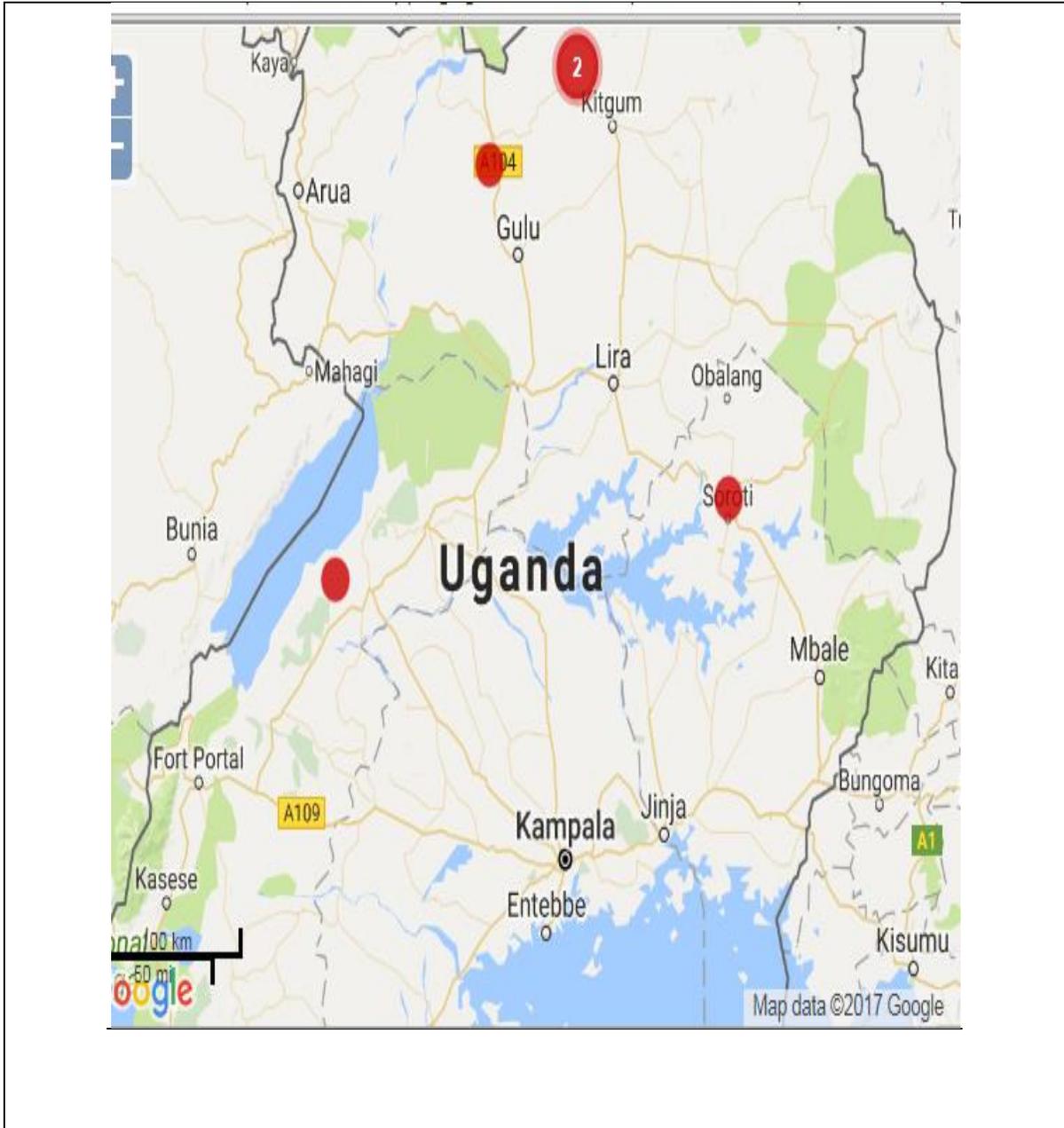
¹² USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor- Soroti District

Western Region

Ethnic tension continues to simmer in the Bunyoro sub region as reported in last month's conflict assessment report following the dissemination of sectarian and inflammatory audio recordings airing on local radio stations. In the audio recording, a man speaking the Rukiga dialect is heard urging his community to get ready to defend themselves against alleged plans by Banyoro to attack them. The two ethnic groups have been conflicting over land and political positions for many years. The Banyoro accuse the Bakiga of plotting to rule and dominate them through tribal voting and taking their land. The migration of Bakiga into the Bunyoro region has created pressure on the available land and fuelled ethnic conflict. Although the dissemination of the audio recordings has stopped, tension remains high and people are living in fear. Some civil society organizations are being accused of promoting ethnic hatred. It is alleged that some of the CSOs are mobilizing the Banyoro to reject non-Banyoro especially the Bakiga by denying them their right to own land and participate in elective positions.¹³ The GOU and the police should investigate these allegations and bring all those promoting tribalism to book. The Bunyoro region is quite volatile at the moment with the various issues surrounding discovery of oil including land eviction and compensation, the various land conflicts including those with the National Forest Authority (NFA), conflict within the cultural institution among others. Promotion of sectarianism will only escalate the already volatile situation. The Bunyoro based conflict monitors will continue to monitor the situation on the ground.

¹³ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor- Hoima District

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



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

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