



Tracking key conflict and security dynamics in Karamoja – an update



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The People's Peacemaking Partnership project

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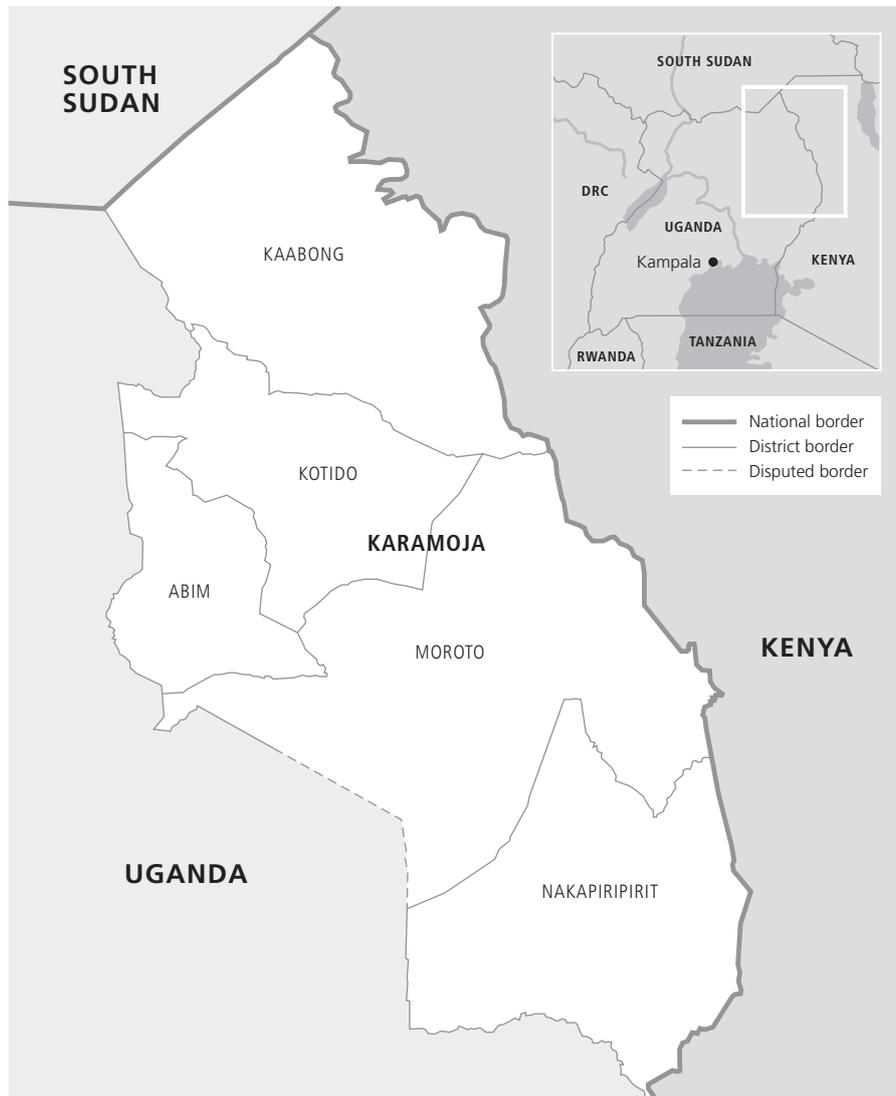
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Karamoja



This map is intended for illustrative purposes only. Saferworld takes no position on whether this representation is legally or politically valid.

Acronyms

ASTUs	Anti-StockTheft Units
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
KIDDP	Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme
LC	Local council
LDUs	Local Defence Units
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NUREP	Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Programme
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces

Executive summary

THE KARAMOJA REGION OF NORTH-EASTERN UGANDA has suffered high levels of conflict and insecurity for decades, alongside dismal development indicators and severe poverty. Communities and groups in Karamoja have been involved in cycles of cattle raiding and counter-raiding, often involving cross-border raids with border communities in Kenya and South Sudan – increasing conflict and insecurity between ethnic groups.

In 2009–10, Saferworld conducted a participatory conflict and security assessment in the districts of Moroto, Napak and Kotido to investigate the underlying issues contributing to conflict and insecurity in the region. A follow-up assessment was carried out in 2011–12 in the districts of Moroto and Napak, providing the data for the analysis in this report. The research aimed to test whether findings from the initial Karamoja assessment still hold true, track how conflict and security dynamics are developing in Karamoja, explore what new issues are coming up, and assess what has been done to address the issues identified.

This analysis is primarily a qualitative study, taking in the views and experiences of a range of voices. It has involved consultation with relevant stakeholders from local government, security and law enforcement agencies, civil society groups and international partners; dialogue meetings between communities and security, peacebuilding, human rights and development actors in Karamoja; focus group discussions; and key informant interviews.

Findings and conclusions

a) Civilian disarmament in Karamoja

- **Communities continue to feel insecure – as a result, serious concerns remain about an inadequate Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) presence and its inability to protect communities from attacks.** The UPDF says its presence has reduced as a result of successful disarmament – something at odds with community perceptions of insecurity. Lack of trust in the ability of the army to protect may lead people to re-arm.
- **Fear of attack and violence remains an ongoing concern among communities.** There is a perception among many community members that their group or community has been ‘more disarmed’ than neighbouring ethnic groups – and that this has left their ethnic group vulnerable to attack from others. Again, without a belief in effective protection from the UPDF communities are likely to re-arm themselves.
- **Fear of attack from groups across the borders between Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan remains high among communities.** The porous borders between Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan make it easy for some communities to re-arm and evade disarmament

processes. Communities expressed fears that cross-border attacks will spark off revenge attacks that might perpetuate a cycle of violence.

- **The government's assessment of improved security and successful disarmament in Karamoja do not seem to reflect the continued insecurity felt by communities, and their doubts about the ability of the UPDF to provide adequate protection.** There is also lack of clarity about the respective roles of the police and UPDF in the region and considerable scepticism about the ability of the police to protect communities from cattle raids, which could well exacerbate and motivate communities to re-arm.
- **Significant numbers of illegal weapons still remain in civilian hands and are a threat to the security of communities in Karamoja.** The transition from military to police-led responsibility for civilian disarmament and security in Karamoja is an opportunity to develop a participatory and trusted community-based weapons collection initiative. But this initiative needs to be part of a wider strategy to make people feel safe and so reduce the demand for arms.
- **Community impressions of the UPDF have improved, mainly because of a change from cordon and search operations targeting whole communities to intelligence-led operations and greater police involvement.** This approach has resulted in a dramatic decline in complaints of human rights abuses and more positive relations with some communities that now generally support disarmament activities.

b) Policing in Karamoja

- **Concerns remain about inadequate police presence with widespread perceptions that the police are ineffective in protecting the public from attacks.** Police numbers have increased in Moroto and Napak districts since the previous assessment, but overall numbers still remain inadequate for an effective presence in all the sub-counties where police posts are required.
- **Police outreach remains limited.** A number of sub-counties remain without a police post, limiting police outreach and curtailing their ability to build good relations with communities and understand their problems. Communities want the police to increase their local presence, but they are critical of them for being generally inaccessible to community members and for failing to respond to their problems.
- **Generally, trust in the police remains high within communities, although certain practices by some police officers risk eroding public trust.** There are still concerns about corruption in the police, with many community members maintaining that some police officers still demand money to follow up cases. Other complaints include delays, poor handling of cases, and suspects being released without trial.
- **There is a lack of clarity and understanding about the role of the police, which could distort perceptions and expectations, and undermine confidence in the force –** although people generally recognise that the police play a positive role in the community. Clarity about the role of the police – so communities know what to expect from them – is essential for effective police/community engagement.
- **Some people are still fearful of the police and are reluctant to meet with police officers for fear of being arrested.** However, the majority of community members see the police as friendly people who are there to help them.

c) Conflict-sensitive development of Karamoja

- **There is a general lack of public awareness and understanding of development initiatives.** This is undermining public participation and increasing the potential for tension and conflict.

- **A significant number of community members feel they have not seen the benefits of livelihoods projects and think that the elite has hijacked many government projects.** These perceptions of exclusion could cause tensions and resentment.
- **While there is a need to diversify livelihoods in Karamoja, there are concerns that projects are not always based on community feedback and preferences.** This increases the potential that some livelihood diversification projects may themselves stir up tensions – as might be the case with the government’s ‘Karamoja Action Plan for Food Security’.
- **Communities agree that the development of alternative livelihoods has the potential to persuade people to give up weapons and help reduce conflict and insecurity.** However, they also have concerns that if these activities are not undertaken in an appropriate and conflict-sensitive way, they risk causing tensions and conflicts.
- **Increased trade in livestock is playing a positive part in the diversification of livelihoods in Karamoja, but is also contributing to cattle raiding as cows becoming a highly prized commodity of trade.**

Key recommendations

1. Security actors in Karamoja should undertake regular critical security reviews that involve communities and address their perceptions and priorities. These reviews could be used to assess the existence and spread of firearms within communities and high-light potential sources of insecurity.
2. The UPDF and police must build relationships with communities and obtain a good understanding of the problems they face, so they can be more effective in addressing community security needs and reassuring communities about their safety and security.
3. The transition from UPDF to police responsibility for civilian disarmament and security in Karamoja needs to be gradual, planned, joined-up, and transparent – with roles clearly communicated to communities to reduce fear and anxiety.
4. The transition should also ensure all ethnic groups are disarmed equally, with efforts to increase protection for all communities and respond more effectively to armed raids. If disarmament efforts in Karamoja are to have any lasting effect, the borders with Kenya and South Sudan must be properly secured against cross-border raids and arms supplies.
5. There is a need for sustained support from human rights bodies to the UPDF and other security agencies, to increase human rights training for security officers and conduct regular monitoring to assess human rights practices. As the police take the lead in collecting weapons in illegal civilian possession, their behaviour needs to be transparent and non-abusive towards communities.
6. Special efforts should be made to engage with youth, as well as those who currently encourage raiding and arms possession, including women (through traditional attitudes regarding masculinity) and local councillors, who have information on who has firearms and who can facilitate consultation with communities.
7. Review the civilian disarmament process to date and set out best practice that can be institutionalised and applied, to ensure accountable and lawful conduct of civilian disarmament activities in future.
8. Renewed commitment is needed from the Ugandan, Kenyan and South Sudan governments to implement existing agreements to address cross-border small arms trafficking and insecurity.
9. Continued support for cross-border, inter-ethnic dialogue and follow-up mechanisms is needed to address the negative relationships that currently exist between ethnic groups, such as hostile alliances.

10. The police should undertake regular critical reviews of security and policing in Karamoja, to clearly understand the current threats and the social, cultural, political and economic issues that influence policing and security. The review should take into account people's security perceptions and priorities, to enable proper identification of the security threats facing communities and to target security actions to address local community priorities.
11. The Government of Uganda should strengthen the police presence in the region and improve the police response to community security needs and priorities.
12. The police need to plan how they will involve other government and non-state security and development actors, as well as civilian authorities, to ensure effective security provision and small arms control, while remaining responsive to community needs and priorities.
13. Authorities and civil society actors should ensure they plan and implement participatory and conflict-sensitive development initiatives.
14. Government and development partners should support initiatives that provide disarmed youth with alternative, appropriate livelihood and training opportunities.

This follow-up analysis was undertaken as one of the projects under the People's Peacemaking Perspectives Project, a joint initiative implemented by Conciliation Resources and Saferworld and financed under the European Commission's Instrument for Stability.

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Introduction

THE KARAMOJA REGION OF NORTH-EASTERN UGANDA has for decades suffered high levels of conflict and insecurity, alongside dismal development indicators and severe poverty levels. Communities and groups in Karamoja have been involved in cycles of cattle raiding and counter-raiding, often involving cross-border raids with border communities in Kenya and South Sudan. Various strategies have been adopted in the past to reduce the scale of small arms proliferation, address insecurity, resolve conflict and increase development opportunities for the people of Karamoja. Some successes have been registered, but significant challenges still remain.

In 2009–2010, Saferworld conducted a conflict and security assessment in the districts of Moroto, Napak and Kotido in the Karamoja region of Uganda.¹ This was an extensive participatory assessment, which investigated the underlying issues contributing to conflict and insecurity in Karamoja, in a way that allowed Karamojong respondents to steer the direction of the research. In 2011–2012, Saferworld conducted a follow-up assessment in the districts of Moroto and Napak, reviewing and tracking some specific conflict dynamics in the two districts and building on the 2009–2010 assessment, which we hold as the baseline study. This follow-up analysis was undertaken as one of the projects under the People’s Peacemaking Perspectives Project, a joint initiative implemented by Conciliation Resources and Saferworld and financed under the European Commission’s Instrument for Stability. The project provides European Union institutions with analysis and recommendations, based on the opinions and experiences of local people in a range of countries and regions affected by fragility and violent conflict. The findings and recommendations of the assessment are also intended to enable key stakeholders (governmental, non-governmental and international) in Karamoja to respond to the conflict and security needs of the region.

In addition, this rapid assessment project focused on some key thematic areas, namely, ‘civilian disarmament in Karamoja’, ‘policing in Karamoja’, ‘human rights issues related to disarmament’ and ‘conflict-sensitive development’. The human rights theme is presented as part of the ‘civilian disarmament in Karamoja’ element in the analysis, since the human rights issues arose mainly from the disarmament operations conducted by the Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF). Drawing on the findings of the 2009–10 assessment, this analysis took in the views and experiences of a range of voices, mainly through consultation with relevant stakeholders from local government, security and law enforcement agencies, civil society groups and international partners, and through dialogue meetings between communities and security, peace-building, human rights and development actors in Karamoja. It aimed to test whether findings from the initial Karamoja assessment still hold true, what new issues are coming up and what responses have been made towards addressing the issues.

¹ Saferworld, *Karamoja Conflict and Security Assessment*, September 2010, www.saferworld.org.uk/smartweb/resources/view-resource/480, accessed 12 February 2012

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Background

Karamoja conflict and security assessment, 2009–2010

The analysis builds on an extensive conflict and security assessment ‘Karamoja conflict and security assessment’, that Saferworld conducted in 2009–2010. This was a participatory conflict and security assessment to investigate the underlying issues contributing to conflict and insecurity in Karamoja, in a way that would allow Karamojong people themselves to steer the direction of the research. The research findings were intended to enable stakeholders (governmental, non-governmental and international) in Karamoja, among others, to respond to the conflict and security needs of the region. The research focused on three sub-counties in Moroto (which has since been split into two districts creating the new Napak District) and seven sub-counties in Kotido District.

The assessment identified three main types of conflict or tension, namely:

Conflict type A: Conflict and insecurity between ethnic groups Some of the most visible and well-documented violence in Karamoja occurs between different ethnic groups, particularly in the form of cattle raiding. The effects of such violence are well known – death, injury, displacement and disruption of economic and social activities. The assessment shows that this form of violence is still prevalent in Karamojong society, affects all communities and mostly still involves firearms. While some responses have been initiated to change this dynamic, perceptions differ between the Karamojong and state actors about their effectiveness. The Karamojong still report a high level of fear of attacks by other ethnic groups (or sub-groups), leading to restricted freedom of movement. State actors on the other hand, see their responses as having become more proactive and effective, and perceive there to have been an over all reduction in violent incidents across Karamoja.

Conflict type B: Conflict between the state and Karamojong society The relationship between the state and society in Karamoja has long been a difficult one. The current Government has significantly increased its engagement with Karamoja in recent years, including through devising programmes such as the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme (KIDDP), meant to decrease insecurity and stimulate development in the region. It remains, however, a strained relationship, identified during assessment consultations as a principle conflict type. This conflict is mostly latent, but punctuated by specific incidents of violence.

Conflict type C: Conflict and insecurity within ethnic groups While inter-ethnic violence is a well recognised dynamic in Karamoja, the assessment found that intra-community (and therefore intra-ethnic) violence was also at a very high level, increasing local level insecurity and undermining social cohesion. This violence is reported to be mostly perpetrated against men, with the use of firearms and some of it seems to be well

organised. Very high levels of theft within communities were reported as characterising this conflict type, targeting livestock, but also food and personal property.

General objective of the analysis

Building on the baseline data that were created by Saferworld's Karamoja Conflict and Security Assessment (2009–2010), the 2011–2012 analysis seeks to track how conflict and security dynamics are developing in Karamoja and the responses to the conflict and security needs of the region.

Specific objectives of the analysis

- To test whether the findings from the 2009–2010 Karamoja assessment still hold true, how they might have changed and whether new issues have arisen in the meantime.
- To check whether and how issues identified in the assessment have been addressed since the assessment was completed.
- To identify what more could be done to address these issues.

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Methodology

THIS ANALYSIS IS PRIMARILY A QUALITATIVE STUDY, taking in the views and experiences of a range of voices, mainly through consultation with relevant stakeholders from local government, security and law enforcement agencies, civil society groups and international partners; dialogue meetings between communities and security, peacebuilding, human rights and development actors in Karamoja; focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

During the course of 2011 and into 2012, Saferworld conducted four thematic consultation meetings. These meetings focused on some key specific themes emerging from the 2009–2010 assessment and included; civilian disarmament, policing in Karamoja, human rights issues related to disarmament and conflict-sensitive development.

Each meeting focused on a specific theme and consisted of a set of dynamics or conflict issues drawing on the findings of the baseline assessment. For each theme, Saferworld developed a thematic paper (policy brief), summarising the key issues and recommendations to enable focused discussion on the key security and conflict dynamics and trends in Karamoja. During the discussions, participants reviewed the issues to identify whether findings from the previous assessment still held true, what new issues were coming up and what responses had been made towards addressing the issues. Responses to the various concerns that had been raised by communities were documented for feedback to the communities.

The thematic meetings were then followed by a series of meetings between communities and security, peacebuilding and development actors to feedback to the communities their responses to the key issues highlighted in the baseline assessment, while also obtaining feedback from the communities, updates on the conflict and security situation since then, and discussing what more could be done to address these issues. In all, Saferworld facilitated 17 dialogue meetings in three sub-counties of Rupa and Nadunget, in Moroto district and Lokopo sub-county in Napak district, with meetings conducted in three parishes per sub-county. Nine of the community meetings centred on policing issues and eight centred on civilian disarmament. Police officers from the districts of Moroto and Napak and UPDF officers from the Civil Military Cooperation Office, along with representatives from Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC), civil society groups, including Riamiriam, OCHODI and ARELIMOK played an important role in responding to community concerns. The various meetings also examined issues related to human rights and conflict-sensitive development. The meetings attracted up to 700 participants, consisting of a cross-section of community members, including adult men, women, elders, youth, ‘reformed warriors’, civic leaders in the communities and community leaders.

The team conducted four focus group discussions for women, youth, elders and men, involving six to nine participants. Five key informants interviews were also conducted with two police officers, one UPDF officer, one Local Council III chairperson and one parish chief, to clarify and examine some issues further. In addition, the study team also obtained some information by participating in two peace meetings that took place at the time of the study and received first-hand accounts of issues relating to conflict and insecurity in Karamoja, from one cross-border inter-ethnic peace meeting in September 2011, at Lokiriama, between Matheniko (Uganda) and Turkana (Kenya), and another inter-ethnic peace meeting, between the Bokora and Matheniko, held in Nadunget sub-county in October 2011.

Presentation of the findings, analysis and recommendations

This report deals with each thematic area, examining and tracking the specific issues and dynamics within them to identify any changes and trends since the previous assessment. It analyses the views and experiences from the consultations with different stakeholders and with the communities, through the dialogue meetings with various actors, to gauge any changes and trends and examines whether and how issues identified in the earlier assessment have been addressed since it was completed. A summary of the analysis is presented for each specific issue within a thematic area in the form of 'Research findings/conclusions', which highlights the changes and trends. Based on these findings and conclusions, a set of recommendations is formulated for each thematic area, for taking practical action. Some of the recommendations apply to more than one thematic area – a reflection of the inter-connected natures of the problems faced by the region and of the responses necessary to resolve them.

Two district-level validation meetings were conducted for peace, security and development actors from the districts of Moroto and Napak that had participated in the previous thematic cluster meetings with some having been involved in the community dialogue meetings. Participants included police and military officers, members of district local government and representatives from external agencies and CSOs working in Karamoja. Saferworld also convened a national workshop on 29 March in Kampala to present and discuss the findings of the assessment. Participants included representatives from the Government of Uganda, the EU Delegation and development agencies with programmes in Karamoja.

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Key research findings and conclusions

Civilian disarmament in Karamoja

UPDF presence

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on ‘UPDF presence’: In theory every district in Karamoja (except Amudat) had a brigade comprised of three battalions, each of which had approximately 736 soldiers. This means that there should have been over 11,000 soldiers present in the region. However, the actual numbers were difficult to ascertain and were likely to be much lower, especially given high rates of desertion. While deployment may not have been at full capacity, the UPDF were present in greater numbers than the police and were seen as the lead protection and security actor. Despite this, respondents believed the UPDF to be only moderately effective in their role and their trustworthiness. A history of violence against civilians has done much to damage relationships between communities and the UPDF.

A significant number of community members consulted in various UPDF–community meetings reported that cattle raids are still taking place in Karamoja and they attributed the inadequate protection they receive to a reduction of UPDF numbers within their areas in recent months. They argued that as much as the numbers of soldiers have been reduced, those still available are not being helpful to the communities, arguing that in the past the UPDF were more vigilant in responding to attacks by cattle raiders and in following up to recover stolen cattle.

“These days the army only stays around their barracks and instead it is the LDUs [Local Defence Units] who do most of the work.”

A community member in Rupa sub-county, Moroto district

Peace and security actors, including the army, police and non-governmental organisations working on peace and security in Karamoja, shared concerns that the UPDF presence is not adequate and that its deployment and reach do not go far enough in villages, which has led to communities losing trust in the army because they do not respond when people are attacked. They reported that communities complain that the army always says it first has to receive an order before it can act, even where it has been given advance information about an attack; that even when the army attempts to take action, the response is very slow and inadequate; and that where the army tries following up the attackers, “they stop on the way and come back without recovering any animals”. They were further concerned that these frustrations are incentives, driving people to acquire guns to protect themselves and could fuel the motivation for revenge attacks, which may lead to an escalation of conflict.

“Response by the army to cattle raids is very slow. They are ineffective in the recovery of stolen cattle. They conduct biased security operations and confiscate livestock belonging to innocent people.”

Elder, Nadunget sub-county

On their part, the UPDF officers said they have adequate troop deployments in Karamoja to meet the security requirements for the region and that the army remains vigilant to protect the public and to respond to any attacks. According to the officers, security in Karamoja has improved and incidents of violent raids have reduced, as a result of disarmament and military operations. They said that increasingly, only cattle thefts and common criminality by village thugs, commonly known as *lonetia*, are generally reported now, which would be handled by the police. They argued that, because of their experiences, traumatised communities feel insecure and want to see security forces more, in order to feel reassured, adding that what was needed now was for the army to conduct 'psy-ops' (psychological operations) to support communities to recover. The officers believe that as the experiences of traumatic events recede, the fear of insecurity in the public is beginning to reduce and people are becoming more confident about their security.

The UPDF officers indicated the intention of the UPDF to scale down its forces in the region and leave the responsibility of dealing with 'ordinary criminality' to the police. Indeed, the UPDF announced plans in mid-December 2011 to end the military-led civilian disarmament exercise in Karamoja, declaring the exercise a success.² The UPDF officers argued that it was not the objective of the army to be permanently deployed to keep internal security and conduct disarmament in Karamoja. As police deployments continue to increase and the police presence becomes more visible, the army will carry on reducing the number of troops, although it will remain available to support police in ensuring security, when called upon. The officers explained further, that the army will also strengthen its presence along international borders with Kenya and South Sudan to deal with cross-border threats, control the flow of arms across the borders and strengthen the existing military liaison with Kenya, while forging a similar relationship with the new Republic of South Sudan, to promote effective action to address cross-border insecurity.

"Once the job of disarming communities is accomplished and as security continues to improve, UPDF will continue to thin out and leave the police to deal with the criminal elements that remain to steal cattle."

UPDF officer, 3 Division, Moroto

UPDF officers reported that the army now works very closely with the police, the police Anti-stock Theft Units (ASTUs) and the LDUs in disarmament and in the tracking and recovery operations for stolen livestock, adding that police are now taking the lead in the cordon and search operations, in joint disarmament teams which also involve members of the local councils (LCs).

Both the communities and the peace and security actors in Karamoja welcome the deployment of LDUs and call for more recruitment to bolster the UPDF strength in villages, which in itself would also ensure greater involvement by Karamojong in their own security. However, they argue that a requirement for LDUs to stay in army barracks undermines their ability to respond promptly to attacks and protect their communities. They think that the LDUs should be deployed and allowed to reside within the communities, working under the control of their *kraal* leaders, but supervised by the UPDF. During a workshop in Moroto to discuss these findings, the UPDF clarified that while the LDUs are recruited and commanded by the UPDF, they have separate formations and reside in their own camps, separate from the UPDF 'detaches' (bases) and close to the communities they are assigned to protect. Their roles are distinct from those of the UPDF – guarding *kraals* during the night, protecting communities as they graze their cattle during the day. They explained that allowing individual members to stay in their homes would render them highly vulnerable to the risk of attacks by raiders, as well as rendering it very difficult to mobilise them operationally.

² Kazungu, D, "Army ends disarmament exercise", *The Daily Monitor*, 13 December 2011, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201112130836.html>, accessed on 9 February 2012.

UPDF officers reported some tendencies, among some community members, that they saw as undermining the army's ability to respond promptly to incidents of cattle raids and frustrating its recovery efforts for stolen livestock. They pointed out that community leaders often bypass the UPDF detachments in their areas and report incidents of attacks to higher authorities in Kampala, which causes undue delays in responding to the raids and reduces the chances of recovering stolen livestock. The second concern was a tendency by some community members to exaggerate the number of animals lost when reporting a raid, in the hope that they would receive more animals when the army returned recovered animals to the 'owners', a practice which they said makes any recovery efforts futile (of animals that were not lost in the first place) and fans accusations that the UPDF is not doing enough to recover stolen livestock.

Findings/conclusions

Serious concerns remain about an inadequate UPDF presence and its inability to protect communities from attacks amidst perceptions of continued insecurity felt by communities: Despite assurances by the UPDF that they have adequate forces in Karamoja to meet the region's security requirements and that the army remains vigilant to protect the public from the armed cattle raiders, a significant number of community members consulted, report continued cattle raids and that the army neither provides enough protection, nor is it any longer as vigilant in responding to the cattle raids. The communities attribute the inadequate military protection to an insufficient UPDF presence and to a reduction of UPDF forces in recent months. These concerns draw similarities with the findings of the previous assessment, which raised similar complaints about an inadequate UPDF presence and inability to protect communities from attacks, amid perceptions of insecurity felt by many communities.

The UPDF acknowledges that a reduction of their forces has commenced and that this will carry on as security in Karamoja continues to improve as a result of successful disarmament. However, while the actual incidents might appear to have reduced, the UPDF assessment of the security situation seems to be at odds with community perceptions, that reflect the continued insecurity they feel. It is these perceptions that further undermine community trust in the ability of the army to protect them and continue to provide the motivation for people to re-arm for their own security.

Karamojong attitudes to disarmament

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on 'Karamojong attitudes to disarmament': In principle, the Karamojong supported the idea of disarmament and a 'gun free' Karamoja. High levels of violence, death, injury and destruction, resulting from conflict between groups in Karamoja, meant that fear of attack and violence remained an ongoing concern. However, while there was support for the idea of weapons reduction and/or removal, the Karamojong did not support the way in which it had been conducted so far, due to high levels of violence and a perceived unequal removal of arms from different communities. A high level of respondents believed their ethnic group had been 'more disarmed' than neighbouring ethnic groups and a very high number believed that this had left their ethnic group vulnerable to attack from others. Furthermore, there were very low levels of support (particularly amongst male Karamojong youth) for the way actors conducted disarmament between 2007 and 2009. There was some variation between groups about whether disarmament had made them feel positively or negatively towards the state. While the majority of groups, particularly men, elders and youth, harboured negative feelings, women showed a high level of support for the activities. It was considered important to build on these positive feelings, but equally important to realise that disarmament activities risk alienating the very people they are targeted at.

While the majority of the communities consulted want to see the guns removed, they said many people are still reluctant to give up weapons, primarily because they fear for their security. Both community members and peace and security actors in the region believe that levels of violence are still quite high in Karamoja and that the associated fear of violence is undermining disarmament. A significant number of community members consulted feel that the UPDF is not providing enough protection from

attacks by communities that have not been disarmed as much as their own communities. Communities in Rupa and Nadunget sub-counties, for example, complained that while they have been disarmed, some of their neighbours, particularly the Tepeth on the slopes of Mount Moroto, have not been disarmed as much and have continued raiding their animals and sometimes killing people going about their daily activities. This has resulted in increased insecurity in the affected areas. They reported that gun-related killings, cattle raids/theft and robberies still take place particularly at night, forcing men to 'sleep' outside their huts, guarding their *kraals* and livestock.

Peace and security actors in Karamoja agree that the inability of the UPDF to provide adequate protection is undermining the disarmament effort, exposing people to attacks from groups that still hold illegal weapons and that increased feelings of vulnerability were inducing people to re-arm, in order to protect themselves. They argued that before guns were removed, all communities were able to defend/protect themselves and that disarmament has now exposed some communities to attacks. They observed that while the majority of the people in Karamoja want to see guns removed from the communities, many people are still reluctant to give up weapons, primarily because they fear for their security. They said that for many Karamojong, a gun is a coping mechanism, in response to endemic insecurity in the region, and that once their security is assured, people will no longer see the need to arm themselves. Pointing to attitudes created by the ongoing disarmament, participants noted that the attachment to the gun is gradually diminishing and that increasingly, many people no longer see the gun in the same way as before – as the sole source of livelihood and protection. They argued that a lack of public confidence in security provision is undermining disarmament.

“Due to the poor response and protection by UPDF, people are becoming more inclined towards re-arming themselves – and are studying the situation very closely.”

Participant in a thematic meeting, Moroto district

The UPDF officers explained that the army do not target any particular groups or communities for harsher disarmament and that individuals, or groups, are specifically targeted on account strong suspicion, or evidence that they are in possession of illegal weapons. They acknowledged though that certain communities, such as the Matheniko, who live in the borderline areas with neighbouring countries and also enjoy ethnic links with groups across the borders, might have greater access to illegal guns from across the border than other groups, enabling them to re-arm more easily, or to escape military operations by fleeing into Kenya with their guns. They also cited the mountain terrain (around Mount Moroto) as another challenge to disarmament, inhibiting the movement of infantry forces and enabling armed persons or communities, such as the Tepeth, to escape the disarmament operations. Targeting decisions also depend on the frequency of violent incidents, such as cattle raids committed by, or linked to, a particular group, or occurring in a particular area.

Community members also pointed to long-standing conflicts between certain ethnic groups and the re-emergence of alliances between groups, as some of the factors still threatening peace and security in Karamoja. They called for renewed efforts to resolve inter-ethnic conflicts; for example, between the Matheniko and Pokot over grazing land in Achoricor, in order to break the cycle of violence and bring about better conditions for lasting peace in the area. Communities in Rupa and Nadunget reported incidents of cross-border raids, citing particularly the attack by the Matheniko (Uganda) and the Turkana (Kenya) on the Tepeth (Uganda) in July 2011, when over 2,000 heads of cattle and other livestock were raided. Hundreds of warriors are believed to have taken part and there are fears that the Tepeth and their allies the Pokot are planning revenge attacks – thereby perpetuating a cycle of violence. Peace and security actors called for a co-ordinated bilateral or regional action to address cross-border insecurity and the prevalence of small arms, arguing that there is little that disarmed communities can do on their own to defend themselves from neighbouring

ethnic groups, some of them springing from neighbouring states like Kenya and South Sudan, that continue to hold guns.

According to community members, these conflicts are driven by alliances between different ethnic groups against other groups, citing an alliance between the Pokot and the Pian, against the Matheniko, that both groups see as a common enemy. The Matheniko, on the other hand, have formed an alliance with the Turkana (Kenya) against the Pokot. Community members are concerned that unless efforts are made to resolve these conflicts between the Matheniko and Pokot and to discourage hostile alliances, there will be no lasting peace in the area.

The assessment heard responses from community members, that are useful in gauging community attitudes towards the UPDF and the way disarmament has been conducted since 2009. Views expressed were mixed. A significant number of community members reported more strained relations, citing violence and victimisation by the army against civilians during past disarmament activities. They were also concerned that some of their neighbours have not been disarmed, have continued raiding their animals and sometimes killing their people, and that UPDF has done little to protect them after disarming them. Other participants reported fear in some communities of being suspected of owning guns, arising from the UPDF's continued presence in their areas.

Peace and security actors in Karamoja attribute the violence to failure by low-ranking soldiers who conduct operations to follow the cordon and search guidelines, resulting in violations against civilians. They called for the increased involvement of the police in cordon and search operations, to ensure that due process and lawful procedures are observed. They also called for increased efforts to encourage people to hand in guns voluntarily, rather than relying primarily on forceful means, and that this should go hand in hand with initiatives to strengthen relations between the UPDF and communities, in order to build public support for disarmament and encourage community participation.

Despite the resentment expressed towards the UPDF by some communities, a significant number of community members reported a more positive attitude towards the army arguing that cattle raiding attacks had been brought under control and the UPDF presence had brought peace to their communities. They observed that UPDF methods for disarmament had been changing for the better over the past few years and that, unlike the previous experiences, people were no longer tortured or killed these days. They also stated that UPDF cordon and search operations had been reduced and that the army no longer targets entire communities, as it had before. Some community members also mentioned an improved response by the army when a raid is reported and that the army is now better at recovering stolen livestock. They acknowledged that the UPDF were now engaging and consulting more with the LCs and that their LC chairpersons are increasingly involved during cordon and search operations, which gives people confidence and the encouragement to support and participate. These communities also expressed their support for disarmament and pledged to continue working with the army and other security agencies to collect illegal weapons.

The UPDF clarified that, contrary to perceptions that the army are only using force in disarmament, they employ a combined approach – starting with voluntary and turning to forceful approaches when people do not cooperate. Over time the army has been revising its approach, scaling down on forceful methods that target whole communities, in preference for intelligence-led cordon and search operations targeting specific individuals or groups.

Findings/conclusions

Fear of attack and violence remains an ongoing concern among communities:

Although levels of violence in terms of death, injury and destruction resulting from conflict between groups in Karamoja are relatively lower than at the time of the previous assessment, the fear of attack and violence remains an ongoing concern among many of the communities consulted in this assessment. While the majority want to see guns removed from their communities, many remain reluctant to give up their weapons, because they fear for their security. Perceptions still remain high amongst community members that their group or community has been 'more disarmed' than neighbouring ethnic groups and that this has left their ethnic group vulnerable to attack from others, without effective protection from the UPDF. These perceptions threaten to increase incentives for Karamojong communities to re-arm themselves.

Community attitudes appear to be improving about the way in which weapons reduction has been conducted lately, as well as towards relations with the UPDF:

Just as the findings of the previous assessment showed, the majority of community members consulted expressed continued support for the idea of weapons reduction. However, significant concerns still remain about the way in which it has been conducted so far, due to the perceived unequal removal of arms from different communities and the complaints of violence by the army against civilians during disarmament activities. Although many community members continue to express resentment towards the UPDF for the violence, attitudes are changing among a significant number of others, who acknowledge that there has been a general improvement in relations with the UPDF during disarmament. They cite a reduction in the UPDF's cordon and search operations and a change in tactics, to intelligence-led operations rather than targeting entire communities, among reasons for a more positive attitude towards the UPDF. Therefore, while attitudes remain hard and resentment towards the UPDF persists among some communities, there is now recognition that communities are beginning to express a more positive attitude towards the UPDF than during the previous assessment.

Fear of attack from groups across the borders between Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan remains high among communities: The porous borders between Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan make it easy for some communities to re-arm, as well as to evade disarmament processes. They also place communities in Karamoja at risk of attack. Some communities reported continued raids by their neighbours, whom they believe have access to guns from across the borders with Kenya and South Sudan. South Sudan in particular seems to be a major source of cheap firearms and ammunition. They expressed fears that cross-border attacks will spark off revenge attacks, that might perpetuate a cycle of violence.

Government attitudes to disarmament and small arms ownership

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on 'government attitudes to disarmament': Security actors involved in the assessment believed that civilian disarmament in Karamoja had been relatively successful. Estimates of the number of weapons collected varied, but ranged from 85 percent of all weapons, 27,119 arms, collected by 9 October 2009, to the Regional Disarmament Committee Secretariat figures of 28,040, as of June 2010. Security actors also believed there were other indicators of success including: no longer regularly encountering large groups of armed warriors, but instead smaller groups with barely a handful of weapons between them, and hospitals not being flooded with casualties anymore. The last two years of disarmament (2007–2009) were deemed to have been the most successful (something disputed by communities) and civilian disarmament was seen as an ongoing, regular process under the framework of the KIDDP. As a result, it was part of UPDF's regular work rather than an ongoing operation.

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on ‘small arms ownership’: While there was general support for disarmament in principle, for any disarmament process to be successful it must be based on an understanding of the reasons for gun ownership and be combined with efforts to address these. Civilian ownership may be illegal and people may be unwilling to admit that they possess a gun, but there remained a moderate to high level of supply and demand for weapons. Indeed, during the validation process respondents acknowledged that if someone entered their *manyatta* and started shooting, they would shoot back, implicitly acknowledging weapons were still owned and available. Community perceptions of why they need weapons varied from government perceptions. Communities largely claimed the need for civilians to possess small arms is so that they could protect themselves from attack by other ethnic groups and protect their livestock. The government believed civilians want weapons to conduct raids (both for commercial and cultural reasons), to protect themselves and their cattle and to conduct revenge raids and attacks.

The findings in this part of the analysis combine two issue areas, ‘government attitudes to disarmament’ and ‘small arms ownership’, because the information from the research is related and can be applicable to both issues.

The UPDF believe that disarmament has largely been a success with over 30,000 firearms collected from communities, as of July 2011, representing over 80 percent of the estimated number of firearms illegally held by the Karamojong. As a result, they believe security in Karamoja has improved, with reduced incidents of violent raids and killings. The UPDF now see the major challenge for security actors in Karamoja as what they term ‘mental disarmament’, a need to work with communities to reduce the reliance on guns and encourage people to surrender weapons still in illegal possession, while supporting and reassuring traumatised communities to recover from fear of insecurity.

“Some people still think they are finished without the gun. They can’t imagine life without a gun. This means we need to talk to them and explain that giving up weapons is not the end of life.”

UPDF officer at a thematic meeting, Moroto

Indeed, the UPDF, in mid-December 2011, announced that it is ending its civilian disarmament operations in Karamoja, declaring the exercise to have been a success and that the army would be transferring the responsibility for civilian disarmament and security to the police.³ In a related development, the Sixth Peace Recovery and Development Plan Management Committee Meeting of 5 December 2011 de-emphasised the disarmament component of the KIDDP, to focus more on recovery and development interventions “since disarmament had been scaled down”.

The UPDF have said that they will continue tracking cattle raids after the disarmament operation comes to end, which seems to indicate a continued role for the army in maintaining security in Karamoja. During a workshop in Moroto, in March 2012, to discuss these findings, the UPDF stated that ending military-led disarmament and handing over responsibility for security in Karamoja to the police, does not mean that the army will pull out of Karamoja entirely and leave responsibility to the police alone. They clarified that this is a technical requirement involving mandates (recognising that the mandate for internal security lies with the police) but that the UPDF will still remain available to provide support to the police, upon request, as the lead agency to maintain security. This mandate was handed to the military by a resolution of the Parliament of Uganda in 2001, that they should take charge of the region, collect illegal weapons and end the high levels of insecurity and lawlessness. It will be important to articulate clearly what role the UPDF will continue to play in security in Karamoja – particularly if some form of disarmament continues as part of the police mandate. It should be made clear from the outset who will be providing security, in order to reduce fear and anxiety in communities and concrete efforts need to be made to build trust between the security agencies and communities. The two forces will need to work out

³ Kazungu, D, ‘Army ends disarmament exercise’, *The Daily Monitor*, 13 December 2011, allafrica.com/stories/201112130836.html, accessed 9 February 2012.

methods for how they will relate and work together, along with other security actors, under the new arrangement.

“Put police in the forefront of disarmament and security in Karamoja.”

Participant in a thematic meeting, Moroto district

The transition from military to police-led responsibility for civilian disarmament and security in Karamoja has been broadly welcomed by communities, as well as by various peace and security actors in the region. Significant concerns remain however, about the capacity of the police to take on their new, expanded role without the continued support of the army. Communities expressed considerable scepticism about the ability of the police to protect them from cattle raiders, given both the continued low number of police stationed in Karamoja and the inadequate resources with which they work. As a result, many community members say that they would prefer a continued strong military presence, to ensure security from outside and cross-border attacks. Peace and security actors caution that the transition should be gradual and well managed, in order to avoid the region slipping back into insecurity and risk losing both the momentum and the gains secured to date.

“Animal recoveries are not taking place now in our communities, and we doubt this role being handled by the police officers. So many animals have got lost and we have not been able to get our animals back since the nearby army detach was removed. The police are slow and should not stop at arresting criminals but should also follow criminals who have stolen our animals.”

Community member, Nadunget sub-county

Communities and peace and security actors, along with some political leaders, view the UPDF declaration that disarmament is a success and its announcement of plans to end military-led civilian disarmament, as a premature victory, owing to persistent armed raids in recent months and that these are happening with limited response from the UPDF. In their view, the increased raids suggest that many more weapons still exist in illegal possession and that the Karamojong still have access to fresh supplies of firearms, enabling them to re-arm. According to some community members, some guns still remain hidden within some communities, who are waiting for the right time when they can put them to use. Many women consulted as part of the assessment blame the men for keeping illegal guns and using them to provoke other clans. They appealed for support to women groups, to enable them to engage the men, adding that many women know where these guns are sometimes kept, but cannot reveal them out of fear of their men.

“We have had several incidents involving the use of arms in November, an indicator that guns have returned to Karamoja. We feel the number of guns is increasing.”

Local Council official, Moroto district

Incidents in which people are sighted with illegal guns have been commonly reported in villages and these were confirmed by security actors in a peace co-ordination meeting with civil society organisations in Moroto, during October 2011. Citing fears of the fresh acquisition of weapons by warriors, Karamoja leaders have asked the Government to review the disarmament exercise and have called instead, for the intensification of military operations to strengthen the response to the attacks. They argued that the cattle raids experienced lately are a manifestation of the existence of firearms within the communities.

There were voices from community participants in the UPDF–community meetings that accused the army of complacency and claimed that the UPDF is no longer as vigilant in conducting disarmament operations, or in responding to the cattle raids. They suspect that the apparent laxity has given the raiders room to sustain, or even intensify, their attacks. They expressed concern about continued inter-ethnic raids and killings in the recent past, such as the continued attacks on the Matheniko by their neighbours the Jie, Pokot and Tepeth, who they believe are still well armed and have

access to sources of guns across the borders with Kenya and South Sudan. These concerns are accompanied by complaints that the UPDF has failed to disarm those groups that are posing a threat to other communities.

While they acknowledge the successes of the disarmament exercise, the UPDF, however, recognise that there are significant numbers of firearms still in illegal civilian possession. As such, the presence of illegal weapons still represents a significant threat to long-term security and stability in Karamoja. This points to a need for arms control efforts and civilian disarmament to continue, although taking a different approach. Therefore, in this regard, the transition from UPDF to police-led civilian disarmament presents an opportunity to develop community-based weapons collection initiatives that engage the communities, build relations with them and earn their trust, which will in turn help encourage communities and individuals to support and participate in disarmament activities.

The UPDF outlined some measures to control the availability and access to small arms and light weapons including, the continued strengthening of border control to restrict the flow of arms from neighbouring states, increased cross-border co-operation with Kenya and subsequently with South Sudan, and concerted regional action to control the proliferation of small arms. While these measures will help to control the supply and access to small arms, they will be more effective if combined with increased efforts to reassure communities of their security and protection from attacks.

Findings/conclusions

UPDF/Government assessment of improved security in Karamoja and declarations of successful disarmament do not seem to reflect the continued fear of insecurity felt by communities and their doubts about the ability of the UPDF to provide the necessary protection: The UPDF believe that with improved security in Karamoja, as reflected in the reduced number of incidents of violent raids and killings, they will now leave the responsibility to deal with ordinary criminality in the hands of the police. However, neither the communities consulted nor various peace and security actors in Karamoja share this optimism and view this as quite a premature victory. They believe that armed attacks have increased in recent months and that the army has failed to provide adequate protection and respond effectively to these attacks. Continued fear of insecurity, felt by communities and doubts about the ability of the UPDF to provide the necessary protection, draw similarities with the findings of the previous assessment.

While, from the perspective of the UPDF, the actual levels of violence, as measured through death, injury and destruction, might appear to have been reduced, its assessments of improved security do not reflect community perceptions of their safety and security, which indicate that fear of attack and violence remains an ongoing concern. Given mixed community views of the UPDF and the police, the lack of clarity about the respective roles of the security services in the region and the considerable scepticism expressed about the ability of the police to protect them from cattle raids, these fears could well exacerbate and motivate communities to re-arm.

Significant numbers of illegal weapons that still remain in civilian hands represent a significant threat to the security of communities in Karamoja: Although the UPDF has announced the end of military-led disarmament operations, they recognise that there are significant numbers of illegal firearms still remaining in civilian hands. In addition, some communities and local political leaders believe that people are re-arming. These community perceptions indicate that there remain considerable levels of supply and demand for weapons. The transition from military to police-led responsibility for civilian disarmament and security in Karamoja, presents an opportunity to develop a participatory community-based weapons collection initiative that engages communities, builds relations and earns their trust and that will help encourage communities and individuals to support and participate in disarmament activities and give up guns

voluntarily. These initiatives should be implemented as part of comprehensive strategies to make people feel safe and thereby reduce the demand for arms.

Human rights issues in relation to civilian disarmament

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on ‘human rights issues in relation to civilian disarmament’: One of the most controversial aspects of civilian disarmament programmes in Karamoja is the human rights abuses that have become associated with them, particularly in relation to UPDF cordon and search activities. In 2008, 25 cases were registered against the UPDF, as opposed to 31 cases against private individuals and 14 against the police. It must also be noted that it has been hard to summarise levels of human rights abuses, as many cases go unreported, so the actual figures were likely to be higher. Generally, it was felt that the conduct of the UPDF had improved over the last few years, particularly since cordon and search guidelines were agreed in 2007. In addition, there was a feeling that increased political will and better outreach by high level military officials, as well as increased training and dialogue between civil society and the UPDF, had contributed to a more positive situation. However, there were still serious violations and during the assessment respondents mentioned reports of torture and inhumane treatment, as well as unlawful killings during cordon and search operations and while in detention. A number of incidents in early 2010 led to an investigation by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, together with the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC), and a call from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for an independent team to investigate UPDF activities.

The UPDF maintain that violence on civilians committed by individual soldiers is not officially sanctioned, that the army has strong institutional mechanisms in place to enforce the observance of human rights in the military and to ensure that individual soldiers who abuse the rights of civilians are brought to account through robust disciplinary systems and military court martial. They stressed that it is the obligation and practice of the UPDF to investigate every complaint it receives about its soldiers. UPDF officers noted, however, that many allegations of violations by the military are unsubstantiated and not proven, even where investigations have been conducted. They said that a good number of them are often exaggerated, acknowledging that these perceptions arise from inadequate communication between the army and the public. In their own assessment, the UPDF believe that the general trend has been that complaints of violence against civilians by soldiers, has gone down considerably.

However, opinions were divided at various UPDF/community meetings convened during this assessment, where some community members expressed negative feelings towards the UPDF, accusing soldiers of committing violence against civilians during civilian disarmament operations, while others acknowledged that there has been a change for the better in the way that the army treats civilians. Community members who felt negatively about the UPDF stated that the experiences of brutality inflicted on civilians by soldiers remain fresh in the minds of communities in Karamoja, and have damaged relations between the community and the army. They said the army has a high propensity to resort to force, rather than persuasion, without making any attempt to understand the issues that force people to acquire guns in the first place.

“We were told the UPDF came to remove guns from the Karamojong. Now that they have got them, what are they still doing around? Their presence is to us to mean we still have guns, yet that is not true, we no longer have guns.”

Elder, Nadunget sub-county, indicating the suspicion with which some communities regard the UPDF

These concerns are shared by human rights actors in Karamoja, who observed the poor relations between the army and some sections of the public, particularly generated from the time when the UPDF was conducting cordon and search operations. Since the cordon and search operations have been replaced by intelligence-led operations, targeting specific actors rather than whole communities, complaints about human rights abuses seem to have declined. While they recognised that the UPDF has demonstrated some steps to improve human rights practice in the army, some actors were concerned that some violations could still be taking place. They pointed out that many people are still not aware of their rights and may, therefore, not report human rights abuses by the UPDF or the police. However, others were sceptical whether a

reduction of human rights complaints against the UPDF could be attributed to steps taken by the army to prevent soldiers from violating human rights. They argued that this could be explained more by the reduction in military operations, as a result of the improving security situation in Karamoja, which has reduced the exposure of communities to potentially violent actions by soldiers. Human rights actors were also concerned about the continued practice of trying civilians in military courts martial and detention of civilians in military facilities. The UPDF officers explained that the army is working on transferring civilian cases under court martial to civilian courts.

Some communities noted that the number of raids has reduced and that with the improving security situation in Karamoja there are now fewer military operations. They observed that UDF operations have been changing over the past two years and that, unlike the previous experiences, people are no longer tortured or killed these days. They also observed that only people that have committed a crime are arrested now and, if there is evidence, taken to court. They said that people now associate more freely with the UPDF soldiers and socialise with them. Community members also noted that the deployment of LDUs has contributed to improved relations between the army and communities, because the LDUs hail from the local areas in which they operate and help to pinpoint individuals suspected of holding guns illegally, without having to round up entire communities.

“People are no longer being tortured. Only those who have committed a crime are the only ones that are arrested and taken to the army detachments for interrogations and if found guilty they are taken to court. When the suspect is got [arrested], he is taken and the rest of the people are left, compared to sometime back where almost all men in the whole village are taken [by the army] ... People now associate more freely with the UPDF and drink together with them.”

Community member, Nadunget sub-county, referring to the change of approach to disarmament by the army

It is important that the UPDF, the police and other security agencies build on these positive steps and the positive attitudes generated within some communities and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to upholding human rights in the course of their duties. On the part of human rights bodies, there is a need for increased support to the UPDF and other security agencies, to strengthen their commitments to human rights and inculcate human rights standards as part of their daily practice. This will include increased human rights training for security officers and regular monitoring to assess human rights practices. These initiatives should be coupled with increased public awareness and efforts to encourage the public to report human rights abuses. Due to the UPDF's role in the civilian disarmament process to date, a lot of the focus from a human rights perspective has been on their behaviour and not so much on the behaviour of the police. But as the police take over the lead in controlling arms in illegal civilian possession, their behaviour needs to be equally transparent and non-abusive towards communities.

Findings/conclusions

Community impressions of the UPDF have improved along with a decline in complaints about human rights abuses, due to a change in UPDF tactics to intelligence-led operations: Past resentment towards the UPDF because of violence by soldiers towards civilians, particularly during the cordon and search operations, still remains and has undermined trust in the UPDF and prevented a more collaborative relationship from developing with some communities. However, community impressions of the UPDF have improved, due to a change to intelligence-led operations and greater police and LDU involvement. This approach has resulted in a dramatic decline in complaints of human rights abuses and more positive relations with some communities that now appear quite inclined to support disarmament activities. Human rights actors in Karamoja agree that poor relations between the army and the public arose particularly due to cordon and search operations and that since the UPDF changed

their tactics to target specific actors rather than whole communities, complaints about human rights abuses have declined.

Recommendations

1. Security actors in Karamoja should undertake regular critical security reviews that involve communities and address their perceptions and priorities. Such reviews could be used to assess the existence and spread of firearms within communities and highlight potential sources of insecurity.
2. The UPDF and the police need to keep communicating with communities, to explain the changing security situation in Karamoja and try to understand security concerns, while seeking to reassure communities about the presence and commitment of the security forces to protect them and to respond to any attacks.
3. Security actors should conduct sensitisation of communities:
 - About the need to support security agencies, providing information about impending raids and reporting incidents of cattle raids promptly to UPDF detachments or police posts within their areas, in order to enable security forces respond promptly and improve the chances of recovering stolen livestock;
 - To highlight the dangers of exaggerating the number of animals lost when reporting a raid, in order to maintain a more accurate assessment of the losses suffered in raids and a correct picture of the security situation in the area.
4. It is important that while the UPDF and police consider how they will continue to manage their responsibilities to protect the communities of Karamoja, major security decisions should take into account community perceptions of safety and security, not just the security incidents alone, because ultimately confidence in, and compliance with, disarmament will be higher when communities feel secure.
5. It is crucial therefore, for the UPDF and police to build relationships with communities and obtain a good understanding of the problems they face, if they are to be more effective in addressing community security needs and assuring communities about their safety and security.
6. The transition from UPDF to police responsibility for civilian disarmament and security in Karamoja:
 - Needs to be gradual, planned, joined-up, transparent and well communicated to communities, in order to reduce community fear and anxiety;
 - Should provide clear roles for the respective security agencies that are going to provide community protection, including a continued role for the UPDF in supporting the police to maintain security in the region. It should be clear from the outset who will be providing security, in order to reduce fear and anxiety in the communities, while concrete efforts need to be made to build trust between security agencies and communities;
 - Should also involve civilian authorities and other government and non-state security and development actors, to ensure effective security provision and small arms control while remaining responsive to community needs and priorities.
7. As part of the transition, security actors should plan approaches that will seek to guarantee adequate security to Karamojong communities, to ensure that all communities feel safe to disarm, including ensuring that:
 - All ethnic groups are disarmed equally and simultaneously, to reduce perceived and actual vulnerability to attacks from communities that have been disarmed;
 - Efforts are strengthened to increase protection for all communities and to prevent attacks; responding more effectively to armed raids, in order to reassure communities and reduce the prevailing fear of insecurity;

- The borders with Kenya and South Sudan are properly secured against cross-border raids and arms supplies, if disarmament efforts in Karamoja are to have any lasting, positive effect.
8. Continued support to the police is crucial, to enable them to deploy in sufficient numbers and with the necessary resources, across Karamoja. Only regular contact with communities will increase trust and enable the shift from military to police-led security provision and disarmament to be successful.
 9. There will be a need to consider increased recruitment and deployment of LDUs, to bolster UPDF strength in villages, which in itself would also ensure greater involvement by the Karamojong in their own security.
 10. The UPDF and the police should:
 - Continue focusing on improving relations with communities and collaborate closely with civilian authorities, as a way of increasing the transparency of different security provisions by the UPDF and the police and inculcating human rights standards as part of their daily functions;
 - Provide clear guidelines and training to the army, police and other security service personnel on human rights issues;
 - Follow up reported human rights abuses and provide feedback to complainants on the steps taken, as a way to strengthen public trust in security institutions.
 11. Continued support will be needed from human rights bodies to the UPDF and other security agencies, to increase human rights training for security officers and conduct regular monitoring to assess human rights practices. As the police take the lead in collecting weapons in illegal civilian possession, their behaviour needs to be transparent and non-abusive towards communities.
 12. The UPDF and the police should continue focusing on improving relations with communities, building their trust in security agencies to protect them and collaborating closely with civilian authorities:
 - As a way of increasing community participation in weapons collection activities and initiatives to reduce the reliance on guns and to encourage people with guns to give them up voluntarily;
 - As a way of strengthening communities to play an active part in security activities, encouraging them to report incidents to security officers, provide information to enable proactive security action to prevent cattle raids and improve information gathering and better planning of disarmament initiatives.
 13. Community-based and civil society initiatives on small arms control and civilian disarmament should be supported – enabling people to understand different perspectives and motivations regarding gun ownership and disarmament options. Special efforts should be made to engage with youth, as well as those who currently encourage raiding and arms possession, including women (through traditional attitudes regarding masculinity) and local councillors, who have information on who has arms and who can facilitate consultation with communities.
 14. Undertaking a review of the civilian disarmament process to date would be a useful step towards setting out best practice that can be institutionalised and applied, to ensure accountable and lawful conduct of civilian disarmament activities in future.
 15. Renewed commitment is needed from the Governments of Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan to implement existing agreements designed to address cross-border small arms trafficking and insecurity. Of particular relevance are:
 - The provisions on joint planning and operations to reduce arms trafficking, demand for arms and criminal activities in the border areas set out in the ‘Nairobi Protocol on Small Arms’;

- The 'Conflict Early Warning Protocol', which provides a framework for addressing cross-border pastoralist conflicts in the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development region through incident and situation monitoring and analysis, to inform appropriate responses by the authorities and other stakeholders.
16. Continued support for cross-border, inter-ethnic dialogue and follow-up mechanisms is necessary, to address the negative relationships currently in play between ethnic groups, such as hostile alliances.

Policing in Karamoja

Police capacity and effectiveness

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on 'capacity and effectiveness': The police were generally considered to lack sufficient capacity, resources and personnel to regularly engage with communities. As a result, the UPDF had been viewed as the primary security provider in the region for some time and was believed to offer the most protection from attacks by other ethnic groups, despite only being seen to be moderately effective. The police, on the other hand, were seen to offer only moderate protection and were not seen as particularly effective. Part of the reason the police may have been seen as less effective in this area, was that a lack of vehicles affected their mobility and so "impairs investigations into criminal activity or raids. The ability of police to mediate disputes or return stolen livestock – both of which can prevent retaliation and escalations in violence – is notably curtailed". However, the perception was different when it came to who offered the best protection against attacks or crimes committed by other people living in the community, something that, on the whole, requires less mobility. In these cases the police (together with the LC) were believed to offer more effective protection. They were also seen as the main justice provider in cases of conflict or crime within the community, although incidents were often reported to LC first and the channelled through them to the police.

Many community members consulted as part of this assessment felt they hardly see police in their communities and are concerned about police failure to respond effectively to incidents of cattle raids, which they consider a serious threat to their security. Community members said they see police only when they come to arrest people in their villages. They complained about the lack of police capacity to handle hard core criminals within their communities. In some areas, community members requested that a police post should be established at every parish and close to the villages where people live. These incapacities continue to influence perceptions within the community of the police being ineffective.

Police officers from the districts of Moroto and Napak acknowledged that police deployment had been very thin at the time when the Karamoja Assessment was conducted in 2009–2010, with the limited number of officers found only in the main urban areas, especially Moroto town, which were relatively secure and more accessible. The poor police presence had greatly hampered police effectiveness and ability to protect communities and to respond effectively to the cattle raids.

Police officers reported that police presence and deployment has improved over the past two years and that this has increased police visibility and enhanced their ability to respond to community needs. The deployment of the ASTUs has been strengthened and, through its field operations, the ASTUs have enhanced police capacity to deal with cattle raids and the tracking and recovery of stolen cattle (jointly with the UPDF). The ASTUs also play a key role complementing the regular police, to enforce law and order and support regular policing activities in the areas where they are deployed. The police officers added that other branches of the police are being deployed in the sub-counties, which indicates the growing capacity of the police to respond to a variety of community needs and policing challenges. These include, a Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Crime Intelligence, Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) and a Family Protection Unit, although there is still a shortage of CIDs in all sub-counties. Despite the increased numbers, the officers admitted that overall police strength still falls short of the required establishment, which has led to a failure to fulfil the requirement to open a police post for every sub-county and that this left a shortfall in their deployment.

At the various meetings, community members welcomed the deployment of the LDUs and suggested that more LDUs and ASTUs be recruited locally from within Karamoja to reinforce the police. They suggested that police and UPDF target the warrior youths (*karachuna*) for recruitment and deployment to the LDUs and ASTUs, in order to strengthen communities' protection against cattle raids. This would also be one way to engage the youths productively, in order to divert them from cattle raiding. They added that redundant youths remain a challenge for security in the villages. Where this has happened, the community are happy with the recruitment of the youths into LDUs and ASTUs, particularly those that come from their own communities. Some community members are concerned that ASTUs recruitment targets only 'young boys' and they want older people to be armed alongside them during ASTU operations, because they could play a useful part in guiding the youths not to misuse guns.

Responding to these concerns, the police officers informed the communities that with an increased presence in Karamoja, the police (including ASTUs), along with the LCs, are now increasingly involved in cordon and search activities, jointly with the army, indicating their growing role in disarmament activities.

The police officers highlighted some steps that have been taken to equip and re-tool the police, through the Government of Uganda and donor-supported 'Restoration of Law and Order in Karamoja' project. A number of vehicles and motorcycles have been supplied to the region, each district having received at least two vehicles on average, which has helped to improve mobility and enhance police effectiveness and ability to respond to security challenges. A number of buildings have been constructed to address operational and administrative housing needs, such as police stations.

Despite these efforts, the officers said they are faced with a number of challenges that impede police effectiveness, including: the expansive territory that they have to cover, which means that police are spread thinly and unable to provide enough staff for all the areas under their responsibility; inaccessible places, such as Katikakire, which has a mountainous terrain (Mount Moroto); desertion by some police officers, because they see deployment in Karamoja as a punishment; and poor mobility, because vehicles that have been supplied in the past three years frequently break down, without funds for repair, or cannot be used, due to the inadequate fuel supply.

Despite these challenges, police officers reported a significant improvement in the security and law and order situation in Karamoja, as a result of the disarmament exercise, which has enabled the collection of a large number of weapons that were used in cattle rustling and other forms of violent crime. Guns are no longer carried openly by 'warriors' and the incidence of cattle raids and inter-clan attacks, road ambushes, sexual violence has reduced, along with gun-related deaths and injuries.

Overall, however, the majority of community members consulted welcomed the deployment of the police in their communities and indicated their willingness to work with them on security and disarmament activities, because of the (positive) manner with which they treat civilians.

Findings/conclusions

Concerns about inadequate police presence remain, amid perceptions of them being ineffective in protecting the public from attacks: While the deployment of police personnel in Moroto and Napak districts has increased since the previous assessment, the overall numbers still remain inadequate to ensure an effective presence in all the sub-counties where police posts are required, thus hampering their capacity to provide protection to the public and respond to cattle raids. This has fuelled complaints from communities that they hardly see the police and that the police fail to protect them and to respond effectively to cattle raids, which they consider a serious threat to their security. While the majority of community members consulted welcome the deployment of the police in their communities and indicated their willingness to work with

them, because of the positive manner with which they treat civilians, police presence and effectiveness are still constrained by inadequate personnel and resources.

Community outreach

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on ‘community outreach’: In the communities involved in the research there appeared to be a genuine desire for a greater police presence and role. Indeed, some believed that the lack of police capacity was a form of marginalisation by the state. While trust in the police was high, the frequency with which they were actually seen in communities varied. Respondents from Moroto district said the police were usually seen in their communities on a daily basis, while in Kotido district police were seen “only rarely”. However, between the focus group discussions in October 2009 and the validation meetings in March 2010 police presence was reported to have increased in Kotido, with personnel being seen much more frequently.

Numerous voices across the different police meetings with communities were critical of the police for being generally inaccessible to the communities and for failing to respond to their problems. A number of community members stated that the police are only seen when they come to arrest people in the villages, adding that police fail to interact with the communities and to develop good relations with them, in order to understand the problems that affect people. Some community members complained about police delays in investigating and resolving cases reported to them, which causes a lot of frustration to members of the public. Others were concerned that the police lack the capacity to handle hard core criminals, who pose a public threat within their communities.

Communities in Nakiloro and Lobuneit, in Rupa sub-county, informed police officers about the increasing incidence of thefts and daytime robberies along Nakiloro–Lokiriama Road, crossing the border into Kenya, which particularly target women and children engaged in gold mining, a key livelihood source in those areas. They requested regular police patrols along the border roads and strengthened security along the Kenya–Uganda border, through the establishment of a police post and permanent official crossing point.

Responding to these concerns, police officers assured communities of their commitment to improve their response to security problems and the way they handle cases. They acknowledged that the number of police officers in both Moroto and Napak districts has increased over the past two years and that as a result, many police posts in most of the sub-counties have been re-opened, thus increasing police outreach to those communities. They said that only a small number of sub-counties still needed to be covered and that police are constantly receiving requests from the public to open police posts in them. The officers said they were still constrained by inadequate personnel and resources to meet these requests, but that police would respond when more resources become available. They also assured communities that despite their limited numbers they were working together with the army and other security agencies, which enhanced their combined capacity to secure protection for people from cattle raids.

The officers stated further that the police have also stepped up the community policing programme to bridge the gap between them and the communities, raise public awareness about their role in the community and build public support for policing and security activities. They informed community members that the police are committed to increasing their presence and community interaction and that, through the community policing programme, they hope to further extend their outreach to communities. Under this programme, police CLOs have been deployed in every district and operate as a link between police and community. The officers encouraged people to participate in community policing activities and informed them about a radio programme devoted to community policing that was running on a local radio station in Moroto town, encouraging them to listen and participate in the programme.

Overall, community members acknowledged an improvement in police presence in the two districts and welcomed the deployment of police and their increasing role in

the community. They said they looked forward to more police deployments to ensure greater protection to communities and more effective handling of crime in their areas. They also expressed their willingness to work with police on disarmament and security activities, because of the positive manner with which they treat civilians. Generally, community members seem to enjoy good relations with police officers, particularly in communities that live close to the sub-county offices where most police posts are located and who know the police officers well and interact with them frequently.

“This will bring us peace and security in our village. Our village will develop since we will be living in the same village with the Police. Now we will be able to sleep in our villages once the police come closer to the villages, unlike today when we still fear to sleep in the villages fearing the lonetia boys.”

An elder at a police–community meeting in Lokopo sub-county, reacting to information that a new police barracks would be constructed in their village

Generally, community participants welcomed the initiative by police to engage directly with communities, in order to share information about security and policing and discuss their concerns. There was positive feedback from community members about the usefulness for these dialogue meetings and requests were made to the police for more meetings at village level and to ensure *manyattas* (homesteads) are visited more frequently by police officers, ‘because they have a lot of problems.’

Findings/conclusions

Police outreach remains limited, constraining their ability to interact sufficiently with communities and strengthen relations, in order to understand the problems that affect people: Although more police officers have been deployed to the districts of Moroto and Napak since the previous assessment, enabling the opening of many police posts in sub-counties, a number of sub-counties remain without a police post. This limits police outreach and curtails their ability to interact and build good relations with those communities, in order to understand the problems that affect people. Community representatives said they want the police to increase their presence in the community. However, they were critical of the police for being generally inaccessible to community members and for failing to respond to their problems. There was positive feedback from community members about the usefulness of continued dialogue meetings with the police. They expressed a desire to engage more, to share their concerns, coupled with a desire for police posts to be opened in their areas. This indicates a growing recognition of the role of the police in the community.

Trust in the police

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on ‘trust in police’: Generally, trust in the police was very high, compared to a moderate trust of the UPDF. Some concerns were raised about police corruption, but on the whole the police were seen to have a high degree of legitimacy, even though they were considered to lack the capability to protect communities from attacks by other groups.

Overall, community members voiced concerns about certain practices by police officers that are undermining police effectiveness and eroding public trust and confidence in the force. Across the various police–community meetings, community members complained that some police officers still demand money from them in order to follow up cases, including money allegedly to fuel police vehicles for the transportation of suspects to police stations. They also blame the police for delays and poor handling of cases, ‘even where evidence has been provided’, and accuse the police of holding files and investigating indefinitely. Other complaints relate to the practice by police of releasing criminals arrested by members of the public without ‘punishment’ and often without informing the persons who arrested them, and that, once freed, such suspects then cause a threat to the community. Although they acknowledge that generally there has been a reduction in bribery demands by police, these acts and failures are

still undermining public trust in the police. Various community members made comparisons with traditional systems of justice in Karamoja, which they acclaimed for providing instant and deterrent justice, unlike the police (the formal justice system), which conducts ‘unproductive and endless’ investigations, that in the end allows offenders to go free. Lack of faith in police action could create conflict between the traditional and formal systems, especially if the role and mandate of each is unclear.

Police officers acknowledged that corruption is a challenge, because it undermines public trust and the legitimacy of the police. Highlighting the difficulties of addressing the issue of corruption, they encouraged people to bring specific complaints against officers for disciplinary or criminal action, rather than just talking in general terms about police corruption. They argued that corruption is not institutionalised in the police force, nor is it police policy to shield any offending staff, adding that every individual is liable for their actions. They informed community members that the police has established telephone lines to encourage people to report cases of corruption. Other measures designed to facilitate the reporting of corruption include name tags displayed on the apparel of every police officer, for easy identification.

The officers also attributed negative public perceptions of the police to the issue of the police bond. They explained that the police bond is a procedure sanctioned by law, to release a suspect on certain conditions while police continue to carry out investigations and that a police bond is granted free of charge. They acknowledged however, that the police bond can be susceptible to abuse, which may give rise to suspicions that often influence public perception that the police release suspects when they are paid money. The officers also explained that until recently, when courts were absent in Karamoja, they had limited options, except to grant a police bond to suspects, to avoid detaining them beyond the 48-hour legal limit. Even with the return of the courts, the police are often blamed for frequent failures and delays in the court and prosecution processes. Police often has to take the blame for decisions and failures in the entire criminal justice system that may not be of their own making. Court decisions to release suspects on bail, or to acquit them, are blamed on police not ‘punishing offenders’, because they have received bribes to set them free. Similarly, where complainants fail to follow up cases and bring evidence against the offenders, resulting in decisions by the courts to release them, this too is blamed on the police taking bribes. The police officers used the meetings to encourage the public to support them by providing information about crime in their area and following up cases.

“The Karamojong have a common problem of not providing evidence and are always not keen to follow up cases at the police or at the courts of law. Sometimes, due to high illiteracy rates, people cannot document evidence although they can memorise.”

A local councillor, Lokopo sub-county, highlighting the challenge of getting people to follow up cases

“The police have asked us to come up with evidence in courts, so as to prosecute the criminal, but we don’t have that money to travel all the time to Moroto town, where the courts sit.”

A community member in Nadunget sub-county, narrating the troubles people face in trying to give evidence to the police, or in court

Findings/conclusions

Generally, trust in the police remains high within communities, although certain practices by some police officers risk eroding public trust: Just as the previous assessment found, trust in the police generally remains high within communities, although certain behaviours by some police officers risk undermining police effectiveness and eroding public trust and confidence. While the majority of community members consulted report that in general cases of bribery demands by police have reduced, there are still some concerns about corruption in the police, with many community members maintaining that some police officers still demand money from them in order to follow up their cases. Other complaints involved delays and poor handling

of cases and suspects being released by the police without having been tried for the crime they were accused of. Police officers acknowledge that corruption is a challenge but encourage people to become more vigilant in bringing specific complaints, without which it would be very difficult to take specific action. They attribute the controversies and suspicions surrounding police bond to a lack of public understanding of how police bond and court bail works. This leads to people blaming the police and accusing them of corruption when suspects are released.

Perceived role of the police

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on ‘perceived role of the police’: This is an important factor in establishing where opportunities and challenges lie for the future. The police are believed to play a number of positive roles in the community including:

- Keeping law and order;
- Arresting ‘wrongdoers’, criminals and cattle raiders;
- Providing protection and security – from criminals and “fighting”, for “food/food distribution” and also for the protection of women and children;
- Social control functions, such as reducing drunkenness, “teaching discipline”, guiding against “wrongdoing”, “fighting adultery” and enforcing ‘modern dress’ among warriors and more traditional people;
- Sharing public information.

At the various community meetings with the police, opinions were divided about how community members understand the role of the police. In some meetings, community members stated that the role of police is dealing with crime within communities. While some community members said it was the role of police to protect communities from cattle raids, others thought that the protection of communities was the work of the army and that the police are there to work under the army. Those who said that the role was to protect communities also thought that the police were better at protecting people than the army, who mistreat people. They cited good police treatment of people in detention and the manner in which they handle their investigations. Other community members thought that the police are there to arrest men who beat their wives, while others said they are there to arrest people for nothing.

In some police meetings with communities, some community members saw the role of the police as working with LCs and were concerned that they were not working closely in villages. They urged the police to engage more closely with LCs, because people believe in them and feel reassured when their LCs are involved in matters that concern their security. Despite the desire to see the police working closely with LCs, many community members said they were not clear about the role of LCs and the types of cases that LC courts are mandated to handle. This was clarified by the police officers; all criminal cases must be reported to the police, who are mandated to handle crime in the country, while some cases of a civil nature, such as disputes between people, or customary land disputes, may be reported to the LC courts. The communities suggested that police sensitise the LCs about their role, the role of the police and the types of cases that LC courts can handle.

Regarding the police role of protecting the public from cattle raids, community members complained about the slow pace of recovering stolen animals. They wondered whether the police consider this part of their role and whether they have the capacity to pursue cattle raiders to recover stolen cattle. The officers explained that the police have established ASTUs as a specialised element in the force, to conduct field operations to deal with cattle raiding and to track and recover stolen cattle. ASTUs also conduct cordon and search operations with the UPDF, under the disarmament exercise.

Some community members said they were confused about the many different types of police uniforms, which made it difficult to distinguish a police officer from other people, an issue that was clarified by the officers. It is not unusual for security agencies

to have a variety of uniforms, as a way of distinguishing different sections, serving different roles in the organisation.

Overall, community members welcome the role of the police in disarmament and providing security and commended the positive approach with which they handle civilians. They are, however, sceptical about the ability of police to handle large-scale operations on their own, without the support of the army, given their small numbers and the lack of logistics. They pointed out that generally, the police are slow to respond to cattle raids, often complaining about a lack of transport, personnel or other resources.

Findings/conclusions

Mixed views and lack of clarity on the roles of the police remain, which could distort public perception and undermine confidence in the force: At the various community meetings with the police, community members mentioned a number of positive roles they understand the police to play in the community; such as dealing with crime and protecting communities from cattle raids. There is a lack of clarity on the role of the police in relation to the army, with some stating that the protection of communities is the work of the army and that the police are there to work under the army, although some community representatives recognise that the police are better at protecting people than the army, with many expressing a preference to work with the police in conducting disarmament activities, because of their positive approach to dealing with civilians. Other community members think that the police are there to arrest men who beat their wives, while others said they are there to arrest people for nothing. Although generally community members recognise that the police play a positive role in the community, mixed views and lack of clarity on their role could well distort perceptions and expectations and undermine confidence in the force. Clarity about the role of the police is essential for effective engagement with communities, so that they understand the police and know what to expect from them.

Fear of attack by the police

Summary of 2009–2010 findings: Fear of attack by the police was very high and in fact, at the same level as the UPDF, although community members remained most afraid of being attacked by people from other ethnic groups. In reality, of the 89 human rights cases registered in 2008 by the UHRC, 14 involved the police, while the UPDF were implicated in 25.

During the police/community meetings some community members in Rupa sub-county, in Moroto district, were at first reluctant to interact with the police for fear of being arrested. They said that they have known the police to be just like the army, arresting people 'for nothing', so they always keep their distance. At another location, some youths who had gathered for the meeting hastily left when they saw a police vehicle approaching – the vehicle was bringing police officers to the meeting. They later said they had attempted to leave because they feared that the police had come to arrest them. Community members say the same vehicle is normally used for arresting people, so people keep their distance. During another meeting, some youths demanded to know why the police always use dogs to follow up on people in their homes, which is very intimidating and exposes them to the risk of dog bites. They also demanded compensation for people killed during raids by government soldiers.

However, these reactions contrast with impressions expressed by other communities that said they are generally satisfied with the conduct of police officers and they do not find a problem in interacting with them. They stated that they see the police as friendly people who are there to help them, which indicates that some communities no longer fear that police will attack them.

At the various meetings, police officers appealed to people not to fear them because they are there to help people, adding that they do not arrest innocent people, only those who break the law. Police officers informed community members about the complaints registered by UHRC and regretted any acts of mistreatment of civilians by security personnel. They stated that the police, in conjunction with UHRC, are conducting investigations into complaints against officers and will take appropriate action on those found to have committed violence against members of the public. They informed the various meetings that police policy does not condone any human rights abuses by its staff and that individuals are held accountable for their actions. They also said that the police has improved its handling of human rights issues, as a result of increased human rights training and other support from human rights organisations.

The officers further explained that through their investigations, they have found that part of the reason for police violence against civilians is linked to some members of the public violently resisting arrest or obstructing police officers in the course of their duties. They advised members of the public to always obey state law enforcement agents when doing their lawful duty and to refrain from attacking them, adding that use of force by police or other security agents is justified in certain circumstances, such as resisting arrest, or violence against them or other persons. They informed community members that under the Community Policing Programme, they have embarked on sensitisation, to educate the public about police powers, including the use of force, and about the public's rights and responsibilities.

Findings/conclusions

Community perceptions about police are mixed, with indications that some people are still fearful of police while others say they no longer fear attacks by police: The behaviour of some community members, in attempting to escape from the community meetings when police officers arrived, indicates that some people are still fearful of the police. Indeed, the individuals concerned stated that they are reluctant to meet with police officers for fear of being arrested. However, these reactions do not reflect the positive responses from the majority of community members, who said that they no longer have any fear of attacks by the police and that they see the police as friendly people, who are there to help them. It is important that the police build on this positive attitude, to strengthen relations with communities and build their trust, while reaching out to those that remain fearful, to reassure them of police friendship.

Recommendations

1. The police should undertake regular critical reviews of security and policing in Karamoja, to clearly understand the current threats and the social, cultural, political and economic issues that influence security and policing. The review should take into account people's perceptions and priorities with regard to their security.
2. Police should create a mechanism for monitoring and strengthening community relations and trust in the police.
3. Police should increase community engagement, so that communities' security concerns are heard and addressed.
4. Police should strengthen community outreach, to raise public awareness of the role of the police, police powers and procedures and the rights and responsibilities of members of the public when interacting with the police.
5. The Government of Uganda should strengthen the police presence in the region, and improve police response to community security needs and priorities and, based on the findings of the critical review, it should:
 - Deploy more police officers to Karamoja, including ASTUs;

- Recruit and deploy more ASTUs in a way that targets youths with the necessary qualifications, in order to engage them more productively and prevent redundant youths from being lured into cattle raiding;
 - Provide increased operational resources to the districts of Karamoja and adequate funding to maintain and operate a vehicle fleet and conduct patrols;
 - Provide resources to enhance police interaction with communities and to increase public awareness about the role of the police in the community, police powers and procedures;
 - Train police officers and other security providers to undertake disarmament and security in a way that is responsive to the needs and concerns of communities, is sensitive to the culture and norms of the Karamojong people and that seeks to encourage their participation.
6. As part of the transition from UPDF to police-led responsibility for civilian disarmament and security in Karamoja, the police need to plan how they will involve other government and non-state security and development actors, as well as civilian authorities, to ensure effective security provision and small arms control, while remaining responsive to community needs and priorities.
7. Police should:
- Continue focusing on improving relations with communities and collaborate closely with human rights agencies, as a way of increasing the transparency of security provision by the police and inculcating human rights standards into their daily functions;
 - Provide clear guidelines and training to police personnel on human rights issues;
 - Follow up reported human rights abuses and provide feedback to complainants on the steps taken, as a way to strengthen public trust in the security institutions.

Conflict-sensitive development of Karamoja

Communities consulted as part of this assessment reflected on the missed opportunities for development, due to endemic insecurity in Karamoja, and hoped that security will improve so that development can take place in their region. However, it is also understood by many, that poorly conceived and badly implemented development initiatives can fuel tensions and conflicts that may undermine peace and security. While this experience points to the need for a secure and violence-free environment to support development in Karamoja, it is also important to ensure that ongoing and future development initiatives are implemented in a conflict-sensitive way.

Awareness of government and development initiatives

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on ‘awareness of government governance and development initiatives’: There were high levels of awareness about the KIDDP, National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Programme (NUREP) and Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), but low levels of understanding about what these programmes actually do and low levels of local participation in any of the government’s key security, development and peacebuilding programmes in the region. While most groups had heard about the programmes, few were able to explain what they actually were and what they involved. NUSAF was the programme that had gained the most recognition and to which the most projects were attributed, whereas only half the groups attributed projects to NUREP.

Strong public awareness is essential for effective community participation in development initiatives. The opinions of community members consulted varied, about whether they had participated in awareness activities on government and other development initiatives. While some community members said they have participated in some sensitisation activities on government development programmes, such as NAADS, others reported that they have only heard about such initiatives and indicated a desire

to participate in such programmes. Government and non-state development actors in Karamoja, however, reported a general lack of public awareness and understanding, which in itself undermines public participation. Not much effort has been made to raise public awareness, for example about the KIDDP and to explain its importance. They cited among others, a lack of interest from the public to attend meetings, without inducements to attract people. Lack of public awareness increases the potential for misinformation, that could lead to increased tensions and intra-communal conflicts, through people feeling left out of development initiatives.

However, low levels of awareness are to some extent also evident among some development actors themselves who, by their own admission, said they have only heard about the KIDDP, but have had no access to the programme document. The effective implementation of development initiatives will require well-informed development actors reaching out to the communities to explain the importance of the various development programmes, such as the KIDDP, NAADS and NUSAF and how people can benefit from them.

Findings/conclusions

A continued general lack of public awareness and understanding of development initiatives undermines public participation and increases the potential for tensions and conflicts: Public awareness is essential for effective community participation in development initiatives. However, while feedback from communities indicates that many had participated in some public sensitisation and awareness activities for some development initiatives, responses from government and non-state development actors in Karamoja indicate a general lack of public awareness and understanding, which in itself undermines public participation in the development activities. They cited a lack of interest from the public to attend meetings without inducements, as one of the challenges. A lack of awareness impairs participation by communities and it also raises the potential for misunderstandings about projects, which might fuel resentment and tensions within communities.

Perceptions of the benefits of government initiatives

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on ‘perceptions of the benefits of government initiatives’:

While most people had heard of the government initiatives to some extent or another, there were some mixed attitudes towards them and the benefits they brought. Elders in one focus group discussion said that, “NAADS, NUREP and NUSAF are a very beautiful song we hear on the radio” and participants in another discussion said “NUSAF just came and stopped in town and did not come to the villages”. In some group interviews in Moroto, participants explained that many NUREP projects were dominated by the Bokora from the south and joked that it had been renamed BOKOREP – ‘the Bokora Rehabilitation Programme’.

Public perceptions of exclusion from development initiatives have the potential to undermine public participation and can cause tensions around development initiatives. Community feedback on existing development projects such as the NAADS and KIDDP demonstrate this risk. Community members, consulted in various meetings, complained that they have not seen the benefits from these projects and believe that the elite have hijacked many government projects, favouring their own relatives, friends or clansmen. They said they are keen to participate in development projects by government and other partners, but they have been left out and that it is other people that benefit all the time. They feel deceived and used by people in responsible positions and called for programme implementers to always stick to the approved plans and selection guidelines, so that people have equal opportunities to benefit from these programmes.

“We hear a lot on radios about goats, pigs and other good things being given out, but we do not see any of these in our villages. When we are in town people show us big goats,

sometimes referred to as NAADS goats, but these belong to the leaders. Ordinary people in our villages don't have them."

Community member, Rupa sub-county, Moroto district

Development actors in Karamoja point to high public expectations about development projects, which can fuel such resentment and tensions. They observed that the lack of public awareness and understanding of the procedures for such development projects is the reason for public dissatisfaction. They stated that the projects come with targeting guidelines and criteria for selecting beneficiaries, that specify which particular people or communities will be eligible and how the final beneficiaries should be selected. It is often hard for ordinary community members to comprehend these procedures, which they then ignore, continuing to demand inclusion in projects, even where they are not eligible. In a chronically food-insecure context, where food aid has often been provided to address spikes in hunger, people feel a sense of personal entitlement to development projects. This leads to complaints when people feel they have been left out.

Findings/conclusions

The high number of complaints by some people that they have been left out of livelihood or income-generating programmes risks causing resentment and tensions around development initiatives: Community feedback on existing development projects, such as the NAADS, indicates that a significant number of community members are unhappy that they have not seen the benefits from these projects and believe that many government projects have been hijacked by the elite. Perceptions of exclusion from development initiatives by members of the public remain high and could have the potential to undermine public participation and cause tensions and resentment around development initiatives.

Supporting existing livelihoods

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on 'supporting existing livelihoods': Elements of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist activities were highlighted during the consultation phases as core causes of inter-ethnic conflict in Karamoja. At the same time, cattle keeping and agriculture were found to be the dominant means of survival among those involved in the assessment. In this context, efforts to support sustainable pastoralist and agro-pastoralist practices could contribute to wider peacebuilding efforts. However, one of the biggest challenges is how to make pastoralism viable. One of the problems is the limited access to pasture, due to the expanding 'green belt' of agriculture and an increasing number of outside investors beginning to settle and fence communal land. Possibly the biggest problem with regard to access is insecurity, with development actors suggesting that large swathes of viable pasture have been abandoned, due to conflict and intense insecurity. Interviewees themselves suggested that livestock and pastoralist livelihoods should be strengthened through support for crossbreeding and improved animal nutrition projects. They implied that 'hatred' and conflict would be reduced if Karamojong communities could get assistance to improve the quality and health of their livestock. Furthermore, the promotion of alternative livelihoods risks stirring up tensions if it is not done in a conflict-sensitive way, as it is viewed by some as challenging the fundamentals of the Karamojong way of life.

While it is accepted by many that there is a need to diversify livelihoods in Karamoja, there are concerns that some livelihoods diversification projects may themselves stir up tensions. For example, the government's 'Karamoja Action Plan for Food Security' aims to address the region's chronic food insecurity, improve livelihood opportunities and support sustainable food production. However, there are concerns from development actors that disproportionate attention is being given to crop production, at the expense of pastoralism or agro-pastoralism (the two dominant livelihoods options for the Karamojong), and that this could become a driver of conflict. In particular, much of the agricultural development is targeted at the 'green belt' of Karamoja – the area with the best water resources and therefore valuable as dry-season grazing for cattle-keeping communities. Development actors in Karamoja fear that this might threaten the sustainability of pastoralism and worsen inter-ethnic conflict relating to access to water and grazing, which could in turn exacerbate food insecurity.

Community members consulted in the assessment emphasised the importance of agro-pastoralism as the most viable form of livelihood for the Karamojong. They also have many suggestions for improving the quality and health of livestock, marketing them and supporting pastoralist livelihoods. It is important that development initiatives place the Karamojong at the centre of the process, ensuring that interventions are informed by the needs and priorities of the communities, based on effective consultation and that they are premised on a good understanding of the culture, local experience and local knowledge in the communities. While this issue featured quite strongly in the consultations with development actors in Karamoja, it was not sufficiently explored during the community consultations to obtain their perspectives on the matter. We propose that the issue be explored further, to deepen the understanding of community perspectives.

Findings/conclusions

While there is a need to diversify livelihoods in Karamoja, there are concerns that these ideas are not always based on community feedback and preferences, which increases the potential that some livelihood diversification projects themselves may stir up tensions: While it is accepted by many that there is a need to diversify livelihoods in Karamoja, there are concerns that some livelihood diversification projects themselves may stir up tensions, particularly where these ideas are not based on community feedback and preferences. For example, while community members consulted in the assessment emphasised the importance of agro-pastoralism as the most viable form of livelihood for the Karamojong, the government's 'Karamoja Action Plan for Food Security', that aims to address the region's chronic food insecurity, improve livelihood opportunities and support sustainable food production, gives disproportionate attention to crop production, at the expense of pastoralism or agro-pastoralism. However, some government and external actors and civil society groups working on development issues in Karamoja have expressed concerns that the disproportionate attention could become a driver of conflict, in particular because much of the agricultural development is targeted at the 'green belt' of Karamoja. This is likely to worsen inter-ethnic conflict relating to access to water and grazing, which could in turn exacerbate food insecurity.

Alternative livelihoods

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on 'alternative livelihoods': Among interview groups, there was a strong perception that the development of alternative livelihoods does have the potential to contribute to a reduction in both inter-ethnic and intra-community conflict. Participants believed that the actual or expected positive impacts of education and employment projects on conflict in Karamoja included: constructively bringing people together and encouraging them to interact; keeping people occupied; and reducing incentives for raiding and theft by reducing inequality and insufficient access to resources. An important aspect to highlight is that during the consultation phase, 'reformed warrior' and male youth focus groups made it very clear that they did not want the government and other actors to give up on them, or discount their willingness to be productive. They felt that they had energy, ideas and some skills, but not the start-up opportunities or resources, which is why they "just sit under trees". However, development of alternative livelihoods is not an easy matter, especially given the terrain and it is unlikely that any alternatives will result in a complete switch by the Karamojong away from owning cattle and a pastoralist way of life.

Communities that were consulted in the assessment believe that the development of alternative livelihoods has the potential to contribute to a reduction in conflict and insecurity. While they are aware that keeping people occupied, especially 'reformed warriors', will reduce incentives for raiding and theft, they acknowledged the lack of opportunities for alternative livelihoods to encourage people to give up weapons and cattle raiding. They called for initiatives that target disarmed youths as a priority, so that they are not lured back to cattle rustling. At various meetings community members suggested that the *karachuna* be targeted for recruitment into the LDUs, as one way

to engage them productively and to divert them from cattle raiding, recognising that redundant youth remain a challenge to village security.

Development actors in Karamoja acknowledge that a lack of alternative livelihoods to cattle raiding and gun ownership undermines disarmament and, more especially, efforts to persuade people to give up weapons. According to one participant at a thematic meeting in Moroto district, the *karachunas* that are accustomed to cattle raiding are reluctant to give up their weapons, because they say they cannot find viable alternative livelihoods and often ask him: “How do we survive after you’ve taken away the guns?” Development actors called for innovative programmes that create incentives to encourage voluntary disarmament while providing opportunities to engage youths in productive, income generating activities.

Development actors observed increased agricultural activity in the districts of Moroto and Napak, with homesteads cultivating sorghum, maize and finger millet, an indication of the increasing of agriculture as an alternative form of livelihood for pastoralist communities. As an indication of how people are adapting to life after being disarmed and having been forced to abandon cattle rustling, some men at a police–community meeting in Nadunget sub-county retorted that they “had now become women” and had resorted to working with their wives in the gardens. Others said they had taken to cultivation because they had no livestock left after all their cattle had been taken by the raiders.

Development actors noted that many people in Karamoja see the gun as a coping mechanism in response to the endemic insecurity and that with improving security, as a result of the ongoing disarmament, attachment to the gun is gradually diminishing and increasingly, many people no longer see the gun as the sole source of livelihood and protection. More people want to settle down and engage in agriculture and other normal activities. But while cultivation of crops can be seen as a coping mechanism for some Karamojong, who having lost their livestock due to cattle raids, it might also see tensions between cultivators and pastoralists within communities, where crops are destroyed by livestock.

Development actors also cited other forms of alternative livelihoods that the Karamojong had increasingly adapted to, including mining and quarrying limestone, gold and marble. This could be promoted through better regulation, processing and marketing, to reduce illegal mining and unregulated practices that might increase the potential for conflict. Increased charcoal burning and firewood collecting are also evident across the countryside. While these offer easy ways to augment family incomes, it is clear that increased charcoal burning and cutting down trees, unless checked, could lead to environmental degradation, which in turn could aggravate water scarcity and food security, as well as threaten pastures; the effects of which could be to increase the potential for tensions and conflict in the region.

Development actors also noted that many people in Karamoja have taken to petty trade around trading centres, selling foodstuffs, charcoal and other household goods, as a way to diversify their livelihoods and sources of income. Meanwhile, many young people have moved to major urban centres outside Karamoja, often into a destitute existence. Both community members and security and development actors point to increased cases of theft of household items and food relief within communities, which they associate with young people returning from major urban centres after being socialised into criminality and other anti-social behaviours. They also raised concerns about the potential for the increased prevalence of HIV and AIDS.

Findings/conclusions

While there is a noticeable increase in a variety of alternative livelihood activities in Karamoja, that may have the potential to contribute to a reduction in conflict and insecurity, there were community concerns that if they are not undertaken in an appropriate and conflict-sensitive way, they risk causing tensions and conflicts:

The communities consulted agree that the development of alternative livelihoods has the potential to contribute to a reduction in conflict and insecurity. Both the communities and development actors in Karamoja acknowledge for example, that a lack of alternative livelihoods to cattle raiding and gun ownership undermines disarmament and, more especially, efforts to persuade people to give up weapons. They called for livelihood initiatives that target disarmed youths as a priority, so that they are not lured back to cattle rustling.

Development actors also reported a noticeable increase in a variety of alternative livelihood activities in Karamoja, mainly agricultural production; mining and quarrying; and charcoal burning and firewood collecting for trade. While these are positive indications that communities are increasingly adapting to alternative livelihoods, there are concerns that if they are not undertaken in an appropriate and conflict-sensitive way, they risk causing tensions and conflicts. For example, cultivation might strain relationships within the community over grazing land and land for crops; illegal mining activities and the lack of regulation might increase the potential for conflict within communities and between communities and the authorities; increased charcoal burning and firewood collecting could deplete the vegetation and forest cover, which might destabilise the fragile ecology of the semi-arid region and could aggravate water scarcity and food security, as well as threaten pastures; the effects of which could potentially exacerbate conflict in the region. There are also increased fears that when they return to their home areas, young people who have migrated to major urban centres outside Karamoja, having been socialised into certain anti-social behaviours, could increase the potential for criminality and the prevalence of HIV and AIDS.

Areas of concern/ potential tensions

Summary of 2009–2010 findings on ‘areas of concern/potential tensions’: Introducing alternative livelihoods is an ongoing process and it is accepted by many that there is a need for diversifying (rather than replacing) livelihoods in Karamoja and indeed doing so may contribute to a reduction in conflict. However, some concerns were expressed about the impact this may have and the potential for actually stirring up tensions and old conflicts. Concerns included:

- Improved trade in the region may lead to an increase in demand for stolen or raided cows, or create new opportunities for raiding;
- Increased levels of food and money in the community could lead to increased opportunities and incidences of theft and looting (although, this contradicts comments from other groups that an increase in food would likely decrease levels of theft);
- Everyone must be included in income-generation, or alternative livelihood projects, otherwise this will lead to complaints that people have been left out and to tension.

While it is accepted by many that there is a need to diversify livelihoods in Karamoja and that doing so may contribute to a reduction in conflict, concerns are expressed by many about the impact this may have and the potential for actually stirring up tensions. Development actors point to complaints that were commonly expressed various community members during the consultations that they had been left out of development projects and attribute this to high public expectations in Karamoja about development projects, which can fuel such resentment and tensions.

“All people must benefit from all government programmes. The idea of piloting projects will not work well with the Karamojong communities, who feel some people are more favoured than others. It is important to note that the Karamojong...will feel jealous when they see another clan with something better and they do not have. These will automatically contribute to conflicts.”

Peace mobiliser, Lokopo sub-county

They noted that in a chronically food-insecure context, where food aid has consistently been provided for decades to address spikes in hunger, people feel a sense of personal entitlement to development projects – everyone feels that they must be included in livelihood or income-generating programmes. The feelings expressed by different communities that they have been left out of development initiatives is indicative of this risk and demonstrates the potential to exacerbate resentment and tensions if perceptions of exclusion abound.

“We can no longer sleep in our villages because people are bitter with us, claiming we are biased when selecting beneficiaries for the government projects. The problem is that people want to get whatever they ask for. And...if some of them miss, that will be hell for us. Sometimes the NAADS target only 30 beneficiaries in a parish, to act as models for the rest. This is something the community will not understand.”

Parish chief Lokopo sub-county, illustrating the tensions surrounding the administration of community projects

Various communities consulted also observed some trends that point to the commercialisation of cattle rustling over the years, a phenomenon that causes concern as it appears to fuel cattle raids. In their view, the increasing trade in cattle and accessibility to ready markets has transformed the cow over recent years, from being a principal source of livelihood in the traditional value system, to being a highly prized commodity for trade. It was a concern of some communities consulted in the assessment that while increasing trade in livestock was a positive development that can serve to strengthen and diversify livelihoods in Karamoja it is, in part, also contributing to cattle raiding. They called for prompt responses by security agencies to ensure stolen cattle are recovered quickly, before they are transported to markets and sold. They observed that while large-scale cattle raids have now scaled down, as a result of disarmament, incidents of cattle theft in which small numbers of cattle are stolen are on the increase, motivated by a desire to sell them for money.

Findings/conclusions

Public expectations about development projects remain high and, where everyone feels they must be included, this may have the potential for stirring up tensions: While it is accepted by many that there is a need for diversifying livelihoods in Karamoja and doing so may contribute to a reduction in conflict, concerns are expressed by many about the impact this may have and the potential for actually stirring up tensions. Complaints commonly expressed by various community members consulted that they have been left out of development projects, point to high public expectations about the projects, where people feel a sense of personal entitlement and everyone feels they must be included. This may have the potential for actually stirring up tensions, that could undermine the programme and its intended benefits if not managed in a conflict-sensitive manner.

While increasing trade in livestock is playing a positive part in the diversification of livelihoods in Karamoja, it is, in part, also contributing to cattle raiding: Community members observed a trend towards the commercialisation of cattle rustling over the years, a phenomenon that appears to fuel cattle raids. Increasing trade in cattle and accessibility to ready markets has transformed the cow from its position as a principal source of livelihood, under the traditional value system, to a highly prized commodity of trade. It is a concern among communities that while increasing trade in livestock is a positive development, that can play a part in the diversification of livelihoods in Karamoja, it is also, in part, contributing to cattle raiding.

- Recommendations**
1. Authorities and civil society actors should plan and implement participatory and conflict-sensitive development initiatives. This includes:
 - Involving communities in the planning and implementation of development interventions, so that communities' conflict and security and development priorities are adequately addressed;
 - Paying particular attention to developing appropriate eligibility and selection criteria, to ensure that the targeting of interventions does not further fuel inter- or intra-community divisions;
 - Clearly explaining all programmes to communities, in order to manage expectations.
 2. Government and development partners should support initiatives that provide youth who have been disarmed with alternative, appropriate livelihood options and training opportunities.
 3. Government and development partners should further explore options for simultaneously supporting viable pastoralism, agro-pastoralism and crop production in Karamoja, in close consultation with the communities living there.

Saferworld works to prevent and reduce violent conflict and promote co-operative approaches to security. We work with governments, international organisations and civil society to encourage and support effective policies and practices through advocacy, research and policy development and through supporting the actions of others.



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COVER PHOTO: A community member speaks at a community dialogue meeting with officers of the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces in Moroto District, Karamoja Region, Uganda, during the conflict dynamics update assessment in 2011. © PATRICK ABONGI/SAFERWORLD



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