

**Abstract For Thesis Titled: Post-Conflict Recovery Efforts And Enhancement Of Human Security In Northern Uganda: A Case Of Peace Recovery And Development Plan (Prdp) In Gulu District.**

**Anne Abaho**

**Introduction**

Conflict poses serious challenges at all levels – from individual to collective compromising the chances of achieving political, social and economic stability (Ferguson, 2010). Ferguson explains the size of the problem in statistical forms indicating that about 191 million people lost their lives to political violence in the 20th century and since the turn of the century, about 4million have died in armed conflict (Ferguson, 2010). In 2008, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) confirmed that conflict has devastating consequences; creates large numbers of casualties either directly or indirectly, exacerbates malnutrition and disease, substantially leads to loss of livelihood, employment and incomes, collapses infrastructure, State institutions and rule of law as well as maintains a chain of insecurity and fractured social networks (UNDP, 2008; David, Baston & Mills, 2011). These consequences have serious implications on both State and human security. In the post-conflict setting though, the effects of conflict may worsen and compromise the enjoyment and realization of human security.

This research purposed to; investigate the effectiveness of the

post-conflict recovery efforts (specifically the PRDP) in enhancing human security in Northern Uganda, Gulu district. The study was premised on the fact that despite a number of post-conflict recovery efforts implemented in Northern Uganda, human insecurity has remained high. It was guided by 4 specific objectives; (analyzing the different dimensions of human security affected by conflict in Gulu district, Northern Uganda; assessing how existing post-conflict recovery efforts (with specific reference to PRDP) enhance human security in Gulu district, Northern Uganda; examining the challenges encountered by post-conflict recovery actors in ensuring human security in Gulu district, Northern Uganda and proposing ways through which post-conflict recovery efforts can effectively enhance human security).

### **Methodology**

The study opted for a non-positivist research perspective that encourages understanding and interpretation of social reality subjectively as each event may mean differently to different people (Sobh & Perry, 2006). As such, the interpretation and derivation of meaning from any given event/s that may appear related can as well have different meaning/s in view of the context, social forces and actors involved. Hence, for non-positivists, social actions and experiences do not exist in themselves but are rather dependent on their recognition and interpretation by social actors (Alessandrini, n.d).

Following the non-positivist research paradigm, realism was

preferred as the research philosophy. Realism, as used in this research is different from the commonly referred to International Relations Theory that values military power as a guarantor of State security. As used in this study, realism considers that reality is not necessarily connected to the researcher's mind. For realists, such an approach allows the researcher to make credible observations in, for example, single cases to determine causation without necessarily comparing situations (Sayer, 1992).

The study took a qualitative approach because it allows a deeper understanding of the meaning and nature of people's experiences regarding different problems and provides room to obtain intricate details about phenomena. Hence as opposed to a quantitative approach that lends itself more to causation, the qualitative approach appreciates feelings, thought processes and emotions that may be difficult to understand in more conventional research ways (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This approach allowed the researcher to study the threats to conflict by interacting with those that lived through the conflict years (returnees) and gave opportunity to the researcher to understand and interpret the meanings, expressions and experiences of the participants. The richness of the qualitative approach in research was appreciated by Creswell (2007) when he advised that for one to be able to obtain a complex, detailed understanding of an issue which (detail) can be best established by talking directly with people, going to their homes or places of work and allowing them to tell their stories unencumbered by

what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature, a qualitative research approach should be adopted.

Using Gulu district as a case study, an in-depth analysis of the problem was conducted. Gulu district was preferred because of its central position during the LRA conflict. The district suffered attacks from the LRA and counter-attacks from the Uganda Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF) that in turn affected human security. The Catholic Relief Services (CRS) explained that Gulu town for example became a base for rebel attacks and due to the terror unleashed on the citizens in the periphery areas, it turned out to be a destination for the night commuters (CRS, 2004). The study involved 44 participants that were purposively chosen and thus allowed capturing of a wide range of views and experiences from different respondents until the saturation point<sup>1</sup>. The saturation point was reached in the fifth Focus Group Discussion (FGD) during which threats to human security such as the collapse of health and educational infrastructure as well as loss of life were repeated.

### **Key Findings**

The study found that a number of human security dimensions were affected by the conflict. These included displacement and social disconnection thus affecting group/community security. group/community security was majorly affected due to the destruction of social norms, cultural erosion and loss of authority.

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<sup>1</sup> Saturation point as used in qualitative research is the point at which nothing new comes from the data.

Conflict also had an impact on livelihood aspects such as property destruction that has resulted in poverty; the collapse of public services such as health, water and education as well as criminality and personal insecurity that resulted from, among others, the use of children and youth in conflict-related activities, unemployment and a fast-growing economy.

During the study, it was confirmed that the existing post-conflict recovery efforts have, despite the ineffectiveness focused on enhancing human security. Some of the ways through which the existing efforts specifically the PRDP have enhanced human security include; addressing economic security; peace-building efforts and enhancement of social security (such as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and delivery of justice); community-based empowerment efforts and infrastructural rehabilitation (water and sanitation, health and education) and restoration of State authority to enhance personal security.

The challenges encountered by the post-conflict recovery actors in enhancing human security were identified as struggles over land; poverty, corruption, marginalization and informal vs formal means of justice. The participants suggested that to effectively address human security in the post-conflict setting, there should be awareness-raising, involvement of intended beneficiaries in programs and justice through the return of lost items.

## Recommendations

From the above findings, the study recommended that;

(a) Working with humanitarian organizations, the Government should commit to restoring health services both in terms of human capital and infrastructural development. Such a move shall be critical in filling the human gaps in the service sector but also rebuilding the broken-down infrastructure.

(b) There should be a deliberate investment in counselling services as a way of mitigating trauma.

(c) In equal measure, both Government and non-state actors such as Non-Governmental Organizations should focus on re-vamping the educational services through recruitment of qualified staff and investment in educational materials such as furniture and books.

(d) Further, the government needs to deliberately target the most vulnerable and give them adequate training in enterprising activities, and sufficient extension services, and handsome capitalisation of the income-generating projects.

## Key References

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