

AMURIA DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Summary Findings on Human Rights Abuses and Loss of Property in Amuria District by the Various Fighting Forces Since 1979

1.0 Background

Amuria is one of the six districts in the Teso Sub region. It was carved out of Katakwi district in July 2005. It lies between latitudes 1° North and 2° South and longitudes 33° East and 34° West and covers an estimated area of 2,613 km² (MPED, 1997). It comprises of Amuria and Kapelebyong counties with its headquarters in Amuria Town Council, 40 kms to the North East of Soroti town. It has 9 Sub Counties, 47 Parishes and 388 villages. It borders Katakwi district to the East, Soroti to the South, Kaberamaido to the West and Moroto and Lira to the North.

2.0 The Demographics, Poverty and Security Situation in the District

The district has an estimated population of 240,000 people (National Household Survey, 2005). The population is predominantly rural with over 90% living in villages and IDP camps in the two counties. The district has experienced prolonged insecurity for over 30 years characterized by extensive cattle rustling (1956 to date); Civil strife involving UPA and NRA (1980s- early 1990s); Kony invasion (June 2003- March 2004) and more recently wide spread flooding (July -November 2007).

The prolonged insecurity has led to the collapse of peoples' livelihoods and unacceptably high levels of poverty. The recent baseline survey by Concern-Uganda showed that up to 95% of the district population has at one time or other been displaced and are living in IDP camps scattered all over the district. It is estimated that up to 64% of the households live below the poverty line way above the national average of 36% (National Census, 2002).

Income poverty in the district is manifested by the insufficiency of income to meet basic human needs, low purchasing power, low savings and low investment leading to very low standards of living. The Low asset base in form of livestock and cash crops, limited human capital due to low

education and inadequate skills and therefore limited employment opportunities (casual and permanent), are major causes of income poverty in the district. Poor market access and low produce prices are the other causes of income poverty at household levels. The implications of the above scenario is the inability of the district to participate in and or benefit from government poverty reduction programmes that require co-funding and matching grants from the communities.

3.0 The Verification Exercise

Given the above scenario of the security situation and rampant poverty in the district, the District Council in May 2007 decided to institute a verification commission to undertake an assessment of Human Rights abuses and loss of property. The Commission was mandated to carry out an inquiry in to the atrocities committed by the various fighting forces dating back to 1979. The verification exercise also included quantification of losses of individual and communal property in the district.

4.0 Methodology

The key methodology was through public hearing of testimonies from victims, relatives and community leaders. Each testimony was attested to by local leaders (LCs, Chiefs, Elders and Neighbors). For purposes of gathering testimonies, a survey instrument was developed and was used in individual interviews by the investigators. The commission visited all the 10 Sub Counties in the district and received testimonies from over 6,500 people.

5.0 Nature and Type of Data Collected

The verification exercise collected two sets of data namely:

- Human rights abuses which included; killings, abduction, torture, rape, unlawful detention and trauma caused by the main fighting forces (Uganda Army, UPA, NRA, LRA, UPDF and others) dating back to 1979.
- Quantities and estimated values of property damaged, looted, stolen or destroyed by the various fighting forces.

(Emphasis was placed on livestock, food crops and Major household property)

6.0 Summary Analysis of Human Rights Abuses and Loss of Property in 4 Sub Counties of Abarilela, Asamuk, Kuju and Obalanga

Preliminary data analysis has been carried out in the aforementioned Sub Counties for which data entry has been completed. The general trends of human rights abuses and loss of property are summarized here below.

6.1 Human Rights Abuses

The summary of Human rights Abuses is given in the Annex 6A below.

Annex 6A: Summary of Human Rights Abuses by Respective Forces

Human Rights Abuse/Violation	Fighting Forces					Total
	Karamojong	UPA	NRA	LRA		
Torture	138	232	225	189		784
Abduction	11	09	29	316		365
Rape	25	20	11	09		65
Killed	208	271	166	281		926
Unlawful detention	00	01	35	00		36
Total	382	533	466	795		2,176

It can be clearly seen that a total of 2,176 persons in one way or the other suffered from Human Rights abuses in the four sub counties. Over 900 person were reported killed of which 281 (30 %) were killed by LRA, 271 (29 %) by UPA, 208 (22%) by the Karamojong and 166 (17%) by the NRA. The persons who died due to confinement in concentration camps were not included in analysis due to the difficulty in attributing the killings to the fighting forces.

Torture was the second most reported Human Right Abuse with a total of 784 victims. The UPA and the NRA were the main two fighting forces blamed for torture with 232 (29 %) and 225 (28%) respectively. Although rape and Unlawful detention reported few cases the major villain of the abuse were the Karamojong, UPA and NRA for rape and almost all cases of Unlawful detention was by the NRA.

The summary report covers only 4 sub counties but when full analysis is carried out for all sub counties the figure estimates would more than double.

The graph below shows total Human Rights Violations contributed by fighting forces.

Patterns and Trends of Human Rights Abuses (1979 – 2006)

a) *Torture*

b) *Abduction*

c) *Rape*

d) *Killings*

e) *Unlawful Detention*

6.2 Loss of Property

The summary of loss of property is given in the Annexes 6B and 6C. Table 6B quantifies the various livestock Rustled, looted or Plundered while 6C shows quantities of Household property lost. The estimated value is based on long term average monetary units.

Annex 6B: Loss of livestock (Rustled, looted or plundered)

Animal Type	Karamojong Warriors	UPA	NRA	LRA	Total	Est. Value	Total Value
Cattle	30,647	8,185	5,394	19,864	64,090	250,000	16,022,500,000
Goats	17,200	6,484	2,272	17,390	43,346	30,000	1,300,380,000
Sheep	1,848	695	183	1,504	4,230	30,000	126,900,000
Poultry	17,842	8,326	2,662	21,202	50,032	5,000	250,160,000
Total							17,699,940,000

A total of over 64,090 heads of cattle was lost in these 4 Sub counties alone equivalent to over Shs. 16 Billion. The Karamojong are the leading cattle rustlers with 30,647, about a half of the cattle rustled. The LRA looted/stole 19,864 (31%) while the UPA and NRA looted 8,185 (12 %) 5,394 (9 %) respectively. Other Animals looted included; 43,346 Goats, 4,230 Sheep and 50,032 poultry. Again LRA and the Karamojong are mainly responsible for the losses. The projected number of cattle rustled for all sub counties is estimated to be more than 200,000 Heads and the total animal losses quantified would shoot to 50 Billion.

The graph below shows the total number of Animals looted by fighting forces

Annex 6C: Loss of other property (Household items looted, stolen or plundered)

Type	Karamojong Warriors	UPA	NR A	LRA	Total	Est. Value	Total Value
Bicycles	123	89	45	278	535	150,000	80,250,000
Ox-ploughs	48	35	17	122	222	150,000	33,300,000
Radios	23	18	11	98	150	30,000	4,500,000
Mattresses	179	108	61	539	887	70,000	62,090,000
Weighing	24	13	9	17	63	120,000	7,560,000

scales						0	
Sewing Machines	21	5	7	17	50	150,00 0	7,500,000
Total Value							195,200,000

Loss of other property in the four Sub Counties is estimated at Shs, 195 million which is equally huge. The major house holds assets that were stolen were Bicycles, Ox ploughs and Radios. The LRA looted 278 (52%) bicycles, 122 (22 %) Ox ploughs and 98 (65.3%) Radios. The Karamojong looted 123(23 %) Bicycles, 48 (22%) ox ploughs and 23 (15%) Radios. The other forces that looted house hold property were the NRA and the UPA. Other items that were looted by these forces were Utensils, gardening tools, clothing, furniture and some automobiles (Cars and motor cycles). These were, however, not included in the analysis because of difficulties in quantification.

The Items that were reported and captured in the Data base though not included in the Analysis included destruction of homes and Food (Stored and in Fields). The homes being mainly grass thatched was burnt and physically destroyed. Food was mainly lost through burnt granaries/ houses, through destruction in the fields and abandonment of crops by the fleeing population.

The graph below shows total number of assets stolen by abusing forces.

Patterns and Trends of Loss of Property (1979 – 2006)

a) *Animal looting & Rustling*

b) *Looting of House Hold Assets*

c) *Destruction of Housing*

d) *Destruction of Crops*

7.0 CONCLUSION

The verification exercise has clearly brought out the nature and type of Human rights Abuses/Violation committed by the various fighting forces since 1979.

It can be clearly seen that Karamojong, UPA, NRA and LRA have been the main culprits in both human rights abuses. The NRA features highly in other violations such as Unlawful detention and Torture. Likewise the LRA and Karamojong were greatly responsible for loss of property. The UPA and NRA (now UPDF) also played a significant role in Plundering, looting and stealing. If projected to all the 10 Sub Counties in the District, then property worth well over Shs. 100 Billion may have been lost which explains the dire poverty in the district.

The Quantity/value of Property lost is glaring and the Trends and pattern of Human Rights abuses clearly relate to the periods when the main fighting forces were active in the district (Karamojong, 1979-1985; 1988-to date, UPA;1988-1991 NRA;1983-1993 and LRA; 2003-2004).

What is reflected in the summary report is loss of private property and Abuses/Violation of Human rights of a few victims in the district. There is a need for further investigation of all claims by individuals in the district and more emphasis on Communal/public property.

Efforts should also be made to reach a larger base of victims who could not be reached during a short period of investigation.

**This is partial analysis for a few sub counties whose data was processed but a full report will be out after complete comprehensive analysis of all data in all sub counties investigated.