

CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATING CHILDREN BORN IN ARMED CONFLICT;

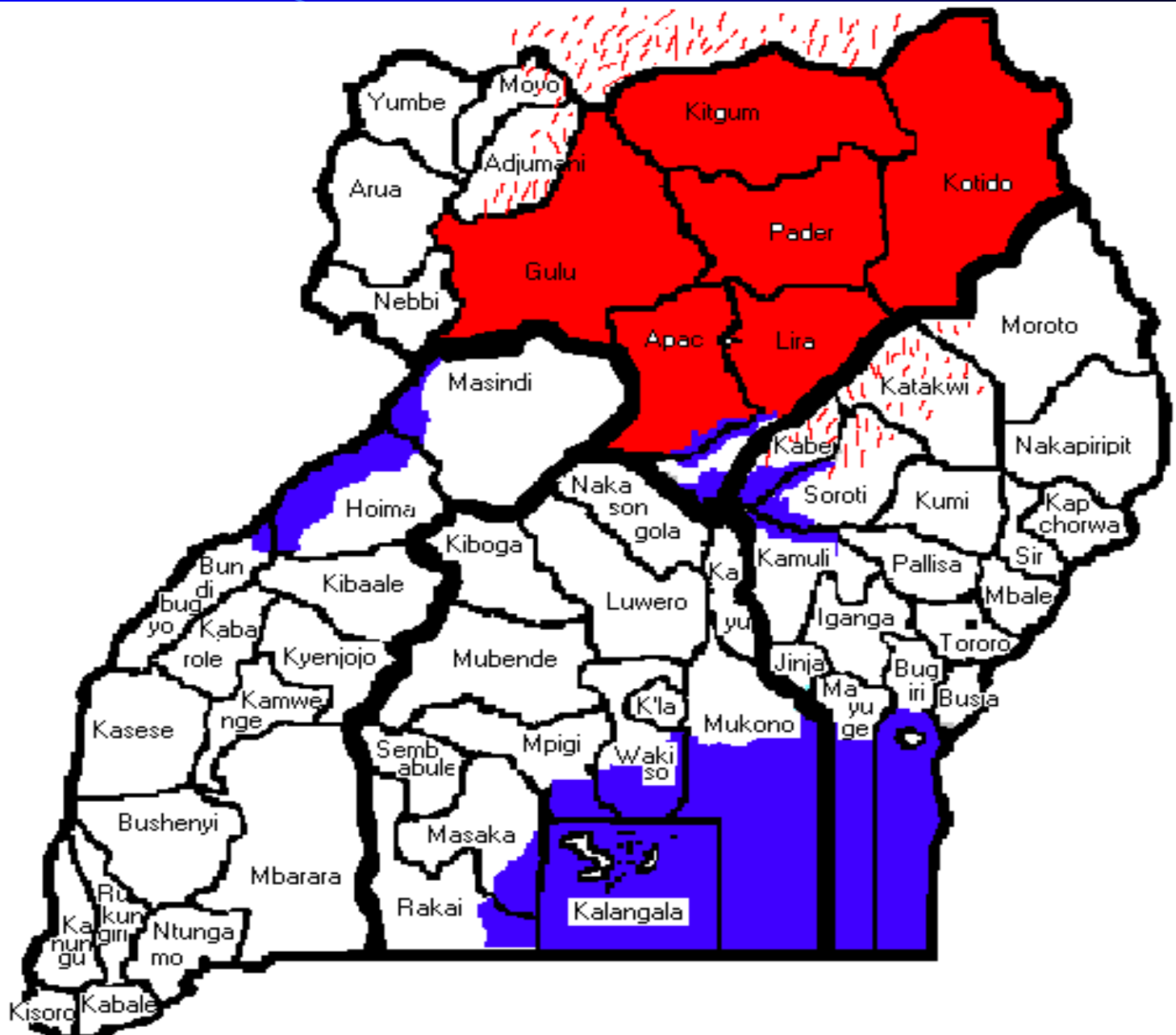
THE CASE OF CHILDREN BORN OF THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY-NORTHERN UGANDA

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MAP OF UGANDA SHOWING CONFLICT AFFECTED DISTRICTS



BACKGROUND

Contextual Situation

- **The war in Northern Uganda has lasted 19 years**
- **Resulted in death of more than 25,000 persons**
- **Abduction of over 25,000 children**
- **Destruction of property**
- **Destruction of livelihoods**
- **Destruction of social and cultural norms**
- **Displacement of over 1.5 million persons into camps**
- **Emergence of children born of forced pregnancies**

The emerging generation of children in the conflict (Lost generation)

- Children born and growing up in IDP Camps
- Children born in army(UPDF) detachments/war fronts
- Children born of the LRA estimated at 5000 (freed from LRA) – largely mothered by abducted girls

THE KEY CHALLENGES

- **The legal provisions are lacking at all levels**
- **The psychosocial/ other challenges for Children born in the confines of the war-as in the case of the LRA**
- **Integration mechanism specifically tailored for children born of armed conflict (the LRA)**

THE LEGAL REGIMES SPECIFICALLY ON CHILDREN BORN IN ARMED CONFLICT

International & Regional measures

- UDHR

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Its Two Optional Protocols
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC).

LEGAL REGIMES Continued

- **National Provisions (Including traditional/cultural opportunities)**
 - **Constitution (1995)**
 - **Children's Act (1996)**
- **GAPS**
 - **Appropriate legislation and measures (lacks)**
 - **Failed to Prevent the continuing mass abductions or involvement of girls in armed conflict**
 - **Protection during confrontation**
- **There is however no specific references within any legal entity to guarantee a place for children born of armed conflict- thus fueling certain actions towards them with impunity**

THE PSYCHOSOCIAL/ OTHER CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN BORN IN THE CONFINES OF THE WAR-AS IN THE CASE OF THE LRA

- **Long confinement in situation of conflict**
- **Rejection by family and community of the parents**
- **Denial of Basic Rights**
 - Name and Nationality
 - Immunization
 - Food
 - Parentage
 - Recreation

PSYCHOSOCIAL/ OTHER CHALLENGES CONTINUED

- Security of the person
- Shelter, clothing, water and other basics
- Harmful social and cultural practices
- Physical and psychosocial recovery and integration

DENIAL OF RIGHTS

- Some Examples from a recent study undertaken:

- Name

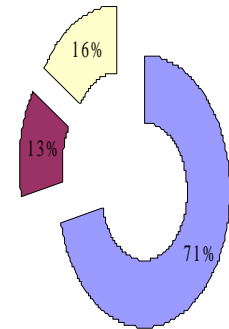
- 71% OF THEM HAD TRAUMATIC NAMES

(Often a-sum up of all the bad experiences of the child mother)

- Nationality

- uncertainty from certain sections of the rural population in the country are severing the children born between these people from citizenship

Illustration a: Denial of the Right to a Name and Nationality



■ Associated with plight ■ ordinary meaning ■ other

Denial of Rights Continued

- Some Examples from recent study:
 - **Immunization**
 - 96% never get immunized at the hands of the rebels
 - 3% (top leader's) were immunized at Khartoum during the LRA's good days
 - **Fear**
 - Darkness-Nil (they find solace in darkness/can go unnoticed and safe)
 - Military as greatest fear

Illustration b: Access to Immunisation

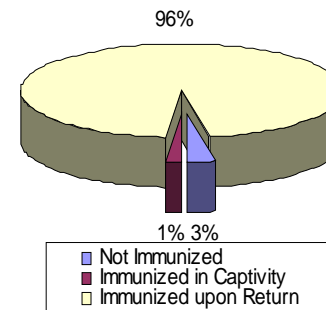
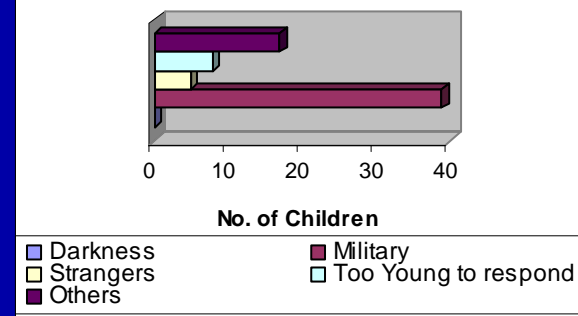


Illustration e: Causes of Fear



INTEGRATION MECHANISM FOR CHILDREN BORN IN LRA ENCLAVES

- Psychosocial Status Of Children Born Of Armed Conflict Is Alarminglly Poor
- Rejection Is Clearly Evident At Family As Well As Community Levels
- Government Of Uganda Has Not Made Any Recognition Of This As A Problem Yet.
 - Affirmative action to guarantee special measures

INTEGRATION MECHANISM CONTINUED

- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Are Responding To The Plight Of Children In Armed Conflict In Northern Uganda
- Mainly, Reintegration is the main area of intervention
- Even so, Issues Associated With Sexual Abuse Are conspicuously missing out in the Mainstream of Support Offered to These Children Returning From abduction
- No CSO However Has Children Born In Captivity As One Of Its Primary Targets

Conclusion

- Children Born in Armed Conflict Are the Most Forgotten Known Category of Children in Armed Conflict World Wide
- More Specific Provisions for Children in the Category of Those Born in Armed Conflict Who Are at the Moment in Their Thousands Globally, Are Lacking. More So, Those Born in the Confines of Combatants' Encampments Like the LRA Born Children
- Programmes Supporting Children in Armed Conflict Have Not Been Designed to Cater for the Special Needs of Children Born in Armed Conflict, and More So, Children in the Category of Those Born of the LRA

Conclusion continued

- **Indeed the Lack of Proper Mechanisms for Children Born in Such Category Will See the Failure of These Children to Fit and Survive Outside the (LRA) System.**

International Interventions That Shall Spell Out Specific Legal Provisions and Matching Mechanism Is Overwhelmingly Recommended. A Quick and Appropriate Response on This Will Also Form the Basis for Interventions Globally.



THANK YOU