

# Promoting conflict-sensitive development in Uganda

Since the end of the conflict between the Ugandan government and the Lord's Resistance Army in 2006, progress has been made in rebuilding the devastated north. However, many communities in Northern Uganda remain in a state of latent conflict, burdened by inadequately addressed war legacies and deep-seated grievances against government institutions. This makes them vulnerable to a relapse into violence if significant triggers occur. In this context Saferworld has been working as part of a consortium to promote conflict-sensitive development and land governance – putting these issues on the national agenda.



Saferworld's work on conflict-sensitive development and land governance in Uganda has focused on three areas: influencing the development and implementation of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP); promoting conflict-sensitive approaches to land governance processes in northern Uganda; and providing technical support on conflict sensitivity to Ugandan government institutions, civil society and donors.

## Promoting the peacebuilding aims of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan among local governments

Northern Uganda's PRDP is an important document that acts as a coordination framework for donor and government development activities, and is a plan to allocate resources and spur economic development in the region. However if the PRDP is not implemented in a conflict-sensitive way, it could exacerbate rather than reduce tensions.

The post-conflict setting in Northern Uganda is characterised by poor service delivery, land conflicts, gender-related challenges and youth exclusion, which all threaten the region's ability to recover. In

collaboration with International Alert and the Refugee Law Project, and as part of the Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS), Saferworld has been providing technical support to the Office of the Prime Minister, local governments, and key donors such as the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and Irish Aid. Support has focused on teaching conflict-sensitive approaches to development to help address the drivers of conflict in Northern Uganda and ensure that development plans in the PRDP are conflict sensitive.

The ability of local government officials and civil society organisations (CSOs) to be conflict sensitive is an important step towards mitigating the current conflicts and preventing relapse into violent conflict. Our programme has involved a conflict analysis of the PRDP region, including assessing the capacity of local governments and civil society actors on conflict-sensitive approaches to development, giving training sessions on conflict sensitivity, and giving advice to the Office of the Prime Minister on how to conflict sensitise the recovery process. Technical support is also being extended to the Uganda National Planning Authority to ensure that the country's overarching planning agenda does not lose sight of existing and potential conflict issues, which have contributed to underdevelopment in Uganda.

We have been giving tailored trainings on key conflict sensitivity concepts, different ways of applying these concepts – including being able to conduct conflict analyses – and practical accompaniment to enable people to incorporate conflict-sensitive approaches in their project cycle. As a result of this work, the ability of communities to analyse and tackle key conflict drivers affecting their communities in development planning and implementation has been significantly enhanced, as shown by Saferworld's impact assessments, a DFID evaluation, and [a 2013 Saferworld report](#).

Decision makers in Gulu, Amuru, Nwoya, and Lira districts have taken steps to make what they do conflict sensitive, improving aspects of their governance such as transparency, inclusion and accountability. For example local government staff in Amuru felt that the training sessions they took part in helped them effectively deal with tensions and disputes over land – providing them with an analytical framework against which to consider issues. In Nwoya, following training sessions in 2013, a resettlement committee was set up to handle land conflict between the Nwoya and Pakwach districts on the eastern bank of the Nile.

## **Encouraging conflict-sensitive approaches to land governance processes**

Land conflict is one of the biggest problems in Northern Uganda. Saferworld has been working in a number of areas to encourage land management structures at national and sub-national levels to adopt more conflict-sensitive approaches to land governance.

### **Promoting conflict-sensitive resolution of the Jonam and Acholi land conflict**

In Purongo sub-county, Nwoya district, there have been clashes between Acholi and Jonam people over land that spans around 55 kilometres. This conflict has led to buildings being destroyed, lives being lost and rightful land owners being displaced. In March 2014, Saferworld conducted a participatory assessment of this conflict, involving both the Nebbi and Nwoya districts throughout the process. We found that people agree that land investors need to be more conflict sensitive in the way they acquire land and that the government should set up a technical land verification committee to document and address land ownership claims.

Based on the results of the assessments, Saferworld; the Uganda Investment Authority; and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development developed a guide for investors on conflict-sensitive land acquisition. Planning for delivering conflict sensitivity support also took place with the Ministry of Lands. This support will be given to the technical land verification committee set up by the government to document and verify land ownership claims in Purongo sub-county, Nwoya district.

In August 2014, Saferworld provided technical guidance to a team of consultants who were working for Total to find them land in Northern Uganda. Total Uganda are making good use of the conflict-sensitive acquisition guide for investors, and are taking into account advice on how to buy land without exacerbating existing conflicts.

In our report [Beyond the reach of the hoe](#) we examine land conflicts in Northern Uganda and provide recommendations for formalising land titles,

strengthening land governance structures, and promoting dialogue.

### **Reducing violence between Madi and Acholi communities in Apaa**

Saferworld has been working to reduce land-related violence over Apaa, a remote village between Adjumani and Amuru. By supporting the Adjumani and Amuru districts to address the causes of violence, we are aiming to foster social cohesion and reconciliation, and help people come to a consensus over Apaa. We have set up dialogue meetings between people from both Adjumani and Amuru, who stressed the need for peaceful co-existence.

The conflict issues in this area are twofold. First, the Adjumani and Amuru districts are in conflict over their administrative boundary, with each district citing a loss in revenue. Second, Madi and Acholi people have clashed over the allegedly unlawful re-gazettlement of land and subsequent evictions by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and the National Forestry Authority (NFA), and yet the land in contention was de-gazetted in 1976.

We are working closely with the UWA, the NFA, and the Ministry of Lands to nurture relationships and build trust between communities in Apaa. As a result, there have been less incidents of violence in Apaa – just two cases were reported in early July 2014 as opposed to in the past when there would be over 30 cases in the same amount of time. We have also seen an increased commitment to resolving the conflict in Apaa among district leaders, cultural leaders, and elders – some of whom were previously involved in violence.

This has been demonstrated with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Adjumani and Amuru, which affirms that they will commit to ending the conflict. The two districts mentioned that the signing of this MoU was a historic milestone, as before they had been treating each other with suspicion and animosity.

Saferworld has also supported the districts in developing a joint work plan for resolving the Apaa conflict. Peaceful dialogue meetings have taken place and for the first time there is a clear process shared by both districts to settle the tension.

### **Supporting inclusive dialogue to enhance service delivery in Otuuke district**

Land conflicts in Otuuke district have seriously hampered health and education service delivery. More than 20 schools and several health facilities and administrative units are affected by the local communities' claims over land ownership, and some of the affected institutions have experienced violence. These land conflicts have mainly been attributed to a lack of documentation of ownership by government authorities and failure to address community concerns. Saferworld has supported dialogues between local government land governance

structures, informal institutions, school management committees and local communities. We have also delivered training on human/land rights, conflict sensitivity and conflict resolution for key district structures to enhance their capacity to respond to land conflicts. As a result, analyses of land conflicts involving social service delivery institutions are being carried out and the decisions that are being made about public land use and ownership are more inclusive.

### **Enhancing community knowledge of mining rights and empowering communities in Karamoja to participate in mining policy processes**

Saferworld has been empowering mining communities in Karamoja to understand their rights, as well as devise recommendations for the new mining policy and law. As a result, Karamoja led the rest of the mining locations in Uganda on reviewing the current mining policy and feeding issues into a CSO position paper. In March 2015, this position paper was adopted as a national CSO position paper in a national dialogue roundtable organised by Saferworld in partnership with the Ecological Christian Organisation (ECO) and ActionAid. Other mining locations discussed, gave input to, and adopted the CSO position paper. During this roundtable the CSO position paper was submitted to the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), which is tasked by the government to draft the policy. The position paper was also presented to a Parliamentary Commissioner who pledged to support these issues throughout the process. During the national dialogue, the participants we are working with from Karamoja demonstrated better understanding and articulation of issues in the mining sector than their counterparts from other mining locations.

### **Conflict sensitivity training for Irish Aid Uganda**

In order to strengthen Irish Aid Uganda's approach to conflict sensitivity in the Karamoja region, Saferworld provided three years of training for them to ensure that their activities are conflict sensitive. This included a review of the organisation's development strategy with recommendations on key conflict sensitivity considerations, carried out through a series of workshops to strengthen Irish Aid's staff and partners' knowledge of concepts and elements of conflict-sensitive programming.

Since the training, Irish Aid Uganda's staff and partners have shown improved capacity to plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate their programmes in a conflict-sensitive way. Their enhanced knowledge and skills helped ensure that the programmes they

support take into consideration issues that are likely to cause conflict.

### **Policy influence at the national level**

Saferworld's work and messaging on conflict sensitivity and its importance for a peaceful future for Northern Uganda have also been successfully reaching national policymakers and officials, civil society, the media and donors – increasing their understanding of the key conflict drivers in Northern Uganda. The launch of the [Northern Uganda conflict analysis report](#) by the ACCS (led by Saferworld) in September and October 2013 provided the public with credible information on conflict issues in Northern Uganda. There was sizeable media coverage of the conflict issues raised by the report, including the appearance of the Minister of State for Northern Uganda on national television to make a statement on the issues raised by the report.

The consortium launched the report nationally and regionally, as well as among critical groups such as the Northern Uganda Donor Group, and the Greater North Parliamentary Forum (GNPF) – Saferworld held a dissemination meeting with 47 GNPF members, including two ministers, in February 2014. Saferworld also represented the ACCS in the Policy Monitoring Committee of the PRDP and on the PRDP Technical Working Group.

At a Policy Monitoring Committee meeting in July 2014, the Prime Minister confirmed that there will be a successor programme for the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan and the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAf) – and that four conflict drivers that Saferworld and the ACCS consortium were working on would feature prominently. During the meeting, the GNPF also recommended that land, youth, gender and transitional justice should be addressed by the successor programme.

Since then, Saferworld has been working closely with the GNPF secretariat and the Uganda National NGO Forum in order to influence recommendations to the third phase of PRDP.

**Saferworld is seeking support from donors for an extensive land conflict management project that focuses on land conflict management across the country. With this support, we would like to undertake a nationwide land conflict study and, upon its findings, scale up our work from three conflict hotspots to eight.**

*View our multimedia gallery on land conflict in Northern Uganda at:*

[www.saferworld.org.uk/uganda-land-conflict](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/uganda-land-conflict).

## About Saferworld

Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We work with local people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis. We use this evidence and learning to improve local, national and international policies and practices that can help build lasting peace. Our priority is people – we believe in a world where everyone can lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from fear and insecurity.

We are a not-for-profit organisation with programmes in nearly 20 countries and territories across Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

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