

Crisis in Karamoja

Armed Violence and the Failure of Disarmament
in Uganda's Most Deprived Region

By James Bevan



An Occasional Paper of the Small Arms Survey

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First published in June 2008

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Small Arms Survey

Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies
47 Avenue Blanc, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland

Copiedited by Alex Potter

Proofread by Donald Strachan

Typeset in Optima and Palatino by Janine Vigus, Janine Vigus Design

Printed by coprint in Geneva, Switzerland

ISBN 2-8288-0094-6

ISSN 1661-4445

The Small Arms Survey

The Small Arms Survey is an independent research project located at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Established in 1999, the project is supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and by sustained contributions from the governments of Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The Survey is also grateful for past and current project support received from Australia, Denmark, and New Zealand.

The Small Arms Survey collaborates with research institutes and non-governmental organizations in many countries, including Brazil, Canada, Georgia, Germany, India, Israel, Jordan, Norway, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Small Arms Survey Occasional Paper series presents new and substantial research findings by project staff and commissioned researchers on data, methodological, and conceptual issues related to small arms, or detailed country and regional case studies. The series is published periodically and is available in hard copy and on the project's Web site.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
KIDDP	Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme/Plan
LC1	local council administrative level 1
LDU	local defence unit
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NAP	National Action Plan (on Small Arms and Light Weapons)
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
UGX	Ugandan shilling
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNDSS	UN Department for Safety and Security
UNHCHR	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UPDF	Uganda Peoples Defence Forces
USD	US dollar

About the author

James Bevan is a Researcher for the Small Arms Survey. He has conducted extensive field research on the dynamics of illicit arms proliferation, armed violence, and armed violence reduction policies. In addition to all aspects of armed violence and security, he specializes in technical aspects of conventional weapons and their production, deployment, and use. He is currently devising field protocols for tracing ammunition and provides technical advice to a number of organizations, including UN sanctions inspectors. He is Special Advisor to the Chair for the 2008 UN Group of Governmental Experts on Conventional Ammunition in Surplus. He has published widely on issues ranging from the structure and organization of armed groups, to studies on small arms and light weapons production and trade, man-portable air defence systems, ammunition tracing, and conventional ammunition in surplus.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express his appreciation to the many people and institutions that assisted during the lengthy research for and writing of this report.

First and foremost, thanks go to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada for its generous support to the Small Arms Survey's Uganda projects and to the Department for International Development, United Kingdom.

Special mention must go to reviewers of this study: Elizabeth Evenson, Jonah Leff, Robert Muggah, Steven Okello, Noel Stott, and Francis Wairagu. Barbara Gimelli Sulashvili, Jonas Horner, Jasna Lazarev, and Sharmala Naidoo provided research assistance at various crucial stages in the project. Sincere thanks must also go to Kennedy Mkutu—the authority on armed violence in the region—and to Ryan Murray, who provided the statistical analysis and deserves great credit for his tireless efforts.

The staff of the Center for Conflict Resolution was pivotal in organizing and administering the household survey and focus groups. Thanks go particularly to Stella Sabiiti, Albert Gomes-Mugumya, Rose Othieno, and Mariam Sentamu for their hard work and clockwork-like organization; to the staff and students of Makerere University, including Vincent Abigaba, Alex Ngobi, and Wilberforce Wanyama, who inputted the data; and to the surveyors: Vincent Abigaba, Norman Aboka, Josephine Achan, Lucy Akello, Susan Akello, Henry Aleko, Alex Ariho, Susan Aroko, Brenda Assimwe, Lilian Awio, Lydia Awor, Joyce Ayikoru, Solomon Baka, Joy Bongerire, Lawrence Byansi, Owari Dafala, Fr. Robert Ecogu, Br. Drakare Erminio, Patrick Gwokrick, Robert Ikaawa, Evelyn Illukor, Beranic Kabugho, Peter Kamron, Fred Kayongo, Rhoda Kemigisha, Joseph Kibande, Rev. David Kibonwa, Richard Kidega, Martin Komakech, Moses Koriang, Anthony Kweronda, Winnie Kyaligonza, Barbara Kyolaba, Francis Layok, Henry Lobo, Sharon Lorot, Dorothy Maasa, Hamida Mambelo, Hannington Mbabazi, Esther Mirembe, Moses Mubiru, Peter Mugarura, Jonathan Muhairwe, Betty Mukasa, Jackson Mumbere,

Olive Mupalya, Asaph Murangi, Jude Musisi, Emmanuel Mutua, Matilda Nabukonde, Eva Nabusale, Sylvia Nakami, Patrick Namango-Odeke, S. Nansubuga, Patricia Nangiro, Rahman Nansimbe, Ezra Nbizeyi, Hasubi Deo Njoki, John Nsubuga, Francis Odongyoo, Denis Okeng, Peter Okiria, Taban Onigo, Ambrose Otwal, Herbert Sakwa, Ivan Senkanjako, Amani Tobit, John F. Tumwesigye, Jennifer Uwera, Yonah Wanjala, and Ankuria Yunis—thank you for your hard work and professionalism under difficult circumstances.

The chiefs of the Jie and Dodoth sub-clans of Kotido and Kaabong Districts deserve special thanks for their hospitality in the kraals and their frank insights into the security situation facing their respective communities.

Many institutions lent their assistance to the project, or assisted the author in his travels. In particular, the author would like to thank Michael McNulty and the staff of the UN Department for Safety and Security Kampala for their timely and accurate information on the security situation in Karamoja; Jean Mark Aporu and Romano Longole of the Kotido Peace Initiative for their hospitality; Alex F. Losikria and the staff of the Adakar Peace and Development Initiatives, Kenya for their insights ‘across the border’; the civilian administrations of Kotido and Kaabong Districts for their cooperation and thoughtful comments; and the late John Mark Edaan of Riam Riam, whose efforts to bring peace to the region will not be forgotten.

All analysis and conclusions are the responsibility of the author alone.

Map 1 **The five districts of Karamoja, Uganda**



Summary

Uganda's Karamoja region is, for many people, the exemplar of Africa's pastoral wars. It hosts a number of sub-clans that, together, comprise the Karimojong—a population fractured by protracted inter-clan conflicts over cattle, pasture, and access to resources.

Karamoja suffers significantly higher levels of small arms violence (death and injury by firearm) than any other region of Uganda, including the highly publicized northern region, where the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) operates. With a small arms death rate approaching 60 per 100,000 of the population, Karamoja is one of the world's most armed violence-afflicted regions.

Since the 1970s, cattle raids have escalated in lethality with the proliferation of modern assault rifles. A commensurate rise in armed criminality, in which acts of violence are increasingly orchestrated irrespective of community norms on the use of force, has severely impaired the region's socio-economic development.

This paper explores the dynamics behind armed violence in Karamoja and the scale and distribution of its impacts. It is the product of two years of research focused on the Karimojong and neighbouring clans, and presents findings from an extensive range of research methods, including household surveys, interviews, and focus group studies throughout the region.¹

While Karamoja features prominently in many studies of pastoral armed violence, this study differs from inquiries of the past. Not only does it contextualize armed violence and its precipitates within re-emerging (and escalating) hostilities between the Government of Uganda and the Karimojong, it also critiques the related failure of state- and internationally-formulated conflict-reduction and development interventions. The report finds that:

- Small arms are often the only source of security for warring communities in Karamoja. Without the provision of adequate security by the state of Uganda, small arms will continue to play a central role in providing com-

munity protection; conversely, their offensive use is also likely to continue.

- Small arms play an equally offensive role as they do a defensive one. They are used in the vast majority of violent incidents, comprise the greatest source of violence-induced mortality and morbidity, and rank highest among people's security concerns.
- The Karimojong acquire weapons from southern Sudan; on the domestic illicit market in Uganda; and, notably, from members of Uganda's security forces.
- Military-enforced disarmament initiatives have destabilized an already volatile security situation and involved extra-judicial killing and torture directed at the Karimojong. These initiatives have resulted in civilian displacement and engendered widespread fear of the Ugandan military.
- Ugandan military operations to forcibly disarm the Karimojong have been launched irrespective of an emerging—and more integrated—set of policies premised on increasing community security and development in order to promote voluntary weapons collection.
- Nascent initiatives, such as the Karamoja Disarmament and Development Programme/Plan (KIDDP), which are based on integrated security- and development-enhancing strategies, have been impeded as a result of forcible disarmament measures that have made disarmament a more contentious issue.
- The Karimojong stress the need for their greater involvement in community policing, decisions concerning the defence of communities against hostile parties, and the future shape of disarmament initiatives.

The report concludes that past violence-reduction, development, and disarmament interventions have all failed to bring sustainable peace to Karamoja. As a result of widespread insecurity, a reduction in hostilities is unlikely unless there is a radical shift in the way governments and international development agencies view pastoral regions and the conflict-reduction strategies applied to them.

In the particular case of Karamoja, measures need to address a number of factors that have pushed the pastoral system out of equilibrium and resulted in armed violence, which was traditionally conditioned by community norms

regarding the use of force, spilling over into more general types of armed crime.

First among these factors is the urgent requirement for state security forces that are able to regulate community relations and police disputes before they escalate into outright war. It is this uncontrolled, escalatory phenomenon that lies behind much of Karamoja's insecurity. Although they are the primary tools of violence, small arms are best understood as a symptom, rather than a cause, of this deeper malaise.

That said, there is a legitimate common understanding—among governments, civil society, the international community, and the Karimojong themselves—that small arms need to be removed from the equation in order to sustain peace and promote development. While these weapons are not at the root of the violence, they have an intensifying effect on raids; retaliatory actions; and, ultimately, life and development.

Recent violence-reduction initiatives, however, suggest that a pure focus on disarmament may be a misplaced policy priority and potentially damaging in both the long and the short term. Without adequate provision of state security to communities in Karamoja, demand for weapons is likely to remain high.

Disarmament is therefore not the first step required to solve Karamoja's armed violence, but a secondary consideration that can only be addressed once communities are protected and feel safe enough to disarm.

Above all, it is Karamoja's peripheral status that is the primary factor in its continued insecurity. Investment in adequate police and legal systems, roads, and infrastructure, and the positive benefits these measures could bring to encouraging investment, are long-term development imperatives that are a necessary complement to future armed violence-reduction initiatives. ■






Map 2 Karimojong sub-clans and neighbours



Sub-clans of the Karimojong

-  **BOKORA**
-  **DODOTH**
-  **JIE**
-  **MATHENIKO**
-  **PIAN**

Neighbouring groups

-  **Pokot**
-  **Toposa**
-  **Turkana**
-  International boundary
-  Town

0 km 50

I. Background to armed violence and insecurity in Karamoja

The Karimojong share close ethno-linguistic ties with neighbouring peoples in north-western Kenya, southern Ethiopia, and adjacent regions of Sudan (see Map 2). The region as a whole, which straddles the borders between the four states, is often called the Karamoja Cluster. It is defined by the dominant mode of production practised by its people—pastoralism, or the use of rangeland for extensive livestock grazing by semi-² or wholly nomadic communities.

Karamoja is only one part of the Karamoja Cluster, but it has attracted considerable public interest because of escalating levels of armed violence there. The Karimojong population of northern Uganda is embroiled in a number of lethal intra-clan conflicts; wars with neighbouring communities; and, increasingly, armed struggle with the Ugandan military. As a result, much has been written on the prevailing security situation in the region. Most notably, studies have focused on the link between the proliferation of small arms and armed conflict among the Karimojong and neighbouring Turkana and Pokot clans of Kenya (Mkutu, 2003; 2007b; Mirzeler and Young, 2000).

These conflicts are not new, and the tensions that arise between clans are often prompted by competition over pasture and water, in addition to traditional practices of raiding cattle from rival communities. Conflict dynamics are often complex. The Dodoth of Kaabong District, for instance, cite the Jie from the south as their principal adversaries (Map 2). They also include the Turkana, whose home villages are on the Kenyan side of the border, as another prime threat.³ Similarly, while the northern Jie describe the Dodoth as their main foe,⁴ the southern Jie note that their main threat is the Matheniko, whose home villages are in Moroto District.⁵ The pattern of conflict is similar across Karamoja, with the Bokora, Dodoth, Jie, Matheniko, and Pian sub-clans switching quickly between fragile alliances and outright war. The situation is made worse by the Pokot and Turkana from Kenya, who enter the mêlée whenever drought afflicts the Kenyan side of the border.

Most studies note that security has deteriorated in Karamoja since the 1970s. Violence associated with cattle raiding, in addition to banditry and general predation, has escalated in lethality with the use of modern assault rifles. Taken at face value, the current insecurity in Karamoja stems primarily from armed conflict among the region's sub-clans and with neighbouring pastoral groups in Kenya and Sudan—in short, it is a systemic problem derived from existing raiding practices associated with competition among pastoral groups.

However, focusing solely on intra-clan conflicts—and notably cattle raiding or 'rustling'—leaves many contributing factors out of the equation. Karamoja experiences many different forms of armed violence, including interpersonal disputes, large-scale collective clashes between clans, criminal attacks perpetrated for profit, and violence between the Karimojong and state forces. Although these types of violence are often related to the long-standing practice of cattle raiding, they cannot be attributed to failings in the pastoral system alone.

As the following sections argue, violent conflict in Karamoja needs to be attributed to a concatenation of numerous factors, including seasonal and climatic variations, the impact of disease on livestock, changes in the migratory patterns of the Karimojong prompted by the reallocation of land, and the near absence of state security in the region. Some of these factors are external to the pastoral system. Land reallocation in particular has severely impaired traditional migratory patterns and brought new tensions between clans. Increased firepower has escalated the impact of conflicts that have arisen from these tensions and has helped weaken traditional dispute mediation mechanisms. Minimal state security provision facilitates the intensification of unmediated conflicts.

None of these factors can be treated in isolation. Natural shocks such as disease and drought have always been a factor in Karamoja. But, when combined with the previously mentioned external 'shocks', these dynamics push an already fragile pastoral system out of equilibrium.

One of the key failings of many accounts of violence in Karamoja—notably in the news media—is that they reduce the sources of violence and insecurity in the region to a simple formula: the dynamic of *cattle rustling made more lethal by small arms*. Most conclude that the introduction of modern assault rifles has escalated the lethality of traditional cattle raiding to the extent that violence, which might have traditionally been controllable, is now out of control.

It is clear that cattle raids have become more lethal, but there are many more reasons for instability in the region. What makes this simplification inherently dangerous is the tendency for decision makers—whether national or international—to formulate policies of equal simplicity that later prove inadequate to resolving Karamoja’s insecurity.

Box 1

A note on methodology

This study is the result of desk and field research, key informant interviews, and household surveys in the Karamoja districts of Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, and Nakapiripirit. The studies were conducted between May 2006 and December 2007 and were designed to triangulate with one another.

The survey involved random cluster sampling and comprised 360 households. It was designed to answer broad questions related to armed violence and to assess its impact at the household and local council 1 (LC1) administrative levels. Questions included:

- 1) What impact does armed violence have on morbidity and mortality?
- 2) Which actors are armed and engage in armed violence?
- 3) Which actors present the greatest threat to human security?
- 4) What is the relative impact of small arms and light weapons-related armed violence in Karamoja?

Overall, the survey was intended to provide a snapshot of armed violence and its impacts in Karamoja and to identify the principal perpetrators of armed violence and the locations in which these actors have the greatest impact on human security.

Survey administrators interviewed 201 men and 159 women (56 per cent and 44 per cent of the total, respectively) from the following age groups: 5.5 per cent under 17 years of age; 31.3 per cent aged 18–29 years; 43.2 per cent aged 30–49 years; and 19.1 per cent aged 50 years and over. Two focus groups were held in each district of Karamoja, totalling eight groups in all. In recognition of the different gender-based influences on responses, where possible, the focus groups comprised individuals of the same sex.

The Small Arms Survey also conducted numerous interviews in the four districts of Karamoja, both at the time of the survey and later. These interviews were structured in such a way as to support both the findings of the survey and the focus groups, and included actors ranging from security personnel, to NGOs, to Karimojong elders.

Importantly, none of the research methodologies were confined to the towns, where information about rural insecurity is incomplete and often incorrect. In particular, many of the interviews that were used to flesh out some of the report’s more nuanced findings were conducted at the kraal (or temporary settlement) level, in order to gain a fuller appraisal of the security concerns of warriors, who play such an important role in Karamoja’s insecurity.

For example, many news reports and policy-oriented publications suggest, first, that small arms are a causal factor in armed violence and, second, that the primary facilitating factor in the development of armed conflict is the pastoral mode of existence itself.⁶ As a result, state policy (and not just in Uganda) has tended to view pastoral systems as unstable, inherently conflict prone, and incompatible with violence-reduction and development objectives. There has also been a parallel tendency for policies to focus on disarmament without addressing the factors that either have made the pastoral system more unstable, or that have allowed conflicts arising from systemic instability to progress unchecked.

The following sections comprise a modest attempt to redress the ‘thinness’ of popular conceptions of the sources of armed violence in Karamoja. Beginning with a typology of violence in the region and its sources, the text outlines its impacts and the primary reasons why a lack of attention to the root sources of conflict has resulted in ineffective—and in some case destabilizing—policies. ▣

II. A typology of evolving types of armed violence in Karamoja

The following brief typology of armed violence in Karamoja attempts to explain why violence has evolved from traditional raiding practices into new forms of economically motivated crime and general lawlessness. It suggests that, while cattle raiding remains the predominant characteristic of violence in the region, contemporary raids should not necessarily be understood as a simple evolution of historical practices. Armed violence in Karamoja is not solely a product of the pastoral system, but rather the result of malfunctions that have been induced by external shocks, such as diminished access to rangeland and commensurate breakdowns in resource-sharing agreements. These factors have combined with easy access to modern firepower and negligible provision of state security to create an unpredictable situation in which armed violence is commonplace.

Cattle raiding: traditional practice within new parameters

Cattle raiding is a highly destructive activity, even when operating within traditional structures of community authority. It is primarily orchestrated by young male warriors who are charged with the security of a community's herds.

These warriors, or *karachunas*, play the implementing role in community-sanctioned inter-clan raiding and retaliation and, as a result, rank highest in people's fears. For instance, over 80 per cent of respondents to the household survey in this study reported that they were most fearful of warriors, in contrast to a spectrum of other actors ranging from state militias and the Ugandan military to common criminals. Elsewhere in Uganda, respondents⁷ to the same set of questions rarely specified particular criminal elements and usually referred, in broad terms, to 'criminals' or 'thugs' when asked whom they were most afraid of.

These findings suggest that cattle raids are a primary security concern in Karamoja, but should not be taken to mean that traditional raiding practices are wholly to blame. Raids undertaken to augment livestock numbers and to compensate for thefts have been normalized and accepted as part of traditional intra-pastoral relations in Karamoja, and indeed among other African pastoral communities (Bevan, 2007). Augmenting stocks of cattle for reasons of status and bride price are as relevant now as they were in the past (Mkutu, 2007b). Although the basic tactics of contemporary raiding are often little changed from raids of the past, several factors have contributed to a rise in their frequency and impact. These factors are not new and emerged during the 20th century.

Since the 1920s, changing land use has increasingly encroached on pastoral regions of Karamoja, introducing a massive shock to the pastoral system. British policies of the colonial period resulted in the loss of rangeland through pacification initiatives, the redrawing of international boundaries with Kenya and Sudan, and the creation of game reserves and protected areas. Encroachment continued post-independence with successive governments creating buffer zones between the Karimojong and sedentary communities and re-allocating pasture for military uses (Muhereza, 1999; UWA, 2004). These policies have restricted access to rangelands and resulted in growing scarcity of pasture and a necessary rise in the mobility of the Karimojong in an effort to maintain productivity.

This rise in mobility encourages conflicts between groups that would otherwise have little contact with one another. Extended and erratic migratory patterns often mean that communities increasingly graze their cattle within the orbit of populations with which they have no historically developed access rights. In other cases, disrupted migratory patterns have negated existing access agreements due to the arrival of new groups.

In the past, relatively stable migratory patterns meant that entire communities had an interest in preventing raids and reprisals from escalating. Regular inter-clan dialogue was necessary for negotiating seasonal access rights, but was also pivotal in controlling the actions of communities' warriors. In cases where access agreements no longer stand, or where grazing patterns intersect in the absence of agreements, there has been a commensurate loss of

control over raiding. Today, transitory groups of warriors often have little regard for communities they encounter far from their home villages.

Reduced access to rangeland has therefore resulted in growing disequilibrium in the pastoral system. Although this has been the case in many pastoral regions of Africa (Bevan, 2007), in Karamoja, however, two escalatory factors can be added to underlying sources of conflict—the impact of disease and drought, and the proliferation of small arms. Each factor has encouraged increased frequency of cattle raiding and contributed to further disruption of the pastoral system and extant conflict-moderating mechanisms within it.

First, in 1975, an outbreak of foot and mouth disease left many communities with few cattle. To compound matters, a region-wide famine in 1980 claimed the lives of over 20 per cent of the population and decimated the animal population (Biellik and Henderson, 1981, p. 1333). Disease and drought prompted an increase in cattle raids as communities sought to augment their depleted herds. Moreover, arid conditions further distorted seasonal migratory patterns, thereby yielding more opportunities for inter-clan raiding and generally adding to the potential for violent disputes.

Second, increased frequency of raiding was accompanied by growing demand for weapons—both for the purposes of raiding and for defence against marauding groups. By the early 1970s, the proliferation of small arms in the region had already prompted the Government of Uganda to launch ad hoc disarmament initiatives (Mkutu, 2007b, p. 51). However, the collapse of the Ugandan army during the 1979 overthrow of Ugandan president Idi Amin Dada released large numbers of automatic weapons into the hands of the Karimojong. A raid on the army's Moroto Barracks by the Matheniko sub-clan is but one example in which some 60,000 state-owned weapons entered the pastoral system (Mkutu, 2007a, p. 36).

The release of weaponry was a critical factor in facilitating armed violence. The redistribution of weapons was uneven and further upset the balance of power among clans in a system that was already destabilized. It gave some the strategic edge over others, and enhanced their capacity to raid in order to replenish stocks lost to drought and disease. The Matheniko's looting of Moroto Barracks, for example, rendered the clan far more heavily armed than

neighbouring groups. Uneven distribution of weapons also made raiding more injurious to the victim community, leaving many communities destitute and without cattle.

In summary, the late 1970s introduced both motive and means for increased cattle raiding into a system that was already falling apart. Herds diminished by disease and drought prompted compensatory raiding. Increased firepower facilitated these raids. The resulting economic and strategic imbalances between communities simply served to reinforce the increasingly zero-sum nature of pastoral relations. Raids aimed at capturing entire herds prompted retaliatory raids of the same magnitude. Violence itself increasingly became a factor in altering migration routes. These routes, in turn, became less and less predictable, thereby multiplying the potential for further raids and disputes. Warriors travelled ever greater distances, with diminishing regard for the communities they encountered. With the increasing range of their activities, they were further dislocated from their communities for much of the year, and as a consequence, so too were the controls on violence that might have been exercised by clan elders.

This is the status of the pastoral system in Karamoja today. It is characterized by violent cattle raiding that, outwardly, might appear to be an extension of traditional practices. But today's raids take place within a failing system. Communities speak of the need to maintain a 'balance of terror' to dissuade rival groups from attacking them.⁸ Where violence might have formerly been moderated by virtue of communities having to occupy the same resource space for decades or centuries, it is now uncontrolled and highly unpredictable, leading to elevated levels of insecurity in the region.⁹

From cattle raiding to rising crime and lawlessness

The violent, zero-sum nature of intra-pastoral relations in Karamoja has led to increasing levels of economically motivated crime. In simple terms, the growing severity of cattle raiding, described above, has left some communities without livestock. Other groups face reductions in productivity as armed aggression depletes herds or curtails access to pasture.

The net effect has been a reduction in the opportunity cost of involvement in armed criminality. As is often the case, young adult males prove particularly susceptible to becoming involved in criminal activity when faced with barriers to socio-economic advancement (Bevan and Florquin, 2006). Warriors increasingly play a pivotal role in armed crime that takes place outside the framework of traditional clan authority structures.

The primary reasons for increasing warrior involvement in criminality can be ascribed to the impact of raids and lost pasture that result in the loss of livestock. Warriors without cattle cannot acquire a bride, support families, or contribute to the gross productivity of their communities. The resulting impact on the status of these young men cannot be ignored, particularly when there is a tendency for pastoral societies in the region to ostracize them for being 'failures', 'fools', or 'unmanly'.¹⁰ Being unarmed is a 'fool's choice' in a violent system. However, access to arms often gives warriors a comparative advantage in armed criminal activity, which accounts for the fact that most people view them as the most significant contributing factor to instability in the region, as noted.

Box 2

Trouble on the periphery: armed violence among African pastoral communities

Many of the world's pastoral communities fight among themselves. They also fight with neighbouring sedentary communities and with the state. Only a small number of these conflicts, however, erupt into armed violence. But those that do—and notably in the African context—have proved devastating to the socio-economic and development trajectories of entire regions.

The overriding factor that makes pastoral communities prone to conflict (whether violent or otherwise) is their ambiguous relationship with host states and the majority sedentary populations that reside within these states. Historically, pastoralism adapted to sparsely populated, arid regions where seasonal, migratory grazing—or transhumance—maximized nutritional gain.¹¹ As a result, pastoral communities emerged at the periphery of the more populated regions that would later become trading and administrative centres and, later still, the nuclei of states.

In many regions, the pastoral periphery is in a state of flux. Climatic changes have led to desertification and narrowed the belts of pasture upon which the pastoralist mode of production depends. At the same time, growing sedentary populations, and resulting demand for arable land, have decreased the relative opportunity cost of farming in arid

regions. Assisted by government- and internationally sponsored irrigation schemes and changes in land use, sedentary 'encroachment', alongside climatic change, has further diminished the range of pastoral transhumance. These factors have drastically impaired pastoralist access to rangeland, which has prompted intra-pastoral tensions and conflict with adjacent sedentary communities.

These precipitates of conflict have been exacerbated by the politico-administrative sparseness that characterizes the periphery. Historically, lower population densities and minimal agricultural yield have discouraged the growth of large trading centres with expansive administrative capacities. Infrastructure therefore remains particularly scant in pastoral regions, with few public services and only a small number of roads. Furthermore, in many countries that are home to pastoral groups, power resides at the core, and it is here, rather than at the periphery, that state security forces—including police services—are most heavily concentrated.

Many pastoral regions also comprise very large territories within states. The relatively minimal presence of state apparatus, combined with poor communications infrastructure, curtails the ability of government representatives to monitor, mediate, and police disputes. Governments have little capacity to regulate the use of common pool resources and, if they do, have a tendency to regulate in favour of sedentary communities.

Increasing competition over scarce resources, combined with the inability or failure of governments to intervene in disputes, often leads to downward spirals of crime and violence. Growing urban populations adjacent to pastoral regions have prompted increases in economically motivated crime. These conurbations provide attractive markets for stolen animals, in contrast to often-diminishing financial returns from grazing. In some situations, such lucrative markets have encouraged growth in large-scale, 'commercialized' livestock raiding. As a result, levels of violence escalate because crime—particularly on a large, commercialized scale—leaves some communities depleted or without livestock. Young men, left with little capital and social status, often become tempted into recompensatory crime.

The laissez-faire approaches to managing peripheral regions adopted by governments often mean that, while the social and economic determinates of conflict and crime multiply, the role of the state in managing resources, grievances, and crime remains nascent in the extreme. Many pastoral regions have, as a result, become lawless—fuelling a self-sustaining dynamic where minimal socio-economic investment allows crime and violence to flourish, which further deters investment of all kinds.

Source: Bevan (2007)

Although the process description of a general rise in criminality in Box 2 is an accurate one, it is also important to note that Karamoja's burgeoning crime problem has been facilitated by a number of factors other than raiding, including the proximity to pastoral regions of urban centres, which provide markets for cattle and other looted goods, and the weak role of the state in

providing security to the region, mediating disputes, and policing acts of aggression. Karamoja is not unique in either respect, but as the following paragraphs illustrate, it is an exemplar of the many types of armed violence that can emerge when these factors combine.

One of the most notable spin-offs of a rise in the severity of cattle raids and their effect on communities has been ‘the integration of raiding into the free market economy’ (Mkutu, 2007a, p. 49). ‘Commercial raiding’ is a term used in Karamoja to describe cattle theft undertaken for immediate profit. In contrast to traditional raiding practices, which augment ‘working’ livestock and contribute to the productive output of entire communities, commercial raiding removes livestock from the pastoral system. Cattle are either sold for cash or taken directly to meat-processing plants, which represents a net loss to pastoral communities that cannot be recouped by counter-raids.

Urban entrepreneurs appear to be the primary orchestrating agents in this activity.¹² They have the capital to pay for raids by local pastoral warriors and, frequently, the extra-regional connections to organize the transit of stolen cattle.¹³ This urban-centred activity is increasing in scale and frequency in Karamoja, and adds another layer of insecurity to the existing threats posed by inter-clan raids.

The addition of commercial raiding to already grievous community-sanctioned raiding practices has further negated the productivity that communities can gain from pastoralism. Many pastoralists have been forced to abandon cattle raising and seek employment in the towns. These conurbations have little infrastructure and offer few employment opportunities. Armed violence and diminishing productivity has pushed communities away from pastoralism into a precarious peri-urban existence. Poverty and a lack of employment are widespread (IRIN, 2003) and tempt people into crime to generate hard currency to support themselves and their families.¹⁴

In addition to commercial raiding, there has been a rise in other activities that people label ‘materialistic’ criminality. Currency and material goods, which had little relevance in traditional pastoral barter economies, are now essential for subsistence. But with few employment prospects, groups of Karimojong have found a niche in armed attacks on vehicles, urban robberies, and elimination killings. As with commercial raiding, urban-based entrepreneurs have exploited the poverty of warriors by paying them to carry out

roadside ambushes of political or social rivals. Focus group research in Nakapiripirit, for example, suggests that this type of violence is quite widespread. For instance, in 2006 alone, four deaths in the town were attributed to 'elimination' killings, including a dispute over finances, a social dispute, a political killing, and the targeted killing of the district director of health services.¹⁵

A permissive environment for armed violence

A dearth of state security facilitates the growth in crime and violence. Karamoja is a marginalized, peripheral region of Uganda. It has few roads and its administrative offices, hospitals, and clinics are few, poorly equipped, and under-funded (Mkutu, 2007a, p. 39). Security provision by the state of Uganda is equally scant. District officials report that the number of police officers in the region is insufficient and that the few police personnel face challenges to maintaining law and order, even in the towns (UNHCHR, 2007b, p. 27).¹⁶ Some of these challenges are imposed by the nature of dealing with large, pastoral regions; others are the result of a failure by successive governments to invest in security solutions that are tailored to the needs of the Karimojong. In August 2006 there were an estimated 137 police personnel in Karamoja, as Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2007, p. 18) notes, suggesting a police officer to population ratio of around 1:7,300, 'about one-sixteenth that of the UN standard of 1:450 and one-quarter that of the national ratio of 1:1,800'.

Karamoja, by virtue of its topography and historical development, poses a number of obstacles to state-provided security. Foremost among them is the peripheral status of the region. As is the case in other pastoral regions, this cannot simply be attributed to a lack of government investment. Such regions are home to pastoralists for a reason (Box 2), namely that pastoral modes of production have traditionally exploited otherwise under-utilized tracts of land. The result has been little past incentive to police largely under-populated regions with few perceived linkages to the state or to the mainstream economy. Add to this the sheer size of Karamoja—at over 27,000 square kilometres, it is around the size of Rwanda—plus the paucity of roads, and it becomes easy to see why under-funded and relatively immobile security services are poorly equipped to police pastoral regions.

In addition to location, the pastoral system itself, in which migration is commonplace, further impairs state security forces. Criminal acts are facilitated by

the fact that perpetrators can easily seek the protection of their clans. This is most notably the case with regard to violence committed (particularly by young men) in the towns and villages. Youths often have the default option of fleeing to their fellow warriors in the bush when pursued by security forces.¹⁷ The same is true of cattle raids—whether of the traditional sort, or those undertaken for economic gain. It is very difficult to track and apprehend offending groups when they, unlike security forces, are highly mobile in the bush.

However, even given these topographical and administrative difficulties, it is clear that the Ugandan government has made little attempt to improve security provision in the region. Part of this is arguably because the state finds itself in an awkward position with regard to the pastoral system. On the one hand, the system is largely outside the orbit of state control. Pastoral groups, for instance, operate far from centres of commerce and authority, and frequently traverse international borders. Any control exerted over these regions is unlikely to be as comprehensive or effective as it is in smaller, more accessible regions—a fact that arguably discourages investment in security providers. On the other hand, it is clear that the Government of Uganda, through its actions in recent decades, has proved a desire to maintain at least some control in the region because of the impact of growing crime and lawlessness around the region's commercial centres and the roads that link them.

One significant function of the state's predicament is the almost exclusive devotion of security personnel to protecting towns and commerce from acts of aggression, rather than intervening in the disputes and crime that have most severely impacted pastoral communities. For example, police forces have been provided with few vehicles, and their subsequent lack of mobility 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.¹⁸

Given this urban–pastoral divide in the provision of security, government policies can be described more in terms of containment than policing. One prime example is the predominant role of the military and associated quasi-military groups in the region. A considerable number of Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) troops are stationed in Karamoja on a regular basis.

There are a number of reasons for this, including Karamoja's status as a frontier province and a potential weak point for incursion by neighbouring states and pastoral groups within them;¹⁹ escalating violence in the later half of the 20th century, in which the military was probably the only effective deterrent to large-scale raids by some Karimojong groups and neighbouring clans; and the linked requirement for protecting communities that had been disarmed during a number of interventions (addressed below).

But the military are not a police force. In almost all districts of Karamoja, they are stationed as a buffer force. By and large, they do not perform policing duties and, with the exception of the actions of a few commanders, they rarely attempt to mediate disputes or follow-up on raids. The same is true of government-created 'anti-stock theft' and 'local defence' units (LDUs), which—similar to the Kenya police reserves on the other side of the border—serve as defensive forces for border regions and urban areas, respectively.

Because security forces are relatively immobile and perform static protective duties, there is little active conflict or crime resolution in Karamoja. For this reason, there is arguably a need for surveillance and mediation mechanisms in the region. The majority of activity devoted to following up on raids and negotiating the return of cattle is performed by local, community-based organizations that are often poorly funded and equally burdened by a lack of mobility. These activities are critical—and have proved so in parts of Kenya (Small Arms Survey, 2007b)—to reversing the escalatory dynamics of raid and retaliation among pastoral groups.

The promise of active mediation and effective community policing is that it can diminish the impact of armed violence sufficiently to restore stable relations among sub-clans and thereby curtail some of the 'push factors'—such as a lack of productivity or loss of herds—that have encouraged warriors into crime and predation.

If the state is to assume responsibility for control in Karamoja, it needs to invest in police forces that are capable of performing these duties and addressing the sources of armed violence in the region, rather than simply containing its effects. ▀

III. The impact of armed violence on communities in Karamoja

The same factors that make Karamoja difficult to police also impair accurate assessments of the impact of armed violence. Many communities operate far from urban areas, where—albeit limited—reporting mechanisms exist. For these reasons, the Small Arms Survey employed a set of methodologies that was designed to give a first impression of the scale of impacts derived from armed violence. These included household surveys, focus groups, interviews, and evidence from previous public health studies.

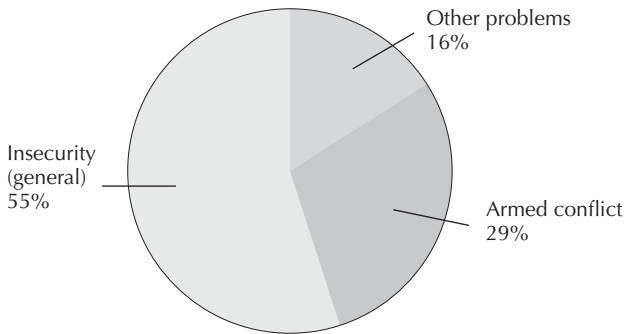
The following sections briefly sketch some of the most notable impacts in terms of broad currents of insecurity and more specific effects. The latter can be divided into public health-related effects, such as mortality and morbidity—and notably the direct impact of small arms use—and secondary consequences, such as constraints on mobility and inter-clan communications, and a general impairment of the social fabric of Karimojong society and its extant conflict mediation mechanisms.

Impact of armed violence on general insecurity

Armed conflict in Karamoja ranks higher in people’s concerns than other life-threatening factors such as drought and limited access to pasture and water. As Figure 3.1 indicates, 29 per cent of survey respondents made explicit reference to armed conflict in response to the unprompted question, ‘What is the single, greatest problem affecting your community?’ In addition, 55 per cent of respondents referred to insecurity in more general terms, which in Karamoja means insecurity related to crime and violence—in effect, human-induced insecurity rather than other threats to ‘human security’.²⁰

Figure 3.1

Armed conflict and related insecurity in relation to other reported problems in Karamoja (n = 337)



Note: Twenty-three missing responses are not included in this figure.

Armed violence has a strong impact on people's daily lives. Over 90 per cent of respondents reported that they were afraid to leave their homes, with over 60 per cent reporting that they were more afraid to do so at the time of the survey (June–July 2006) than before.

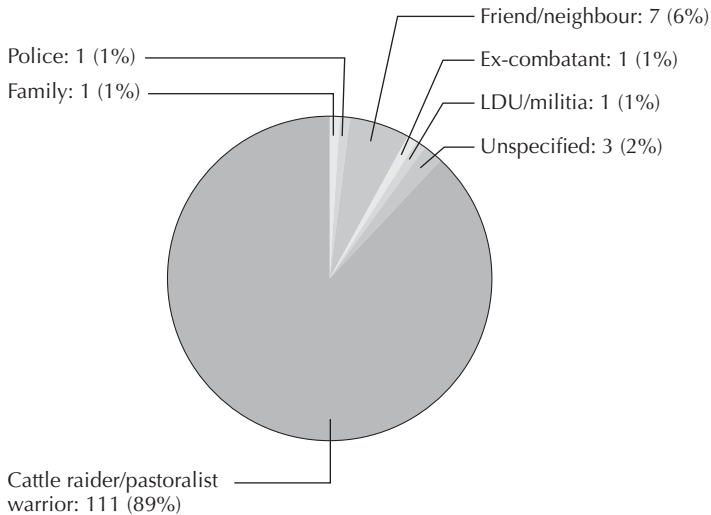
The survey also revealed a positive correlation between the reported frequencies of gunshots heard in the immediate locality of communities²¹ and reports that people feared to leave their homes. In the cases where gunshots were more frequently heard (on a weekly basis), people were more afraid of leaving their homes. Conversely, the cases where gunshots were reported to occur less frequently (on a monthly basis) were negatively correlated—i.e. people were less afraid to leave their homes.

Although it must be stressed that the survey only recorded people's *stated* perceptions, on the whole the relationship between armed violence indicators—such as gunshots—and perceived insecurity appears to be consistent. For example, the survey found positive correlations between increased frequencies (during the six months prior to the survey) of hearing gunshots and increased fear of leaving home. Equally consistently, it revealed negative correlations between reduced gunshot frequencies and cases where people reported a reduction in fear.

There is little doubt that Karamoja's raiding-related conflicts are the primary causes of concern for most residents—whether of the traditional variety or commercially motivated. People attribute the greatest source of armed violence to the Karimojong warriors—notably with respect to cattle raiding. Almost 90 per cent of reported incidents in which a household member was killed or injured in an attack were the result of aggression by warriors—whether named explicitly or as part of a raid (Figure 3.2).

It is important to stress, however, that the term warrior is largely synonymous with a young—often armed—man. The label should not imply that the person in question necessarily acts within the traditional parameters of community-sanctioned inter-clan raiding practices. One of the failings of the survey—and a consideration for future studies—was that it failed to disaggregate traditional forms of raiding perpetrated by warriors from economically motivated crimes perpetrated by the same type of actor.

Figure 3.2
Perpetrator involved in the most recent attack in which a household member was deliberately hurt or killed (n = 125)



Impact of armed violence on morbidity and mortality

There is a reason why armed violence-induced insecurity appears to be particularly severe in Karamoja. Reported small arms-related death and injury rates are very high and stem from a number of types of aggression, including raids, roadside banditry, and interpersonal disputes. The survey revealed that 26 per cent of households had suffered a death or injury in the six months prior to the study. In over 25 per cent of those cases, residents reported multiple killings and injuries. Over a longer period of one year, the number of households to have suffered death or injury rose to 30 per cent.

The vast majority of these attacks reportedly involve weapons, with 88 per cent of responses indicating that a small arm was used in the event that left a household member dead or injured.

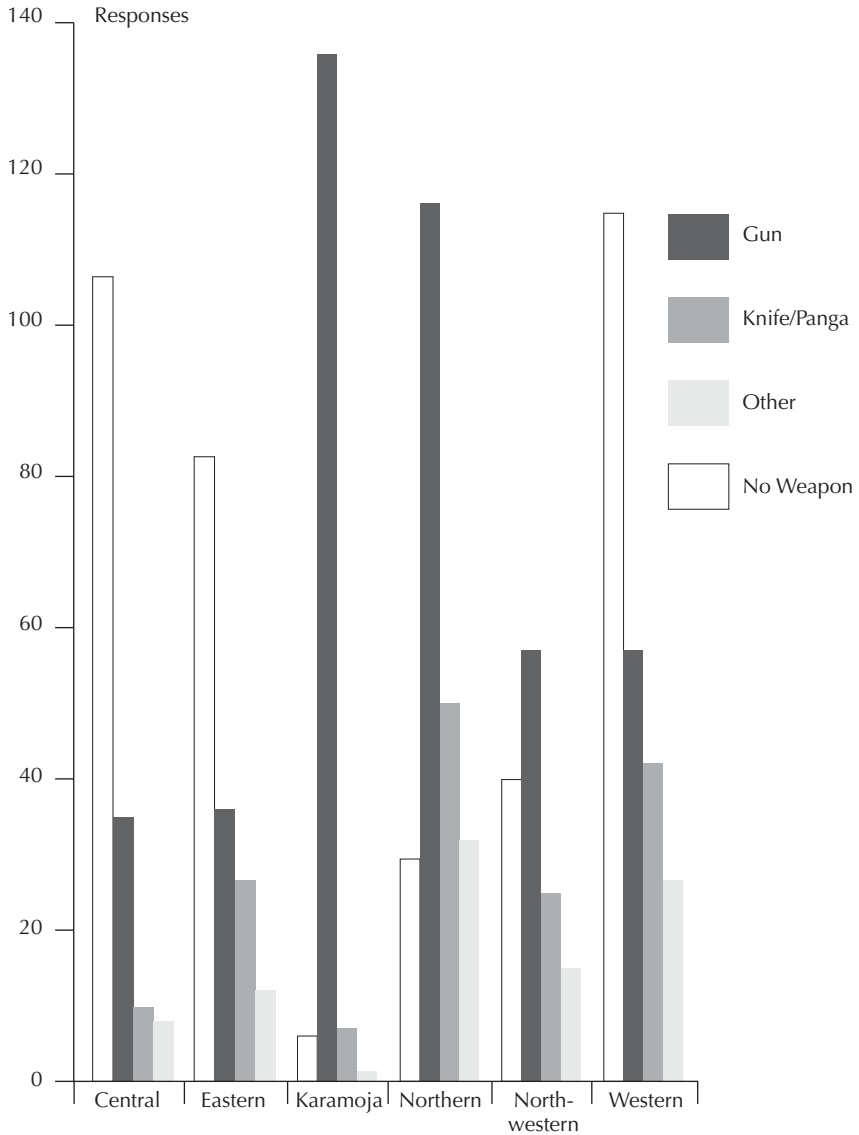
Given the degree of small arms proliferation in Karamoja, these findings are understandable. Figure 3.3 displays the types of weapons reported in the most recent attack to have resulted in the death or injury of a household member for all regions of Uganda surveyed by the Small Arms Survey. Taken as a whole, reports of small arms use in violent events was significantly higher in Karamoja than in the other regions surveyed.

In particular, the use of small arms in violence appears to be more frequent in Karamoja than in the northern region, despite the fact that the northern region²² has been severely affected by the 20-year conflict involving the Government of Uganda and the LRA. While the northern region also suffers very high levels of small arms use, Karamoja is unique in the sample in having significantly lower levels of violence that either did not involve weapons or involved weapons other than a firearm.

These findings suggest that Karamoja may be illustrative of a 'substitution effect', whereby small arms proliferate in such numbers that most violent events, which might otherwise have involved fists, knives, or other non-projectile weapons, involve small arms. As Figure 3.3 clearly illustrates, the northern region, despite very high rates of small arms use, has significantly higher frequencies of violence not involving small arms—a potential indicator of less widespread small arms use.

Figure 3.3

Weapon used in the most recent attack to result in the death or injury of a household member, December 2005–July 2006 (n = 1,068)

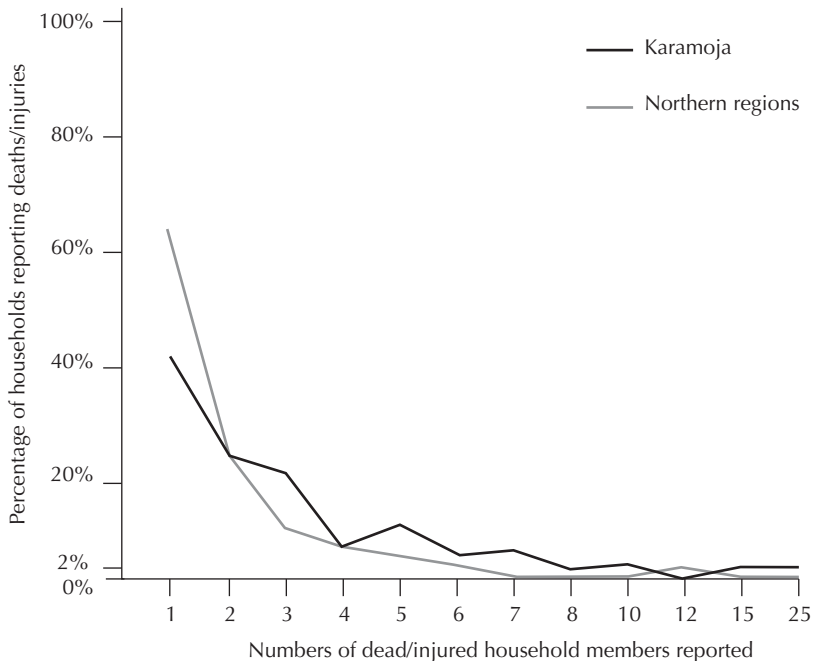


The specific modes of violence prevalent in Karamoja—notably violence associated with raiding—may explain why armed violence in the Karamoja and northern regions differs. Attacks with knives or agricultural implements are frequently a feature of violence in the northern region and characterize both LRA²³ attacks and interpersonal violence in camps for internally displaced persons. Most shootings involve small numbers of protagonists and result in few victims (Bevan, 2005–07).

By contrast, one of the predominant features of violence in Karamoja is cattle raiding. Whether undertaken to augment herds or for hard currency, raiding necessitates large numbers of attackers and the heavy use of firepower. Most raids result in shooting. Gunfire is often indiscriminate, and in the wicker confines of Karimojong villages, the effect of high velocity rounds penetrating flimsy building structures can result in a high death and injury toll, including to

Figure 3.4

Household members killed and injured in violent events in Karamoja and northern regions, December 2005–July 2006



women, children, and the elderly. Moreover, stiff resistance is often the deciding factor in prompting the attacking warriors to inflict as much suffering on the inhabitants as possible, which often equates to murder.²⁴

Figure 3.4 plots reported household member deaths and injuries from violence for the period December 2005–July 2006 in both the northern (LRA-afflicted) and Karamoja regions. Responses suggest that, while the northern region has significantly higher rates of single violent injuries and deaths, respondents in Karamoja near-consistently report higher numbers of multiple deaths and injuries within the same period.

One plausible conclusion is that a higher prevalence of violent events involving small arms in Karamoja results in a greater number of deaths, due to the destructive capacity of assault rifles in contrast to non-projectile weapons. However, although firearms use in violence is significantly higher in Karamoja than in the northern region, it probably cannot account for such a disparity in numbers of dead and wounded. The impact of violence cannot be explained by recourse to weapons alone, and the case of Karamoja suggests that heavy firepower, when *combined* with raiding practices that concentrate attackers and potential victims in one place, yields the region's distinctive pattern of morbidity and mortality.

Despite these findings, it is important to stress that *reports* of violent death and injury may not necessarily equate to *actual* levels of death and injury across Karamoja. There are a number of reasons why data from household surveys can be misleading, including the tendency for people to report deaths and injuries in the wider community rather than the household (despite a number of in-built controls in the survey design); the possibility of having sampled from an area that has been particularly prone to armed violence; and the potential for people, in desperation, to inflate mortality and morbidity figures, in the hope that the survey findings prompt outside intervention to curtail armed violence. The Small Arms Survey could not find significant problems related to the survey in any of these areas, but they cannot be discounted, and for this reason it is important to utilize other available indicators.

Hospital and clinic records compiled by Mkutu (2007a, p. 42) indicate that, between 1996 and 2003, almost 8,000²⁵ people were killed or injured in small arms-related incidents in Karamoja. It must be stressed that most records are

incomplete. With this in mind, Karamoja’s armed violence burden is almost certainly higher than health facility data indicates. This is particularly so in relation to deaths. For instance, in the selection of records presented by Mku-tu where deaths and injuries are disaggregated, deaths comprise only about 5 per cent of accounts (52 deaths compared with 1,054 injuries).²⁶ A wounded to killed ratio of approximately 20:1 is particularly high, given poor access to medical care and the use of high velocity weapons. It is likely that a significant number of people die before receiving medical attention, due to very limited access to the region’s few small hospitals and clinics. Given these factors and data from other contexts,²⁷ a wounded to killed ratio approaching 2:1²⁸ is probably more realistic, which would yield a figure of around 530 deaths per year.

Table 3.1
Reported deaths as a result of violent incidents in Karamoja, 2004–06

	Jan.–Apr.	May–Aug.	Sept.–Dec.	Partial annual totals
2004	-	154	48	202
2005	195	163	187	545
2006	-	147	-	147

Source: Compilation of reports to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Conflict Early Warning and Response (CEWARN) Mechanism (CEWARN, 2007)

Data for 2005 suggests that a figure of around 530 deaths is plausible, given the limited data available for Karamoja. As Table 3.1 illustrates, in 2005—the only year in which reports to the regional monitoring mechanism CEWARN comprised an entire year—545 deaths were recorded as a result of violent incidents. Like public health data, CEWARN reports are incomplete, and many violent incidents, which often take place in the bush, probably go unreported.

Given the above findings, and the fact that most collective violence in Karamoja involves the use of small arms, it is probably safe to conclude that annual direct deaths from small arms violence are probably in excess of these figures, and conceivably a great deal more. Although a base figure of around

550 deaths appears relatively low in comparison to firearms-related deaths in some other troubled regions, given that the population of Karamoja is relatively small (at around 930,000²⁹), it equates to almost 60 deaths per 100,000 of the population annually (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2
Selected small arms death rates per 100,000

Country/region	Year	Firearm deaths	Firearm deaths per 100,000
Colombia (Meta)*	2002	105	530
Colombia	2002	28,989	60
Karamoja	2005	>550	>58
South Africa	2004	10,573	22
Brazil (urban)	2000	—	27
Brazil	2002	38,088	21
Kenya	1999	1,599	5
United States	2001	10,953	4
Tanzania	1997	175	<1

* A municipality with a population of 19,781.

Sources: Brazil: Phebo (2005, p. 9); Brazil (urban): Small Arms Survey (2007a, p. 230); Colombia: Small Arms Survey (2006, pp. 236–38); Colombia (Meta): Small Arms Survey (2006, p. 240); remainder: compiled by the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers and available on request

Impact of armed violence on social relations and culture

The threat of armed violence has a significant impact on people’s daily lives. This manifests itself in the form of increasingly impaired communication among groups of Karimojong and also in the deterioration of relations within communities.

Violence, or the threat of violence, disrupts travel between towns, villages, and kraals or temporary cattle camps. Many people fear to walk because it may result in their being robbed and potentially shot. In some cases, people have been captured and forced at gunpoint to lead raiders to their community’s live-

stock, which means that one person's decision to travel can be a strategic problem for the whole community.³⁰ These deterrents to travel affect both intra- and inter-communal relations.

Most communication in Karamoja is face to face. An upsurge in armed violence deters all but the most essential travel. People have abandoned visiting relatives who live even a relatively short distance away for fear of being robbed, killed, or taken hostage.³¹ Impaired social networks have a highly negative impact on the prospects for peace in Karamoja. As noted above, inter-clan meetings have historically been pivotal in dispute resolution, and for sustaining resource-sharing agreements and access rights to pasture. Many elders are now disinclined to risk travel and are often dependent on transport provided by the few faith-based and other community-based mediation groups in the region.

Most gun killings, cattle theft, and robberies take place at night, particularly between the hours of 7 p.m. and 10 p.m.³² As a result, warriors—and, indeed, most men—guarding the villages sleep outside of their huts to avoid being trapped inside should a raid take place. This kind of behaviour takes its toll on family relations, particularly on male–female relations.³³ The need for constant night-time security has also negatively impacted on the traditional forums for discussion and learning.³⁴ The fireplace was once the central area of villages and a focus for story-, riddle-, and poem-telling. This forum was one of the main ways in which elders could impart their knowledge and culture to the young people of Karamoja—and, in many respects, condition their behaviour. In some communities there is now no central fireplace, owing to the need for night-time surveillance.

Impact of armed violence on development and development assistance

The population of Karamoja is highly dependent on food aid. Although some of the region's food shortages are the result of drought, armed violence has exacerbated the impact of seasonal and climatic factors. In addition, violence has further curtailed access to food by constraining the mobility of both the

population and aid agencies operating in the region.

A recent survey of nutrition and food security in Uganda noted that some 16 per cent of the population was food insecure and 46 per cent highly vulnerable. The survey concluded that human-induced insecurity (i.e. armed conflict), drought, and little crop diversity were the largest causes of food shortages (WFP, 2005, pp. 28, 85). The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) also notes that humanitarian indicators in Karamoja are the lowest in Uganda as a result of sustained hostilities (UNICEF, 2007).

Most villages are surrounded by a few fields that produce sorghum, maize, and finger millet (WFP, 2005, p. 28)—the staple foods that supplement the basic Karimojong diet of meat, blood, and milk. The constant threat of armed violence means that people are unable to exploit fertile land farther afield and instead rely on over-farmed plots close to villages and towns.³⁵

Armed violence has furthermore had a direct impact on food distribution by international agencies. For example, in May 2007, the UN World Food Programme suspended its operations in Karamoja following the death of one of its drivers in an ambush (*New Vision*, 2007c). Violence of this kind has an impact on the entire structure of aid and development assistance in the region.

Relatively few agencies operate in Karamoja, in sharp contrast to the high density of organizations working in Uganda's northern region. Unlike the northern region, Karamoja only recently (2007) hosted a UN security coordination centre. As a result, information related to security incidents in Karamoja has been relatively scant and the few agencies operating in the region have, until recently, done so outside of a coordinated field security structure, and under threat of hostility. For example, while the northern region was designated UN security level 2 in September 2007, Karamoja remained at level 3 status.³⁶ The threat level is clearly visible in the number of violent attacks reported to the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) (Figure 3.5).

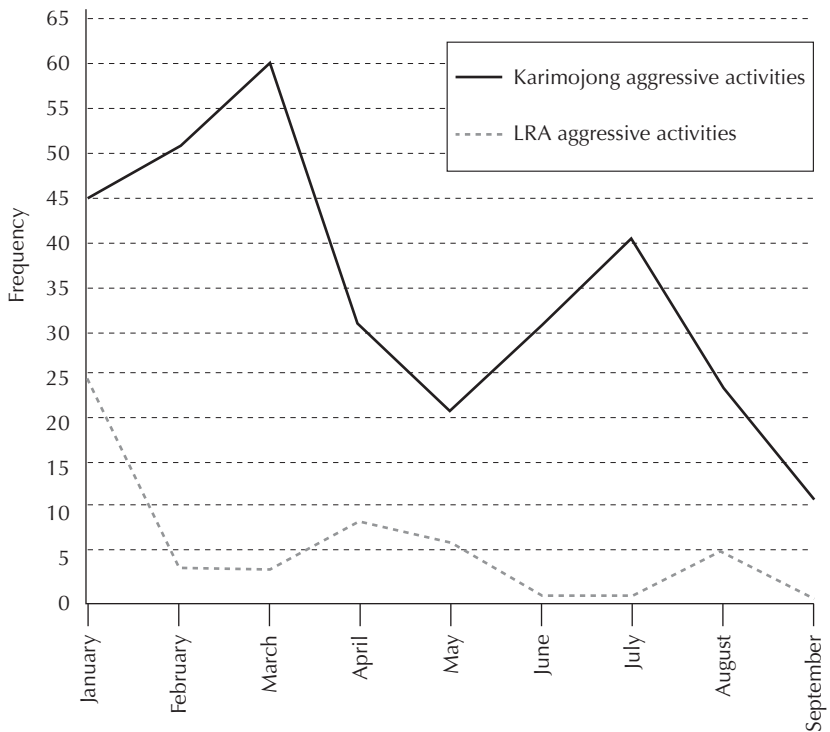
The pronounced differences between development and humanitarian access in the north and access in Karamoja are reflected in disparate development indicators. Despite 20 years of war in the northern region, Karamoja's development indicators continue to rank lower.³⁷

The upsurge in violence in 2006–07 has arguably prompted renewed interest in increasing aid agency capacity in the region.³⁸ This is critical, given that

most projections suggest a lack of improvement in either the food supply or the impact of violent conflict in the near future. For instance, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' prediction for 2007 (UNOCHA, 2006, pp. 14–15) indicated a distinct lack of improvement in factors that have contributed to food insecurity and aid agency access:

Figure 3.5

Security incidents reported to UNDSS in Uganda, January–September 2007



Karimojong aggressive activities:

- (i) Ambushes
- (ii) Inter-klan fighting
- (iii) Raids
- (iv) Rape
- (v) Reported killings

LRA aggressive activities:

- (i) Abductions
- (ii) Ambushes
- (iii) Firefights
- (iv) Food raids
- (v) Reported killings

Source: UNDSS (2007, p. 3)

In Karamoja, forcible disarmament, inter-clan tensions, banditry, and cattle rustling into neighbouring districts are expected to continue. Karimojong incursions will contribute to maintain the displaced population in camps in Katakwi and part of Amuria and will slow return in eastern Acholi districts. Increased food insecurity is expected in Karamoja following poorer than average harvests. A stalemate in the Karimojong disarmament process persists.

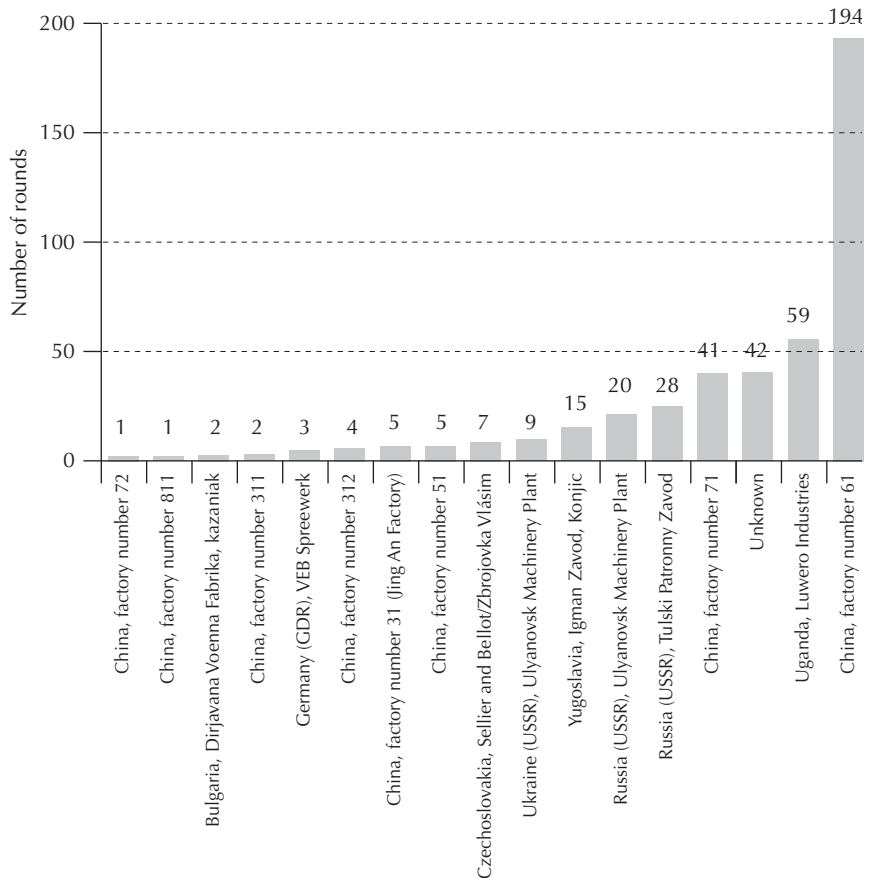
In September 2007, the Famine Early Warning System Network predicted that food assistance would again be needed for Karamoja by the end of 2007 or early 2008 (FEWS NET, 2007). Floods later that month inundated the region's pasture and arable land. 🗑️

IV. Types and origins of weapons circulating in Karamoja

In any one region of Karamoja, there are numerous armed actors. They include the military and LDUs, the police and local auxiliary police, former

Figure 4.1

Manufacturers of 7.62 x 39 mm rounds recorded in Karamoja (n = 438)



GDR = German Democratic Republic (East Germany); USSR = Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union).

Source: Author's research conducted in Kotido and Kaabong Districts, September 2006

security forces personnel, local politicians and counsellors, a limited number of civilians,³⁹ and pastoral warriors. The vast majority of these actors are armed with assault rifles.

Kalashnikov-pattern assault rifles are the most prevalent types of weapon circulating in Karamoja. Weapons of this type are used by both state and non-state actors.

These weapons employ the 7.62 x 39 mm Warsaw Pact standard cartridge, which is prevalent across the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions. Ammunition circulating in Karamoja is almost exclusively of this calibre. Interestingly, much of it is relatively recent and of Chinese origin. Figure 4.1 shows the origins of 438 live rounds of ammunition recovered from state forces and warriors in Karamoja.

Arms and ammunition appear to enter Karamoja from at least four sources. First, there has been, and probably still is, a thriving trade between southern Sudan and Karamoja. Second, there is considerable trade within Uganda, between groups in Karamoja and groups in the districts to the west of the region. Third, the Karimojong appear to have captured weapons from opposing groups both within Uganda and from Kenya. Finally, there is strong evidence to suggest that members of the Uganda state security forces sell arms to the Karimojong.

The Sudan link

There are a considerable number of pointers to southern Sudan being a source of arms and ammunition, including low prices of arms in that region.⁴⁰ Residents in Kaabong, the most northerly district in Karamoja, name the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) as a source of arms and ammunition since at least 1986.⁴¹ This trade is most likely to flow through the Toposa clans, who move freely across the border between Uganda and Sudan. The Toposa are in closest contact with the Dodoth Karimojong of Kaabong District.⁴²

Other sources corroborate this link. During the disarmament exercises of 2001–03, many of the Karimojong handed in their weapons. However, with intensified raiding from the Pokot and Turkana following disarmament, and inadequate state security provision, they needed to rearm. Focus groups in Moroto noted that, in response, weapons arrived in the south from Sudan via Kaabong District.⁴³

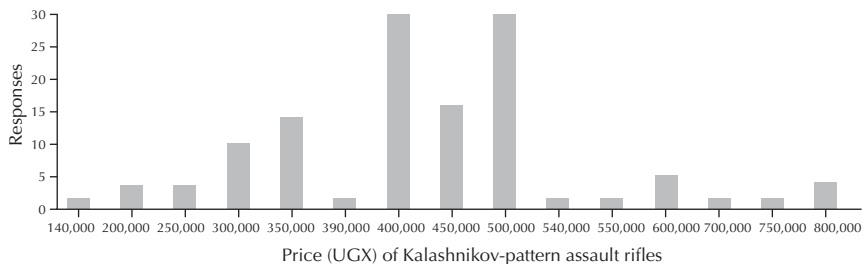
Reports by the UPDF indicate that some Karimojong groups may be in posses-

sion of some of the SPLA's heavier weapons. As one senior Ugandan army officer reported in May 2005, some groups of Karimojong are in possession of 60 mm mortars, which they have received through trade with members of the SPLA.⁴⁴

It is clear, however, that the use of these weapons has not been reported. Indeed, it is unlikely that they have practical applications for the types of violence that are most prevalent in Karamoja at present, although this is not to say that they could not be used. A recent Karimojong attack on the UPDF in Kotido indicates that certain Karimojong groups are willing to engage the Ugandan armed forces (*New Vision*, 2006c). Weapons of this type pose a serious threat to any escalation in violence of this kind.

The low price of weapons in southern Sudan is a further indicator of a Sudanese–Ugandan arms and ammunition link. Figure 4.2 includes some outlying estimates, but indicates that the cost of a Kalashnikov-pattern weapon is between UGX 300,000 and UGX 500,000⁴⁵ (USD 250–310).⁴⁶ The mean price for all districts was UGX 400,000, around USD 250. This estimate appears to be broadly supported by findings from focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Prices in Sudan are reportedly lower, given relatively greater supply in the country. Focus groups in Kaabong District of Karamoja, which is adjacent to southern Sudan, estimated a price of UGX 350,000 (about USD 220) for a weapon purchased from the Sudanese Didinga or Mening (which both use Ugandan currency).⁴⁷ Arms prices are generally lower in Sudan than in Karamoja, which is strong reason to suspect that the majority of arms have traditionally come from that country.

Figure 4.2
Price estimates of Kalashnikov-pattern assault rifles (n = 360)



UGX 1,600 = USD 1.

Intra-Uganda trade and capture

The regions to the west of Karamoja are heavily armed as a result of the conflict between the government and the LRA (Small Arms Survey, 2006, pp. 272–93). This is primarily due to government policies of arming civilians and LDUs against the LRA and to the presence of the heavily armed LRA itself. Focus group reports and other interviews suggest that the Karimojong trade cattle for weapons with various groups in these regions.

Interviews conducted in Nakapiripirit, for instance, suggest that cattle are traded for arms with the Teso, Bugisu, and Lango, who reside predominantly in Katakwi and Lira Districts, to the west and south of Karamoja (Map 1).⁴⁸ Interviews conducted in Kotido and Kaabong districts also suggest that the Karimojong, although fiercely opposed to the LRA, have also traded cattle with hungry LRA fighters in exchange for arms and ammunition, as well as with businessmen from Kitgum and Pader districts.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, it is not just trade that sustains Karimojong stocks. Like many non-state armed groups (Small Arms Survey, 2005, pp. 186–87), capture is a primary source of arms and ammunition in Karamoja. Examples of capture by the Karimojong include weapons captured from the LRA that Karimojong warriors have clashed with and defeated, and the Pokot and Turkana—both on numerous occasions. Other sources include isolated incidents of warriors waylaying soldiers and taking their weapons by force (usually when the soldiers are alone).⁵⁰

Domestic sources: evidence from arms prices

A decrease in the price of weapons during recent government disarmament initiatives suggests that weapons availability has actually increased. Disarmament operations themselves may be responsible, due to the presence of larger numbers of soldiers in the region.

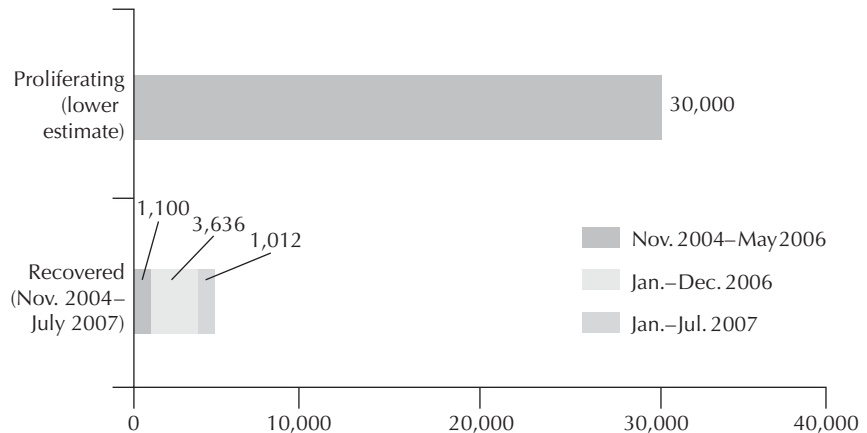
In some cases, price trends appear to be obvious. For example, a reduced supply created by a disarmament initiative should increase prices (given constant demand). In Nakapiripirit, for instance, respondents noted changes in the price of weapons following disarmament. Prices were higher immediately after the 2002 disarmament initiative, when the price of an assault rifle

reached around UGX 750,000 (USD 470). Later, prices dropped by around UGX 250,000 to UGX 500,000 (USD 310).⁵¹ This is to be expected, but it leaves a significant question—why haven't prices increased to such levels as a result of recent (2006–07) cordon and search operations?

A focus group in Moroto estimated that assault rifles cost in the region of UGX 600,000–700,000 (USD 380–440), or between five and seven cows, in 2001. Since then, the price has dropped considerably and remains as low as one to three cows.⁵² Another group in Moroto estimated the same low price and also noted that prices have fallen since the beginning of the 2006–07 disarmament exercise.⁵³ In supply and demand terms, disarmament should have reduced the number of weapons circulating and, given higher insecurity (addressed below), led to increased demand and hence a higher cost of weapons. Instead, these findings suggest the potential for increased supply.

Figure 4.3

Number of weapons estimated to proliferate and reported recovered in Karamoja, November 2004–July 2007



Notes: Data from January 2007 onwards counts grenades as individual weapons, and other periods may do so also. The majority of weapons are nevertheless assault rifles.

Sources: *New Vision* (2007a; 2007d); Uganda (2007b); UPDF (2007)

Although weapons are less visible⁵⁴ in Karamoja since the onset of the 2006–07 disarmament initiatives, this does not necessarily equate to either decreased demand or supply. Nakapiripirit focus groups suggested that the number of arms circulating had increased in 2006, but members were unable to offer a reason why.⁵⁵ Two groups in Moroto believed that arms from deserting or dissatisfied soldiers could be bought at far cheaper prices, such as a single cow, than from other warriors and civilians.⁵⁶ It is unlikely that isolated incidents of soldiers selling weapons could be responsible for a major increase in supply, so sustained low prices remain something of a mystery. One possible explanation is that the region is so saturated with arms—with estimates ranging from 30,000 to 200,000 weapons⁵⁷—that, while demand may have increased with growing insecurity, the number of weapons already circulating because of intense rearmament after the 2001 disarmament initiatives easily meets that demand. For example, as Figure 4.3 illustrates, the number of weapons reportedly recovered is low in comparison to even the lowest estimates of numbers proliferating in Karamoja.

Domestic sources: evidence from ammunition stocks

While the regional market for assault rifles may be saturated, ammunition for those weapons is a consumable good. Very high levels of small arms violence almost certainly sustain strong demand for ammunition in the region.

Research in Kotido and Kaabong Districts reveals that stocks of ammunition in the hands of Karimojong warriors match closely those of state armed forces in Karamoja. From the evidence of ammunition data collected in August 2006, press reports, military statements, and key informant interviews, there is a clear case for the illicit transfer of ammunition from members of Uganda’s military and auxiliary forces to the Karimojong (Bevan and Dreyfus, 2007, p. 290).

Ammunition in the hands of Karimojong groups contains a very large number of recently (2002–04) manufactured Chinese ammunition, which is also used by the Ugandan security forces, in addition to a large number of relatively new Ugandan-produced rounds of ammunition. When compared with samples of ammunition from state security forces, the types and dates of ammunition in the hands of Karimojong warriors matched closely those of the security forces.

Five mutually supported reasons suggest that state security forces are a key source of ammunition for the Karimojong. First, while state and Karimojong stocks are not mirror images of one another, they are sufficiently similar to conclude that state and non-state actors have very similar sources of ammunition. Second, statements by the military made in the Ugandan press admit to trade between LDU and UPDF members and Karimojong warriors (*New Vision*, 2002; 2006a). Third, poor quality Ugandan-manufactured ammunition—which has been publicly criticized by members of the security forces—circulates with the Karimojong in relatively high numbers (*Monitor*, 2002b; *Red Pepper*, 2004, pp. 1–2). Importantly, this ammunition is far less frequent in the hands of state armed forces, suggesting an ‘off-loading’ phenomenon on the part of state forces. Fourth, there is considerable evidence of trade in military commodities other than arms and ammunition. Finally, Karimojong warriors are emphatic that Ugandan security forces comprise their primary source of ammunition.⁵⁸ ■

V. Disarmament: tried, tested, and failed

Numerous government-led disarmament initiatives of varying scale have been launched in Karamoja, including in the years 1945, 1953, 1954, 1960, 1964, 1984, 1987, and 2001.⁵⁹ Another disarmament initiative was launched by the UPDF in the first half of 2006 and was ongoing at the end of 2007. None of these initiatives has proved effective in reducing armed violence in the region. In fact, the most recent disarmament initiatives appear to have had an escalatory effect on violence.

The 2001 initiative is highly relevant to the reaction of the Karimojong to the most recent (2006–07) disarmament attempts. The programme was relatively well planned and appears to have gained the support of a number of Karimojong groups. The Bokora, for instance, voluntarily surrendered up to 44 per cent of the projected number of arms in their possession, while the Jie and Dodoth surrendered an estimated 27 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively.⁶⁰

However, the 2001 initiative proved damaging for subsequent disarmament initiatives because of its failure on several counts. First, although initially voluntary, the operation became forcible after a fixed period of time. In some cases, this involved violence by the UPDF, which alienated many communities—notably those where some members had voluntarily disarmed. Second, the rapid departure of the UPDF in 2002—in response to a renewed LRA threat to the west—left the disarmed region open to attack from neighbouring clans. The Jie, for instance, who had been disarmed to a lesser extent, raided the Bokora. The Kenyan Pokot, joined by a smaller group called the Tepeth, also raided the Pian. Third, people were promised assistance from the government in return for disarmament, such as money, iron sheets, and ox ploughs, but in the end received little.

For many in Karamoja, the resumption of raids sent a clear signal. The underlying problem of insecurity had not been addressed by disarmament. Because the disarmament programme was not comprehensive—which was

largely due to a failure to provide alternative security to armed warriors—some clans retained more weapons than others. This upset the balance of power among communities and contributed to escalating insecurity⁶¹ and renewed weapons acquisition.⁶²

Many people also equated disarmament with repression on the part of the government and army, which set the scene for intense opposition to any subsequent initiatives to disarm the Karimojong.

Direct impacts of the 2006–07 forcible disarmament programme

Despite an apparent groundswell of opinion against military solutions, the UPDF began to launch what would later be termed ‘cordon and search’ operations in April–May 2006. These operations were designed to remove small arms directly from communities. Over time, these operations have changed from targeting villages, by cordoning off and searching, to targeting them and other collectives of individuals by using more violent means.

UPDF tactics have undoubtedly been heavy-handed, to the extent that—whether part of a policy or not—the military has been implicated in human rights abuses, including the torture and killing of unarmed civilians, and provoking displacement and the disruption of the social order. In some cases, increased UPDF presence in the region has contributed to the recirculation of weapons. The following sections explore these impacts in greater detail.

Abuse of the population⁶³

A policy of cordon and search was first aimed at the villages, where small numbers of warriors reside with women and children and a fraction of the clan’s livestock. Eyewitness reports indicate that in many cases, cordon and search has been conducted peacefully, in broad daylight, and with steps taken to ensure minimum friction between the UPDF and the persons concerned. However, in other cases, the military have arrived at night, unannounced, and have been mistaken for raiders (which is to be expected of villages con-

tinuously under threat of raids). The prevailing security conditions therefore have some part to play in these types of situations, but UPDF responses have nevertheless involved excessive use of force.

In one case, in May 2006, for example, UPDF units attempted to force their way into a village in Kotido in the early hours of the morning, received fire from the inhabitants, and then proceeded to return fire (into the village) with a heavy machine gun mounted on the back of a vehicle. The incident resulted in a number of unarmed casualties.⁶⁴ Focus groups in Kotido noted the use by the UPDF of light weapons, including heavy machine guns and grenades, against suspected or actual warriors. Troops also set fire to homes and beat people.⁶⁵ Local people in Nakapiripirit furthermore report that UPDF soldiers have completely destroyed some villages during disarmament operations.⁶⁶

In other cases, UPDF tactics have extended beyond cordon and search to what can only be described as hostage taking. For instance, in July 2006 reports from a number of reliable sources indicate that UPDF troops surrounded some 800 unarmed warriors at a cattle market near the Kotido–Kaabong border. When the warriors attempted to escape, the UPDF opened fire, killing around six unarmed civilians, including a woman carrying a child. Those warriors who were surrounded were repeatedly beaten until they confessed that they had small arms hidden elsewhere. Those who confessed were held until someone from their kraal had returned with a weapon and ammunition.⁶⁷

Box 3

The impact of military operations on the civilian population: the Nagera-Kapus incident

One feature of UPDF cordon and search operations is that they have targeted populous areas, such as villages and kraals, due to the difficulty of apprehending warriors in the pasture and bush. These tactics bring with them the risk of unarmed civilian casualties. The burden of death inflicted on women, children, and the elderly in late 2006 and early 2007 was particularly high.

On 12 February 2007 a UPDF cordon and search operation targeted a kraal in Nagera-Kapus, Kotido District. The operation was prompted by a series of ambushes on soldiers in the Kapus dam area on the Kotido–Abim road. The operation was intended to apprehend the warriors responsible for the ambushes and retrieve their weapons. However, action by the UPDF resulted in a number of civilian casualties. Although it is difficult to ascertain the precise numbers of dead and injured, due to the panic and localized displacement of the

population, it is clear that unarmed members of the community suffered greatly.

A list provided to the Small Arms Survey shortly after the incident revealed that a number of children had been killed during the attack. After comparing casualty lists and the statements of elders, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) concluded that 34 persons were killed, of whom 16 were children.⁶⁸

It is important to stress that the Nagera-Kapus incident is not unique. While UPDF action in this case was certainly provoked by aggression on the part of warriors, since the start of operations in 2006, the military has been implicated in numerous operations, resulting in similar loss of life.

UNHCHR concluded after having investigated the Nagera-Kapus incident that: excessive force continues to be used by the UPDF in its military operations in Karamoja with significant negative impact on the lives and human rights of all individuals, demonstrated by the fact that the 12 and 13 February 2007 incidents are not isolated occurrences but amongst many similar incidents recorded by OHCHR on the ground since November 2006 (UNHCHR, 2007a, p. 22).⁶⁹

It is important to note, however, that the situation is not static. In August 2007, UNHCHR (2007b, para. 6) noted significant overall improvements in the human rights situation in Karamoja and recognized that the UPDF had 'made significant strides to enhance confidence-building measures and improve civil-military relations in Karamoja.' However, the report (para. 12) also noted that:

Some UPDF members continued to commit acts which resulted in human rights violations, including killings, acts of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment, as well as the use of excessive force leading to the destruction of property and livelihoods.

Such tactics have extended elsewhere and are not only directed at the warriors. In Nakapiripirit, villagers have been detained and tortured to reveal the location of arms caches or warriors. Villages in Natapararengan and Lomormor, for instance, report over ten people losing limbs after having been tortured by the army with a binding technique known as *kandoya*.⁷⁰

The presence of the army has also ushered in types of violence that are not part of disarmament operations. Soldiers have been accused of isolated killings. Likewise, in Moroto, villagers claim that the UPDF disarmament initiative has gone hand in hand with the rape of village girls, the killing of civilians, property damage, and theft by troops.⁷¹ Focus group participants in one village noted several summary executions in 2006, including the shooting of a young boy who was walking home late in the evening and a similar case in which soldiers shot two men. They also noted killings by soldiers in neighbouring communities during the same period, including the shooting of two people in one village and three young shepherds in another.⁷²

These are often acts perpetrated by individual members or units of the UPDF, but are facilitated by a lack of accountability within the military. International monitors continue to press for improvements in accountability for violations of the UPDF code of conduct, the UPDF Act, Ugandan national laws, and international human rights standards (UNHCHR, 2007b, para. 12).

Displacement resulting from military operations

Warriors have, to a large extent, been the focus of military disarmament operations, despite wider involvement of the civilian population. However, the impact on warriors has led to some broader impacts on the whole community.

As a result of UPDF activities, warriors have moved the herds and kraals (where they reside) to more inaccessible parts of Karamoja. Largely, this entails moving far into the bush, away from their villages and distant from roads that the UPDF might use as a bridgehead to launch an attack. This displacement has led to a number of factors that together contribute to a decline in the welfare of whole communities:

- The supply of clean water, scarce at the best of times, is often non-existent in areas where the warriors have taken to moving the herds.
- Warriors often do not have access to the staple foods provided by home villages, and their health is affected considerably.
- An already limited supply of medical aid to animals and people is further impeded.
- Warriors spend even less time with their families, impairing the social structure.
- Elders have less contact with warriors, as a consequence of which social cohesion and mediation are impaired, and disputes are more difficult to solve.
- Home villages are affected by a reduction in protein, because the warriors and cows have moved further from the villages.
- Criminals seeking shelter from justice can join isolated groups of warriors, which may 'criminalize' those unconnected with the criminals' crimes.

Adding fuel to the fire: increased circulation of weapons

Despite the reluctance of warriors to come into contact with UPDF troops, it is very clear from interviews and visual evidence that considerable trade exists between some members of the security forces and the Karimojong. The recent higher concentrations of troops in the region for the purposes of disarmament appear to have increased the problem of small arms proliferation.

Many warriors openly wear UPDF combat jackets and even wear UPDF cap badges on their hats. These insignia were once a sign that a warrior had killed a

soldier—and hence a symbol of prowess. Now there are simply too many such articles circulating among the warriors for this to be the case. Warriors concede that members of the security forces contact them when they come into towns and villages⁷³ and sell them military apparel and, more importantly, weapons and ammunition. The arms, and notably the ammunition, currently in the hands of a number of clans strongly implicate the UPDF as a source.

Many people (including senior administrative officials) in the region are unsure what has happened to the arms recovered by the UPDF during disarmament initiatives. It is clear from the little information circulating that the numbers of weapons recorded by the UPDF are fewer than those reported to local government officers.⁷⁴ People claim that they need to see evidence of destruction (or at least accurate record keeping) if they are to believe that guns are not recirculating.⁷⁵

The potential for a Karimojong backlash

Because of the impact of past and current disarmament initiatives (notably the violence involved), many Karimojong view the UPDF as hostile invaders in their territory. By extension, they have increasingly come to view the government, and everything associated with it, as a hostile actor.

Focus groups suggest many Karimojong believe that the army is an instrument of vengeance. Participants alleged that ‘foreign’ soldiers (of different ethnicities) from the districts to the west of Karamoja were mostly to blame for the violence against civilians. Troops of Iteso and Acholi origins, they noted, deliberately target civilians in revenge for raids by the Karimojong against their communities in times past.⁷⁶ This frames the disarmament initiative in ethnic terms and ignites old animosities, which are reason enough for people to believe that they are being deliberately punished.

The government’s legitimacy in the region is consequently tainted, to the extent that any government-associated policy is viewed with hostility. This animosity can be far-reaching and extends to government-related activities that are wholly unconnected with the activities of the military. In early November 2006, for instance, the UPDF had to escort the national school examination papers from Kampala to Karamoja and also protect the students sitting the exam, due to warriors’ threats to attack students.⁷⁷

Many people note that the warriors, if pushed, will engage the army and fight back.⁷⁸ They have done so before and it appears that anti-government/UPDF feeling is beginning to prompt such attacks again. In October 2006 Jie warriors shot dead 16 soldiers, including the commanding officer of the UPDF 67th battalion. The attack was their response to a cordon and search operation at Lopuyo village, near Kotido town (*New Vision*, 2006c). Between November 2006 and March 2007 the UPDF reportedly lost 24 soldiers killed in action (UPDF, 2007a), and a further three troops were reported dead in the Ugandan press in May (*New Vision*, 2007b). The prospect of large-scale conflict between the Karimojong and UPDF is very real, and it is worth noting that, at the local level, the two forces are not always unevenly matched. ■

VI. Prospects for disarmament

Prospects for disarmament in the near future have undoubtedly been set back by the conduct of the military in the most recent initiatives. People are not only openly opposed to it, but have taken precautions to hide their weapons. Moreover, with tensions growing between the Karimojong and the army, it is highly plausible that people are doing what they usually do when faced with a threat—arming themselves to a greater extent. It appears very unlikely that any future disarmament initiative can prove successful without adequate measures in place to improve the security of Karimojong communities. This means stopping the raids by warriors and controlling the activities of the army. In short, it means that community protection needs to be in place before people are willing to disarm.

Caching and general concealment of weaponry

People have become far more sensitive about the sources and locations of their weapons during recent UPDF operations. Focus group discussions report that many people have taken to burying their weapons for fear that they will be confiscated by the army.⁷⁹ Warriors, faced with forcible disarmament, have taken their weapons to the kraals, where they are less likely to be recovered by the army.

While weapons used to be a common sight in Karamoja, they are now rarely seen.⁸⁰ As one focus group in Moroto noted, warriors used to walk around with guns on their shoulders as if they were simply walking sticks.⁸¹ The Small Arms Survey's findings from the household survey appear to corroborate these reports. More than 50 per cent of respondents noted a decrease in the number of small arms seen carried in the LC1 area—conversely, only 18 per cent noted an increase.

However, a decrease in weapons in the LC1s does not necessarily mean a net decrease. It is probable that, in response to ongoing disarmament initia-

tives, weapons are kept away from major settlements. Research in Kotido and Kaabong Districts suggests that one has to go deep into the bush, where the UPDF rarely operates, to see weapons openly carried by warriors.⁸²

In a related finding, the household survey revealed that people were very concerned about giving any positive indication of levels of small arms possession in the community—primarily because UPDF cordon and search operations have targeted entire villages that are suspected of harbouring arms. For example, when asked about changes in the number of small arms in the LC1, very few respondents (8.9 per cent) believed they had increased. Almost half believed they had decreased (49 per cent), and some 20 per cent believed the number had stayed the same. Almost 40 per cent of people refused to answer or didn't know how many households had guns in the LC1. A further 30 per cent reported very few guns in households.

The responses suggest an increased reticence in giving information about weapons ('never' responses), which is quite unusual in Karamoja, where people are often willing to talk freely about the weapons that are so much a part of their lives. They also suggest that guns are being hidden. Both types of response are arguably a direct result of the disarmament operations.

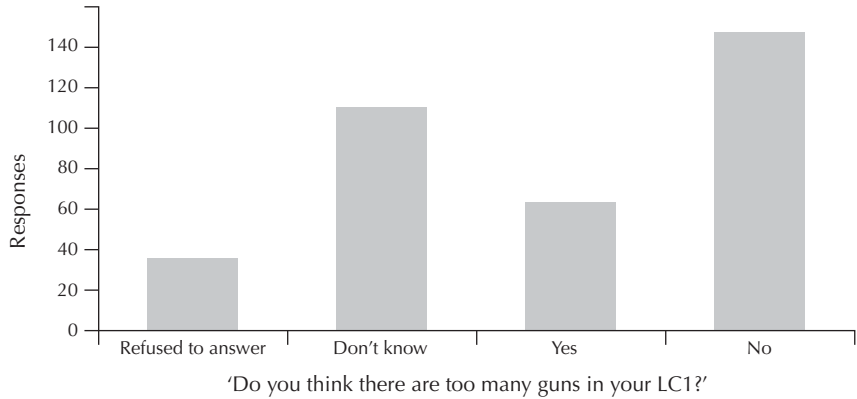
Ambivalent views on weapons, but strong demand for arms nonetheless

Focus group participants in Moroto encapsulated the role of small arms in Karamoja. They noted that the Karimojong communities will never make the unqualified assertion that guns are a problem, despite elevated levels of armed violence. Weapons have both positive and negative connotations in Karamoja, and neither side can prevail, given the current climate of insecurity.⁸³

Figure 6.1, for instance, illustrates household survey responses to the question, 'Do you think there are too many guns in your LC1?' Despite the fact that people are highly concerned about armed violence (88 per cent of households reported that a small arm was used in the event that left a household member dead or injured), a very large number responded 'no', they didn't think there were too many guns—in fact, over double the number of 'yes' responses.

Figure 6.1

Perceptions of whether there are too many guns in the country (n = 359)



Despite this, a significant number (almost 70 per cent) of residents also reported that it was dangerous to own a weapon, suggesting that people in Karamoja have an ambivalent relationship with small arms. This viewpoint does not appear to be determined by gender, and there was no significant difference between male and female responses.⁸⁴

On the one hand, therefore, people recognize all too well the dangers of small arms proliferation, while on the other, noting their role in providing security—whether real or perceived. The household survey provided one strong indicator of this contradiction. Responses to the frequency of gun killings in the LC1 and answers as to whether there were too many guns in the LC1 were negatively correlated. Put simply, higher frequencies of gun killing resulted in a greater number of assertions that there were too *few* small arms in the LC1.

Community views on whom to disarm

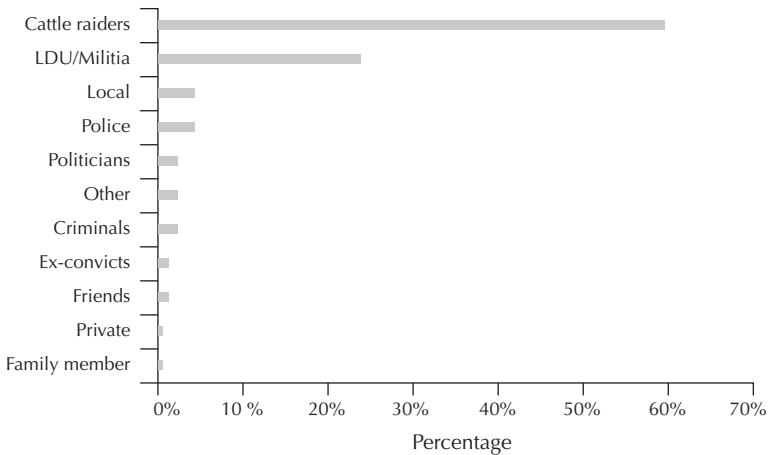
Focus group discussions suggest the majority of people want to see disarmament. When asked to specify who should be disarmed as a matter of priority, almost 90 per cent of respondents to the survey replied that warriors and those associated with cattle raiding were the first priority. Moreover, the sur-

vey revealed a positive correlation between these problematic elements and the types of people residents were reportedly afraid of—warriors on both counts (Figure 6.2). However, these results need qualification. For many people, while a large part of the problem, warriors are also a source of security for their own communities.

People fear to give up their arms for defensive reasons.⁸⁵ Most are concerned that disarmament is not uniform and that it will upset the balance of power.⁸⁶ Discussants in Kaabong indicate that Karimojong are particularly concerned that full-scale war will break out between the warriors and the UPDF, which is further reason for retaining weapons.⁸⁷

Figure 6.2, for instance, shows responses to the question, ‘Which group of people are you most afraid of?’ Warriors clearly predominate in people’s concerns. Overall, the dynamics of the security complex of warring clans appears to have the strongest impact on people’s fears. However, Figure 6.2 also demonstrates that people’s second-greatest fear is the army. Given that the army is operating in the region with the mandate of improving security, this is a worrying trend.

Figure 6.2
Actors whom people reported they feared most (n = 342)



Inadequate community protection by state security forces

Many people in Karamoja speak of the need for security forces that have the capacity to stop the raiding and armed criminality, but do not become embroiled in Karamoja's conflicts.⁸⁸ Unless some mechanism for diffusing the region's security complex without contributing to it can be achieved, the prospects for successful disarmament are probably bleak—disarmament itself may be an unwise policy.

People's trust in the UPDF has been deeply undermined by military operations in Karamoja. One focus group in Moroto even argued that the UPDF itself should be disarmed and that local Karimojong warriors should be recruited to guard and disarm their own communities.⁸⁹

Given the recent role of the UPDF, it is extremely unlikely that people will accept this force as a long-term alternative to policing. It is also unlikely, given the inefficacy of the police and LDUs, that people will agree to hand over their weapons in return for such flimsy protection. Focus group discussions suggest that security forces are ineffective and lack the capacity, in almost all respects, to enforce law and order.⁹⁰ A good deal of this incapacity is due to limited resources and the inaccessibility of much of Karamoja.

As noted above, the terrain in Karamoja is difficult, to say the least, which makes many areas inaccessible—or problematic to reach—for the police and army. Moreover, the police and army are ill-equipped to deal with the Karimojong or other groups in the bush, where their superior firepower is rendered ineffective due to the lack of vehicle access. The warriors can meet the army and police with equal, if not greater, force, so there is little incentive for state forces to engage them in the bush. Many troops are fearful of the Karimojong, and, indeed, a number of them who have served in northern Uganda previously report they are more fearful of the Karimojong than of the LRA.⁹¹

As a result, state security forces often prove ineffective at providing security to communities. For example, in February 2006, raiding Pokot warriors looted animals from the Pian in Namalu sub-county, Nakapiripirit District. The local Pian warriors requested the police and LDUs retrieve the stolen animals. However, both the police and LDUs refused. As is often the case, the

warriors launched a raid to retrieve the cattle.⁹² Similarly, focus group participants in Moroto claim that the local UPDF 'detachments' do not receive sufficient support (including finances) and are unable to guard against attack. Cattle rustling and raiding reportedly takes place right next to army units, who claim that they cannot interfere due to 'orders'.⁹³

People are also reluctant to report instances of cattle theft to the security forces (and more inclined to take action themselves) because of theft by security force personnel. In Nakapiripirit, for instance, soldiers have seized cattle from raiders, but have not returned them to their owners. Low and intermittent pay, and the soldiers' need to provide for their families, conspire to make poor soldiers a core part of the problem.⁹⁴

Together, these observations suggest a distinct lack of faith on the part of local people in the ability of the state to provide for their security. There is undoubtedly willingness to disarm the warriors, who comprise the most troublesome elements in society. However, it is clear that without some effective alternative to community defence—which is not the army—people in Karamoja will continue to have an ambiguous relationship with the use of small arms. Warriors remain people's best defence against attack.

Focus groups highlight a number of needs that people think should be reflected foremost in future disarmament initiatives. At the heart of these requirements is the concept of community-led security.

Community participation in security provision: Many Karimojong are adamant that disarmament must be orchestrated by the local communities and not by outsiders. Some people cite the period between 1995 and 1997, when Colonel Andrew Gutti, a native of Karamoja, succeeded in reducing conflict across Karamoja. The reason for this success, they argued, were policies of integrating warriors into local defence or 'vigilante' groups. Warriors were recruited and registered as members and it became 'almost impossible' for them to raid without being identified by their commanders and punished accordingly.⁹⁵ Whether this was actually the case is a matter of some debate and it is clear that Karamoja was not a haven of peace during the period. However, these observations are clear evidence that local people demand buy-in to any future processes.

Improving community-based cattle security: Given that cattle-raiding is one of the primary driving forces behind violence in the region, it is clear that abstracting cattle removes a significant focus of violence from the equation. For instance, residents of Bokora County, Moroto, noted that when cattle were taken into the military barracks near the village, cattle rustling subsided, resulting in a general improvement in security.⁹⁶ Although this was a temporary measure, it suggests that putting the security of cattle in the hands of a broader community force, rather than smaller groups of warriors, has the potential to make raiding—and hence retaliation and escalation—more difficult. However, while this kind of initiative may be feasible around villages—thereby dissuading attacks on home communities—it is unlikely to be suitable for the protection of the vast majority of herds in the bush.

Increased incentives for disarming: People also feel that the incentives for disarmament are quite weak in monetary terms. Many people purchased the weapons that they retain today in the mid-1980s. According to focus group discussions, the prices were far higher then, with a Kalashnikov-pattern assault rifle costing around ten head of cattle. This means that the weapons are probably today worth one-fifth of their value then.⁹⁷ Added to this is, of course, the opportunity cost of disarmament, which could mean losing entire herds of cattle from raids orchestrated by rival groups, in the absence of alternative security provisions.

Cross-border coordination of disarmament operations: There is general concern in Karamoja that disarmament needs to be coordinated with equivalent initiatives in Kenya. In the last round of disarmament, in 2002, for instance, the Kenyan Pokot were not disarmed, and consequently raided the Ugandan Pian, Bokora, and Matheniko as soon as the latter groups were disarmed.⁹⁸

Greater pre-disarmament sensitization: Elders and leaders stress the need for ‘sensitization’ in advance of disarmament initiatives. They argue that people need to be informed of how the programme will be conducted, and whether it is likely to be forcible or voluntary, and stress the need for cooperation between the government and local civil administrations (rather than simply the army) for effective consideration of local needs.⁹⁹ ■

VII. Towards a more structured approach to disarmament?

In 2001, the Government of Uganda launched a fresh disarmament initiative in Karamoja. The first, short phase of the initiative (December 2001–January 2002) was voluntary and was accompanied by a presidential campaign to sensitize the Karamojong about the aims and components of the initiative.

Despite grave flaws, this strategy was heralded as successful. It encouraged further investment of time and resources in developing comprehensive approaches to disarmament, culminating in the 2005 Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Plan (KIDDP). However, the forcible disarmament component of the 2001–02 initiatives engendered widespread hostility to disarmament in Karamoja.

The reaction should have served as a warning to policy-makers that voluntary disarmament—prompted by development assistance and the provision of security—was the way to secure community buy-in to disarmament programmes. Perhaps more importantly, it should also have warned those involved in planning future initiatives that any gains made in sensitizing people to voluntary disarmament could be shattered by heavy-handed, military-led forcible disarmament.

These lessons were not learned, and the years since 2002 have been characterized by half-hearted attention to comprehensive development-oriented strategies, punctuated by military-led forcible disarmament.

The following sections explore some of the trends in government-sanctioned disarmament initiatives since 2001, focusing particularly on KIDDP. It should be noted that despite the lip service paid to comprehensive approaches to disarmament, sections of the Ugandan government, in conjunction with the UPDF, have consistently favoured the military option in Karamoja.

The 2001–02 disarmament initiative: important lessons unlearned

The ostensible aims of the 2001–02 initiative were to conduct disarmament in conjunction with the provision of state security for Karimojong communities and incentives for the surrender of weapons.

Communities were promised permanent barracks along the borders, security roads,¹⁰⁰ and better investment in security forces, all with the intention of deterring attacks by neighbouring clans. These considerations were made in light of previous, uneven disarmament initiatives that had resulted in raids by armed clans against those who had been disarmed. People were also offered material and financial rewards for surrendering their weapons.¹⁰¹

The two months of voluntary disarmament were undoubtedly successful in some communities. Given the promise of material incentives and increases in security, communities reportedly surrendered around 10,000 weapons between 2001 and 2003 (Uganda, 2005a).¹⁰² It is safe to conclude that a mixture of government engagement from the highest levels, combined with the promise of rewards for disarmament, was responsible for these initial successes.

These gains were, however, overshadowed by deep flaws in the initiative. Arguably, the two-month voluntary phase—which included concomitant (not prior) sensitization efforts—was too short a period of time for people to accept disarmament and realize its benefits. Moreover, it is doubtful that the majority of those targeted for disarmament gained anything in return. Security roads were never constructed, the main force of the UPDF was redeployed to northern Uganda, and LDU members deserted, leaving disarmed communities unprotected. Furthermore, the incentives that had been promised were compromised by poor distribution, and material benefits were diverted from their rightful recipients to other parties (Uganda, 2005a, pp. 8–9).

These failings were compounded when the government launched the forcible disarmament phase of the initiative on 15 February 2002—only two months after the start of the voluntary initiative. The short time frame arguably displayed a lack of understanding among government decision makers as to the depth of Karamoja's insecurity. It did not respect the critical role that

small arms play in defending communities, nor the length of time it would take to implement even modest improvements in people's security.

In addition, the forcible approach to disarmament was characteristic of many regional governments' approaches to pastoralist communities—arguably based on the premise that pastoralists shun 'modern' livelihoods and deliberately impede development and the exercise of state control. As a result, exasperated government responses have often been heavy-handed and have tended to focus on muscular short-term actions, rather than deep-seated, long-term efforts to address underlying sources of conflict.

The second phase of the 2001–02 initiative arguably demonstrated a deep frustration that higher authorities in the Ugandan government felt towards the Karimojong. Military operations launched in 2002 included a number of tactics, including the shooting on sight of persons found with guns along the road, and cordoning off and searching villages and kraals where firearms were suspected to be present. Again, the complementary security provision by state forces was notably weak, and the government later noted the 'existence of widespread disdain towards forceful disarmament, which is likely to lead to violent clashes between the army and warriors' (Uganda, 2005a, p. 10).

2001–02 in retrospect: revised views on disarmament?

Taken as a whole, the 2001–02 initiative could be summarized as a wasted opportunity—an initiative that appeared to make considerable gains that were later eroded by government's failure to live up to its promises and the population's negative reactions to forcible disarmament. But the initiative also stood as a valuable lesson: the population had initially been responsive to concerted sensitization by high-level government and the promise of material and security benefits.

This lesson was reinforced by the failure of sporadic, forcible disarmament approaches, which continued into 2004. Viewed against later forcible disarmament failures, the 2001–02 voluntary approach appeared comparatively successful and appeared to indicate a potential way to resolve Karamoja's insecurity through a heavy focus on development and security-enhancing strategies run in parallel with disarmament.

Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), for instance, noted the government's 'participatory and sensitive approach to disarmament in Karamoja in 2001–2', which it ranked alongside improvements in the independence of the judiciary and the role of community service (Uganda, 2005b, p. 118). The PEAP promised a more holistic approach to Karamoja, stating: 'Government's approach to this problem will combine an ongoing effort to encourage the surrender of weapons in the context of regional small arms control with actions to support the development of Karamoja' (Uganda, 2005b, p. 103).¹⁰³

There appeared to be growing support among the international community, civilian government agencies, civil society, and development partners for a broader and more integrated focus on voluntary approaches to disarmament as an alternative to the military operations of the past. The 2004 Uganda National Action Plan (NAP) on Small Arms and Light Weapons (Uganda, 2004, pp. 16–17) also noted the importance of integrating weapons collection with broader peace-building activities. In particular, it stressed the importance of securing community buy-in through sensitization campaigns, providing security to the civilian population, and offering incentives for individuals to surrender weapons. One strong conclusion within the NAP was that '[a]n appropriate balance needs to be struck between the levying of sanctions and the provision of incentives to encourage surrender of [small arms and light weapons]' (Uganda, 2004, p. 17).

The initial stages of the 2001–02 initiatives appear to have been influential in changing opinions among key stakeholders¹⁰⁴ and in prompting a renewed initiative to promote peace and security in Karamoja.

KIDDP: slow consensus, stagnation, and collapse¹⁰⁵

The Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme was arguably the culmination of many shifts in thinking prompted by the 2001–02 initiative. It was developed in accordance with the aspirations of Pillar Three of the PEAP and was closely linked to the Uganda NAP (Uganda, 2006a). The

initial document was drafted in 2004–05, with implementation scheduled to run between 2005 and 2008, and had a projected budget of around USD 23 million.¹⁰⁶ Its development was based upon the premise that the provision of community security and development (with a focus on alternative livelihoods) were necessary prerequisites to voluntary disarmament.

However, confusion around the nature and status of the KIDDP framework (and an apparent lack of enthusiasm among the highest levels of the Ugandan government) would lead to the demise of the initiative before its finalization or implementation. These factors, combined with unconnected military-led forcible disarmament operations, which further damaged the KIDDP process, curtailed even ad hoc¹⁰⁷ attempts to support peace-building and development in Karamoja. Donors distanced themselves from KIDDP after forcible disarmament operations were launched in 2006, but the reason for the malaise—notably, references to forcible disarmament in KIDDP—was insufficient political planning before 2005.

While it is difficult to comment on the efficacy of a proposal that was never implemented, it is worth unpacking some of the debates behind KIDDP, for the benefit of future initiatives. It is also important to reflect on the apparent reasons why KIDDP was essentially rejected in favour of—or at the very least pre-empted by—the military-led forcible disarmament operations that continued into 2007.

Although described as a programme, KIDDP is better conceived as a roughly sketched plan¹⁰⁸ of potential types of intervention to promote peace and security in the region and facilitate disarmament. It was first published by the Office of the Prime Minister as a working paper entitled the *Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme* in June 2005 (Uganda, 2005a). The preliminary document, as it stood, required further development and clarity, but was premised on voluntary approaches to disarmament, the provision of community security, and the development of alternative livelihoods. As such, it was probably the most comprehensive and thoughtful proposal for reducing armed insecurity to have been targeted at Karamoja—and, for a time, appeared to correspond to a cessation of military solutions in the region. Its recommendations included, but were not limited to:

1. undertaking stakeholder (Karimojong) mobilization and sensitization to KIDDP, and disarmament contained therein;
2. establishment of a community-based security system to ensure security for people and property (notably cattle);
3. the voluntary disarmament of communities whose security has been ensured by the above provisions, with livelihood incentives;
4. support for the development of alternative means of livelihood to discourage the absolute reliance on cattle in the region; and
5. enhancing coordination and monitoring of the progress of peace-building initiatives and the efficacy of KIDDP (Uganda, 2005a).

That said, KIDDP remained uncompleted and contradictory in places, and many donors and NGOs had effectively relegated it to a non-working draft, given its lack of development and formal launch by the government.¹⁰⁹ This initial draft exemplified the tensions between donor/NGO views and those of other stakeholders on how disarmament should be undertaken. For example, the first published draft of the plan, released in June 2005, made reference to forceful approaches to be taken by the UPDF against those that did not participate in voluntary disarmament or preyed upon communities, which, given past events, was unpalatable to the donor community.

In fact, this first KIDDP document was particularly unclear as to what exactly could justify forcible disarmament. On the one hand, the document asserted that the UPDF would only resort to 'military operations for forceful disarmament, when it becomes completely unavoidable (for example in case of a raid) and mainly in the long-term' (Uganda, 2005a, p. 24). On the other hand, the document also made at least two unqualified assertions that forcible disarmament would be conducted to 'collect weapons from persons who refuse to voluntarily disarm' (Uganda, 2005a, pp. xii, 56).

Other questions arose, including the overall intentions of the proposal, management and capacity limitations, whether KIDDP represented a government-wide position or not (which in retrospect appears not to have), and concerns over arming of local defence groups by government (Uganda, 2005a, p. 69).¹¹⁰ All of these issues suggested that, in 2005, there had been little feasibility assessment on the part of the drafters of the document, and that donor and

non-government stakeholders' monitoring and diagnostics at this stage were sub-optimal.¹¹¹

Despite the fact that these inconsistencies were in writing, donors and NGOs among the stakeholders clearly believed that the plan should rest only on voluntary disarmament and deal *first* with the long-term causes of insecurity and underdevelopment in the region. A subsequent May 2006 information note, published by the Office of the Prime Minister with the backing of other stakeholders, noted a core principle of KIDDP: 'Weapons collection is a voluntary process' (Uganda, 2006a, p. 1). Importantly, it also referred to KIDDP as a 'plan' and not a 'programme'—reportedly a deliberate attempt by some non-government stakeholders to emphasize that KIDDP was by no means finalized, that the previous (2005) document had inconsistencies, and that KIDDP was still subject to considerable refinement.¹¹²

Such contradictions in KIDDP publications—notably those over voluntary vs. forcible disarmament—were symptomatic of deep disagreement among stakeholders. The confusion led, essentially, to the fragmentation and ultimate irrelevance of the initiative. KIDDP might have provided an evolving plan for substantially diffusing the security complex in Karamoja, but months after its initial drafting, discussions began to stagnate and become less frequent. In the first months of 2006, the (2005-published) document, which was by now outdated, had still not been revised, and many inconsistencies were still under discussion.

The UPDF, which had been brought into the early KIDDP planning process on a consultative basis—and as a future implementing partner—then reportedly began to draw back from discussions in early 2006.¹¹³ Parties to the process attributed a lack of engagement on the part of the UPDF, as well as others, to the busy presidential election period in the first quarter of 2006, with some asserting that the discussion itself did not enjoy widespread support among key stakeholder groups. Some parties requested that the government clarify its position publicly, including at the highest levels. However, different government departments appear to have been divided as to how to approach the region. The document was not formally launched, so the various views of government and other actors were never formalized.

Progress thus inevitably faltered, due to an apparent lack of high-level

government buy-in, vying positions on potential approaches by groups of stakeholders, and a lack of consensus and clarification on the sequencing of the elements contained within KIDDP, all of which hindered support for KIDDP's further development and eventual implementation. Some stakeholders by this point therefore began to rethink engagement and restructure projects in, or proposed for, the region to better reflect the confused policy and operational environment in Karamoja.¹¹⁴

Nevertheless, some assistance for the region continued unabated until the security situation worsened (see below), including needs assessments, targeted mediation/reconciliation efforts, capacity building for local stakeholders, modest-sized development projects (largely focused on improving infrastructure), and initial awareness-raising and consultations on peaceful approaches to disarmament. These would have been supported even in the absence of any KIDDP framework discussion, on a piecemeal basis, so little change in support to the region can be registered during this period. However, because of continued confusion around the emerging KIDDP approach, development partners found it increasingly difficult to operate.

Donors undertook some activities to inform and revive the debate, such as capacity building of civilian parts of government (in effect to strengthen technical capacity in the Karamoja region), some initial research, meetings and consultations in affected districts of the region, and a few targeted workshops on themes such as community-based security. These activities could not, however, substitute for stakeholder agreement on the KIDDP framework.¹¹⁵ KIDDP was thus seen to be adding to the confusion in the region on overall strategies and coordination, and was fast becoming more of a liability than a benefit to Karamoja.

While KIDDP stagnated due to a lack of political support and clarity, a parallel (albeit unconnected) initiative was in the pipeline—another round of military-led forcible disarmament operations.

Unconnected forcible disarmament operations: the last nail in the coffin for KIDDP

In May 2006 stakeholders active in the region and participating in the KIDDP debate were alerted to renewed UPDF 'cordon and search' disarmament operations in Karamoja, from reports by donor project staff, civil society, and the local media. As a result, donors and development partners postponed many scheduled peace-building and development interventions and, given the then impossible operational environment, ceased discussing any future voluntary weapons collection process. Focus instead turned to dialogue and advocacy, community-level development projects, and increasing levels of humanitarian assistance.

Non-government stakeholders that were opposed to the military operation pursued a number of avenues, including conditioning potential future support for a KIDDP exercise on the immediate cessation of forcible disarmament.¹¹⁶ A report issued by the Donor Technical Group on Northern Uganda and Human Rights Working Group on 1 June 2006 noted the fundamental incompatibility between the activities proposed and being developed under KIDDP and the forcible disarmament operations conducted by the UPDF, stating:

Forceful disarmament in the form of cordon and search operations in April/May 2006 resulted in 80 guns collected, 11 people killed, 5 injuries and 110 arrests. These ... operations, where males are taken from villages to the barracks, makes [sic] the implementation of KIDDP impossible, put staff working with communities at heightened risk of reprisals, and curtails [sic] the ability of the donor community to assist the KIDDP initiative overall. (DTG NARC, 2006a, p. 1; original emphasis)

Calls from concerned development partners, NGOs, members of parliament and civil society groups for the cessation of UPDF activities and the resurrection of (discussions around) a comprehensive framework for the region, premised on voluntary disarmament, continued into mid-2006 and sporadically thereafter. Two formal donor and NGO meetings were convened in the first half of June to agree on a common position regarding the new situation

and to formally convey the international community's concerns regarding the UPDF operation to the Ugandan government at the highest levels (DTG NARC, 2006b). Protests by other stakeholders continued throughout 2006. UNICEF, for instance, criticized human rights violations in the forcible disarmament operations and made a public statement to the effect that the government should show commitment to KIDDP's emphasis on voluntary disarmament (*New Vision*, 2006b).

However, participants to the KIDDP process report that failure to resolve the situation from May to June 2006, and the diminishing prospects of a change in the de facto government approach, prompted many to disengage from the process. These factors also led to a halt in the number of consultations and peace-related development projects planned for the region, as donors withdrew budgets in light of continued military operations and the consequently increasing irrelevance of these ad hoc efforts.¹¹⁷

Despite this, in November 2006, the Office of the Prime Minister expressed interest in reviving KIDDP discussions, recognizing the impact of forcible disarmament and failings in the existing plan (Uganda, 2006b). A revised draft of the 2005 KIDDP document was published in January 2007. This initiative may have been introduced to offset the widespread domestic and international criticism that the forcible disarmament initiatives incurred during 2006 and into 2007. Importantly, the revised document contained no reference to forcible disarmament in its planned activities (Uganda, 2007) and was approved by cabinet in September 2007.

Whether or not a KIDDP-type approach can be salvaged remains to be seen. Forcible disarmament operations continued during the drafting of the document and were ongoing at the end of 2007. It is, as yet, unclear whether there is sufficient political will at the highest levels in Ugandan government—of the kind that was absent in 2005–06—to refine and implement KIDDP, although its readoption by cabinet in September may indicate that some quarters of government are keen to push through the initiative.

One thing is clear, however. The population of Karamoja is today so sensitized to the negativities of recent forcible disarmament initiatives that it is unlikely that disarmament will be palatable to most communities in the near future. ■

VIII. The painful truth about disarmament

One conclusion to be drawn from the case of Karamoja and its many failed disarmament initiatives is that disarmament without alternative security provision is untenable. Forcible disarmament may be a necessary last resort in cases where the minority hold weapons and threaten to spoil an emerging peace. But in cases where the majority of communities are armed, and that majority enjoys no security other than by virtue of being armed, disarmament can become a highly destabilizing factor—one that escalates armed violence.

Faced with the fact that the Government of Uganda does not have the capacity to disarm warring groups simultaneously—and this is the case for all states in the region—inconsistent disarmament appears to do more to upset the stability of the region than no disarmament at all. A balance of power, upheld with small arms, is often all that stands between a community's tenuous hold on subsistence and being raided to destitution by neighbouring groups.

Karamoja currently has no viable police force. Its auxiliary security forces, including LDUs and local administrative police, are largely confined to the towns. Security forces, in general, cannot patrol and enforce the law due to a lack of mobility, and of the will to become embroiled in Karamoja's deadly inter-communal conflicts. The kraals and the bush pastures have been the battlegrounds for many decades, and they remain unpoliced.

Recent UPDF operations have proved that piecemeal actions to secure weapons and apprehend warriors have contributed negatively to insecurity in the region and have also brought violence into the towns and villages. They have done little or nothing to improve community security on a daily basis or to protect communities from raiders.

A painful truth that runs to the heart of the international community's pre-occupation with disarmament initiatives is that there is no quick fix to a situation such as this. Security provision at the local level is a long-term process. Its roots lie in the reorganization, remuneration, and retraining of the security

sector. Its success rests on sustained investment in regions that have to date escaped a fair share of government investment.

Given that the region is awash with weapons and ammunition—and that the supply of arms and ammunition is continually fed both from within and outside the state—arms reduction strategies that do not address the fundamental precipitates of armed violence appear doomed to failure. Disarmament in this setting is an end, and not a means to resolve Karamoja's problems. ■

IX. Conclusion

Without a structured plan for increasing community security in Karamoja, there is very little prospect for effectively disarming pastoral groups in the near future. While the current use of the UPDF to disarm the Karimojong continues, tensions are likely to remain high between civilians and the army. The prospect of larger-scale conflict breaking out is very real. As a result, small arms are likely to continue to play a primary role for communities that seek to protect themselves from a host of threats.

Past initiatives clearly demonstrate that pure disarmament cannot come before the provision of adequate security by the state of Uganda. In the short term, this means the protection of communities and cattle from raids by rival groups of warriors or from economically motivated crime. In the long term, it means the provision of police forces that are able, not only to resolve crime, but to mediate disputes before they escalate.

Arguably, one future danger is the persistence of short-term policies directed to the region—ones that are built either on incomplete assessments of the nature of the insecurity that exists in the region or desperate measures born out of frustration at the escalating crisis there. This is not a problem for Uganda alone.

Governments and international agencies alike often tend to focus on pastoral systems *themselves* as being fundamentally incompatible with the structure of the modern state system.¹¹⁸ There is consequently a tendency to frame conflict-reduction and development interventions—however nascent—in terms of a drastic reordering of the modes of production (Steen, 1994), rather than attempting to fix failings in the system. But, while the system in Karamoja may be gravely malfunctioning, to attempt to replace it would be unwise on several counts.

First, pastoralism is not the result of marginalization, but rather of the optimization of previously inaccessible resources. Most of Karamoja's range-

land is not suited to agriculture, and it is doubtful whether the population of Karamoja could exist on the limited land that is suited to farming. Second, pastoral groups interact with the market on many different levels. In Karamoja, the criminal linkages between pastoralism and the economy are clear evidence of this, and are an indication that the state has a role to play in encouraging better integration of pastoral modes of production into the national economy. Third, and most importantly, if the state views such drastic changes as necessary, the enormity of implementing these policies is likely to deter any meaningful interventions. The failure of every alternative livelihood component within KIDDP is a prime example.

The result, as in the past, is likely to be short-term policies directed at addressing the symptoms of the region's problems—such as numbers of weapons—rather than structural reasons for conflict, such as marginalization, poverty, and scarcity. All of these observations suggest the need for a well-developed, long-term plan for increasing security in Karamoja; one that reflects the needs of communities and will not be the work of one or two years.

Above all, Karamoja needs to receive adequate government attention. Its roads, towns, and people all exemplify neglect by central authority. As a result, in the eyes of many Karimojong, the army's use of force is the only role the government plays in their lives. The government needs to restore the confidence of the people of Karamoja if it is to begin to address armed violence, insecurity, and underdevelopment in the region. ■

Endnotes

- 1 Karamoja currently comprises five districts, namely Abim, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, and Nakapiripirit. In July 2007, Abim District was created by taking Labwor County from Kotido District. This study included field research, key informant interviews, and household surveys in four Karamoja districts—Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, and Nakapiripirit—between 2005 and 2007. At the time of the survey and focus groups, Abim District was still a part of Kotido.
- 2 Sometimes referred to as 'agro-pastoral'.
- 3 Focus group research conducted in Kaabong District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 4 Author's interviews with Jie warriors, northern Kotido District, May, June, and September 2006.
- 5 Focus group research conducted in Kotido District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 6 See, for example, Borzello (2001) and Mirzeler and Young (2000).
- 7 The same survey was administered in 35 districts of Uganda.
- 8 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 9 Focus group research conducted in Kotido District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 10 Field interviews conducted among the Karimojong, Turkana, and Toposa, 2006–07.
- 11 There is some consensus that people have been prompted into the pastoral mode of production by opportunity, rather than impelled by scarcity and competition. One of the most recent examples of a shift from sedentary to pastoral existence occurred among the Saraguro people of Ecuador, who, during the early 20th century, shifted from agro-pastoralism to take advantage of economic benefits, in what some commentators have described as a relatively smooth transition. See Stewart, Belote, and Belote (1976).
- 12 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 13 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 14 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 15 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 16 Author's interviews with district officials in Kotido and Kaabong Districts, September 2006.
- 17 Author's research in Kotido town, May, June, and September 2006; focus group research conducted in Kaabong District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 18 The same is true of many pastoral regions. Police in the Turkana region of Kenya suffer similar constraints on mobility (researcher's interviews in Karamoja and Turkana, 2006 and 2007).
- 19 Pastoral regions, by virtue of their peripheral status, are often used as buffer zones against foreign incursion. See, for instance, Mburu (2003, p. 3) on the role of the Dassenach on the Ethiopia–Kenya border.

- 20 Across the region, security is generally perceived as relating to the use of force (i.e. violence). Likewise, insecurity is viewed as threats derived from the use of force. The concept of a multiplicity of factors within the 'human security paradigm' is largely absent from most people's conception of insecurity in pastoral regions (author's field research among the Karimojong, Turkana, and Toposa, 2006–07).
- 21 The immediate locality, in this case, was defined as the LC₁—the smallest administrative division in Uganda.
- 22 The northern region comprises the districts of Apac, Gulu, Kitgum, Lira, and Pader.
- 23 The majority of LRA attacks on civilians involve knives and agricultural implements, and result in few deaths and injuries, despite the LRA's hallmark massacres. See *Small Arms Survey* (2006, p. 279).
- 24 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006; author's research conducted in various Dodoth and Jie villages, northern Kotido and southern Kaabong Districts, May, June, and September 2006.
- 25 Mkutu (2007a, p. 42) records 7,751 deaths and injuries.
- 26 Calculation from hospital and clinic data, presented in tabular format by Mkutu (2007a, p. 42).
- 27 For a comparison of wounded and killed ratios from conflict and non-conflict settings, see Coupland and Meddings (1999, p. 408). A wounded to killed ratio of 20:1 in Karamoja is comparable in scale only to injuries sustained by low velocity bullets by British military personnel in Northern Ireland (27:8). By contrast, the wounded to killed ratio for high velocity bullets sustained in Northern Ireland was 2:2. British soldiers had relatively rapid access to medical care, which is not the case in most instances of violence in Karamoja. Other comparative examples include: Croatia 5:2 (Former Yugoslavia, 1991–92); Israel 4:5 (Lebanon, 1982); United States 2:7 (Second World War, Italy, 1944–45); and United States 4:1 (Marine Corps, Vietnam, 1964–73).
- 28 Ratios derived from soldiers wounded by high velocity rifles in a military context in Malaya and Northern Ireland (1:9 and 2:2, respectively), compiled by Coupland and Meddings (1999, p. 408).
- 29 Data compiled from 2002 census data for Kotido (596,130), Moroto (170,506), and Nakapiripirit (153,862) Districts. In 2002, both Abim and Kaabong Districts were part of Kotido District. Data available from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (<<http://www.ubos.org>>).
- 30 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 31 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 32 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 33 Author's interviews and focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 34 Focus group research conducted in Kotido District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 35 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 36 Telephone interview with Michael McNulty, UN security adviser for Uganda, 12 September 2007.
- 37 Statement by UNICEF representative Keith McKenzie, cited in CISA (2007).
- 38 See, for example, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' consoli-

dated appeal for 2007 (UNOCHA, 2006, p. 8), which notes: 'Karamoja did not adequately feature in previous [consolidated appeals processes], hence the need to advocate for specific and improved protection, access to services, and emergency preparedness and response in the sub-region, based on improved analysis of the region's vulnerability.'

39 Most Karimojong make a firm distinction between civilians and warriors.

40 From a purely political perspective, the Sudan link is significant. There is some justification for claiming that arms in Karamoja are at least partially the result of 'blow-back' from Uganda's aid to the SPLA. Uganda supported the SPLA with shipments of arms and ammunition from around 1997 to 2002 (Small Arms Survey, 2006, p. 275).

41 Focus group research conducted in Kaabong District of Karamoja, July 2006.

42 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.

43 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.

44 Confidential interview with a knowledgeable source, Gulu, Uganda, 25 May 2005.

45 Karamoja was the only region in Uganda to generate large numbers of accurate responses on the price of small arms. The survey was designed in such a way as to eliminate 'uninformed' price estimation by using an 'expertise qualification'. During the household survey, respondents were presented with colour images of weapons, including pistols and revolvers, a Kalashnikov derivative assault rifle, a G3 rifle, and an SKS carbine. The Kalashnikov-pattern rifle is the most common assault rifle in the region, but SKS carbines and handguns are relatively rare. G3s are almost non-existent. Respondents' answers reflected this. The vast majority could not estimate the cost of the three rarer weapons, but were able to estimate the price of Kalashnikov-pattern weapons. This method was therefore designed to: 1) include only respondents that were familiar enough with Kalashnikov-pattern weapons to know how much they cost; and 2) to ensure that responses were therefore not random, but informed (i.e. otherwise there would have been responses for the other weapons).

46 This and all subsequent US dollar values related to the Ugandan shilling are based on the exchange rate on 9 June 2007.

47 Focus group research conducted in Kaabong District of Karamoja, July 2006.

48 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.

49 Author's interviews in Kotido and Kaabong Districts, September 2006.

50 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.

51 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.

52 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.

53 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.

54 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.

55 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.

56 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.

57 The UPDF (2007a) claims a figure of 30,000 weapons. As Mkutu (2007b) notes, most estimates range from 40,000 to 80,000 with some (media) suggesting as many as 200,000.

58 Author's research conducted in Kotido and Kaabong Districts, September 2006.

59 Briefing note and conversation with Michael Lokuwua at the Centre for Conflict Resolution, September 2006.

- 60 Author's interview with a knowledgeable source, Kampala, September 2006.
- 61 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 62 Focus group research conducted in Kaabong District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 63 For a more detailed account of the abuse of the population, see HRW (2007).
- 64 Author's research conducted in Kotido District, September 2006.
- 65 Focus group research conducted in Kotido District of Karamoja, July 2006
- 66 Focus group research conducted in Kotido District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 67 Confidential interviews conducted by the author, Kotido District, September 2006.
- 68 UNHCHR (2007a, pp. 18–22); list of names of dead and injured provided by a confidential source; email and telephone correspondence with a confidential source, February–June 2007.
- 69 The Ugandan Ministry of Defence and UPDF responded to the UNHCHR report with the following text: 'No complaints of destruction of property, death, or grave human rights abuse have been registered by police, UPDF or any other authority in the region. This is because those killed are found in the wilderness where there are no other members of the community. It is unbelievable therefore that such a magnitude of violations given by the report could have escaped the attention of the military command in the region or the political leadership in the sub-region' (Uganda, 2007b).
- 70 Focus group research conducted in Kotido District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 71 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 72 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 73 The warriors usually dress differently to hide the fact that they are warriors when they do approach communities where UPDF personnel may be stationed.
- 74 Local government officials report small discrepancies, such as 15 weapons reported recovered by the UPDF in one incident, when the number was closer to 40. On aggregate, these small variations may amount to a significant number of weapons unaccounted for (according to the author's research conducted in Kotido and Kaabong Districts, September 2006).
- 75 Confidential interviews conducted in Karamoja by the author, May, June, and September 2006.
- 76 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 77 Telephone interview with a knowledgeable source, Kotido District, 3 October 2006.
- 78 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 79 Focus group research conducted in Kaabong District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 80 Focus group research conducted in Kaabong District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 81 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 82 Research conducted by the author, May, June, and September 2006.
- 83 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 84 The same was largely true of opinions about owning a gun when disaggregated by age group. Responses that suggested it was dangerous to own a gun far outweighed those who believed it had protective value for all age groups, with the exception of youth (17 years and under), where responses were equal.
- 85 Focus group research conducted in Kaabong District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 86 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.

- 87 Focus group research conducted in Kaabong District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 88 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 89 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 90 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 91 Confidential interviews conducted by the author, August 2006 and June 2007.
- 92 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 93 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 94 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 95 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 96 Focus group research conducted in Moroto District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 97 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 98 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 99 Focus group research conducted in Nakapiripirit District of Karamoja, July 2006.
- 100 Roads designed to facilitate the rapid response of security forces to raids against communities by hostile parties.
- 101 Incentives were supposed to include an ox plough and a bag of maize for all individuals who handed in weapons. In addition, these individuals were supposed to gain priority in accessing funds from poverty eradication schemes. Kraal leaders who encouraged voluntary disarmament were also supposed to be allocated 40 iron sheets for the construction of permanent housing (Uganda, 2005a, p. 7).
- 102 It is worth noting that around 8,000 of these weapons were reportedly reissued to LDUs and militias, such as the anti-stock theft units. The state retains little control over these weapons, which suggests that the balance of weapons removed from society is more in the realms of 2,000 units (Uganda, 2005a, p. 8).
- 103 Critically, the PEAP notes both voluntary and ‘enforced’ (Uganda, 2005b, p. 102) disarmament, but does not comment on the efficacy of either approach. While the document places heavy emphasis on sensitization, development, and community partnerships, it remains little more than an overview of various possible approaches rather than a plan of action. The parallels between the PEAP and KIDDP are obvious—both documents were, to greater or lesser extents, intended to be the touchstone of donor support and the framework for programmes. In both cases, there is some claim to be made that neither is an adequate basis for programme design and funding.
- 104 Major stakeholders in the evolving debate over Karamoja—notably KIDDP—included the Office of the Prime Minister, the Office of the President, the Uganda National Focal Point on Small Arms, various Ugandan line ministries, civil society organizations, NGOs, and donors (the European Union, the Danish International Development Agency—DANIDA, Ireland, and the UN Development Programme—UNDP).
- 105 This section is based on a review of publicly available documentation related to the development of KIDDP, together with a number of interviews with involved stakeholders.
- 106 Donors funded very little of the USD 23 million. For example, UNDP allocated USD 1 million for the initial stages of KIDDP. When UNDP halted its operations in Karamoja in June 2006, just under USD 300,000 had been spent; see Associated Press (2006). The production and formulation of the 2005 KIDDP document was funded by the Human Rights and Democrati-

- zation Programme of DANIDA; see KIDDP document (Uganda, 2005a, p. iii).
- 107 'Ad hoc' in this context refers to initiatives launched irrespective of the KIDDP framework.
- 108 From the perspective of the donor community, the 'programme' was conceived more as a plan or framework encompassing much ongoing and planned-for work on development and peace-building. Interviews suggest that members of the donor community believed that the programme could not be implemented without considerable refinement and, as such, was unlikely to attract further direct funding (according to confidential interviews with a knowledgeable source).
- 109 Given the scale of the proposed programme, the absence of a formal launch could be interpreted as an indicator of minimal buy-in to KIDDP at the top levels of government.
- 110 Confidential interview with a knowledgeable source.
- 111 These fundamental inconsistencies raise wider concerns about the wisdom of investing in initiatives without adequate evaluation of whether there is political will at the appropriate levels to implement them. The fact that KIDDP was published in June 2005 while still containing multiple references to forcible disarmament and the rearmament of quasi-governmental militias (Uganda, 2005a, p. 69) suggests that donor monitoring and evaluation were minimal once initial funding for the planning process had been transferred to the Office of the Prime Minister. Some interpretations suggest that non-government stakeholders at first believed that KIDDP, while flawed, could be refined into a vehicle with which to launch development and peace-building initiatives. When the discussions stagnated, the issue of flaws in the document—i.e. forcible disarmament and the arming of militias—was simply viewed as irrelevant, due to the failure of the initiative, and hence there was no concerted effort to revise the document (according to a confidential interview with a knowledgeable source).
- 112 Confidential interview with a knowledgeable source.
- 113 Confidential interview with a knowledgeable source.
- 114 Confidential interview with a knowledgeable source.
- 115 The precise modes of voluntary weapons collection, which most development partners and NGOs were pushing for in order to pre-empt another round of military operations, were as yet untested and defined. UNDP had agreed to budget USD 100,000 for a small pilot project, to be launched in the second half of 2006, to further clarify necessary steps and demonstrate the approach. However, the pilot was overtaken by events and was neither designed nor realized.
- 116 Confidential interviews with stakeholders.
- 117 UNDP, for instance, halted its operations in Karamoja due to a 'continuing difficult security situation and concerns about Ugandan military operations in the area' (Associated Press, 2006).
- 118 This is despite the fact that the pastoral mode of production has traditionally been very closely linked to the economies of sedentary populations; see Blench (2001).

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