



**Mapping and Analyses of Election-induced Violence
&
Mitigation in Northern Uganda: Towards a
Framework for Stability.**

A Research Report.

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Table of Content

ACRONYMS	4
ABSTRACT.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	5
Background.....	7
Context: Northern Uganda.....	7
Significance of the study.....	8
Overall objectives.....	8
METHODOLOGY.....	9
Pre-fieldwork consultation.....	9
Fieldwork.....	9
Ethical considerations.....	9
EMERGING ISSUES.....	9
Election as a means to achieving democracy.....	9
Defining and conceptualizing electoral violence.....	10
Election violence in Pader and Agago districts.....	11
<i>Intimidation</i>	12
<i>Defacing candidate’s posters</i>	12
<i>Vote rigging</i>	13
ROOT CAUSES OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE.....	13
<i>Multiparty democracy</i>	13
<i>The role of the Electoral Commission</i>	14
<i>Economic poverty</i>	15
<i>Multiple identities and affiliations</i>	16
<i>Intrinsic violence</i>	16
PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS OF ELECTION VIOLENCE.....	16
TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK OF STABILITY: MECHANISMS FOR ADDRESSING ELECTION VIOLENCE.....	18



Linking socio-economic and political vulnerabilities to election violence	19
Mitigating vulnerabilities to electoral violence.....	21
Good practices that contributed to violence free election.	23
Points of actions for stakeholders.....	24
CONCLUSION	25
REFERENCE.....	26

ACRONYMS.

ARiD	Advocates for Research in Development.
CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations.
DP	Democratic Party.
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo.
EISA	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa.
KY	Kabaka Yekka.
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army.
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa.
SADC	Southern Africa Development Cooperation.
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme.
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.
UPDF	Uganda People Defense Forces.

ABSTRACT.

The main aim of the study was to map and analyse the nature of election induced violence in post-conflict northern Uganda districts of Pader and Agago. The study assumed that the holding of regular elections is one of the main attributes of representative democracy. And that, a nation can be considered to be democratic if its electoral process is also considered to be free, fair, just and open to the participation of all-political parties and adult suffrage.

This exploratory research, therefore, focused on community perceptions of what they consider potential triggers of election related violence in northern Uganda – in a country which holds regular general elections after every five year constitutional terms. In retrospect, we examined the voting patterns of the study area during and after the armed conflict which northern Uganda persevered for over two decades.

The hypotheses which guided our study were based on the evolving patterns of voting behaviour and electorates' expectations during and after the civil wars. These are: first, *civil war influences the general voting patterns and during which time there is limited election-related violence*. The main assumption related to this hypothesis is based on the view that the people affected by conflict have more common pressing needs which make them repress their social differences. These are, therefore, reflected in their bloc voting patterns.

Secondly, *post-conflict contexts enable redefinition of societal identities. These identities reassert themselves and become more important and whenever they are manipulated through political competitions, violence results*. Here, we assume that as a society reasserts itself in a post-conflict context, multiple identity issues become more

salient as they provide pathways for strengthening solidarity during the post-conflict recovery. They, however, can easily be manipulated during political competition resulting in inter-group tensions.

The research report presents the findings from a one month study on election-induced violence, the views based on experiences emanating from the different roles played during the recently concluded national general elections in Uganda. In this report, different types/ forms of election violence and the causes are mapped and discussed with examples; factors that determine voting behavior in the two districts are explained and linked to the electoral violence; the report goes further to discuss, in themes, community mitigating circumstances that influence violent-free elections in northern Uganda before concluding with suggestions and recommendations to stakeholders for achieving a violent-free elections in the region.



INTRODUCTION.

The holding of regular elections is one of the main attributes of representative democracy. A nation can, therefore, be considered to be democratic if its electoral process is regarded as free, fair, just and open to the participation of all-political parties and adult suffrage. In the aftermath of the Cold War, most of the countries in the world moved towards strengthening democratic governance in the quest for sustainable socio-economic and political stability and human security. “Democracy” as a concept comes with the rights to participate in a country’s affairs even though the participation element alone is not enough to claim it.

Since attaining political independence in the 1960s, many African countries went through several decades in trying to undertake first tentative steps towards democratization. Matlosa (2003) points to a plethora of literature which suggests that countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have been undergoing a major democratic wave since the 1990s (see scholarly works of Ake, 1996; Hyslop, 1999; Reynolds, 1999; Ake, 2000; UNDP, 2002; Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Huntington, 1999; Bujra and Adejumobi, 2002).¹

Although SSA countries have been pursuing the course of democracy, its understanding seems to be relative. To Bujra and Buthelezi², democracy is understood to mean the

“Ability of the citizens in society or participants in an organisation to effectively take in the choice of their representatives or leadership and to

effectively participate in the decisions made on issues that affect them or society in general. As a system, democracy should be biased in favour of social justice and equality of access to national resources”.

Given the foregoing definition, it is apparent that democracy is a system of governance that seeks to represent people through inculcating the values of equality and justice. The democratic ethos emphasises free and fair elections for all countries from the Western industrialized ones to the developing countries of the South. In as much as it is the main responsibility of government to ensure the running of countries affairs, governments do not work in isolation and, as such, the systems and actions they adopt are usually scrutinized and at times contested by the governed through various methods. It is not surprising, therefore, for a country’s electoral process to usually be marred by a tug of war between the ruling parties and the opposition on the one hand, and the people represented by various civil society organizations and the government on the other hand. It is rare cases that election outcomes reflect the will of the people in SSA.

Whilst it can be argued that it is the government’s responsibilities to draw up electoral systems and conduct elections, civil society has a normative role to play in ensuring the success of the electoral processes – which reflect free, fair, just and transparent participation which are consistent with the nation’s constitution as well as the wishes and aspirations of the majority of the people. Where the process of electoral democracy has been attainable, civil society has been a very significant stakeholder.

In contrast, evidence has shown that electoral democracy may be a trigger or an outlet of unaddressed deep rooted grievances in the community in forms of voting patterns or reactions to outcomes. In many cases, election

¹ Maltose K (2003) Electoral System Reform, Democracy and Stability in the SADC Region: A Comparative Analysis. Johannesburg: EISA

² Bujra, M. and Buthelezi, S (eds). (2002). Leadership, Civil Society and Democratisation in Africa: Case Studies from Southern Africa. Addis Ababa: UNECA.

outcomes are contested. The recent trend of persistent contestations of election outcomes and violence across Africa is indicative of entrenched patrimonialism and ‘big-man’ politics which usually results into an outbreak of communal violence at both the national and local level. Election outcome contestations raise questions of legitimacy, transition, accountability political leadership in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (DRC, Ivory Coast and Uganda in 2011; Kenya and Zimbabwe in 2008). Ivory Coast, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, South Sudan and the DRC are but few examples which attest to this claim.

Background.

Uganda, a former British colony and a land-connected country, lies astride the latitude 0⁰ (the Equator). It is bordered by Kenya to the east, Rwanda and Tanzania to the south, the DRC to the West and South Sudan to the north. Uganda prides itself with 61 tribes³ and a population estimated at 31.5 million people.

Pre-independent Uganda did not have any form of ‘electoral democracy’ as the country’s political affairs were managed by the colonial masters. Prior to the colonial period, some parts of Uganda had highly organised central system of governance under kingdoms and decentralised chieftaincies in the rest, which managed socio-economic and political affairs of the society.

The introduction of electoral ‘democracy’ in the run-up to independence created complexities to Uganda nation-building. Religious and ethnic identities underpinned inexorably the formation of pre-independence political parties. Notably, the Uganda National Congress founded in 1952 was predominantly Protestant, the Democratic Party (DP) formed

in 1956 predominantly Catholic while the *Kabaka Yekka* (KY) party created in 1961 was a predominantly Protestant and pro Buganda kingdom. Since then, the introduction of ‘electoral democracy’ resulted into divisive politics whose legacy continues to haunt Uganda almost 50 years since it attained its political independence.

Since 1980, election cycles in Uganda have been characterised by escalating tensions along ethnic and political lines. Predisposing factors for violence are historical in nature, broadly revolving around legal concerns relating to the primacy of state institutions, allegations of fraud and electoral malpractice, and an argument about legitimacy that addresses the transparency and fairness of the electoral process. And although none of these alone determine whether or not violence occurs, the failure to address them may lend strength to forces that may well result in political violence.

Given the trends in Uganda electoral history, however, three facts which are inescapable include the following. First, general elections have increasingly become more competitive than ever. This means that there is much more utility attached to political posts. Second, despite elections offering an opportunity for change, they process has continued to bring to the fore existing tensions and underlying social grievances. Incumbency has been synonymously associated with overwhelmingly majority win.

Context: Northern Uganda.

Advocates for Research in Development (ARiD), a research-oriented development organization in Pader district is fully aware of the profound effects of election related violence in Northern Uganda, an area that is emerging from hostilities between the government of Uganda and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). Northern Uganda is an area where over 90% of the population was

³ See detailed article information about Uganda tribes from: <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/659598>.

affected by the civil war. Although the internally displaced persons have since returned to their places of origin following the cessation of hostilities in 2006, access to basic social services, sustainable livelihoods and food security remain a major challenge. Unemployment in urban and semi-urban areas is high and income poverty in the region has continued to increase.

ARiD understands the importance of mapping vulnerability and conflict sensitivity in the target districts and the aim of analyzing community perceptions on the linkages between human security and election related violence and local coping strategies. In addition to the research report on election related conflict sensitivity during the mapping exercise, ARiD identified best practices for fast tracking vulnerability mapping that could be used beyond the target districts and suggest appropriate action plans.

The need for electoral democracy.

The electoral process of a country is critical in establishing the political leadership and in the process of democratisation. As such electoral processes are an area of great interest to the citizens of a country as well as to the sitting governments and other stakeholders. In a democratic country, ordinary citizens have the sovereign power and final authority of choosing their political leaders. As such, it is imperative to understand electoral processes operating in a country so as to determine the extent to which citizens are exercising their democratic right of choosing their leaders. More importantly, it is imperative to ascertain the link between vulnerability and violence and how such vulnerabilities can be mitigated.

Electoral processes in Africa have largely determined the fate and destiny of political leaders and also the destiny of the electorate. The design of electoral processes has largely been flawed and uneven resulting in leadership and governance problems as losing parties and

some members of the electorate point out to irregularities and unfair practices. Against this background of unsound electoral processes, civil society organisations have emerged to champion the cause of democracy by striving for free and fair elections. This study therefore intends to analyse the electoral induce violence in Pader and Agago districts and investigate whether it has links with human security.

Significance of the study.

The purpose of the study was to analyze community perceptions on human security, conflict prevention, and mitigation of election violence. Moreover, the data collected and analyzed is deemed to help enhance community human security and social cohesion.

Overall objectives.

The overall objectives of the study was to map out human security vulnerability factors which influence election processes in the target areas (Pader and Agago) and possible mechanisms of mitigating election related violence. The specific objectives include:

- Identifying and mapping socio-economic and political vulnerability factors that shape election behaviour in northern Uganda.
- Analysing the linkages between community vulnerability and election violence.
- Identifying and analysing the community mitigating circumstances that enhance social cohesion and human security that impact peaceful election processes; and
- Identifying action plans for strengthening good practices for violence free election processes in northern Uganda.

METHODOLOGY.

The research largely relied on the use of qualitative research methodology where both primary and secondary data were collected and analyzed. Methods of data collection were literature review; in-depth interviews with key informants and focus group discussions. Categorization of the key informants and participants is as in the table below:

The methodology of the research included the following stages: pre-fieldwork consultation, fieldwork and report writing.

Pre-fieldwork consultation.

This phase involved mapping the overall context, key literature and key stakeholders and drawing up an initial list of individuals and organizations to be interviewed during the fieldwork phase. This phase consisted of making initial consultations with relevant district leaderships (technical officers and politicians), international and local organizations and individuals in the targeted districts. The research participants were categorized into groups as shown in Table 1.

Fieldwork.

Consultations and stakeholder meetings with relevant actors (key actors, local partners, CSOs, local and district authorities, development actors and/or individuals of relevance) identified by ARiD were conducted in six weeks from late January to end of February 2012

Ethical considerations

The researchers in the process of conducting this study upheld high professional ethical standards including seeking informed consent of respondents, ensuring confidentiality and avoiding use of inducements such as provision of money to respondents which could have biased their responses.

Table 1: Research Participants.

	Respondents	No.
1.	District Officials: Chairperson District Local Council V	2
	Judicial Officers	2
	District Electoral Commissions	2
	Security Officers (Police and army)	4
	Political leaders: Youth Councilors	4
	Women Councilors	4
	2.	NGOs: International NGOs
National/Local NGOs and CBOs		4
Women		4
Youth organizations		4
3.	Opinion leaders	4
4.	Electorates	6
	Total	40

EMERGING ISSUES.

The following themes emerged from the analysis of the primary data.

Election as a means to achieving democracy.

Elections are of vital importance in any representative democracy whose process should recognize the people's will and sovereignty. Competitive elections are central components of democracy and a way of dealing with issues of governance. Ideally, they allow for the peaceful transfer of power and make it possible to assign accountability to those who govern. On this premise the Uganda's Electoral Commission was established under Article 60 of the constitution of the republic of Uganda, and was mandated to organize, conduct and supervise regular free

and fair elections and referenda in accordance with Article 1 of the constitution⁴.

In democratic societies, violence in connection to elections defies the very conception of democracy as built on nonviolent principles. Elections facilitate communication between politicians and citizens, and they also serve symbolic purposes by giving voice to the public. In fact, the right to elections has been enshrined in international law⁵. On this note, respondents were asked what roles political leaders must play on behalf of the people they represent once they assume elective positions. Varied responses were hence-forth given.

Political leader must sensitize the community on their roles in economic development of the nation. These include, but not limited to maintaining community roads, paying relevant taxes and being Law abiding. A leader must at all times feed the people with the changing and recurrent government policies on issues that affect them. An informed and knowledgeable community is easy to manage and difficult to manipulate, but ignorant community is backward, highly dependent on the state, lacks innovativeness which makes it vulnerable and susceptible to manipulation that causes violence. In Pader and Agago districts, respondents said political leaders should mobilize people and enforce formation of cooperative movement and unions as a move to improving social and economic welfare of the citizens through collective bargaining and marketing of outputs.

Promotion of mass production to fast-track recovery and development: Leaders should encourage people to work harder and engage in

⁴ Paper presentation at the workshop on challenges of conducting free and fair election and referenda by Mrs. Gladys M.K Nduru, Director Electoral Commission, 2003, Kampala Uganda

⁵ Election violence in conflict ridden societies: Concepts, causes and consequences.

commercial agriculture. Instead, it is alleged that the Acholi Parliamentary group recently 'de-campaigned' cotton production rather than looking for its alternative market. Some members of parliament were for instance discouraging people from growing cotton yet this is the only cash crop that historically performs well in the entire northern Uganda. It is the responsibility of elected leaders to mobilize people in the fight against poverty, corruption, and human rights violations so as to have a peaceful and strong civil society in the country.

Respondents also mentioned that a leader should have a vision of uniting the community especially given that people get divided along political parties during elections. A leader can enhance unity amongst diverse communities by explaining the purpose of elections. Once a leader is chosen people should accept and recognize the elected leader even if he/ she belong to another political party. A leader should be able to unite people to achieve a common good for the all society and not just a chosen few if unity is to be achieved.

Defining and conceptualizing electoral violence.

Jeff Fischer (2002) defines electoral violence as any random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically arm, blackmail, or abuse a political stakeholder in seeking to determine, delay or otherwise influence an electoral process. Electoral violence takes several stages – at identification/ registration of voters, during campaign, during balloting, results declaration and during representation of the electorates. Defining electoral violence becomes a matter of characterizing the actors, activities, timing, and motives.

The Actors approach to defining electoral violence in a conflict context can emerge from a variety of sources, such as state actors

(military and police), political parties, guerrilla rebel groups, and militia and paramilitary groups. Armed groups are the obvious perpetrators of electoral violence in situations of sustained violent political conflict. Electoral violence can be used as part of a militant organization's overall campaign to achieve a political goal. A dual strategy of combining electoral politics and violence might have several benefits for a militant organization. Competition in elections may "complement rather than replace the organization's military orientation" and "reduce the risk of major splits within the organization over tactics."⁶

However, political parties - both those who hold government positions and the opposition have been key organizers of electoral violence. Political parties have also been known to pay thugs or make use of the youth wing to carry out the violence. For instance, in Kenya the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) organized youth wings to work as militias both in the 1992 and 1999 elections, and violent clashes became an element in the run-up to the election. In Sri Lanka, political candidates have been hiring army deserters to threaten or physically attack rivals. Moreover, if the party system is weak and lacks legitimacy, opportunities arise for other groups to "exploit election tensions."⁷

Meanwhile, the activities and target of election violence include the harassing, assault, intimidation, rioting, destruction of property, and political assassination of candidates, election workers, and voters. Targets can be separated into four categories: electoral stakeholders (voters, candidates, election workers, media, and monitors), electoral information (registration data, vote results, ballots, campaign material), electoral facilities (polling and counting stations), and electoral events (campaign rallies, traveling to polling

stations). While physical violence targeted against individuals can influence elections in a direct manner by preventing politicians from campaigning or standing in elections or preventing voters from casting their ballots, tactics based on threat and intimidation should not be underestimated. The fear created by such tactics can substantially influence not only if people vote, but also who they will vote for (*ibid*).

In essence, electoral violence is separated from other forms of political violence by a combination of timing and motive. The time aspect relates to violence carried out during the election period. The objective of electoral violence is to influence the electoral process and in extension of its outcome.

Election violence in Pader and Agago districts.

Like other districts in northern Uganda, Pader and Agago districts are undergoing recovery and development phase after over twenty years of Lord Resistance Army's (LRA) insurgency. Majority of the people in the two districts are living below poverty line. It will be seen, that poverty is one major community vulnerability factor that partly exacerbates the electoral violence as political parties and their leaders use it to manipulate voters to achieve political objectives. One common view among all respondents in this study in relation to the recently concluded national election of 2011 was that minimal cases of violence were experienced in Agago and Pader districts compared to the previous elections - 2001 and 2006 respectively. Reasons for are discussed in the next section.

In Pader and Agago districts, participation in election was both at the primary elections of different political party representatives and the national elections. Majority of people in the two districts subscribe to four main political parties: The National Resistance Movement

⁶ Höglund, K. (2009)

⁷ *Ibid*

(NRM), Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), Uganda People's Congress (UPC), and Democratic Party (DP). Some political parties - NRM adapted adult suffrage in their primary elections. Inclusion of parties' primary elections was found necessary in this study because events and discontents that transpired there in were significantly reflected in the national elections. Widespread party election violence of varying degrees was experienced and that partly explained the participation of independent candidates (those who do not belong to any party) in the parliamentary and local council elections. The responses were given in reflection to both the recent primary and national elections. The notable electoral violence according to respondents was as below:

Intimidation.

This action transcends the entire electoral activity in Pader and Agago districts and takes many forms. Intimidation of voters, candidates and the party agents include use of threats, abusive language and physical beating of the candidate by supporters of another candidate. It is a tool used to cause fear to the electorate and the candidates on the campaign trail. The NRM (ruling party) supporters and candidates, for instance intimidate the electorates that they would miss government support if they do not vote back NRM party into power. Since northern Uganda is still recovering from the 20 years of insurgency, the ruling party uses it as a campaign tool that the people of northern Uganda that has historically not voted NRM party would return to suffering they people do not vote for NRM candidates. This campaign strategy explains the overwhelming support of NRM in 2011 national elections made some people to vote in fear of relapsing to the camp life and insurgency.

Intimidation was also manifested in terms of outright beating of political candidates so as to cause fear and submission of the candidates and/or supporters. A respondent from Pader

district, for instance recalled that one DP Parliamentary candidate was assaulted at night and beaten up by suspected supporters of a rival candidate. The case was taken to police, but was dismissed due to lack of incriminating evidence. The action nevertheless caused fear to the DP candidate who ceased to walk at night to canvas for votes.

According to respondents, the main perpetrators of this form of electoral violence include the candidates, campaign agents, police, Army, the political parties in attempts to wind popular support from the electorate, the voters themselves, and state agents. Respondents specifically mentioned the office of the Resident District Commissioners (RDCs), and District Internal Security Office (DISO) who, under the pretext of monitoring and providing security during elections, use the opportunity to intimidate electorates to vote for the ruling party who employed them. Using abusive language and telling lies during campaign have largely been blamed on the candidates. Their supporters carry on with the same and intimidate supporters of other candidates, a strategy that has led to violence during campaign.

Defacing candidate's posters.

The lack of support or unpopularity of a candidate is expressed through tearing or defacing posters to spoil identification. In both Pader and Agago districts, defacing pictures of opposition candidates was more common in places where ruling NRM supporters were the majority and vice versa. According to electoral laws, defacing pictures is an electoral offence and supporters of different candidates have clashed on many instances when their candidates' pictures are defaced by a known person. In the case of Pader district, a businessman, a renowned FDC supporter in one trading center (*Puranga*) removed the picture of NRM presidential candidate and was severely attacked and beaten up by NRM supporters. The incident reportedly involved

the office of the Resident District Commissioner (RDC), the police, and the court. The police and the RDC wanted the man to be charged with electoral crime, but the prosecution declared the alleged offender innocent because NRM supporters pinned their candidates' pictures on his wall – business premise without seeking his consent.

Vote rigging.

Most respondents mentioned that vote rigging marred all parties' primary election, with NRM registering the worst experience, not only in Pader and Agago districts in northern Uganda, but the entire country. There was no uniform voters' register developed by the party, and no voters' cards amongst other problems. Instead, exercise books were used both as voters' register and voters' cards. Worse still the incumbents influence to appointment of party's electoral commission who worked in their favor. This triggered mass protests and violence from the losing candidates and their supporters. At some instances, the police had to intervene to restore order as scuffles ensued between candidates, their supporters against the opponents. Realizing that party secretariats could not do much to correct the impasse, most NRM and FDC candidates defied their party constitutions and stood as independent party candidates.

In Agago district for instance, it took almost one month before the results of primary election for NRM candidates could be declared until when the party (NRM) secretariat had to intervene to settle the confusion. There was mass rigging in form of inflating the voter's registers and ballot stuffing. A respondent who lost in parliamentary election from Agago district claimed during that his supporters caught the state operatives with pre-ticked ballot papers in favor of NRM party candidate in one of the sub counties at night. The pre-ticked ballot papers were loaded in a coffin to give the impression that a dead body was being transported.

ROOT CAUSES OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

The respondents presented their views on the possible causes of election violence in Pader and Agago districts. For the purpose of this study the research team focused on local specific factors that cause electoral violence in the areas under study. Some factors are national in nature but have significant influence on local political engagements in the two districts. Such factors are equally given due consideration and included in the discussion.

Introduction of multiparty democracy.

The existence of political parties that have different agenda and strategies of gaining popular support is believed to be one of the main causes of electoral violence. Some respondents argue that elections in Uganda were rather peaceful when the current government took over power in 1986 and subsequent elections were done through "individual merit" because there were no political parties. Although multiparty democracy is widely practiced in many countries, respondents argue that the practice is not paying the desired dividends in Uganda's democratic processes. There is a problem with, either the system or the practice of multiparty politics in Uganda. Unlike in democratically advanced societies where there is relatively freedom to belong to and choose a party of one's interest while still living in harmony with those from other parties, people in Uganda have been made to believe that not belonging to one party makes the other person from another party an automatic enemy. The practice has, unfortunately divided people along political party lines, and this is evidenced during elections. Family members have ended up fighting one another because of supporting another party.

Political party organizations in Uganda have different agenda and strategies of achieving popular support. Unfortunately, the strategies used by some parties to gain popular support and win elections have often instigated violence during campaign rallies and political debates. One respondent, for instance described the choice of some party campaign symbols and slogans as drivers of violence. The use of *hammer*, and *key* symbols coupled with the intimidating slogans by FDC party candidates and supporters during elections have been misinterpreted by the local people to be the beginning of aggression towards the ruling NRM party. This misconception largely characterized violent most campaign rallies of the two parties who have majority support not only in Pader and Agago but in Uganda at large.

Another problem with the multiparty democracy is linked to the building of a political organization around few individuals. Respondents argue that NRM has over the years built their party around the personality of the president, while FDC has equally done the same though to a lesser extent. The two parties have since contested in three consecutive elections with the same presidential candidates. This has generated in-fighting in the parties and such infightings are replicated in the national elections. Moreover, the inefficiencies during parties' primary elections have generated a host of disagreement amongst party candidates. Party representatives are chosen according to the interest of the party officials and not the candidate's competency and support by the people. Dissatisfied aspirants have responded by standing as independents and this exacerbated violence and rivalries during the national elections. In Agago district, the NRM primary elections were marred by rigging and the candidate who lost in the primary election petitioned the party's electoral commission but the results could not be over turned. As a result, the disgruntled candidate stood as independent in

the national election, but there was too much intimidation for the NRM party and the supporters.

Complicity of the Electoral Commission.

Majority of respondents castigate the national electoral commission for causing election violence. In the recently concluded elections for example, there were complains of alternation of election results by election officials. This was mainly done from the polling stations and the district levels. Supporters and candidates whose results were altered resorted to outright violence in protection of their votes and results. According to most respondents, alteration of results was mostly done in favor of candidates who belonged to the ruling NRM party. Asked why this common, some respondents said, the ruling party provides a lot of money to election officials to do so. Secondly, that the president appoints the electoral commission. Hence it is necessary to return the favor and protect the president. In order to successfully do alter results, the election officials connive with police and security officials to chase away party agents from other parties to give them the chance to manipulate the results to suit their interests. Although this was not very common during the 2011 national elections, it was common in 2006 and 2001 national elections, and this caused violence in many ways.

The Electoral Commission has also been blamed for drawing wrong time table that causes coalition of political candidates and their supporters during campaigns. In a situation where campaign venues are either the same or adjacent to one another, this has resulted into violence as supporters of different candidates meet and exchange abusive words to one another. Such a coalition resulted into open fight between the supporters of FDC candidate and NRM candidate in Omot sub-county, Agago district. The research team attempted to corroborate this with the Electoral Commission based in the district, but they said

the mistake was with the party candidates, not the Commission's poor programming.

One other factor that causes violence during election is multiple registrations of voters. This however, has also been blamed on electoral commission. For instance, one of the parliamentary candidates allegedly had his name appearing in more than one polling station. Although this is widely believed to be the technical error from Electoral Commission, some people used the error to vote several times in several places. It is on the basis of this problem that opposition political parties blame the electoral commission of siding with the ruling party to rig election. Expression of this discontent has been through peaceful demonstration in which the use of tear gas by police to disperse demonstrators has resulted to fully fledged violence.

Respondents further blamed the Electoral Commission for swapping of names with others from voters' register to deny opportunity to contest in the elections. A case in the point was in Ogom sub-county where a candidate of UPC was swapped with another person and his name was never in the voter register. Although he had started to campaign for the Local Council III seat, he was not eligible to stand as he was considered not a registered voter. His supporters turned violent on his NRM opponent but nevertheless, he never participated in the election.

Economic poverty.

The high level of poverty amongst the population of northern Uganda makes people vote for a particular candidate of party in anticipation of material gains rather than good representation. Aware of this heightened vulnerability in the community; political candidates use money and other material items to buy votes in order to win election. Poverty and unemployment has caused a state of desperateness to people who struggle to win election and gain access to resources to earn a

living. Campaign agents who get money from political candidates to canvas for votes are involved in acts of intimidation, beating of voters and rigging so that their candidates win election. This was common in both Pader and Agago districts.

The general socio-economic and political and atmospheres in the country provide for a violent election. There is the attitude of "who cares." Nobody is trusted and people, including political leaders do whatever they like. There is a tendency of doing bad thing with intent after all you will eventually become rich and control the lawyers the state operatives with money. During election, states of lawlessness prevail in some instances. More so, our leaders take politics so personal and this makes them think losing an election is something so bad and one would look at the winning aspect only during election and leaving out the possibility of losing. There is no culture of admitting a loss in an election; rather results are always contested in terms of demonstration and court action. To escape the dilemma of losing elections, incumbents rig elections, intimidate, and beat up opponents in order to retain their seats.

Dishonesty at all levels especially the election officials. People now days are aware of the weaknesses of the election officials. So they intentionally rig election knowing for sure that it will take long before the case is settled or even end up winning the case as it court proceedings will require the complainer to use a lot of money. Political candidates also take advantage of ignorance of voters on electoral laws to achieve their own objectives. Voters, especially the youth are used to intimidate others and ferry election materials at night against electoral laws. This is partly a result of inadequate sensitization of the communities on things that should and should not be done during election period.

Multiple identities, patronage and the dilemma of affiliations.

Like in many African communal/rural societies, northern Uganda has multiple identities which range from cultural/religious, ethnic belongings, which are hardwired. These identities are salient in the society as they reflect traditional loyalties to kith and kin. It is argued that identity is very significant and remains one of the most powerful forces in society because it is functional – it can either pull the society together or breaks it apart.

Voters are inclined to support their clan members against candidates from other clans. Violence comes in a situation where a member of the clan or family supports a candidate who comes from another clan and leaves his/ her own clan aspirant. For instance, one of the *Gombolola*⁸ Internal Security Officers (GISO) was reportedly beaten by his own brother for differing on the family choice of candidate, and the case ended up in the police. The common practice here is that the choice of candidate a family votes is almost solely decided by the head of family, who in most cases is a man. Violence occurs when the woman supports another candidate different from the husband's candidate as the man attempts to apply force.

Intrinsic violence.

Some people are inherently violent in all situation, be it election or any other public occasion. Such personalities are inclined to causing commotion and insecurity for others. The people who are inherently violent sometimes use that trait intentionally (e.g. setting up a group whose purpose is to cause chaos and terror) as a strategy to disorganize and instill fear to political opponents. Whereas this argument can be seen as instrumental in causing fear and instability, critics believe that

⁸ A *Gombolola* is a term that is used interchangeably with “Sub-county” – an administrative unit, several of which constitutes a constituency or country.

human behaviours can be unlearned through trainings and rewards of positive attributes.

PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS OF ELECTION VIOLENCE.

The respondents argue that depending on the circumstances, nearly every stakeholder is a perpetrator of election violence, but to varying degrees as explained below:

The primary initiators of election violence, according to respondents are the **political candidates**. Although they do not directly engage in open violent activity, the candidates plan and order their supporters to go and disorganize their counterparts through intimidation, threats, and harassment. In addition some political candidates also use blackmail and lies directed to soil the reputation of the opponents.

The **campaign agents** in their struggle to get voters on the side of their candidates on many instances end up causing violence. The use of money as a means of inducement to voters, intimidation, amongst others is a strategy used by campaign agents in soliciting for votes for their candidates. Sometimes voters also engage in acts of violence because they do not want to see or meet supporters of another political candidate. Hence intimidation and physical violence is exercised at maximum level.

Some sections of police (the law enforcement agencies) force have also been implicated in violent activity. For instance, during the national elections, campaign agents of opposition parliamentary candidate were forcibly sent away from the polling station by the security agency present in the polling station. Secondly, the dispersal of opposition rallies by police and other security operatives have been labeled acts of violence to the electorates who do not support the ruling parties. Respondents mentioned that it is rare to hear that police have dispersed a really of NRM candidate at any level. Opposition

believe that police is partisan in the discharge of their duties.

The **state operatives** – the Internal Security Organizations (ISO), the army (UPDF), have on many occasions been blamed of intimidation in favor of the ruling party incumbents. The people of Pader and Agago believe that the army is not neutral when it comes to providing security during elections. During campaign period, the UPDF were heavily deployed in areas known to be opposition strong holds under the pretext of providing peace and security. At night time some soldiers were seen distributing money and other items to the people and warning them of suffering and resumption of LRA war if they voted for opposition candidates. This caused fear in people and many of them voted to retain the ruling party as a price for the prevailing peace in the region.

As already explained in the previous section, the offices of RDC, DISO, and GISO, under the cover of monitoring elections and providing security, also campaign and force people to vote for the ruling party incumbents. Most respondents argued that presence of these state agencies during elections intimidate voters who fail to make independent decision to vote a candidate of their choice. A case in the point is when an FDC supporter who removed NRM presidential candidate's poster from his wall was pushed by the office of the RDC for prosecution. Fortunately, court found him not guilty of the alleged offence. Such actions when heard by other community member can cause fear and intimidation to voters.

The Electoral Commission is equally a perpetrator of violence. Like any other persons, Electoral Commissioners also have candidates of their choice, especially the incumbent president who is their appointing authority. The lack of voter's civic education by Commission makes it a perpetrator of

violence in some ways. For instance, a vote casted may be canceled as invalid by the election official when the tick in made on the picture of the candidate. This can cause violence and riot as voters will begin to suspect electoral commission of being biased of their candidate. In one polling station in Agago, vote counting was canceled because the voters and polling agents could not agree on what constitutes an invalid vote.

According to respondents, there are primarily two victims of election violence - the voters and candidates. When election turns violent, the voters are immediate victims because they are the ones who are beaten, hurt, arrested and used as culprits or witnesses in courts of law.

In Puranga for instance, two brothers ended up fighting seriously because both of them supported two different candidates. In times of quelling riot by the police, the voters are fired with tear gas and injured in varying magnitudes, which in unfortunate situations have led to the death of people. Prominent supporters of a candidate have always suffered different forms of intimidations including kidnapped. Secondly, a rigged election leads to wrong representation and people are forced to accept to be led by a person they have not chosen. This causes dissatisfaction and lack of cooperation to the leadership by the electorate. The political candidate is also a victim of election violence, when elections are successfully and forcibly rigged in favor of the opponent who would have lost in the contest. In Pader district, a parliamentary candidate was beaten up by supporters of another candidate. When the case was reported to police, the assailants had put stones in the pocket of the victim to give the impression that he had a premeditated plan to begin the attack. The case never went to the prosecutor.

TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR STABILITY: MECHANISMS FOR ADDRESSING ELECTION VIOLENCE.

In addressing election-induced violence already discussed above, respondents mentioned that most election offences go without any legal redress and perpetrators go scot free without facing the law. Respondents argue that the court system in Uganda demands a lot from the complainants on who the burden of proof lie. The local electorates are not familiar with court issues and nobody accepts to be witness to testify in the courts of law even if election malpractice was committed in the open. People complain but are reluctant to go to courts. Secondly, the emphasis that “the magnitude of the offence must be to a level that can significantly alter the overall results” discourages people who have minimal evidence on violence and rigging. For the violence that occurred, multiple strategies were used to curb, control and prevent it.

The role of civil society organizations (CSOs): With support from Northern Uganda Transition Initiative (NUTI), Pader district NGO forum participated in civic education in Pader and Agago district and handling of minor misunderstandings during campaign period. The NGO forum’s strategy was through community mobilization where candidates belonging to different political parties were brought together to present their election manifestos. During the campaign rallies, the forum would allow a controlled question and answer sessions where candidates were given opportunity to respond to key community concerns. It was at this point that misunderstandings between candidates were sorted out in the presence of everybody. This strategy did not only help in reducing potential violence during campaigns, but also provided an opportunity to the electorate to listen to both candidates at the same time and make informed decision.

Intervention of political party headquarters to resolve the impasse between rivaling candidates during primary elections. In the case of Agago District, results of NRM party primary elections could not be declared until the party headquarters intervene. In the process, there were accusations of intimidation, blackmail and rigging of elections. The party tribunal was set up to look into electoral complaints. Some cases were successfully handled while others remained unresolved to date, a gap that continues to haunt NRM party in Agago district.

Intervention of the clan heads, especially in the election of Mayor Pader Town Council. Two brothers stood for the same post and there were already bitter exchange of words, intimidation and harassment of supporters from both sides. The head of the clan intervened and persuaded one of the candidates who agreed to withdraw from the race. This ended the already emerging violence within the clan.

Court actions were sought especially in the elections of LC Chairperson for Agago District, and the MP for Aruu County. The two candidates were taken to court on charges of, amongst other things rigging and breaking of other election laws. Court has since blocked the election of Agago district chairperson and ruled in favor of the winning candidate of Aruu County Member of Parliament.

Some arrests were made, but there were challenges, because before the victims are sanctioned, the DPP must consent to the file. In some cases, you find that after election period is over, they even do not want to follow their cases in court and they do not want to be a witness at court. People give up after elections. As a prosecutor, such cases have always been dismissed for lack of follow up, even if the accused really has a case to answer.

Linking socio-economic and political vulnerabilities to election violence.

The study also investigated vulnerability factors that make communities susceptible to electoral violence. The factors are categorized as social, economic and political in nature, and they all play significant roles during elections. Respondents mentioned social vulnerability factors to include culture (relationship, clan and tribal affiliations), geographic/ regional location of a candidate and religion. Meanwhile, economic vulnerability factor is associated to the poverty level of the community in question, and the economic status of a candidate. The political factor involves the aspects of party affiliation of a given candidate. It should be noted that these vulnerability factors on their own do not cause election violence, but the manners in which they are perceived and practiced cause violence during elections. In this part, we discuss how they influence elections and link them to violence.

The first social factor is religious affiliation: most respondents indicated that, belonging to the same religion as that of a political candidate increases chances of winning election. People of the same religion have the obligation of supporting their own leader against the candidate from another religion irrespective of the candidate's competency. Although this factor has never led to overt violence in the Pader and Agago districts elections, it is a silence factor that is deeply rooted in people and motivates supporters to go on offensive against their opponents. Strong religious attachment provides a situation of vulnerability because people do not consider other trivial factors when choosing a candidate to support. In the case of Agago parliamentary elections, the church was deeply involved in the campaign; as such heated exchanges of words were experienced between supporters of candidates who belonged to different religions. The use of religion in Uganda's politics dates back to the time of independent when Catholic

and Anglican were widely believed to have formed political parties in the names of Democratic Party (DP) and Uganda People's Congress (UPC) respectively. Elections at that time equally experienced violence of different forms and religious factor was central. In some regions of the country – Buganda and Lango sub regions, party politics is still closely linked to religion.

Clan and relationship affiliations: cultural institutions headed by cultural leaders have rules and regulations that guide their subjects. Even during elections, some cultural leaders wield power on their subjects and influence their choices of candidates. Vulnerability comes in the sense that clan members are obliged to support their son or daughter even if he/ she is not popular and weak. Hence deviation from the leader's choice attracts severe punishment. Even without the intervention of cultural leaders, people want to support their own immediate relatives because of the "we" factor. There is an inherent desire of a particular minority group to "dominate" the affairs of the entire society. This explains the difference in the voter turnout, vote rigging in places where a candidate comes from, or where his/ her relatives are many. To achieve this, people go outside the law and rig elections, intimidate and torture supporters of other candidates who actually belong to another clan in order to win and "dominate" other clans.

This view is typical of Uganda's politics where national election is considered "free" and "fair" only if a presidential candidate from certain region of the country wins election through rigging, intimidation and beating up opposition supporters using the state security and agencies. Tribal politics therefore poses a great challenge to Uganda's democratization process because it is practically difficult to achieve a national consensus and reconciliation. Tribal politics goes beyond just elections and national representation. The

division of national cake significantly reflects tribal and regional biasness, because while one region has over nine cabinet ministers, other regions have either only one or none completely, yet the status quo cannot be changed through elections anymore because of sophisticated rigging.

The adverse effects of war and insurgency: Northern Uganda underwent over twenty years of suffering during the insurgency. Compared to other parts of the country, the region has the highest poverty levels where over 90% of the population is vulnerable and lack basic necessities. In three consecutive national elections – 1996, 2001, and 2006 the ruling party presidential candidate failed with a landslide because the population believed the government was reluctant to solving their problems. This did not help to remove the incumbent from power. With the return of peace and stability in the region, coupled with the popular Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for northern Uganda, the 2011 national election experienced an interesting twist. Respondents indicated that people voted the ruling NRM party, not because they support it, but because of the fear of relapsing into insurgency. In the 2011 national elections, opposition supporters were intimidated because they were seen as people who wanted to take people back into LRA war. Hence people were scared of change, especially in presidential election, so they found it peaceful to elect the incumbent president.

Party affiliation also creates vulnerability that causes violence during elections. Political parties have constitution that governs their members. One of the rules common to all parties requires that all party members support a candidate chosen by the party to run in the national election. Unfortunately, the process of choosing party representatives is not always free and fair, prompting other party insiders who were rigged out in the primary elections to run as independents. This is where violence

erupts because people would be divided not along party lines, but candidates of their choice.

In the case of Agago, the NRM could not represent their woman member of parliament in the national election because the one chosen in primary election was accused to have rigged elections, yet she did not have required academic qualifications. The disgruntled party aspirant went to court the successfully challenged the party flag bearer who was blocked by court from standing as a women member of parliament due to low academic qualifications. The two do not look eye to eye to date.

Within the political party, there exist political camps attached to individuals in the party. These individuals are influential and decide the affairs of the parties in the districts including who should stand for which political posts. Belonging to one camp makes one unable to vote a candidate of his/ her interest in another camp within the party because of fear of reprisal. In many instances such influential individuals have caused violent in the party during elections. In the 2011 elections, the NRM party in Agago district was divided into two camps - the *Owiny Dollo* Camp verses *Peter Odok's* camp. These camps fronted their candidates for the same positions and a lot of intimidation, blackmails and accusations were made. In the end, according to some respondents, the *Owiny Dollo* camp went to court to challenge *Peter Odok's* (LCV Chairman) election and they have so far succeeded. Supporters of these two camps are still actively engaged in acts of violence because the case is not fully handled by the court of law.

Another important vulnerability factor is poverty. One respondent remarked that....“Uganda’s politics is politics of money”. Political candidates find it easy to manipulate people because they are poor.

There is a tendency of “let me vote candidate ‘A’ who gave me salt because I am not sure of getting any more assistance from him after he is elected.” Hence, the more a candidate gives out in terms of money and handouts, the higher is his/ her chance of winning elections. Commercialization of politics in Uganda, according to a respondent who participated as a candidate but lost, is a big threat to Uganda’s democratic processes. Based on estimates one respondent said the NRM party spent about 2 trillion shillings during the 2011 elections to buy votes for their candidates, starting with the presidency to the local councils to win elections. Unfortunately, this money is held by a few individuals who only pour it during elections, and the result is now being felt in the economic crisis where inflation hit 32% and now stands at 25.7%. Voter’s bribery was rampant and whoever did not get the money turned violent on those distributing the money. The same source attributes the country-wide support of the party in 2011 elections to vote buying and not the supremacy of their campaign ideals. This was not only common to Pader and Agago only, but the entire country.

Poverty has made certain section of the voters - the youth more vulnerable during elections yet they too want to campaign and be elected in positions of leadership. One youth leader remarked that

“... nowadays, talking alone is nothing.... You must supplement your points by giving money to the voters. Rich but weak candidates have a high chance of winning elections, because, even if they do not win, they can bribe the election officials and results are changed in their favor”.

To make matters worse, the youth are used during campaigns as party agents, and election officials. Some selfish leaders promise youth big rewards and involve them in violent activities such as intimidation, beating opposition supporters and rigging elections. In

times of arrests and use of tear gas, the youth suffer on their own while those leaders are not touched. Society looks at youth as inevitably a violent lot and treats them with no seriousness.

Peculiar to Agago district is the geographic zoning of the district/ constituency into *L-shape* and *straight line*. With the exception of 2011 elections, the voting pattern in Agago has always reflected the region where a candidate comes from. For instance, a candidate who comes from *L-shape* region would get an overwhelming majority vote from there compared to what he/ she gets from the straight line. This underlying assumption of politics in Agago is however disputed by senior politicians who come from Agago district with reference to the 2011 elections. The voting pattern never reflected the L-shape or straight line factor. Hence, the violence, intimidation and harassment that occurred during election were not linked to regional factor.

Mitigating vulnerabilities to electoral violence.

In this part, socially and culturally embedded measures and politically constructed strategies are discussed.

Ignorance of the youth in electoral laws was mention as one vulnerability factor linked to electoral violence. Intensive civic education of the youth is suggested so that youth are involved productively rather than exploitatively. There should be a deliberate effort to empower the youth so that they become economically stable, have access to information and can equally stand in elective positions. It is widely believed among the respondents that when poverty and unemployment is reduced among the youth and the community at large, manipulation and voter buying will reduce in subsequent election because the level of poverty and desperateness would reduce.

Respondents put emphasis on the use of socially and culturally embedded institutions

and structure within the community that can control or trigger election violence. The clan leaders should not be left out during civic education. Clan and family heads know how to talk to and punish their own children because they have systems and processes of dispute resolution. On the other hand, traditional chiefs (*Rwodi*) are very significant cultural figures in conflict resolution. When they are involved in the pre-election, during election and post-election activities, conflicts and violence will be reduced because people respect and listen to them. Some respondents however expressed skepticism that this institution has been infiltrated by the government and may not exercise the impartiality society expects of the. Secondly, they are equally vulnerable in terms of resources making them prone to manipulation like it is done to other community members.

The electoral commission should constantly empower and involve religious leaders in civic education prior to, during and after elections is also said to reduce election violence. People believe that religious leaders are neutral and can be trusted by all parties involved in politics. Moreover, their preaching of peace, love and respect for one another can help in cooling the tempers that rise during election processes. Leaders, according to religious institutions are chosen by God so elected leaders should be seen as God's representatives and whoever is elected should be accorded the respect and support in leading the masses. If this Christian value is adopted, then post-election violence can be minimized. In addition, use of local council one in the sensitization of the village members can also reduce election violence. Voters' sensitization makes the voters know the dos don'ts and they cannot easily engage in violence.

Deployment of security to uphold law and order in the entire electoral period: It is a constitutional requirement that government provides security to ensure safety in the

electoral process. Respondents indicated that although security is not adequate, there was realized improvement in the 2011 election because unlike in the past police posts were put in every sub county headquarters to monitor and provide security during the election. This explained the reduced cases of election malpractices. Some respondents however noted that police and other security agencies like the office of the RDC, and DISO were directly engaged in election frauds and intimidation in favor of the ruling NRM party candidates. Such actions orchestrated violence in some polling stations in the study area. The most affected sub counties included Omiya Pacwa, Wol, Paimol, Lapono, Puranga and Pader Town Council in Agago and Pader districts.

Electoral laws should be strengthened to include prohibition in the use of money to induce voters in the campaign process. Political contenders have been blamed for voters' bribery to win elections. The bribed voters engage in acts of violent against their opponents. Local people have lost the meaning and purpose of election and see it as an opportunity to get money from political contenders. Electoral rules should be amended so that the incumbents do not use state resources that put them at advantage over their opponents. There should be strict adherence to election rules by all political parties and their candidates.

The electoral commission should increase and promptly pay the allowances of polling day officials. The respondents, especially the youth complained of meager pay to the polling officials that even take so long to be paid. Youth actively take part as election officials during the polling day. As soon as elections are concluded, it takes several months for the allowances to be paid. Even if it is paid, the actual rates are different from the one previously promised. The youth are cheated because of the high level of financial

vulnerability arising from high unemployment amongst them. Political contenders, especially the ruling NRM party find it easy to bribe the polling officials who receive the bribes and manipulate results to favor the candidates, and this causes violence.

Fulfillment of pledges and promises made by successful political contenders can mitigate violence and generate trust in leaders by the electorates. Leaders who fail to fulfill their promises meet stiff resistance in the subsequent election campaigns. Community turns rowdy at such leaders who come only at election times to solicit for votes. This was what happened to the former leader of opposition in Uganda's parliament who promised to give a revolving fund to the youth in Agago and gained overwhelming support from the youth, but this has never come to pass. In 2011 election, his campaigns were marred by intimidation and abusive languages as people shouted at him for not living by his words when people of Agago gave him the chance to represent them in Parliament.

Good practices that contributed to violence-free election.

It was by consensus that elections in the study areas were generally violence-free compared to previous elections. Respondents specifically mentioned the positive roles played by the media, civil society organizations, the police (election constables), Electoral Commission, behaviors of political contenders who won and lost, and party agents for violence-free elections.

At first, media used to single out incidences that happened on particular candidates. But in the recent election, the media brought candidates for radio talk-shows so that they could present their manifestos instead of criticizing their opponents. Peace journalism was practiced and this partly explains the reasons for the relatively peaceful national elections in the 2011. Putting candidates

together helped minimized possibility of defamation and telling lies to the electorates and communities became more informed about elections and the roles they needed to play.

As already explained earlier in this text, the use of local leaders (traditional chiefs, clan leaders, LCs, Religious leaders) also helped in putting right misunderstandings especially in their villages. Critical statements and warnings over radio talk shows were passed before, during and after election were made by traditional leaders, all urging electorates to desist from all forms of violent activities and chose leaders who would effectively represent them. Such warnings were directed not only towards the electorates, but the entire stakeholders including government agencies. This is believed to have contributed to violence free election enjoyed in 2011.

Unlike in the past where voters were intimidated, beaten, and harassed by security officials, respondents applauded the professionalism of election constables who worked hard and minimized offences. In the 2011 general elections in Pader and Agago districts, the security officers put to maintain security during elections did a good job. They exercised impartiality and safeguarded the ballot boxes in and around the precinct of the polling station. This prevented possible manipulation of results by polling officials. Some respondents however said the positive roles of security officials should not be over emphasized, as cases of connivance were noted in some areas between the police and the army when they were caught escorting coffin that carried pre-ticked ballot papers by the then RDC of Pader district in favor of NRM parliamentary and presidential candidates.

Another good practice that was noted was the acceptance of election outcomes by both the losing candidates and their supporters. Those who lost genuinely admitted the results, but those who lost election and were not satisfied

with the results sought justice in the courts of law and their grievances resolved while other cases are still active in courts by the time of this study. For example, rather than resort to violence, the former chairperson LCIII of Atanga sub-county who lost election went to court to cancel the election because the candidate who won election was below the constitutional age of chairperson of LCIII. Court ruled in his favor, and currently the vice chairperson of Atanga is acting in the position of LCIII Chairperson.

The NRM party candidate lost election and took the matter to court on allegation of rigging by FDC candidate for Aruu County. Court ruled in favour of the FDC winner and community is peaceful. Concerned citizens of Agago district went to court after election of LCV Chairperson, claiming was over and above the constitutional age limit of 75 for all elective positions in Uganda. Although court ruled in favor of the petitioners, the accused has since appealed and appellant court is yet to pronounce itself over the matter. At the local council level, some candidates accepted the results of election and congratulated their opponents who won the election. This is a good practice that should continue in order to strengthen democratization processes through elections.

The high level of cooperation between electoral commission and political contenders belonging to different political organizations was also commended by the respondents. There was cordial relationship during the entire process and this gave a lot of confidence not only to the political contenders but also the electorates who voted their different candidates of interest. Some level of independence were exercised by electoral commission and this showed an impressive improvement which should be strengthened. Some respondents however believe that the Pader and Agago incidences cannot be pushed very far since electoral commission is known to be ruling

party-lenient because it is the president who appoints the commission, hence election provides opportunity for them to return the favors.

Points of actions for stakeholders.

1. In addition to being independent, the Electoral Commission should organize early and consistent civic education. For instance, by arranging a platform for open and joint campaigns by candidates (be it presidential, Parliamentary and Local Council elections) over television and radio station for the voters to listen to all candidates and make their decisions.
2. Party primary elections should be done in a manner that conforms to that of national electoral laws in order to inculcate the spirit of respect for electoral laws in both the candidates and party supporters. For instance, in the NRM primary elections, there was no uniform voter register. Secondly, uniform and standard ballot papers were not used, instead exercise books were used. This made it easy for some candidates to manipulate election results to their advantage leading to mass violence. To make it worse, some of the violence were carried forward to the national elections because many losing candidates felt cheated and hence stood in the national election as independents. This did not go without violence.
3. The office of electoral commission should remain active even after elections for continuous consultation and education of the people. Most district electoral commission offices stay lock for the rest of the years until the next election is nearing.
4. People who lose elections should learn to accept defeat and know that election is a game of chance and there is always a winner and a loser. Maturity in democracy

can be manifested in the behaviors of the losing and winning candidates. In this regard, winning candidates should not condemn and abandon their opponents because the opponents equally have good ideas to development which need to be tapped by the winner to develop the same community. People need to learn to work together in harmony after elections so as to minimize possibility of post-election violence. In particular, the NRM party leaders should control their supporters who do not tolerate opposition candidates if violent-free election is to be realized in not only Pader and Agago, but in Uganda at large.

5. Other than the police, other state agents, including the office of the RDC, DISO, and the army should play minimal role during the general elections. Most people complained of the heavy deployment of the army in some areas, that it scares people to vote a particular candidate. More so, some deployments target opposition strong holds, which many people believed was meant to intimidate opposition supporters.
6. Political contenders should deliberately include environmental factors that cause community vulnerability to election violence. The strategies and mechanisms of addressing adverse environmental factors need to be addressed by all candidates in their manifestos.

Desired actions that reinforce stability and co-existence in northern Uganda.

√ *Conduct regular trainings which target political parties, elected leaders, election observers and law enforcement officers. The theme should include performance delivery.*

√ *Carry out regular surveys on leadership performance using score cards.*

√ *Organise capacity building courses in peace, leadership and governance.*

√ *Initiate collaborative projects on multiparty dispensation for post-conflict development.*

CONCLUSION.

Electoral violence is a broad subcategory of political violence that has received surprisingly little theoretical or methodological attention to facilitate its systematic study. While election-linked violence has a limited objective in the sense that it is aimed at affecting the electoral process, its consequence may influence attempts at the consolidation of democracy. This study has mapped and analyzed issues pertaining electoral-induced violence, with a special focus on community mitigating circumstances to enhancing violence-free election in Pader and Agago districts.

The study also demonstrates that electoral violence involves a multitude of actors, motives, and activities. The study found that the triggering vulnerability factors of electoral violence are the factors that should have brought about violent-free election. First, the ruling party leniency by electoral commission and the entire security forces that are partial contributed to violent elections in Uganda. The electoral mechanisms (system design and administration) conditions incentives and disincentives for violent behavior of political actors. A situation of impunity to election offences therefore prevails in Uganda, especially if the perpetrators belong to the ruling party. Second, the cultural and relationship affiliations; party affiliation; and poverty, all play some roles in triggering violence during election.

Future research seeking to account for variations in electoral violence and its effects needs to explore explanations both in structures and strategies. Research can focus on the structural factors which determine the costs involved in employing violence in connection to elections for opposition groups as well as government actors. The strategies and responses by local and international actors - political parties, police, military, and the international community are also important in explaining the bearing of violence on electoral processes and on conflict management.

In addition, to fully understand electoral violence in a country like Uganda, we have to analyze the regional variations of violence within a country to get at the local dynamics which are at work. This study only focused at two districts out of 112 districts in Uganda which is very minute to generate consensus on local election violence.

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