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UGANDA: CONFLICT ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE MONTHS OF AUGUST 2017

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National Overview

Tension continues to simmer in Amuru District in Northern Uganda following a long standing land conflict between the community, the Government of Uganda (GoU) and a sugar investor-Madhvani Group which wants 10,000 hectares of land to establish a sugar factory in the area. However, the community feels that the establishment of a sugar factory is a strategy by GoU to grab their land. The SAFE program has repeatedly reported on this conflict in various monthly conflicts assessment reports.

During the month of August, the surveying of the land for establishment of the sugar project began amidst tension and heavy deployment of army, police and crime preventers.¹ The survey was met by protests from political leaders, locals and a nude demonstration by elderly women. The survey was also marred by intimidation and harassment of those who were unwilling to offer their land for survey. Some of the residents who agreed to their land being surveyed say they accepted out of harassment and intimidation. Because of the heavy security presence, some community members have fled the area. A local community school (Payot community primary school) is now being used as a barracks for security personnel much to the annoyance of the community.² According to the Member of Parliament of Kilak South –Gilbert Olanya, the survey exercise this month was null and void since excessive force had been used, and members were intimidated.³ Members of Parliament (MPs) of the Acholi sub region are against the giving away of the land, saying ‘government’ wants to grab their land yet it’s the only asset that the local people are left with. The MPs insist that Madhvani Group must meet the entire Acholi community who have the final say on their land.⁴

The issue of land and investors raises questions about land rights and transparency in investment. Removing local farmers to make way for a sugar plantation might undermine the food security of local people in the area. Unless the GOU and the Sugar Company continue to dialogue with the local residents and leaders, the people of Amuru, and most of Acholi will harbour ill feelings against the company, with the potential for future violence. The SAFE Program is aware that land is an important economic asset and source of

¹ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor-Amuru District

² Ibid

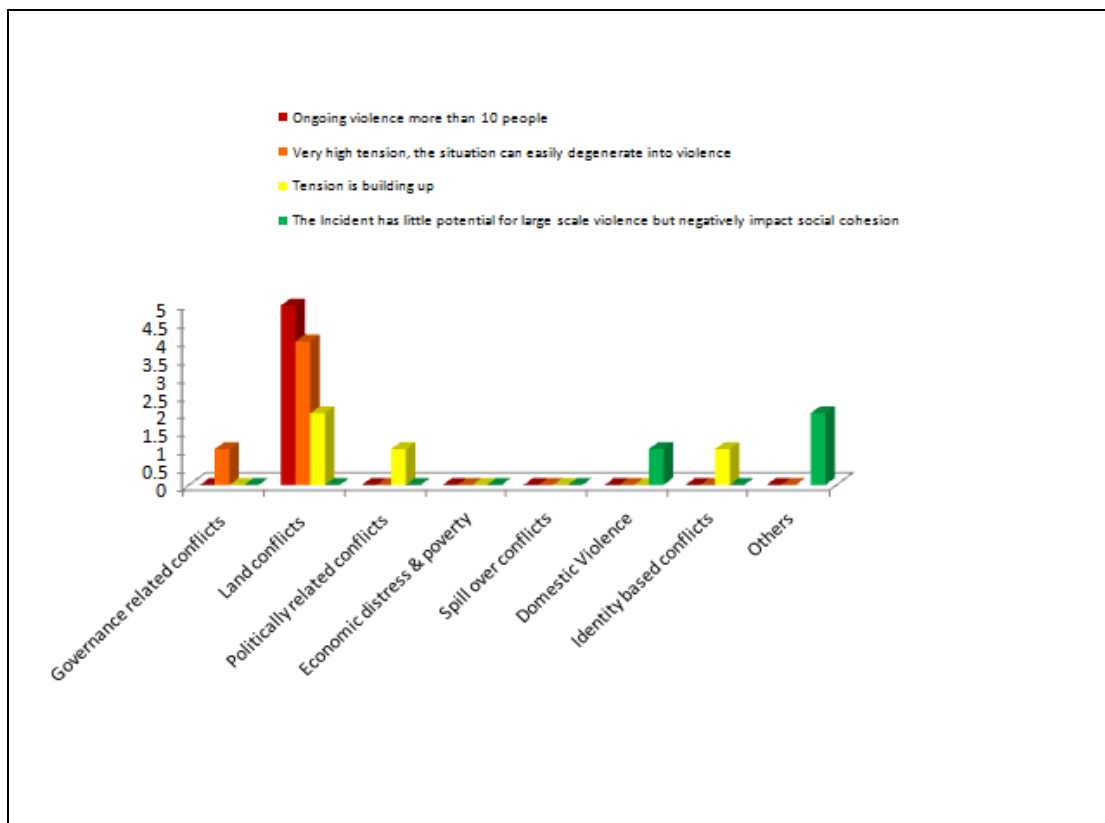
³ <http://www.monitor.co.ug/OpEd/Commentary/-Amuru-land-fight--leadership-Acholi-Madhvani/689364-4084150-3ixa0m/index.html>

⁴ <http://www.ntv.co.ug/news/local/04/aug/2017/acholi-mps-accuse-betty-amongi-fostering-land-grabbing-amuru-district-18385>

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.

Apart from the Amuru land conflict, during the month of August 2017, 55 % of the conflict incidents reported to SAFE’s conflict monitoring database were related to land. The Conflict Monitors who reported conflict incidents were from the districts of Masindi, Kyegegwa, and Buhweju in Western Uganda; Katakwi, Ngora and Butaleja in Eastern Uganda; Napak, Amuru, Arua, Kitgum and Pader in Northern Uganda; and Mubende and Wakiso in Central Uganda. SAFE’s 536 conflict monitors will continue monitoring and reporting conflict incidents as they occur in their communities.

Below: Number of Reported Conflict Incidents- August 2017



Source: SAFE Conflict Monitoring Database: August 2017

Regional Overview

Northern Region

The continued influx of refugees from South Sudan is leading to increased tension between the refugees and host communities as it is putting huge strain on the country's already limited social services, and delicate local resources like land, firewood, and water. 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. By the end of August 2017, it was estimated that One Million and Two hundred thousand refugees and asylum seekers from South Sudan were in Uganda.⁵ On average, 2,000 people arrive each day.⁶ Rising social tension between refugees and host communities has the potential to degenerate into secondary conflict. The fact that refugees can access food but not the host communities is not going down well with some community members. There are concerns over the environment as trees are being cut [down] and not replaced. In some cases, locals have already threatened refugees with violence.⁷ In Lamwo District, the host communities are refusing to offer land to refugees for Agricultural purposes.⁸ 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.

Eastern Region

A land conflict in Butaleja district over an irrigation scheme project escalated this month following a standoff between police and demonstrators in which one person was killed and several others injured.⁹ The GOU and the locals are wrangling over Lwoba-Bwirya irrigation scheme project at Himutu Sub County which the GOU wants to introduce in the area yet the locals say it's a ploy by GOU to take their land on pretext of an

⁵ UNHCR Report-September 2017

⁶ ibid

⁷ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor-Lamwo District

⁸ Ibid

⁹ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor-Butaleja District

irrigation scheme. Residents claim they were not sensitized about the project which they have termed as a “land grabber’s project”.¹⁰

Butaleja District is one of the districts in Bukedi sub region riddled with various land conflicts. It has a long standing boundary dispute with Budaka district characterized by violent incidents of which the SAFE program has continuously reported about.¹¹ Residents of the two districts-the Banyole of Butaleja District and the Bagwere of Budaka District, have also been clashing over ownership of the River Namataala and River Manafwa and nearby wetlands by both groups for cultivating food crops including rice. 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.

Western Region

Tension is high in the Rwenzori sub region following the decision by the Queen Mother of the Rwenzururu Kingdom (Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu) to take over the kingdom from her son King Mumbere who is currently under house arrest in the capital city Kampala.¹² King Mumbere was arrested in December 2016 on charges related to terrorism, aggravated robbery and attempted murder. These charges stemmed from attacks on police officers and police installations in the region. The Queen Mother’s decision to take over the kingdom affairs came under fierce attack from some section of the leaders who strongly disassociated themselves from her move.¹³ They warn that the Queen Mother’s move is bound to create further turmoil to the already fragile situation. This tension is amidst allegations that a militia group (Kirumiramutima) loyal to the Rwenzururu Kingdom has been regrouping and training people. One person alleged to be a member of this group was shot dead by army personnel after he stabbed a UPDF soldier several times during a security operation in Bwesumbu Sub County in Kasese district.¹⁴ The Rwenzori region is very unpredictable, it has a history of violence and there is fear, the simmering tension could lead to further large scale violence. The SAFE’s Rwenzori based Mobile Coordinator and Conflict Monitors will continue to monitor the situation on the ground.

¹⁰ Ibid

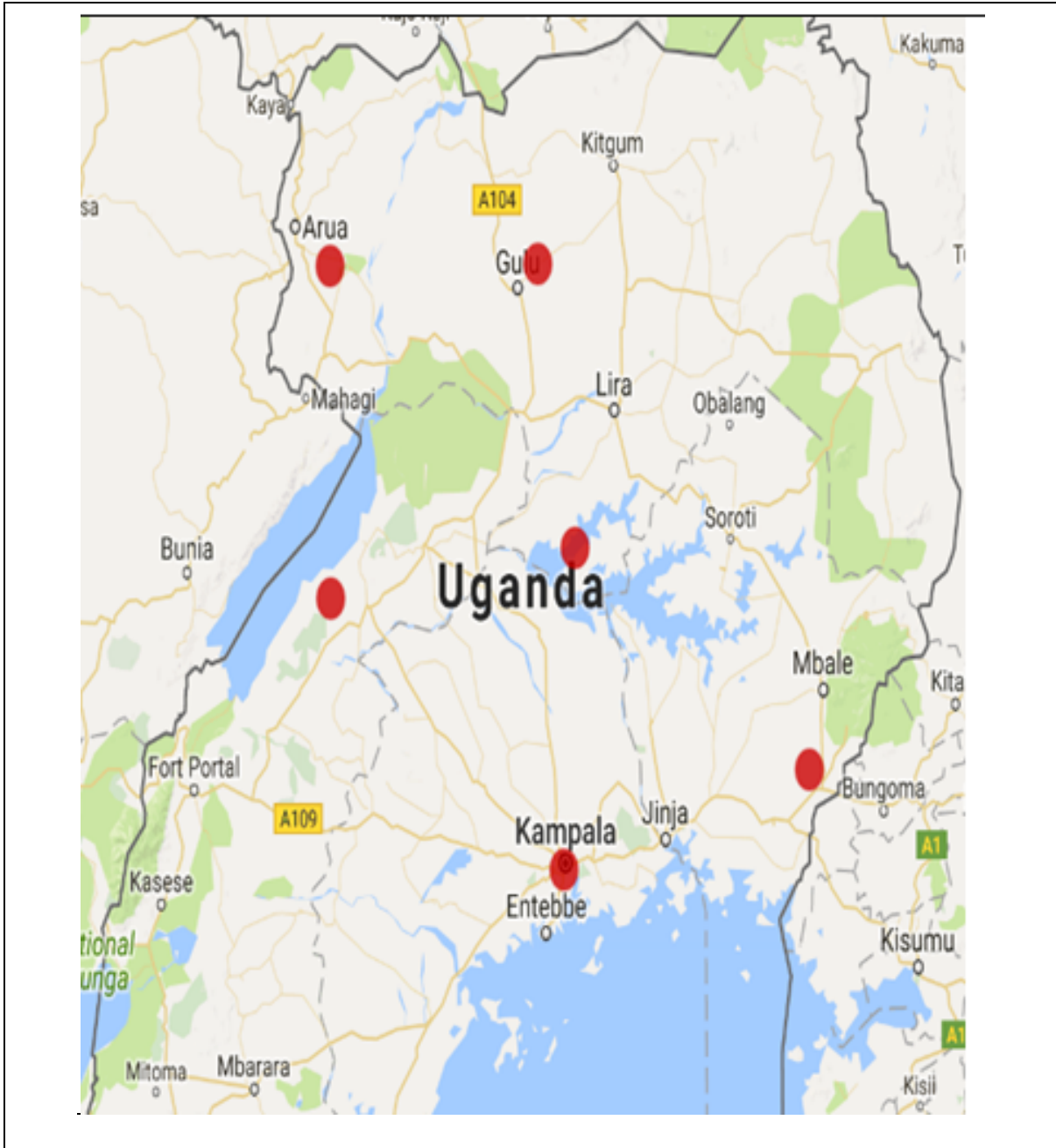
¹¹ March, September, October, December 2015, April, May, August, September, November, December 2016,

¹² USAID SAFE Mobile Coordinator- Rwenzori Region

¹³ USAID SAFE Conflict Monitor-Kasese District

¹⁴ Ibid

**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