

Prospects for Addressing Uganda's Small Arms Problem through Security Sector Reform

Sabiiti Mutengesa and Dylan Hendrickson

About this study

This study, commissioned by the Small Arms Survey, situates the donor security sector reform policy debate within a broader historical understanding of the factors that have shaped the evolution of Uganda's security apparatus since the colonial era. Receptiveness to the donor SSR agenda in Uganda has been limited, reflecting the challenges external actors have faced in tailoring their SSR model to the prevailing social, political and institutional circumstances. Three themes are examined: the emergence of the modern Ugandan state in a region beset by persisting conflict and instability; the as yet incomplete process of consolidating state authority and institutions; and a politico-military culture which has entrenched violence as an instrument of political change. These factors have contributed to the emergence of a state security apparatus which - far from being able to exercise a monopoly over the instruments of violence - is at times drawn into political contests, in the process heightening the demand for light weapons.

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Chapter 1

Introduction¹

Improvements in the capacity of the state to provide physical safety to the public in an accountable and effective manner are a vital component of efforts to address small arms proliferation. Under the banner of security sector reform (SSR), there is currently a donor-led drive to encourage partner countries to undertake more comprehensive and integrated programmes of reform in the security domain that are supportive of wider development goals. To date, however, development of the SSR agenda in Uganda has been relatively limited, reflecting the challenges external actors have faced in indigenising their SSR model sufficiently to obtain 'buy-in' from the government and reflect the unique social, political and institutional circumstances which prevail in this country.

This chapter situates the current policy debate on 'security sector' reform within a broader historical understanding of the factors that have shaped the evolution of Uganda's security apparatus since the colonial era. There are three inter-related themes: the emergence of the modern Ugandan state in a region beset by persisting conflict and instability; the as yet incomplete process of consolidating state authority and institutions and building a strong sense of national political community; and a politico-military culture which has entrenched violence as an instrument of political change. Each of these factors have contributed to the emergence of a state security apparatus which far from being able to exercise a monopoly over the instruments violence is at times drawn into political contests, and in the process heightened the demand for light weapons.

The chapter first examines the historical roots of Uganda's security apparatus and how the divisiveness of its founding had to inevitably engender future problems of small arms proliferation. It then examines the ascendance of the National Resistance Movement to power in 1986 and how the organisation's ideology and approach to managing security were shaped by the country's

¹ This report was commissioned by the Small Arms Survey, Geneva (www.smallarmssurvey.org).

turbulent history and the prevailing context of insecurity. The chapter reviews the history of Uganda's military establishment, highlighting the guerrilla and revolutionary warfare heritage and how the associated legacies may generate potential discordance with donor driven reforms. Finally, the chapter discusses the future prospects for externally initiated 'security sector' reform in Uganda in a context of persisting internal conflict, nascent state institutions, and chequered political transitions.

Chapter 2

Historical evolution of the state security apparatus

The history of what we now know as Uganda is dominated by so much instability that any reference to a 'state security apparatus' while reflecting on that country may sound rather exaggerated. A key characteristic of the country's political evolution right from the advent of colonialism is that external invasion, military coups, and insurgency have almost become institutionalised as the standard method of transfer of power. Unbridled force has dominated the transactions between the country's diverse social forces to the extent that every single instance of transfer of power from one regime to the next has been through violence.

Consequently, the creation of personal and ethnic 'armies' by individuals and groups aspiring for space on the national political stage, and with it, the heightened demand for weaponry, remains the common insurance policy for survival in the political jungle that is Uganda. The failure to institutionalise political power has meant that power seekers attempt to establish themselves by victimising not only their rivals, but also the predecessors' communal base in addition to dispersing their armed forces, leading to endless cycles and episodes of competitive retaliation and of dismemberment and reconstitution of military forces and formation of rebel groups.² This politico-military culture has had several effects, the main one being the high demand for instruments of violence, mainly small arms and light weapons. The high turnover of governments through irregular means and, with this, the cyclical disbandment of national military forces, has sowed the country with weaponry and saturated its outlying areas with irregularly disbanded soldiers, putting at risk the livelihood of whole communities.

² See Annex A for a list of rebel groups active in the last two decades.

The pre-colonial and colonial back-drop

Although the emergence of a standing military force in modern Uganda only began with the establishment of colonial rule in the early 1890s, extensive military structures existed in the country's pre-colonial societies. Bunyoro and Buganda, the two large centralized states in the South of the future country, possessed armed forces that, by the advent of colonialism had upgraded their armouries from spears, and bows and arrows to modern firearms. The powerful Omukama Kabalega, King of Bunyoro from 1870 to 1899, presided over a large standing army that was fully equipped with a variety of 'modern' weapons, including Remington rifles, percussion muskets, breechloaders and a large collection of muzzleloaders.³

In the Kingdom of Buganda located on the northern shores of Lake Victoria, Mutesa I, King from 1852 to 1884, also raised a standing army, and a navy led by a general and several captains. At its most powerful, Mutesa's military force consisted of several thousand warriors with more than 1,500 rifles. According to some estimates,⁴ the period 1885-1902 saw at least 1 million firearms and 4 million pounds of gunpowder entering the East African region many of which ended up in the armouries of monarchs and chiefs. The practice in Bunyoro and Buganda was for 'every trader on his arrival to present almost half of his goods, especially powder, lead, shot and guns, to the ruler who in turn places at his disposal a house and garden and gifts of cattle and fruit'.⁵

The pattern of modernisation of the armouries of the Ugandan monarchs, and with it, the proliferation of small arms was closely linked to military modernisation and rearmament in Europe. When, in the 1870s European powers rearmed their infantry with Chassepot, Snider and Martini-Henry breech loaders all of which were using metallic cartridges and steel barrels, the old muskets with their iron barrels were instantly disgorged on to the market, especially in un-policed zones like East Africa. Percussion guns using caps instantly replaced spears and the modest sprinkling of flintlocks in the Kings' armouries.

When in its infancy, the breech loader was superseded by the introduction of the magazine or repeating rifle, breechloaders flooded the market. The American Winchester was then to prove itself in the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish war, inspiring France to craft its own magazine rifle, the Lebel; and Austria and Britain to introduce the Mannlicher in 1886 and the Lee Metford in 1888

³ Kabalega's military is reputed to have been more multiethnic (and Pan-Africanist) than the militaries that modern Uganda has had. Apart from the Banyoro, the ranks of his Kingdom's military included Egyptian deserters, Baganda, Bari, Acholi, Alur, Langi and Madi.

⁴ Beachey, R. W., 'The arms trade in East Africa in the late nineteenth century', *The Journal of African History*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1962, p. 467.

⁵ Pasha, Emin, *Emin Pasha in Central Africa*, London: George Philip, 1888, p. 115.

respectively. When in 1888, Euan-Smith, the British consul general at Zanzibar estimated that at least 250 firearms were finding their way into Africa via the East African coast every 24 hours, he was alarmed enough to write to the Earl of Rosebery stating that:

The great question is that regarding the import of arms and ammunition into East Africa. This trade has now assumed proportions of which your lordship may possibly be unaware. Formerly the arms so imported were cheap and worthless weapons manufactured to last for a maximum period of some two or three years and after that time becoming useless and worn out. Now, however, arms of precision and breech-loading rifles and ammunition are being imported in large quantities and are rapidly taking the place of flintlock and muzzle-loading cheap muskets. Unless some steps are taken to check this immense import of arms into East Africa, the development and pacification of this great continent will have to be carried out in the face of an enormous population, the majority of whom will be armed with first class breech-loading rifles.⁶

It was hardly surprising that for example, 1888, the year that witnessed the total upgrade of European armouries also coincided with the escalation of the civil strife in Buganda Kingdom. When in 1888, Mackay of the Church Missionary Society arrived in Buganda, he reported his encounter with a private gun-runner, Charles Stokes delivering a consignment of 100 breech-loaders and 20,000 rounds of ammunition to the embattled King Muwanga.⁷

Hence, military modernisation and rearmament in the global North has always been one side of the coin, whose other side is the enhancement of the technology of violence in the global South. Any worthwhile reference to 'Security Sector' Reform aimed at stemming the flow of small arms has to lay holistic emphasis on the entire coin.

When, towards the close of the nineteenth century, Britain firmly established her interest in Uganda, a group of merchants under the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEACo), created a military force composed mainly of Sudanese mercenary soldiers who may have numbered up to 3,000.⁸ According to Captain Lugard, the British agent on the ground then, the Nubian people of Sudan constituted the best material for soldiery in Africa.⁹ Their task was, to protect British commercial interests and to provide a counterforce against

⁶ F.O. 5732/52 Euan-Smith to Rosebery, 28 June 1888 (cited in Beachey, op. cit., p. 453).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ These were from the remnants of Egyptian garrisons in the Equatorial Province (that covered present day West Nile and Acholi in Uganda), cut off from the rest of Egypt by the Sudanese nationalist uprising, the Mahdist rebellion of 1883. On estimates of their strength, see Lwanga-Lunyiigo, Samwiri, 'The colonial roots of internal conflict in Uganda', in Rupesinghe (1989), p. 25.

⁹ Cited in Pain, D. R., 'Acholi and Nubians: Economic forces and military employment', in Dodge, C. P. and Wiebe, P. D (eds), *Beyond Crisis: Development Issues in Uganda*, Kampala: Makerere Institute of Social Research, 1987, p. 25.

the armed Protestant, Catholic and Mohammedan factions that were jostling to control the centrally located Buganda Kingdom.

The Sudanese soldiers who had gained a reputation for robberies, looting and enslaving, provided the mainstay of the military in the colony and their primary task was to protect British commercial interests and to launch punitive expeditions against those who 'rebelled' against the crown.¹⁰ Their mission received legal backing in September 1895, when the British legislature passed the Uganda Rifles Ordinance of 1895, which under clause 13 required the troops to swear allegiance to the British Sovereign directly and secondarily, to the protectorate government. Clause 58 of the ordinance included a provision for the Uganda rifles to take military action, against not only outside powers, but also any local groups in the protectorate that engaged in active opposition to the administration.¹¹ This, especially the suppression of political opinion disagreeable to the centre, became the basic ethos of Uganda's 'security sector', even after the departure of the colonialists. A later legal provision, the 1898 Military Force Ordinance, allowed for the absorption of yet two other non-indigenous groups, the Indian and Swahili troops, after the Sudanese mutinied in 1897 because of poor terms of service.

Thus, an essentially alien and mercenary force formed the core of the colonial military in Uganda and the basis on which the post-independence governments constituted the armed forces of the new country. Deployment of colonial troops was governed by the 'principle' that they should be of a race different from that of the people in the zone of assignment or from an ethnic group that is geographically remote to, and if possible, hostile to the inhabitants of the area of deployment. Hence, in Uganda, the Nubian people of Sudan were top on the list, 'because they were an entirely alien mercenary element who did not have any sentimental attachment to Uganda and could be trusted to be brutal without any reserve or compunction'.¹²

Later attempts to indigenise and diversify the Uganda Rifles were in accordance with the principle of remoteness, to which was added the myth of 'martial tribes' that favoured the Nilotic and Sudanic ethnic groups of Northern Uganda and the Nilohamitics of the East who would be used as a blunt instrument against populations of the centre of the country. Stamina and physique became the criteria for recruitment, and to match this, service personnel were not known to be soldiers, but 'rifles', hence the abject name for the military force, 'Uganda Rifles', subsequently called 'King's African Rifles'.

¹⁰ The explorer and adventurer H.M. Stanley described them as 'fawning, crafty rogues who have made perfidy their profession' (Stanley, Henry M., *In Darkest Africa*, London, 1890, pp. 188) just like H.H. Johnston, Uganda Commissioner, 1889-1900 observed that, 'themselves ex-slaves, they had all the cruelty and unscrupulousness of the Arab Slave traders, whose names, principles and religion they had inherited' (cited in Lunyiigo, op. cit., p. 26).

¹¹ Omara-Otunnu, Amii, *Politics and the Military in Uganda, 1890-1985*, London: Macmillan, 1987, p. 19.

¹² Lunyiigo, op. cit., p. 28. This policy was pursued in other British colonies, as Gutteridge observes for in Ghana, 60 per cent of the colonial military at independence time had been recruited from the northern nationalities, just like in Nigeria, the Hausa were dominant, and in Sierra Leone, the northern Karankos, Mandingos, Fula and Limbe filled the ranks.

Accordingly, by 1914 Acholi region had become the recruiting ground for the armed forces. By the time of independence in 1962, the Uganda Army was made up of 1,000 personnel commanded by 50 British officers. On the eve of independence the need to man the officer corps with indigenous officers—or ‘Africanisation’—arose, but the authorities could not meet this requirement because, according to one of the British officers,

the policy of the Army during the 57 years of its existence had always been to enlist from Northern tribes ... the entire cream of the force was composed of the most backward people of the country ... we ourselves were prejudiced against the ... educated.¹³

Clearly, the ‘security sector’ of the colonial phase of Uganda’s history was built on the foundation of anti-intellectualism, remoteness and ethnic bias, factors that have made a significant contribution to the insecurity that has haunted the country for many decades since and have continued to be a principal demand generator for small arms.

Post-independence period, 1962-86

The Obote 1 Government, 1962-71

The first post-independence government perpetuated the imbalance in the composition of the armed forces for much the same reasons as the colonial government had done. The former did so with an even graver sense of anxiety, given that the ethnicity of the first Prime Minister, Milton Obote, coincided with the ethnic group favoured for recruitment into the colonial military force. Obote was a Nilotic, belonging to the Langi sub-ethnic group of Northern Uganda.¹⁴ The character of the security forces reflected the tensions that obtained within Uganda’s fractious political class, torn apart by ethnic and religious sectarianism. Obote sought to resolve those tensions by the use of force, and therefore set out on a path of nurturing a partisan ‘security sector’.

As a first step, he consolidated the ethnic bias of the colonial military force by enlisting more personnel from the North of the country. In 1969, seven years after the attainment of self-rule, 141 (88 per cent) of the 171 officers in the Uganda Army were from the Nilotic, Sudanic and Nilohamitic ethnicities of the country. Although the population of the north was a mere 19 per cent of the national total, 61 per cent of the military were from that part of the country.¹⁵ In support of the military was a secret police organisation, the General Service Unit (GSU). It came into existence in 1964 on the administrative instructions of Prime Minister Obote

¹³ Grahame, I., *Amin and Uganda: A Personal Memoir*, London: Granada, 1980, p. 15.

¹⁴ Together with the neighbouring Acholi and Alur, the Langi are part of the Luo speakers.

¹⁵ Omara-Otunnu, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-82.

and reported directly to him. It was under the directorship of a cousin of his, in addition to the Special Force. Under the Prime Minister's office also was a paramilitary unit, the Special Force dominated by personnel from Obote's home district to supplement the GSU.

In order to understand Obote's future intentions for utilising the state security apparatus, it is necessary to look back briefly at how he dealt with the 1964 mutiny by the country's battalion strength military force. The Mutiny was part of the general revolt by the militaries of the three East African countries in respect of pay and for 'Africanisation' of the command structure. The response by the leaders of each of the countries was a test of their leadership and determined the subsequent character of the armed forces, the political future of their respective countries and the safety of their citizens.

Tanzanian president, Julius Nyerere responded to the mutiny by disarming the troops, disbanding the Tanganyika Rifles and rebuilding it from scratch with new recruits who transited through the youth league of the ruling Tanzania African National Union (TANU) party for political education. The name of the military changed to Tanzania People's Defence Forces (TPDF). In Kenya, British military personnel were promptly shipped in to get an immediate grip on the rank and file of the mutinying soldiers. President Jomo Kenyatta accused the mutineers of gravely betraying the trust and confidence of the Kenyan people, rejected any possibility of negotiation, and dismissed the ringleaders of the mutiny from the armed forces.

Ominously, the Uganda government responded by granting the mutinous soldiers all their demands and increasing their pay by 135 per cent-300 per cent;¹⁶ in addition to elevating several officers and commissioning several Non-commissioned Officers to officer ranks. Within a year, Idi Amin, the future Army Commander rose from Captain to Colonel.¹⁷ The Prime Minister summarily dismissed and then summarily reinstated three hundred personnel that had instigated the mutiny. The budgetary allocation for defence shot up to represent about 10.2 per cent of the budget, compared with 6.9 per cent in Kenya and 3.8 per cent,¹⁸ and representing 10 per cent more than the total defence budget of the two countries combined.¹⁹ Clearly, 'the Army witnessed the government's timidity under pressure'.

The following year in 1965, Prime Minister Obote used the now pampered military to carry out an internal coup in order to forestall a corruption

¹⁶ Howe, Herbert, *Ambiguous Order: Military Forces in African States*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001, p. 47; Omara-Otunnu, op. cit., p. 61.

¹⁷ Within a year, Idi Amin was promoted from temporary major to colonel (Omara-Otunnu, op. cit., p. 61).

¹⁸ Brett, E. A., 'Neutralising the Use of Force in Uganda: The Role of the Military in Politics' *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1., March 1995, p. 135.

¹⁹ Omara-Otunnu, op. cit., p. 79.

investigation and a potential vote of no confidence that members of his cabinet were agitating for against him. A year later, he used the military again to overthrow the independence constitution and depose the ceremonial President of the country, the King of Buganda, Kabaka Edward Mutesa. Prime Minister Obote emerged from these crises as the President, with Major General Idi Amin as the Army Commander. General Amin was by now a card-bearing member of Obote's party, the Uganda People's Congress (UPC). In 1971, the Military under Idi Amin now feeling that they were the king makers overthrew President Obote.

The Amin years, 1971-79

Immediately after the successful execution of his coup d'état in 1971, Idi Amin launched a major recruitment drive for the armed forces. Within a space of three months, he implemented the equivalent of a mobilisation for war, more than doubling the strength of the military. This he did by recruiting more than 10,000 men, the core of which was 4,000 ex-Anyanya fighters from Southern Sudan and some former Zairian freedom fighters.²⁰ By 1977, the strength was 21,000, 75 per cent of which were foreigners, thus complicating problems of communication, training and discipline.²¹ With this pattern of recruitment, the mercenary soldier reclaimed his place as in the colonial days.

In addition, educational requirements for recruitment were suspended, thus attracting the labourers, the unemployed, and all manner of tramps. The larger part of the remainder hailed from West Nile, Amin's own ethnic base with at least 40 per cent of them being Moslem.²² The first year of Amin's rule were marked by purging the military, the civil police and civil service of Acholi and Langi and replacing them with individuals from his home region, West Nile and co-ethnics from across the border in Congo and Sudan.²³ His close bodyguards were Palestinians. The purging did not merely involve the loss of employment but also the loss of life. Langi and Acholi personnel were killed by being herded into rooms and being blown up by explosives; several were bayoneted and thrown into the River Nile.²⁴ Those that survived the massacres escaped with their military equipment, specifically small arms, to neighbouring Sudan and Tanzania to prepare to fight to reinstate Milton Obote.

²⁰ Mamdani, Mahmood, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976, p. 302; Omara-Otunnu, op. cit., pp. 107-8.

²¹ Byrnes, Rita M. (ed.), *Uganda : A Country Study*, Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1992, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/ugtoc.html>, 11 December 2006.

²² Mamdani, 1976, op. cit., p. 303.

²³ Amin's closest adviser was an English Mercenary, Bob Astles.

²⁴ In Obote's home district, Lango, Amin's soldiers burnt peasants in their huts and killed infants by placing them in mortars and ordering their mothers to pound them with pestles. After that, the parents would be executed ('One Day, Partyists Will Be Butchered' *The Monitor*, Kampala, November 10, 1997).

President Amin set up two internal security forces—the State Research Bureau (SRB) and Public Safety Unit (PSU). Apart from ‘intelligence gathering’ the SRB had no known functional brief, or code of conduct or financial support and had unlimited powers over the lives of any individual in Uganda. The Public Safety Unit (PSU) dealt with increased cases of burglary, highway robbery and general brigandage that resulted from the steady collapse of the economy.²⁵ Through its ever-changing directors, it was answerable only to the President and its personnel found their way into many government departments, public and private institutions, including foreign diplomatic missions in Uganda.

By 1979, 15,000 personnel staffed the three organisations of which 3,000 were permanent and the rest were informers.²⁶ The SRB and PSU were responsible for the murder of as many as 300,000 people. President Amin’s reign ended in 1979 at the climax of a military campaign by a combined force of Tanzanian troops and Uganda exiles who had formed themselves up into the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) with a military force, the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA). This was in retaliation for his attempt to annex part of the Territory of Tanzania. As the military disintegrated, it abandoned large stores of weaponry that ended up in the hands of civilians, especially in the Northeastern region of Karamoja where for the first time, the locals gained access to modern firearms. At least 10,000 soldiers retreated to Zaire and Sudan and formed themselves into insurgent groups, prominent among which were West Nile Bank Front (WNBF), Former Uganda National Army (FUNA) and Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF) that continued to operate in West Nile region until 2004.

The immediate post-Amin Era, 1979-85

The first post-Amin president, Yusuf Lule, ruled for 68 days and was deposed by the military commission of the UNLF. One of the factors that hastened his downfall was the attempt to formulate a policy of building a national military force by drawing recruits from all parts of the country according to the size of ethnic groups in relation to the country’s population. He set new standards of literacy and civic education for the military and police. This move was interpreted, and probably rightfully so, as an attempt to give the majority Baganda, the President’s own ethnic group, larger representation in the security forces. Non-Baganda, especially the officers from the North who knew the

²⁵ The PSU replaced the para-military Special Force of the Obote days. It was at the expense of the civil police, the Uganda Police Force which suffered the same ravages as the Military in terms of purging personnel from undesirable ethnic groups.

²⁶ Byrnes, *op. cit.*; Khiddu-Makubuya, E., ‘Paramilitarism and human rights’, in Rupesinghe (1989), p. 148.

military was traditionally their niche and stood not to gain from this policy, opposed it and engineered the sacking of the President.

The next President, Godfrey Binaisa, appointed in June, 1979 served for just under a year and was toppled as he attempted to limit the influence of military officers from Northern Uganda. This was followed by a national election that saw Obote returning to power in a fraudulent election. During the elections he kept taunting his opponents to show him their generals. Several rebel movements emerged instead to challenge the outcome of the poll. The main group was the NRM under Yoweri Museveni.²⁷ President Obote's government and the military the Acholi and Langi dominated UNLA failed to suppress the insurgency and Obote was once again overthrown by his generals, who were themselves overthrown by Museveni's NRA. The government forces were ill-trained, poorly clothed and fed, irregularly paid and badly led foot soldiers, who had no discipline to execute a counterinsurgency campaign. They caused the death of up to 300,000 people in the failed campaign.

²⁷ Museveni's Front for National Salvation, Fronasa was part of the UNLF/A. He was a member of the military commission of the UNLF, the Minister of Defence and subsequently the Minister of Regional Co-operation in the transitional government. He contested and lost in the 1980 elections under his party, the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM). During the campaigns, he persistently and openly warned that he would 'go to the bush' if the elections were rigged.

Chapter 3

NRM efforts to transform the security apparatus, 1986–99

The consequences of the NRA's success

The principal question that faced Uganda in the wake of the NRM's capture of power was whether the new government would be capable of reconstituting the atrophied state, re-establishing the confidence of the population in government, halting the cycle of insecurity that had haunted the country throughout its history and building a military force that respected the rights of the population.

By the time the NRA seized the country's capital, it had existed for only five years and had a narrow political base having spent most of its time in the South of the country, mostly in the centrally located Buganda and in the West.²⁸ Moreover, there were the historical legacies of the country's north-south divide and the associated ethnic polarisation, and the new reality that, the predominantly Bantu (southern) led and manned NRA had dislodged a predominantly Nilotic regime by defeating a military force that was largely manned by personnel from the north and East of the country. This provoked natural anxieties and deep scepticism over the intentions of the NRM in areas that deemed themselves as losers. Within six months of the new government being installed, armed opposition to the NRM emerged in the north and east of the country launched initially by elements of the defeated UNLA but subsequently by spontaneous local movements. The resulting atmosphere of siege rendered any possibilities of reforming the 'bush army' unthinkable. Instead, the government's focus and energy was diverted from many of its ambitious political and economic reforms as it became ever more imperative to rapidly expand the armed forces to confront the new security challenges.

However, the NRM departed fundamentally from the tendency of incoming regimes to neutralise the military forces of the ruling groups they have displaced. Instead, the NRM decided to integrate soldiers from other fighting

²⁸ The lack of earlier opportunities to broaden the organisation's political base and the precipitous collapse of the Obote government caused key leaders in the NRM to conclude that far from capturing state power, the NRA had been captured by state power.

groups, including the defeated government forces, into the NRA. The aim of this strategy was firstly, to boost the strength of the NRA, which at the time of entering Kampala was manned by only about 20,000 soldiers. Secondly, the NRM sought to build confidence in the regions where the soldiers originated from, and to lessen the number of disgruntled armed men roaming the countryside. By the time the NRA came to assume control over the entire country, seven of its 18 battalions consisted of personnel from formerly opposing groups.²⁹

Ascendance of the NRM in the context of insecurity

One of the lasting legacies of Uganda's culture of collective violence is the near formalisation of force as a first-line instrument of political action. The success registered by the NRA in executing a protracted guerrilla campaign that resulted in the defeat of a numerically and logistically superior government force was a watershed not just in the politics of Uganda, but also of civil military relations on the African continent. The NRA/M was the first insurgent movement in Africa to take power through military means and establish effective rule.³⁰ On the local scene, the success of the NRA heralded the first decisive shift since the country's independence of political pre-eminence, from the elites of the North of the country to those of the South.

The years that followed the NRA's victory, though marked by a relative upswing in the fortunes of the better part of the country have also been characterised by an explosion of armed rebellion with Ugandans increasingly perceiving the exploits of the NRA almost as a re-branding of insurgency as an enterprise, and its elevation to the level of an institution. No less than fifteen rebel groups and movements have since emerged (see Annex A), the longest surviving being the exclusively Acholi Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which has dislocated the lives of millions of people in its zones of operation, and complicated the relations between Uganda and her regional neighbours.

The major emphasis of the NRM on assuming power was to improve the image of the military by maintaining the ethic and discipline of the NRA that enabled it to attract popular support in its first five years of existence as a guerrilla force. This it did by upholding the stringency of the NRA Code of Conduct that the force's leadership formulated to ensure good relations with the population. The code later on formally enacted as the NRA statute in 1992. Maintenance of a minimum level of discipline was one key 'reform' of the

²⁹ Museveni, Yoweri K., *Sowing the Mustard Seed: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda*, MacMillian: London, 1997, p. 174.

³⁰ Ngoga notes that, the first successful insurgency against an African regime was in Chad in 1979 but this failed to institute an effective regime (1998:91).

military that the new government felt it owed the population given the long history of ill-disciplined government soldiers many of whom were untouchable. The other significant departure was the introduction of a political education programme for all military personnel, a continuation of a similar programme in the guerrilla days. This programme aims to increase the civic awareness of soldiers. This was a fundamental reform in the training doctrine of the military in Uganda. Furthermore, the advent of the NRM on Uganda's political scene witnessed a fundamental, and probably the most significant transformation in the management of the 'security sector', namely, how to deal with the military forces of an outgoing regime following the irregular transfer of power. As discussed above, the new government integrated all such forces into the new military, raising the strength of the NRA to 100,000 by the early 1990s. However, a number of factors including widespread insurgency and the lack of resources and the continuing insecurity in the region hampered these attempts at reform. In these circumstances, GoU devoted substantial resources to addressing security problems, primarily through military means, resources that might otherwise have been devoted to other areas of development.

Donor pressures to down-size the military

Donor interest in Uganda's security system during the 1990s was primarily focused on the level of military spending rather than on how security institutions were managed. Concerned that military spending was reducing the amount of resources available for social and economic development; donors placed considerable pressure on the Government during this period to reduce military spending. International support for a World Bank-supported demobilisation process in 1992-95 led to a reduction in the size of the military by 36,000 soldiers and in overall defence spending.³¹ While a substantial percentage of actual savings were used to improve the standards of the now leaner NRA, most of the savings were channelled into the social sectors which, for the first time in many years, in 1992-93, surpassed defence spending. This was despite a Government expectation at the time that significantly more funds would be available for defence modernisation and professionalisation.

In 1995, defence spending began to rise again primarily due to the recruitment of auxiliary forces in response to continuing insecurity in the North. By the late 1990s the size of the army and defence spending swelled significantly when Ugandan military forces were deployed in the Congo. While the presence

³¹ Colleta, N. J., Kostner, M. and Widerhofer, I., *Uganda: Consolidating Peace. Section III: Case Studies in War-to-Peace Transition: The Demobilisation and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in Ethiopia, Namibia and Uganda*, World Bank Discussion Paper no. 331, African Technical Department Series, 1996.

in the Congo was principally driven by the urgent need to secure Uganda's frontiers, secondary factors including increased involvement by some UPDF commanders in economic activities and tensions between Rwandan and Ugandan forces in the region served to extend and deepen this presence until 2004.

Concerned by increasing levels of defence spending and weak financial management in the defence sector, donors funded two studies carried out by external consultants in 1997-98. The focus of both the World Bank-funded Logistics and Accounting Reform Programme (LARP) and the DFID-funded Uganda Defence Efficiency Study (UDES) was on maximising the efficiency of defence spending and identifying economies in resource use for possible re-deployment to non-defence areas. The recommendations were primarily technical in nature, relating to the management of financial and human resources, procurement and logistics. This reflected the extreme political sensitivity of military reform for all parties concerned. Wider questions concerning the UPDF's political and economic roles, Uganda's security needs, and the issue of civil oversight of the armed forces were not addressed in any depth.

Few of the recommendations contained in LARP and UDES were taken forward. The reasons for this stem from a combination of factors including a lack of resources, weak Ugandan ownership of both the studies and their recommendations, lack of donor follow-up support, and broader governance problems inside and outside the defence sector that were not adequately addressed by the studies.

In 1999 donors (led by the IMF) imposed a cap on defence spending amounting to 2 per cent of GDP. While the cap forced the Government to engage with donors in a discussion about levels of defence spending, this discussion was not based on a comprehensive analysis of Uganda's security needs and the amount of resources that would actually be required to create a secure environment conducive for development. Defence spending consistently exceeded the cap. It is also likely that the cap created a perverse incentive for Government to keep a significant portion of military-related spending off-budget. As much was admitted by a former Permanent Secretary for Defence who stated that it was Government policy to channel funding for the 'Home Guards' through the budget of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to avoid exciting the donors.³²

³² See Hendrickson, Dylan and Ball, Nicole 'Off-Budget Military Expenditure and Revenue: Issues and Policy Perspectives for Donors', report prepared for DFID, June 2001.

One unintended consequence of the cap on defence spending was *decreased* transparency and accountability of financial management in Uganda's defence sector and higher levels of defence spending than reported by both Government and donors. This highlighted the limitations of conventional donor approaches to defence spending which have traditionally relied on the use of conditionalities and financial instruments to manage spending, in the absence of changes in the *process* by which decisions on defence spending are made.

Chapter 4

Uganda's security apparatus: Legacies of the guerrilla heritage

The contemporary security apparatus³³

The military: Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF)

The UPDF is the principal arm of the Ministry of Defence and forms the core around which most of the security apparatus is constituted.³⁴ The UPDF is largely a light infantry based force that has evolved over a period of 30 years, starting off as the Front for National Salvation (Fronasa), formed by Museveni and trained in Tanzania and Mozambique in the 1970s in preparation for the war that deposed Idi Amin in 1979. In 1981, it was renamed the NRA, a guerrilla organisation that successfully carried out a five year Maoist insurgency, overrunning the capital in 1986 to bring Museveni to power. The 1995 national constitution renamed the NRA the UPDF to de-link it, at least in name, from the ruling NRM.

The UPDF has not been able to outgrow its origins as an irregular force, one of the most negative legacies being the personal loyalties between Museveni and those that fought with him in the early days of Fronasa and NRA, many of whom occupied key positions though they always demonstrated incapacity to manage a modern organisation. Moreover, the UPDF was born as an organ of a political organisation. Even after ceasing to be a guerrilla force, it has remained subordinate to the National Resistance Movement although the latter has since become a political party. The slow pace of regularisation of the UPDF is attributable to Museveni's need to maintain a firm grip on the force doing so through officers that are personally loyal to him, thus strengthening the UPDF's central role as an arbiter in political contests. This has been highlighted by the

³³ For further details, see Republic of Uganda, White Paper on Defence Transformation, Kampala: Ministry of Defence, 2004, <http://merln.ndu.edu/whitepapers/uganda2004.pdf>.

³⁴ Most of the personnel of the Internal and External Security Organisations are seconded from the UPDF, and since 2001, the Inspectors General of Police have been drawn from the military.

increasing prominence of the Presidential Guard Brigade (PGB), formerly the Presidential Protection Unit (PPU) as a semi-autonomous military force. The PPU was originally a small unit of about 200 personnel tasked with providing for the security of the president without the need to divert personnel from combat units. In the last 5 years, its strength has been raised to at least 10,000, about 20 per cent of the national military.³⁵ The President's son is the Commander of the PGB's motorised infantry component, and according to some, the de facto Commander of the PGB.³⁶ During the debate on the UPDF Bill in 2003, there was an attempt by elements close to the president to make the PGB 'a separate, independent armed force inorganic to the UPDF' but this did not receive endorsement from the country's legislators,³⁷ causing the public to interpret the move as Museveni's intention to build a personal Military force.³⁸ There have also been recurring queries by the legislators on the source of funding for the unit, with reports that it was being budgeted for State House, and not the Ministry of Defence as ought to be the case for all military formations in the country.³⁹

The key trade off has been professionalism and the adoption of standard administrative and command procedures across the board. The failure by the UPDF to develop modern record keeping systems; for, among other things, tracking lethal items like small arms is one of the manifestations these weaknesses.

Intelligence agencies

The two main security organisations are the Internal and External Security Organisations (ISO and ESO) established in 1987 by a legal instrument, Statute 10, The Security Organisations Statute, 1987.⁴⁰ The Internal Security Organization (ISO) is responsible for 'internal' security, with a four-tier structure up to the village level, running parallel to the local government hierarchy. The External Security Organization (ESO) is responsible for security abroad.

Uganda Police Force (UPF)

The UPF, in existence for the last 100 years has suffered the same fate as all other national institutions through the years of instability. The force remains saddled

³⁵ Barkan, Joel, 'Uganda—a "success" that has peaked', paper presented at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, 2005, <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/events/docs/BarkanPresentation.doc>, 24 December 2006. See also 'Museveni has 10,000 Guards', *The Monitor*, 24 March 2004.

³⁶ See 'PPU becomes Presidential Guard Brigade', *The New Vision* (Kampala), 24 February 2003 and Barkan, op. cit., p. 7.

³⁷ 'MPs Oppose PGB Autonomy', *The New Vision* (Kampala), September 2004.

³⁸ 'Museveni Building Own Army', *The Monitor* (Kampala), 23 August 2005.

³⁹ 'Defence lacks Funds for PPU' *The Monitor* (Kampala), 26 October 2001.

⁴⁰ This was the first time ever in the history of the country for security organisations to be established not by an administrative decision of the Chief Executive.

by the long-standing shortages in all aspects of its functioning ranging from manpower, housing,⁴¹ training, means of mobility, and pay. The current strength of the force is reported to be 15,000.⁴² According to the United Nations, the optimum ratio of police personnel to the population for effective policing is 1:450.⁴³ With the current population of 28 million, Uganda's ratio is 1:1,866. According to international standards, the current population should be policed by at least 62,000 police officers, the implication being that the UPF is currently undermanned by more than 300 per cent, with the unstable northern region of the country, also experiencing a major small arms problem being more under-policed than the national average as the table below shows.

Table 1: Policing in northern Uganda	
Sub-region	Police to population ratio
Northwest (Arua, Adjumani, Moyo, Nebbi, Yumbe)	1:5129
Central Northern (Pader, Kitgum, Gulu, Lira, Apac)	1:4803
Northeast (Amuria, Katakwi, Kaberamaido, Soroti, Kumi, Pallisa, Sironko, Kapchorwa)	1:2884
Karamoja (Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Kotido)	1:7202
Regional average	1:5004
National average	1:1866

Source: Republic of Uganda, *Our North: Government Position Paper on Northern Uganda*, Kampala: Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Programme, Office of the Prime Minister, 2006, p. 16

⁴¹ See 'Nsambya Police Live in Mortuary, Kitchen', *The Monitor* (Kampala) 22 September 1999, <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/199909180041.html>, 11 December 2006.

⁴² 'Police must grow', *The New Vision* (Kampala), 2 February 2002.

⁴³ This ratio is traceable to the constabulary requirements in the American Zone of Occupation in Germany at the end of WWII and has since been adopted as a doctrinal template for international policing. A force of 2.2 police personnel per thousand Germans (equivalent of 1:450) was found to be adequate for the limited objectives of enforcing public order, controlling black market transactions and performing other basic policing functions (Quinlivan, James T., 'Force requirements in stability operations', *Parameters*, vol. XXV, 1995, pp. 59-69, <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/USAWC/Parameters/1995/quinliv.htm>).

In 2002, though the police needed 576 vehicles, it had only 256 (less than half),⁴⁴ forcing the Inspector General of the force to go on a begging spree among businesspersons to raise money for purchasing vehicles. There are also worries that the professional integrity of the police force is being compromised by the increasing militarisation of the force. For the last five years, the force has been under the command of Major Generals attached from the Military. There are media reports that up to 1,200 military personnel may be already assigned to the force.⁴⁵

Militia and paramilitary structures

Auxiliaries have been organised as groups of members of local communities trained and mobilised to provide support to the military. They are trained as soldiers but are not part of the regular military and are regarded as a supplementary force or reserve from which personnel are drawn for integration into regular units or to augment units in areas of operations. The commonest example of auxiliaries in Uganda are the Local Defence Forces (LDFs) who first became a common feature of security provision in Uganda after 1986 as part of the restructuring of local government by the NRM. The NRM government alteration of local administration by introducing popularly elected local councils,⁴⁶ the nine member Resistance Committees also included a Secretary for Defence under whom all matters to do with LDFs fall.⁴⁷ The Secretary for Defence at the parish level was empowered to identify members of the local communities to volunteer for basic military training for subsequent assignment to Local Defence Units (LDUs). A declaration by the President in a military radio message in 1989 subsequently made them part of the National Reserve Force, along with further confirmation at public speeches and rallies.⁴⁸ Overzealous civil servants often interpret such declarations as law in a manner that in the end only helps to harm the President's credibility, apart from undermining the welfare and commitment of auxiliaries by assigning them a nebulous legal status. But more importantly, this ad hoc approach to the management of public affairs causes the deinstitutionalisation of the 'security sector', with deleterious effects on public safety.

Though the auxiliaries, especially the LDFs are responsible for protecting their own villages, it is the primary duty of the military to train, arm and command them. In non-emergencies such as routine patrols in the villages, the

⁴⁴ 'Police Needs 576 Vehicles', *The New Vision* (Kampala), 19 June 2002.

⁴⁵ 'Growing Concern As Ugandan Army "Infiltrates" Police Force', *The East African* (Nairobi), 23 November 2005.

⁴⁶ At the village, parish, sub-county and district level.

⁴⁷ There are about 10,000 parishes in the country.

⁴⁸ See for example, 'Museveni says LDU is UPDF Reserve', *The Monitor* (Kampala), 18 April 2000 and 'Museveni Directs UPDF to Control Karamoja Vigilantes', UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, 24 September 2001.

Local Council Secretary for Defence deploys them, and they are remunerated for their services from financial contributions from the communities. In parts of the country affected by insurgency and rebellion, LDFs and other auxiliaries operate with the military, either in their own units or as fillers for under strength units. Auxiliaries are often drafted en masse to participate in large-scale military operations as happened in 1996 when local defence units from the East of the country were deployed to fight the Allied Democratic Front rebels in the West of the country. They were also mobilised for deployment of the Democratic Republic of Congo where many are reported to have perished.⁴⁹

Membership to, and the sheer variety of militias has proceeded in direct proportion to the increase in the levels of antigovernment insurgency and banditry. There are at least a dozen militia forces with varying degrees of training and discipline in different parts of the country.⁵⁰ In zones of military operations, some of the militia groups are indistinguishable from insurgents and bandits, yet others are a source of livelihood insecurity. The Africa Centre for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture victims in its reports of 2000 and 2002 named LDFs as the worst abusers of human rights, ahead of the military, the Police and Prisons Services in that order.⁵¹

As is indeed the case in many sub-Saharan African countries, management of Uganda's 'security sector' is characterised by a wide gap between constitutional stipulations and practical realities.⁵² Although the existence of LDUs and other auxiliary forces predates the constitution by a decade, it makes no provisions for those forces, yet they have become a key element in the country's 'security sector'. Currently, there is no legal instrument for establishing the auxiliaries as a component of the armed forces and this leaves many gaps that work against the interests of both the membership of the forces and the wider public. The constitution of Uganda states 'no person shall raise an armed force except in accordance with this constitution'.⁵³ The constitution does not provide for any of those forces, let alone the National Reserve Force, which is supposed to be comprised of such forces.

The Police and UPDF statutes both have sections that provide for auxiliary forces, but even those provisions are in conflict with each other especially on the

⁴⁹ See for example, 'Over 700 Katakwi LDUs go Missing', *The Monitor* (Kampala), 28 March 2002.

⁵⁰ They include the Home Guards and Frontier Guards (Northern Uganda), Nyekundiire (South western), Special Police Constables (National), Local Administration Police (National), Vigilantes (Karamoja), Anti-Stock Theft Units (Eastern Uganda), Arrow Boys (Teso region), Amuka/Rhino Militia (Lango Region).

⁵¹ 'LDUs Named Worst Rights Abusers' *The New Vision*, 27 June 2000 and 'Security Organs Accused of Torture' *The New Vision* (Kampala), 27 June 2002.

⁵² This issue is covered in more detail in a comparative research project on security decision-making which includes case studies of Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Uganda. For further information on the Uganda case, see Mutengesa and Hendrickson, 2008.

⁵³ The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, Article 208(4) [http://www.chr.up.ac.za/hr_docs/constitutions/docs/UgandaC\(rev\).doc](http://www.chr.up.ac.za/hr_docs/constitutions/docs/UgandaC(rev).doc), 3 November 2006.

control of LDUs, Special Police Constables, the Police Reserve and the Local Administration Police. According to the UPDF statute, 'the Army shall consist of such other force as may be prescribed by the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces Council'.⁵⁴ The Police statute makes similar claims on who the police can appoint as a member of the force.⁵⁵ However, both these statutes are rendered incompetent by the provisions of the constitution by being inconsistent with both articles 208 (4) and 2(2),⁵⁶ thus making all auxiliary forces unconstitutional. The uncertain legal status remains an obstacle in the maintenance and employment of auxiliaries, and a risk factor in the proliferation of small arms. Many of them go unpaid for months,⁵⁷ causing the more undisciplined ones to resort to armed criminality to in reward themselves.⁵⁸ The print media reported one such incident in Karamoja where unpaid vigilantes organised a livestock raid in which they rustled 500 head of cattle and killed 17 villagers in the process.⁵⁹ There are also reports of auxiliaries who sell off their weapons and ammunition,⁶⁰ and others who desert upon completion of training,⁶¹ fuelling the fear that such training may even be one of the avenues insurgents use for acquiring fighting skills and weaponry before withdrawing to the bush. Undoubtedly, auxiliaries remain a key asset in providing security either at the local level or nationally. However, the casual accessioning, training and arming of those forces, in addition to the perennial disregard for their welfare promises to create more problems than the ones those irregular forces are intended to solve. One such problem is small arms proliferation.

Paramilitary security and intelligence organisations

The security apparatus in Uganda has been characterised by the proliferation of agencies, some of them starting off as operational arms and task forces of the formal security structures only to acquire a personality of their own; most times becoming vehicles of civilian victimisation. The majority of these groups are formed without statutory authorisation, and are often disowned by the state

⁵⁴ Statute no. 3, subsections 2(1) and 3(c).

⁵⁵ Statute no. 13, 1994; Part VIII, sections 65-68.

⁵⁶ Article 2 (2) states that, 'If any other law or any custom is inconsistent with any of the provisions of this constitution, the constitution shall prevail, and that other law or custom shall, to the extent of this inconsistency, be void'.

⁵⁷ For example, see 'LDUs: Popular Force that the Government Won't Pay', *The Monitor* (Kampala) 31 August 1999.

⁵⁸ See 'Are the LDUs Night Guards Or Robbers?', *The New Vision* (Kampala), 17 July 2002, which also quotes the Human Rights Commission (U) report stating that LDUs are the worst rights abusers.

⁵⁹ 'Vigilantes raid villages', *The New Vision* (Kampala), 24 September 2004.

⁶⁰ See 'UPDF Conned of Bullets', *The New Vision* (Kampala) 28 May 2002.

⁶¹ See '50 LDUs Escape With Guns' *The New Vision* (Kampala), 5 November 2004 and '86 Militiamen Escape With Guns', *The Monitor* (Kampala) 2 May 2005.

when their operations attract public disapproval or when no government department wants to pick up the bill for their maintenance.⁶²

Kalangala Action Plan (KAP):⁶³ KAP gained prominence during the 2001 electoral season as an armed paramilitary/militia launched by President Museveni in October 2000,⁶⁴ and headed by the Senior Presidential Advisor on Political Affairs, one Major Kakoza Mutale.⁶⁵ It is especially active in the run up to Presidential, parliamentary and local government elections in which it moves ahead of Museveni to assemble enthusiasts in addition to campaigning for his loyalists and intimidating/terrorising opposition politicians and their supporters; with operatives claiming that they are doing so on the orders of the President. KAP has also been implicated in electoral violence, illegal arrests, abductions of opposition politicians and unauthorised exhumation of remains of the deceased and extortion.⁶⁶ It draws its membership from retired military personnel and NRM loyalists and even legislators.⁶⁷ Museveni is reported to have described KAP as a 'political action group of the Movement which helps in gathering intelligence in disturbed areas',⁶⁸ although opposition politicians refer to it as a 'terrorist organisation' which, in a move that threatened to spark off the formation of political party militias, they were preparing to confront by force of arms,⁶⁹ just like they have been in confrontation with the Uganda Police Force.⁷⁰

The Black Mamba Urban Hit Squad: Part of the military's intelligence branch, who in an infringement on the independence of the judiciary sealed off the premises of the High Court in the country's capital to arrest a key opposition politician, Col. Kiiza Besigye and alleged rebel suspects whose bail application had been honoured.

Joint Antiterrorism Taskforce (JATT) & the Violent Crime Crack Unit (VCCU), formerly 'Operation Wembley' task force. The two agencies were constituted by the state out of the statutory security organs in response to public safety crises. The

⁶² See for example, 'UPDF disowns Major Mutale', *The Monitor* (Kampala), 12 May 1999; 'KAP Not Part of Defence Ministry', *The New Vision* (Kampala), 6 July 2002; 'State House Doesn't Fund Mutale's KAP', *The New Vision* (Kampala), 21 June 2002.

⁶³ KAP had partner groups, 'Civic Defence Teams (CDT) and 'Labeja' in the Northern region of Acholi (Human Rights Watch, *State of Pain: Torture in Uganda*, HRW, vol. 16, no. 4 (A), 2004, <http://hrw.org/reports/2004/uganda0404/uganda0304.pdf>, p. 21), and Kampala based Mulyankota Development Association Group ('Mutale Trains New Morale Team', *The New Vision* (Kampala), 15 February 2005.

⁶⁴ 'Museveni 'Leader' of Kalangala Action Plan', *The Monitor* (Kampala), 7 March 2002.

⁶⁵ Kakoza Mutale headed a rebel group, Vumbula, which operated in the Luwero Triangle in the 1980s. The group later allied itself with the NRA.

⁶⁶ 'Mutale Group faces Probe' *The New Vision* (Kampala), 24 August 2004.

⁶⁷ In preparation for the 2006 presidential elections, more than 150 members of the national legislature are reported to have registered as members of the KAP ('150 MPs join Kakooza Mutale's Kalangala Action Plan' *The New Vision* (Kampala), 20 April 2005)

⁶⁸ 'Mutale Blasts Tumukunde', *The New Vision* (Kampala), 15 May 2002.

⁶⁹ 'UPC Likens Mutale's Group to Terrorists', *The New Vision* (Kampala), 17 February, 2005; 'FDC to start anti-Mutale youth brigade' *The New Vision* (Kampala), 15 February 2005.

⁷⁰ 'Police, Maj. Mutale Clash in Masindi', *The New Vision* (Kampala) 2 March 2006.

JATT was formed in late 1990s mainly in response to a spate of bombings in the country's capital by agents of the Islamist rebel group, the ADF. It was further strengthened in 2002 by the enactment of the Anti-terrorism Act. It draws its membership from the formal security organisations. The VCCU came into existence in 2002 following the near breakdown of public order especially in the large urban centres due to armed criminality due to the widespread availability of small arms. Both organisations have been widely criticised for illegal detention and torture of suspects and high-handedness.

Popular Intelligence Network (PIN): Founded by the Reserve Force Commander Lt. Gen. Akadwanaho (Salim Saleh) a brother of President Museveni in 1996 in Gulu, but it was fully implemented by presidential assistant, Major Kakooza Mutale of KPA as a loose network of members of the civilian population in Acholi region to expose LRA collaborators. The activities of PIN in Acholi region were suspended due to the excesses of Major Mutale.⁷¹ As popular intelligence-gathering concept, PIN was revived and successfully employed in Teso in 2003 to deal with the incursions of the LRA in the region.⁷²

Commercial Security Groups (CSGs)

Because of the many decades of protracted social conflict, political instability, and institutional collapse in Uganda, whatever was left of the state had limited capacity to provide physical safety to the public. As already noted, one of the key victims of the erosion of public authority were the law and order institutions particularly the police. The Uganda Police Force currently operates at about 300 parts of the country that are not afflicted by civil conflict. The ordinary Ugandan may have known worse forms of insecurity in the past but the wider effect of the gradual breakdown of order has threatened to undermine attempts per cent below the personnel strength recommended by the United Nations. This level of under-capacity is indeed grim but probably a lot less than it would be if one factored in equipment, morale and training shortfalls. The resulting reality has been one of extreme insecurity even in by the Uganda government to revitalize the country's economy, dependent as it is on foreign investors.

The lack of basic amenities such as patrol vehicles for the police unit in charge of securing the country's capital compelled the Inspector General to run a fundraising campaign amongst legislators and the business community. The police unit in the city no longer had the capacity to carry out routine duties such

⁷¹ See for example, 'Amnesty Implores Museveni on North' *The New Vision* (Kampala) 18 March 1999.

⁷² During the Anti-LRA campaign in Teso the PIN was the guide for the UPDF and the local militia, the Arrow Boys ('Arrow Group-People's Power against Kony's Rebels', *The New Vision* (Kampala), 20 August 2003).

as surveillance and rapid response to emergencies.⁷³ The public response to these gaps came in form of making financial contributions towards the purchase of vehicles for the police and providing for personal safety by acquiring firearms. At some stage, the Internal Security Organisation estimated that the population in the city was holding up to 10,000 firearms for personal protection.⁷⁴

Senior security officials openly acknowledged the limitations of the organs tasked with superintending law and order function and the need to engage private individuals and organisations in the provision of security. In September 2000, the Inspector General of Police declared that, the police was to withdraw from acting as guards and escorts to the public leaving these services to private security firms, further indicating that 'the police was to concentrate on public security in form of foot and mobile patrols'.⁷⁵ The result has been the rapid privatisation of security provision making the private 'security sector' one of the fastest growing and most lucrative businesses in the country.⁷⁶ Commercial security groups currently operate in the large urban centres mainly in Kampala where they outnumber the regular police by a factor of two. They also have a presence in rural areas where they guard commercial plantations, quarries and mineral extraction operations. By mid 2004, there were at least 87 licensed Commercial Security Groups, manned by 18,000 compared to the national police force whose current strength is 13,000.⁷⁷

The clientele of the CSGs includes public authorities, small businesses, medium and large-sized businesses, banks and other financial institutions, residential customers, international governmental and non-governmental organisations, high commissions and embassies. The common services they provide are cash transportation, ATM Outsourcing & Management, manned security, mobile patrol and stationary guards, and security survey services and risk assessment and VIP protection.

The rapid expansion of the private 'security sector' has not passed without problems given that the liberalisation of security provision was a knee jerk reaction to a crisis. The country lacked an effective legal and institutional framework for regulating the formation and operations of the mushrooming CSGs. In the short run, CSGs threatened to undermine public order. In 2004, Police reported that private security guards were top among in the 'security sector' in commission of crimes. Of 187 cases of reported crimes that were committed by security organisations in 2004, private security organisations

⁷³ 'City Police Short of Patrol Cars', *The New Vision* (Kampala), 15 December 2000. According to this report, the force had only four out of 16 patrol vehicles.

⁷⁴ '10,000 Civilians in Kampala Have Guns', *The Monitor* (Kampala), 23 May 1999.

⁷⁵ 'Police to Stop Guarding Public', *The New Vision* (Kampala), 6 September 2000.

⁷⁶ They also operate in Entebbe, Jinja, Lira, Mbale, Mbarara and many of the major regional towns.

⁷⁷ 'Can Private Guards be Trusted?', *The Monitor* (Kampala), 23 May 2006.

committed 100 (53 per cent), police 44 cases, the military 36 and prisons services, one case. Reported cases included murder by shooting, robbery, theft, corruption and bribery.⁷⁸

There is a wide variety of quality among the companies, and this calls for bringing them under close oversight, legislative control and internal self-regulation. At present, the state has left this responsibility to Police operational control under the statutory instruments of the Police Statute 1994. However, the Police would benefit from institutional and legal reinforcement if it is to serve this role effectively. The companies have formed a body, the Uganda Private Security Association (UPSA) for regulating their members, setting minimum labour standards, as well as recognizing and bargaining with employee unions.

The growth of the commercial security industry in Uganda has by far outpaced the regulation of the industry. There remain key issues that need urgent attention, among them, specific training doctrine, requirements and standards, remuneration and benefits, the quality of the vetting of criminal records, the sourcing of weapons and whether all companies have the right to import their own weapons and the type of weapons to be used by the organizations, the rules of engagement. Others are, the use of communications equipment; and protection of information and privacy for commercial groups engaged in investigation. Decisions on some of these issues are still discretionary and are taken by the Minister of Internal Affairs on the recommendations of the Police.

Many of the CSGs operating in Uganda are not indigenous. Several operate regionally, and others globally, a few of them existing on the listings of stock exchanges in key capitals of Europe. As such, the establishment of regulatory frameworks has to reflect the reach of these organizations. If national regulatory protocols are to have the desired impact, it is necessary to conceive them within the context of sub-regional, regional and international frameworks. The main challenge however is putting in place a well-structured and integrated public safety policy that encompasses the CSGs not just as transient actors but as active partners who have come to stay.

Key legacies of the guerrilla heritage

Of all the norms of democratic governance of the 'security sector', civilian control of the military stands to face severe challenges in countries like Uganda where the military has its origins as a guerrilla organisation. A key characteristic of protracted guerrilla wars and guerrilla organisation methods is the lack of a

⁷⁸ 'Probe Private Security Firms', *The Monitor* (Kampala), 12 February 2005.

clear-cut distinction between military and civilian roles and this presents special problems for the reforming such organisations especially when such reforms are premised on traditional thinking on civil-military relations which

...assumes only two actors (the military, often in practice the Army, and civilian politicians), and it saw their relationship as adversarial, such that there is a constant battle by civilians to 'control' the military. This in turn meant that the two played a zero-sum game, in which the essential premise for any system of civilian control is the minimisation of military power...It also assumed that there were only two possible states—civilian democracy or military rule.⁷⁹

However, the guerrilla tradition tends not to conform to such thinking. Like has been the case in Uganda, organisation of a successful guerrilla campaign entails the formation of a strategic alliance with civilians; building popular support for insurgent forces in addition to military activity that calls for commanders to wear (at least) two hats. Such commanders take charge of a fighting unit or formation in the field, they are the political overseers of the zone of the country their forces dominates and additionally hold a key appointment in the hierarchy of the political organisation for which the fighting force was the military wing.⁸⁰ The leader of the guerrilla organisation is also the Commander-in-Chief of the fighting forces, the manager of the organisation's foreign relations and its chief publicist. These legacies of fusion, convergence and overlap of authority tend to linger on for very long in organisations with leftist guerrilla origins and are major obstacles to the kind of reforms envisaged by SSR. It is such obstacles that current politico-military dispensation in Uganda represents. Long after the NRA was renamed as the UPDF, it has remained an organ of the NRM, which itself has long ceased to be a broad-based national movement but has become one the country's political parties. The partisan character of the UPDF, a hangover from its guerrilla origins, probably remains the principal challenge to reform, not only to the 'security sector', but also of the politics of the country.

In implementing 'security sector' reform, overlap between the civil and military domains as pointed out above would probably be a surmountable obstacle if it were just a transitional arrangement aimed at ensuring tight control, in the context of a guerrilla campaign. However, it often turns out to be an

⁷⁹ Chutter, David, 'Understanding 'security sector' reform', *Journal of 'Security Sector' Management*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2006, p. 2, http://www.ssrnline.org/jofssm/issues/jofssm_0402_chuter.doc?CFID=583247&CFTOKEN=44908723.

⁸⁰ Other examples of this type of politico-military organisations are the Rwanda Patriotic Front and Rwanda Patriotic Army, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the Sudan People's Liberation Army. A Similar arrangement also obtains in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

avenue to the more difficult obstacle to reform: the personalisation of the management of the armed forces as has indeed been the case in Uganda where security organisations have come to embody the character and will of a single individual, President Museveni. As the International Crisis Group (ICG) notes,

perhaps the most damaging legacies of the bush war of the early 1980s are the strong bonds of personal loyalties between Museveni and those who fought with him and have subsequently held senior military positions. These bonds ... have greatly impeded the army's performance, as many who have proved to be corrupt or incompetent in meeting the present security challenges have been allowed to retain important positions.⁸¹

The biggest danger posed by personalisation of management of a fragmented security apparatus as the one in Uganda is that, the multiplicity of armed groups lacks a clear command structure and those tend to operate competitively or at cross-purposes. Many of them are inspired not so much by the need to stem the insecurity the wider community, but by the wish to catch the eye of the President as his committed loyalists. Since much of the security apparatus is under-institutionalised, fragmented and controlled personally by the President Museveni, there is always the risk that, his sudden departure from the political scene, the waning of his power or the constitutional end of his tenure could turn the country into a hostage of warring armed factions. Far from merely focussing on curtailing defence expenditure, the disintegration of the security apparatus into warring factions ought to be one of the prospects that a realistically conceived SSR programme should attempt to nip in the bud.

⁸¹ International Crisis Group, 'Northern Uganda: Understanding and resolving the conflict', ICG Report no. 077, 2004, p. 13.

Chapter 5

Nature and limitations of recent reform efforts

Broadening the reform agenda: SSR

Until 2001, donor engagement in Uganda's security domain could be characterised as ad hoc, partial, piece-meal, self-interested and not informed by a strategic perspective. For the most part, during this period, development partners were more concerned with emasculating the military which was seen as a 'problem' for development, rather than enabling it to fulfil its legitimate public functions. In reality, very few donor agencies have been involved in security-related work, and certainly not in the defence sector. Rather it has been the defence and security establishments of donor countries, led by the United States and the UK primarily, which have provided different kinds of support, primarily for the UPDF and the intelligence agencies, and little of which has been informed by a holistic SSR perspective until more recently.

In 2001, the UK Government again offered its assistance to the GoU to undertake defence reforms. This coincided with the run-up to the 2001 presidential campaign where defence modernisation and professionalisation of the military was one of Museveni's key electoral pledges. It also coincided with a move by a number of donors including the World Bank, the UK, Ireland, Holland and Sweden to provide budget support to GoU. Budget support has opened the way for donors to have a seat at the table with GoU for strategic discussions about Uganda's future. There was growing realisation by some donors that it was no longer tenable to exclude the defence sector from these discussions, particularly due to the risks that problems within the defence sector could blow GoU's overall development strategy off course.

Defence Review

In February 2001, DFID supported a workshop where the recommendations from both the LARP and UDES studies were discussed and re-validated and a Uganda

Defence Reform Programme (UDRP) was drawn up. It was agreed that Phase 1 of the UDRP would be a comprehensive Defence Review process which would provide a framework for a longer-term defence transformation process. The Defence Review was conducted by the Defence Reform Unit in the Ministry of Defence.⁸² Technical assistance for the Review was provided by the UK's Defence Advisory Team (DAT),⁸³ a consultant from King's College London, and a number of national consultants including two academics from Makerere University.

The overall purpose of the Defence Review,⁸⁴ as outlined in the Project Document, was:

to re-assess Uganda's central security interests and to consider how the roles, missions, and capabilities of the armed forces should be adjusted to meet them. The aim is to make the UPDF and their supporting structures modern, professional, accountable and efficient. They also have to be affordable within a medium-term economic framework.⁸⁵

The Project Document stipulated, furthermore, that the review was to be guided by a number of principles. It should be:

- conducted in a comprehensive, logical and rational manner, with each Stage building on the previous one;
- followed through to completion and in accordance with the Terms of Reference contained in the Project Document;
- inclusive, consulting with individuals and organisations from within and without Government; and
- open and transparent, with the outcome of each stage communicated as widely as possible.

The Review was intended to provide a framework for a realistic debate on the level of defence spending required to create a secure environment for development. It became apparent, however, that from the beginning the President and the Ministry of Defence regarded the Defence Review as a vehicle for gaining donor agreement for an increase in defence spending. There were

⁸² Following completion of the Defence Review in 2004, the DRU became the Defence Reform Secretariat (DRS).

⁸³ The DAT is a multidisciplinary UK Government team that provides advice to foreign governments on various aspects of SSR. DAT became the 'security sector' Defence Advisory Team (SSDAT) in 2004 after its mandate was widened to encompass 'security sector' issues.

⁸⁴ For further information, see *The Uganda Defence Review: Learning from Experience*, September 2007.

⁸⁵ *Uganda Defence Review: Project Document*, April 2002.

signals from some donors that this would be acceptable assuming certain conditions were met: i.e. that any increase in defence spending could be justified in terms of meeting Uganda's security needs, and that the increase would go hand-in-hand with greater transparency and—in the medium-term—efficiency in how defence resources were used.

However, donors and GoU had divergent views on what 'reform' would entail. While, for the former, reform has been primarily about increasing transparency and accountability in how defence resources are used, for the latter reform was about modernising the military (primarily through the purchase of new military equipment), purposely to increase the military's edge in the counterinsurgency campaign in the north of the country.

In May 2004, following completion of the Defence Review, the Government requested a 30 per cent increase in defence spending, bringing it to UGX 390 billion. Donors rejected this budget on two key grounds: first, because it was not clear that the defence budget reflected the findings of the Defence Review which called for a balanced approach to addressing both operational and non-operational deficiencies in the defence sector; second, because of a lack of transparency in large portions of the budget relating in particular to 'classified' expenditures which were believed to cover procurement of 'unneeded' military equipment. In June the GoU decided to reduce the 2004-05 budget to UGX 350 billion.

The outcome of the discussions which ensued between GoU and donors following the impasse over the budget was GoU agreement to fulfil a number of conditions including: completing a costed Corporate Plan that would detail how key reforms were to be financed and achieved; establishing a Defence Sector Working group in which donors and GoU could have regular discussions on defence issues; providing access to the auditor general and a select group of donors to the classified budget (though not Parliament); and extending new GoU laws and procedures on finance and procurement, which had been introduced in the public sector, to the defence sector.

Of these four areas, progress has been most visible in relation to the corporate planning process which has been embedded in the MOD/UPDF and cascaded throughout the organisation. A new procurement manual for the defence sector has also been developed with the assistance of the SSDAT which provides guidance for how the country's Procurement Law should be put into practice. Although the Defence Sector Working Group has met on a number of occasions, it has not become a forum for regular discussion between Government and donor partners about defence reform as originally anticipated. One reason for this is that Government has been particularly reluctant to engage in discussion with donors about the thorny issue of the classified budget.

In 2006, UK assistance to the DRS was put on hold for a period of nine months, coinciding with national elections, during which it was felt that a constructive environment for effective engagement on defence reform issues did not exist. Among other things, there was concern about the slow pace of implementation of the Defence Review findings as well as the fact that Government procurement decisions, influenced by the ongoing war in the North, were not in line with the Corporate Plan. By the end of the year, however, discussions between donors (led by DFID and the SSDAT) and the Government had again resumed in view of identifying mutually beneficial areas of engagement within both the defence and wider 'security sector'.

While the SSDAT was off the scene, five Reform Work Committees (RWCs) were created by the DRS to take forward programmes falling out of the Defence Transformation White Paper.⁸⁶ Although a new programme for UK support to defence reform has not yet been agreed, the Ministry of Defence has submitted a formal request for assistance which largely coincide with the RWCs. This request for assistance has remained under review during 2007, even as the SSDAT has continued to provide low-level of support to the DRS in a number of areas including corporate planning, procurement reform and public relations.

Close attention will have to be paid to signals most especially emanating from the President on the government's general acceptance of externally initiated reforms to an institution that is critical to the current political dispensation. If externally initiated reforms are to be welcomed by aid recipient countries, donors will have to acknowledge that those countries are sensitive about their own independence. For example, one would question the wisdom of donors asking for details on classified accounts when Ugandan legislators themselves do not have access to details on classified defence expenditure procurement. By insisting on this, donors run the risk of not only alienating the parliamentarians but also playing into the hands of President Museveni who has distinguished himself as the champion of national independence. In light of this, it came as not surprise when in May 2005 at the height of haggling over the defence budget the President wrote a furious letter to the UK Secretary for International Development stating that:

What I find unacceptable, however, is for some of you to continue to think, and even say, that because of the modest sums you give a country like Uganda, you are entitled to exercise suzerainty over our sovereignty issues (foreign affairs, politics and defence) our persistent but polite rejections of that position notwithstanding. What Uganda and Africa

⁸⁶ The five areas are: procurement and logistics; human resources and welfare; research and development; military capability; and corporate planning.

need most is independence in decision making and not subservience, satellite status or dependency status.⁸⁷

A feeling of a potential loss of independence as expressed above, and a perception by aid recipients that donors are unduly intrusive in matters of their own (recipients') internal administration may not bode well for donor-driven SSR.

Security Policy Framework

It is likely that any future UK programme of support will seek to build upon and broaden recent UK assistance in the defence sector. One potential area of support is to take forward work on the Security Policy Framework (SPF) which was the key output of Phase 1 of the Defence Review. The SPF provides a basis for development of a more integrated and sustainable responses to security problems which effectively combine a range of developmental, diplomatic, legal, political and security instruments. This is key in the long term to developing defence forces which are appropriately tasked, equipped, and managed and to ensuring that defence spending is maintained at appropriate levels. Nevertheless, while the SPF provides a basis for developing a more integrated security architecture, there are a number of challenges in taking this initiative forward.

First, while the SPF emerged from the Defence Review, the logical home for this initiative falls within the competence of an actor outside defence with a wide security remit. Following the Defence Review, responsibility for the SPF was formally transferred to the President's Office, though momentum to develop it ground to a halt. The National Security Council, established in 2000, is another instrument by which the SPF could be activated. However, it has never been fully empowered to work on policy issues even though the Act which establishes it provides for very broad cross-governmental representation and charges it with advising the President on security-related matters. Part of the problem is that the NSC does not have a formal Secretariat to manage its activities. The other issue is that the President's natural inclination is to seek advice on security matters from his close advisers, including the 'historicals' (senior veterans of the guerrilla phase of the NRM) who retain significant influence.

But there are also big challenges involved in developing the SPF which should be recognised. Operationalising the SPF will require Ugandans to embrace new security concepts and develop new institutional mechanisms and human capacities. While there are clear long-term incentives for Uganda to

⁸⁷ The full text of the letter is available in: 'Budget Cuts: Museveni Writes to UK', *The New Vision*, 24 December 2005.

develop a framework for state security action that makes better use of available policy instruments and is more sensitive to human development goals, in the short-term this will involve making politically-difficult decisions about spending priorities and where to invest in capacity building. A further disincentive for developing the SPF is that this would likely open up to further public (and donor) scrutiny and debate a policy issue which is a cornerstone of both national sovereignty and Movement efforts to retain power.

Law and order reforms

A number of donors have provided support for police and justice reforms in the framework of a Justice, Law and Order Sector (JLOS) programme, established in 2000. The Dutch have been leading on this initiative, principally by providing financial support in the framework of its budget support agreement with GoU. The JLOS programme went through a mid-term evaluation in 2004, and a final report of was released which spells out both the key accomplishments, and a number of significant future challenges.⁸⁸ A key issue highlighted is the need for a coherent link between JLOS and defence sector work.

During 2005-06 consultations were conducted in view of developing an investment plan for Phase 2 of JLOS which was launched in 2007. The strategic aim of ensuring the safety of the person and security of property has been maintained, though the JLOS will continue to maintain a peripheral engagement with the small arms issue which has been left to the Defence sector to spearhead. Nevertheless, in recognition of the prospects for peace in Northern Uganda, fully 30per cent of the budget for 2006/07-10/11 will be spent on strengthening the police presence in Northern Uganda, a policy which is also intended to smooth the way for a withdrawal of the UPDF from the region.

Financial management

Control of security expenditure has been preferred strategy of donors to promote increased accountability over the security forces. There is some indication that the recent work on corporate planning is having an impact on how Departmental Heads within the MOD manage their business, particularly when it comes to preparing budgetary submissions to the Ministry of Finance for funding. This may reflect an understanding that funding is finite and that spending decisions must be geared toward the achievement of agreed targets. This is all the more the case because defence is no longer the Government's top priority for expenditure.

⁸⁸ Justice, Law and Order Strategic Investment Plan Mid-Term Evaluation, December 2004.

Yet there are a number of reasons to be sceptical about the impact which these reforms will have on financial management within the defence sector. The main one is simply that the President has significant Executive authority when it comes to determining how public spending is allocated. The Ministry of Finance has never had real access to information on the composition of defence spending or autonomy to enforce compliance with budgetary submissions in the absence of strong monitoring systems. While donor assistance has helped to strengthen financial auditing instruments within Government, these have not been systematically extended into the defence sector.

Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP)

The PEAP (Uganda's version of the PRSP) has recently added a new third pillar (out of five) which gives greater visibility to security issues than has traditionally been the case in PRSP documents. The new pillar on 'Security, conflict resolution, and disaster management' stems from recognition that a more integrated response is required to problems of conflict, insecurity and human disasters. While it is clear that not all security concerns can be resolved through the PEAP process alone, this is a significant step forward because it has raised the profile of security and defence issues in the debate on how to overcome the barriers to development in Uganda.

Moreover, the PEAP provides a framework in which donor countries, which have traditionally been reluctant to engage with defence and security issues due to their sensitivity and other legal barriers, can now provide support for GoU reforms in this area. The PEAP document is also significant because it injects a bit of realism into GoU plans for defence transformation, noting that 'it may be necessary to phase the investments in military transformation more slowly than the Defence Review assumes'.⁸⁹ While the eventual achievement of a sustainable peace in the North may allow for reductions in current defence expenditures, the military will likely argue that savings should be invested in professionalising the military to prevent a recurrence of violence.

DDR

Multi-lateral support has been provided to the Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (MDRP) and the associated World Bank managed trust fund to which all Utstein countries contribute (Netherlands, United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Canada).⁹⁰ The MDRP has supported GoU efforts, particularly through the Amnesty Commission to demobilise

⁸⁹ The Uganda Poverty Eradication Action Plan (Version 3), December 2004.

⁹⁰ <http://www.mdrp.org/partner.htm>.

various armed groups which have opposed the GoU over the past 18 years. While the MDRP, through the Amnesty Commission has a continuing mandate and role to play in demobilising the LRA if the current peace talks are sustained, this does not include militia forces. Government has approached donors for assistance in this area, but most are wary given the complexity of defining and identifying militia forces or operationalising such a programme.

The other question which will likely arise, in the event that there is a sustainable end to the violent conflict in the North, relates to the future size of the UPDF. It seems unlikely that there will be a rapid down-sizing of the military for the political reasons outlined above which favour the maintenance of a large military force. GoU has already made it clear that while it would like to streamline the military, the priority is to get rid of the old and infirm, and to establish a larger reserve force. It has approached donors for assistance to divest the UPDF of 10-15,000 'ineffective' troops, for whom it cannot afford to pay pensions. The UPDF argues that retaining these soldiers on the books will prevent them from implementing much needed reforms. Yet the general donor response has been that this issue falls outside the remit of a formal DDR programme (including the MDRP) and that solutions should be found within the main Government budget.

Prospects and directions for future SSR

Prospects for SSR will be heavily influenced by the path of political change in Uganda over the next five years. Even in the best-case scenario—a sustainable end to hostilities in the North, and a stable political situation—reform will be slow due to attitudinal, political and structural barriers. While the success of SSR efforts in Uganda will be to a significant degree determined by governance reforms outside the security system, complementary institutional reforms will need to take place across the range of security departments and agencies, not just defence. The Defence Review has demonstrated that the military offers a useful entry-point for wider SSR, but it also showed the limits of such an approach in the absence of a top-level, civilian-led and empowered cross-government approach.⁹¹

Donors would be wise, however, to be cautious about encouraging GoU to embark too quickly on a major SSR programme. There is a danger of overloading the Government reform agenda due to the lack of sufficient political will and institutional capacity at present for far-reaching institutional reforms in the security domain. A two-pronged approach may be needed that seeks to sustain

⁹¹ See OECD-DAC Policy Paper on 'Security System Reform and Governance: Policy and Good Practice', Box 3.13, p. 44, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/39/31785288.pdf>.

the progress made in the defence sector over the past two years while laying the groundwork for longer-term institutional change in the wider security system. In this regard, there are a number of critical challenges for SSR in Uganda which will shape and condition the success of reform efforts.

Uganda, situated as it is in the heart of Africa's conflict-ridden Great Lakes region, will need to continue contending with a range of conflicts spilling over from neighbouring countries which may exacerbate internal political tensions. Resolving ongoing internal conflicts and managing tensions between Uganda and its neighbouring countries is essential from an SSR perspective because these security challenges have contributed to significant militarisation which Uganda can ill-afford. These conflicts have also resulted in associated security problems resulting from poorly trained and managed security forces that at times prey upon civilians. In the absence of a sustainable solution to these conflicts, it is unlikely that efforts to enhance border security controls as a means of checking flows of light weapons will achieve the desired outcomes.

A second key challenge for security system governance relates to the pace and direction of wider government reform processes. In short, it would be unrealistic to expect the security institutions to be reformed and strengthened more rapidly than in other sectors. Starting in the mid to late 1990s, there were significant achievements at many levels of the public service in terms of improving the quality and quantity of service delivery, including in particular in the health and education sectors. These achievements, which have received much attention internationally, were made possible by more effective financial management and by the general strengthening of public sector institutions. Donors have provided extensive support for these reforms and, with the move to budget support, have demonstrated a desire for a more 'partnership'-based approach to development assistance in which GoU has been encouraged to determine its strategic priorities which donors will support.

In recent years, however, the impetus for reform has slowed markedly. At many levels, GoU has shown itself reluctant to take difficult decisions in view of addressing problems like corruption and wastage of resources. There is increasing concern that early achievements in terms of poverty reduction have slowed considerably or may not have been as significant as otherwise hoped. Generally, across the board, there was a feeling before the 2006 elections that the commitment to undertake difficult reforms was waning. In these circumstances, it should not have been a surprise that SSR would also lag.

External pressure for reform cannot substitute for an internally driven process of change. Progress in the area of SSR will require the strengthening of internal drivers of 'demand' for reform, coming from various sources including the general population, organised civil society and lobbying groups, opposition

political parties and from within the political and security establishment itself. This will require a rethinking of how the donor community conceptualises the 'reform' agenda, with much greater emphasis placed on understanding and addressing the current structural and political barriers to change.⁹²

A third challenge relates to the trajectory of Uganda's political development. President Museveni's decision to extend his stay in power at the 2006 elections received strong opposition from his political opponents and many of his close comrades. With the possibility that some would seek to challenge the regime militarily, there were significant efforts on the part of the GoU to strengthen control over the security apparatus, including the military, police and militias in view of shaping the outcome of the 2006 elections. This came at a time when Ugandan society was already being militarised at a pace and to a degree which was a cause of concern for a number of reasons. The proliferation of a range of regular and irregular security forces in Uganda in recent years is a symptom of wider weaknesses in the management of security by the state and a reluctance of key political figures in Uganda to embrace the principle of the alternation of political power.

⁹² Mutengesha and Hendrickson, *op. cit.*

Chapter 6

Conclusions

The SSR model, developed by donors of the global North is overly suffused with Western norms and 'best' practices and is yet to be adequately adapted to the Ugandan political and institutional context. This context is characterised by persisting conflict and instability; an ongoing process of consolidating state authority and institutions; and a politico-military culture where violence has been entrenched as an instrument of political action. Each of these factors have contributed to the emergence of a state security apparatus which far from being able to exercise a monopoly over violence is just an additional faction in political contestation, only serving to exacerbate existing divisions and heightening the demand for light weapons. In this context, prospects for addressing the problem of small arms through SSR will be enhanced by taking into account several key features not just of the security apparatus, but also of the wider processes of political development and evolution of the state in general.

Arms are not alms. They are commodities produced by entrepreneurs who are intent on disposing of their wares profitably and on a steady basis. Most arms control initiatives have tended to concentrate their efforts and advocacy at the demand side of the cycle of movement of arms as commodities, while disregarding the supply side, which in all probability may have a role to play in generating demand for their products. SSR is an attempt to alter the state of affairs only at the demand side, and is therefore inherently limited in what it can achieve in the broader context of the SALW problem as a complex chain of demand and supply of profitable commodities. With regard to Uganda, and indeed any other country, SSR is only one of various interventions needed to address light weapons problems, including addressing the international trade dimension, intractable regional conflicts and tensions, political transitions within and in the immediate neighbourhood. It would not be realistic to expect SSR or any other downstream reform, to shoulder the entire burden for addressing the SALW problem. Important as it is, SSR can only be the icing on the cake.

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Annex A

Rebel Movements in Uganda, 1986-2006

Organisation	Zone of operation	Period of existence
Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDM/A)	Central North (mainly Acholi Region)	1986-87
Uganda People's Army (UPA)	Teso Region	1986-92
Ninth October Movement/Army (NOM/A)	Eastern (Tororo, Mbale)	1986-
Uganda Mujahdeen Movement (UMM)	Western and Central Regions	1996-?
Allied Democratic Front/Force (ADF)	Western and Central Regions	From 1996
Force Obote Back Army (FOBA),	Eastern (Tororo, Mbale)	1986
Federal Democratic Movement (Fedemo)	Central (Buganda) Region	1981-
Ruwenzururu Kingdom Freedom Movement	Ruwenzori Region	1960s-94
Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM)	Central (Buganda) Region	1981-88
West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) I &II	West Nile region	1979-2003
Uganda National Democratic Alliance (UNDA)	Central (Buganda) Region	1994-95
National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU)	Kasese District	From 1986
Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF) I &II	West Nile Region	1986-2003
Holy Spirit Movement/Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSM) I & II	Central North (mainly Acholi Region)	1987-88
Citizen Army for Multiparty Politics (CAMP),	Central North (mainly Lango Region)	1997-99
Action Restore Justice (ARJ)		
Former Uganda National Army (FUNA),	West Nile Region	1979-87

Anti-Referendum Army (ARA),		1997-?
Peoples' Redemption Army (PRA)	Western and Southwestern	2001 to date
Uganda Salvation Force/Army (USF/A)	Kenyan Border Region	1998-?
Lord's Army	Central North (mainly Acholi Region)	1988-89
Lord's Resistance Army (LRA),	Central North (mainly Acholi Region)	1989-to date