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Sidonia Angom

# Women in Peacemaking and Peacebuilding in Northern Uganda



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# Women in Peacemaking and Peacebuilding in Northern Uganda



Sidonia Angom  
Constituent College of Agriculture  
Gulu University  
Moroto, Karamoja  
Uganda

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Cover photo: The photo on the book cover shows a child soldier © New Vision Printing that has granted on 26 April 2017 permission to use it here.

The photo on page iii shows child abduction as the main method of recruitment by the LRA (1986–2006). Children as young as six were seized from their homes and schools and turned into soldiers and/or sexual slaves. Many were taken to bases in Southern Sudan, where they received basic military training. They were subsequently sent back to Uganda to fight, loot and kill (New Vision) © New Vision Printing. Permission to use this photo was granted by Betty Musoke on 26 April 2017.

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*For*  
*Sarah Amollo Apaja-Opio and*  
*Michael Apaja-Opio (RIP),*  
*Bradford Robbster Ochieng,*  
*Brenda Mary Apio, Brian Ogenrwoth Karar*  
*and Bruce Rwotomio Karar*



This was a typical IDP camp of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) in northern Uganda (1986–2006). In such camps, two-thirds of those displaced were women and children who experienced hardships especially hunger. Basic needs such as clean water, sanitation and education for the children were not sufficient, and health facilities were also inadequate. Men carried out roles that were socially known as women's roles, and likewise women carried out men's roles. *Source* New Vision. Permission to use this photograph was granted by Betty Musoke on 26 April 2017



Girls as young as 12 years of age were forced into doing multiple and demanding tasks like serving as primary or secondary wives to commanders. They were routinely raped and made to produce children. These are considered the only 'pure Acholi', Kony's future army of child soldiers. At the time of writing (September 2014), many more such child mothers are still returning home from Central African Republic (CAR), where they have been in captivity. *Source* New Vision. Permission to use this photograph was granted by Betty Musoke on 26 April 2017

# Preface

Approximately 1.8 million people in northern Uganda were internally displaced during the conflict between the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels (1986–2006). Based on extensive fieldwork, this study was carried out in the Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts of northern Uganda (2009–2016) to examine and assess women's contribution to peacemaking and the peacebuilding process. Local communities, civil society organisations and Government of Uganda bureaucrats were consulted through individual interviews and focus group discussions. Archival work was undertaken at the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at Makerere University, Isis-WICCE resource centre and several university libraries.

Studies and reports indicate that women as well as men have identified causes of conflict and used negotiations and dialogue as a means of conflict resolution. Despite the strong acknowledgement that the involvement of women in peace processes enhances the chances of achieving sustainable peace, the author of this book believes that the northern Uganda experience did not strongly portray the engagement of women as full partners in the peace processes. She argues that the initiatives and strategies of women were largely scattered, inadequately documented and not well known. Women's efforts in setting and influencing the agenda for peace in many societies have generally been treated as a 'token' of goodwill and not as a significant cornerstone in the peace processes (see Chaps. 2 and 3 of this book). She argues that women's role in the northern Uganda conflict has not been an exception to this observation and has asked questions such as: *Must this level of intellectual indifference and ignorance be allowed to persist, especially when one considers the experience of women as victims or sufferers, and their potential contribution to peacemaking and peacebuilding processes?* (See Chap. 4). Based on this, her book has documented women's contributions to the peacemaking and peacebuilding process in northern Uganda 1986–2016.

The study uses gender-sensitive methodologies alongside Lederach's three-tier peacebuilding model, which constituted the theoretical framework within which the study was conducted. Lederach visualises peacebuilding as a process based on conflict as a progression and portrays three categories of actors with different roles,



functions and activities, with the aim of building sustainable peace. The three-tier levels of actors are top elite leadership, middle-range leadership and grass-roots leadership, as illustrated in Chap. 5 of the book (see Fig. 5.1). Thinking of peacebuilding in terms of the framework adapted by the author of this book provided a helpful way to understand and categorise the actors, including women, who participated in the peace processes in northern Uganda. Lederach's framework was modified to include peacemaking as well, since the two concepts are interrelated and usually carried out by the same actors. The modification has also been effected in Chap. 5 of the book (see Fig. 5.2). The gender-sensitive approach was also incorporated because it takes into account the differing needs and interests of women and men, and acknowledges the unequal representation of women in different spheres of life. Indeed, the study was based on the premise that women, as well as men, are essential contributors to peace and conflict-resolution processes and that any efforts towards meaningful 'development' and sustainable 'peace' initiatives must consider women as part of the peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. Ultimately, this is what the author chose to give salience to throughout her book. Women's voices have been considered right from the conceptual level and not just as a source of data.

Significantly, the study found that at the stalemated Juba peace talks in South Sudan in 2006, it was women who presented the Peace Torch to representatives in the conflict, who on that occasion shook hands for the first time ever. At individual, grass-roots and national-level women organised themselves into a civic force and assumed roles as advocates, negotiators, mobilisers and, most importantly, community peacemakers and peacebuilders. These roles were carried out effectively because of a combination of commitment and the willingness of the local communities to end the conflict. Women faced the challenge of conflict by initiating peacebuilding activities in their communities and ensuring the availability of families' basic needs. From civil society organisations, women played critical roles in advocacy, dialogue, negotiation, facilitation, mobilisation and empowerment and in supporting other fellow women in peacemaking and other peacebuilding initiatives.

Women established supportive structures that handled practical issues which were deemed supportive for the resumption of peace in the region. Examples of initiatives and activities started by women included the reception, trauma counselling, rehabilitation and reintegration centres for war-affected children and LRA combatants. Reconciliation and accountability structures were also put in place by women. Initial successes registered by these women's initiatives and the high level of consciousness generated and inspired many more women to create more organisations which epitomised women's dreams of a peaceful region. Major grass-roots community-based organisations formed and created by women included, among others, Gulu Save the Children Organisation (GUSCO), Concerned Parents Association (CPA), People's Voice for Peace (PVP), Kitgum Women Peace Initiative (KIWEPI), Kitgum Concerned Women's Association (KICWA), Christian Children Fellowship (CCF) and many others that the author visited during the study. Some of these initiatives were launch-pads for women to marshal

themselves to participate and seek formal participation during the peace negotiation process in Juba. Discussion and analysis is in Chap. 7 below.

These initiatives by women paved ways for other organisations to be created, and they range from religious- and faith-based groups, traditional institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to human rights groups and community-based self-help groups. Indeed, civil society groups in northern Uganda have provided alternative narratives of the conflict, exposed brutalities against civilians and suggested ideas for peacebuilding. Many of these organisations have lobbied, facilitated negotiations and to date are still engaged in building cultures of peace, the education of ex-combatants and returnees/child mothers, promoting reconciliation efforts, sustaining livelihoods at local level, and influencing and supporting peacebuilding interventions from international sources.

To consolidate the peacebuilding initiatives and interventions, the Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP 1) was launched by the Government of Uganda (GoU) in 2007, and full-scale implementation of it began in 2009 and continued until 2012. Its overall goal was to stabilise northern Uganda and lay a firm foundation for recovery and development. Specifically, the PRDP aim was to promote socio-economic development of the communities of northern Uganda and to bridge the gap between the north and the rest of the country, to enable northern Uganda to achieve 'national average level' in the main socio-economic indicators. The PRDP 1 provided a framework against which all development actors, governmental and non-governmental, were expected to align their interventions in the north. The PRDP 1 covered about 55 districts and nine municipalities in the Greater North that were severely affected by the conflict.

Following a mid-term review of PRDP 1 in June 2011, a number of gaps were identified that affected its effective implementation. One problem was that the programme tried to cover too many variables yet lacked the appropriate resources and authorisation to do so. Such issues were highlighted and recommended as matters for consideration in future programming. Based on these and on the fact that northern Uganda still required affirmative action to catch up with the rest of the country, a second phase of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP 2) was formally approved by the Cabinet in November 2011 and adopted by the PRDP Monitoring Committee (PMC) meeting in December 2011. PRDP 2 was to run for another period of 3 years from July 2012 to June 2015. This has been highlighted and analysed in Chap. 6.

The development of PRDP 1 and PRDP 2 for northern Uganda was an important step for GoU. It was a commendable step and was seen to be a genuine attempt to uphold the Juba negotiations and to launch recovery and reconstruction in northern Uganda. The programme has achieved success in infrastructure growth but has also faced a number of challenges. The challenges are not only related to GoU performance but also stem from donor funding, intentional intervention, NGO emergency relief during the war and issues that relate to the communities as well. Amidst these difficulties, the greatest challenge that emerged from the evidence is lack of genuine political will to implement sustainable recovery and reconstruction in northern Uganda. Time and time again, Uganda national newspapers and reports

were awash with articles highlighting corruption within the Office of the Prime Minister, which affected the major implementation unit and the PRDP framework. As a result, this brought about major reductions in donor funding, as highlighted in Chap. 8 on the PRDP challenges.

Other challenges that the study also noted that pertain to women and other institutional challenges during the peacemaking and peacebuilding processes included the existence of gendered perceptions about the capacity and potential of women in society. This stereotype remains a major barrier to women's participation in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. Women's participation in peace processes is still hampered by constraints such as institutional challenges, intra-class differences, lack of consistency in recognising and defining women's needs, marginalisation of women's capacities and views by peacemakers and peacebuilders, inadequate representation of women in negotiation teams, self-interest, corruption and illiteracy. There were just some of the challenges that affected the full participation of women in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes in northern Uganda.

To play meaningful roles in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes in the future, women and their groups should undergo relevant training in times of peace. It would make women more effective in times of need. The recommendations are made in Chap. 9.

Karamoja, Uganda

Sidonia Angom

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Thank you all.

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Sidonia Angom

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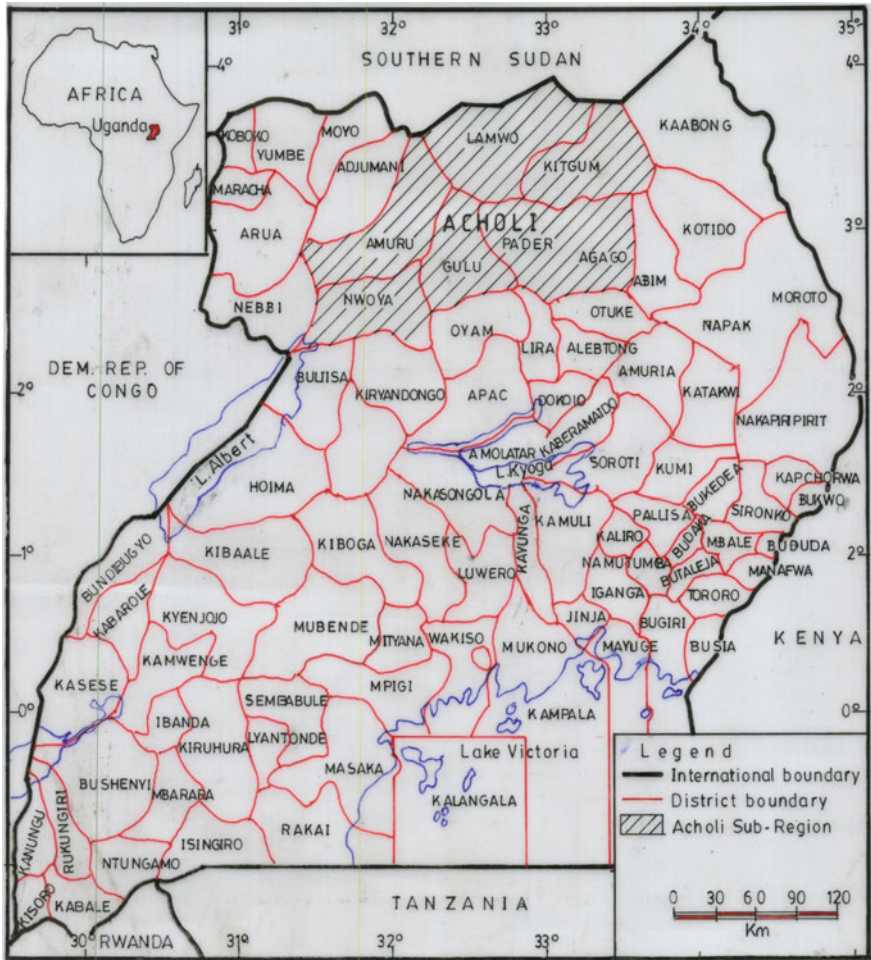


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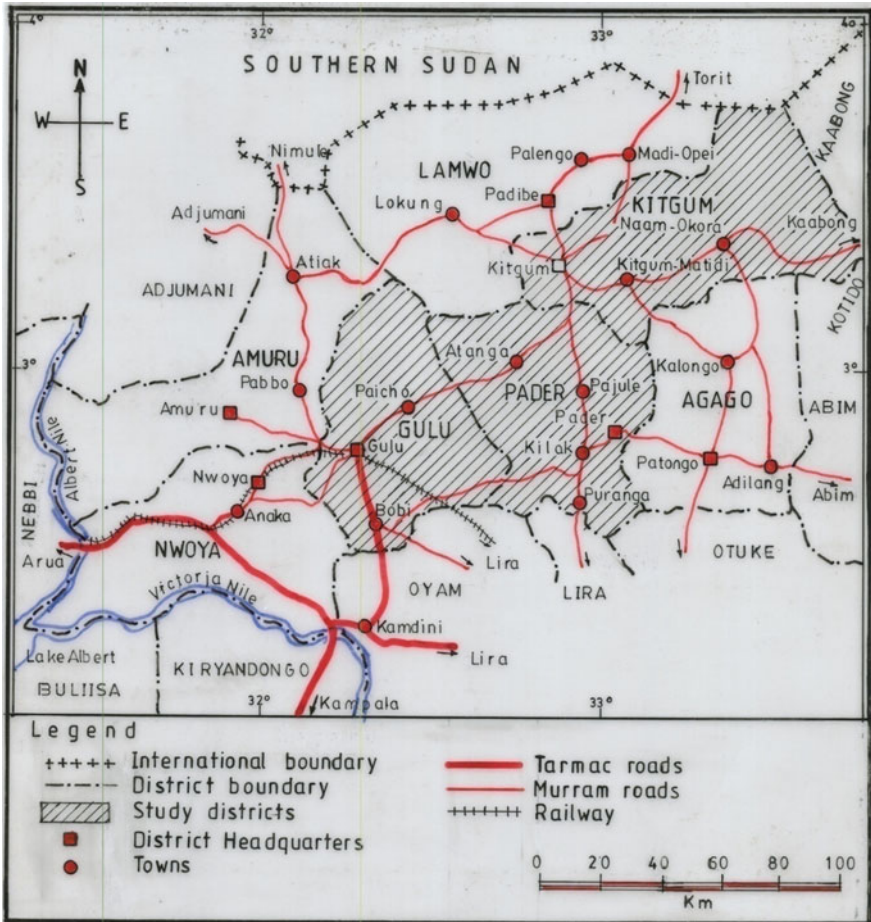
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The study districts of Gulu, Pader and Kitgum in the Acholi Sub-Region. *Source* Uganda Government Districts by 2010



The location of the Acholi Sub-Region. *Source* Uganda Government Districts by 2010

# Abbreviations

ABID	Area-Based Integrated Development Programme
ARLPI	Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative
BRA	Bougainville Revolutionary Army
BRF	Bougainville Resistance Forces
CAP	Community Action Plan
CARE	Carry American Relief Everywhere
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CoH	Cessation of Hostilities
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSOPNU	Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DISO	District Internal Security Officer
DPKO	Department of Peace Keeping Operations
DPT	District Peace Team
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRPT	District Reconciliation Peace Team
ECF	Equatorial Civic Fund
EHAP	Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan
FAC	Formerly Abducted Children
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FEDEMO	Federal Democratic Movement
FIDA	Association of Women Lawyers
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoSS	Government of Southern Sudan
GOU	Government of Uganda
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICG	International Crisis Group

IDA	International Development Association
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
Isis-WICCE	Women International Cross-Cultural Educationalist
JFP	Joint Forum for Peace
KIDDP	Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Plan
KIWEPI	Kitgum Women Peace Initiative
LC	Local Council
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MONUC	United Nations Mission in Congo
NAPW	National Action Plan on Women
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NU	Northern Uganda
NUDC	Northern Uganda Data Centre
NUREP	Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Programme
NURP	Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development with the Development Assistance Committee
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PBC	Peace Building Commission
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRDP	Peace, Recovery and Development Plan
RDC	Residence District Commissioner
SCR	Security Council Resolution
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SWAY	Survey of War Affected Youths
UCDA	Uganda Christian Democratic Army
UDM/A	United Democratic Christian Movement/Army
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific-Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations International Women's Fund
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UNMEEE	United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
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