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Conflict over land and natural resources remained a defining feature of life in Uganda for minorities and indigenous peoples in 2014. In July, the Rwenzori region of Western Uganda erupted into conflict, affecting multiple communities in Kasese, Bundibugyo and Ntoroko districts. These areas are home to, among others, the pastoralist Basongora, and in recent years have witnessed renewed violence. These outbreaks have reignited long-standing conflicts over political power and land rights between pastoralists and agricultural communities in the region. The region is also experiencing rapid population growth which is contributing to the scarcity of available land and natural resources for the diverse communities that inhabit the area. Advocacy groups, including MRG, urged the Ugandan government to address the long-standing root causes of conflict in the region.

Batwa communities in Uganda continued to experience violations of their rights in 2014. According to reports from the United Organization for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU), Batwa houses were burned to the ground in Kisoro in June 2014. The incident, which led to the destruction of 13 homes and to many Batwa fleeing their residences, was an outbreak of a long-standing conflict between Batwa and a neighbouring community. On a positive note however, in Kabaale, members of the Batwa community were able to purchase land for settlement through the assistance of UOBDU. Land will be held by the Batwa as a community and will support enhanced development for the community in the area.

Free, prior and informed consent in relation to mining in the Karamoja region continues to be a concern. MRG reported on this issue in 2011, highlighting the environmental concerns and human rights violations against local populations associated with mineral exploration in the area. A 2014 HRW report again documented the issue, making clear that little progress has been made in relation to the rights of communities in the region. Indeed, in recent years, the extractive industry in Uganda has undergone significant growth, without attendant monitoring and regulation to ensure that the interests of communities are protected. This has exacerbated the difficulties experienced by the agro-pastoralist Karamajong people living in the region, including climate change, land rights issues and violent disarmament operations by government forces.

The poverty and lack of opportunities in the region has pushed some Karamajong to migrate to urban areas such as Kampala, where they typically face exploitation, discrimination and periodic round-ups by security forces. Many end up begging for their survival, particularly Karamajong women and children,

who are especially vulnerable to exploitation. There is also evidence in recent years that issues such as alcohol abuse have become more common among urban Karamajong migrants. Other urban minority groups, such as Uganda's Nubian population, reside in poorly serviced and unsanitary slums. Acholi Quarter in Kampala, for example, is largely populated by formerly rural Acholi from Northern Uganda, uprooted by years of conflict and now caught in a situation of prolonged displacement. Though some sense of a community and identity has persisted among residents, the area is characterized by sub-standard housing, poor environmental health and limited livelihood opportunities.

During the past several years, Uganda has embarked on an extensive process of policy development around land, housing and urban development, with a draft National Land Policy now approved but not yet officially gazetted as of the end of 2014. The policy acknowledges the role that conflict, instability and rural poverty have played in driving urban migration, as well as the prevalence of slum dwellings in urban areas. It also recognizes the particular vulnerability of marginalized groups such as women, children and IDPs, committing the government to 'ensure that both women and men, including children, enjoy equal rights and opportunities with regard to access to affordable urban services without discrimination' and to 'put in place measures to address the issues of internally displaced persons.' Despite these commitments, the description of such strategies and measures is vague and contains no detail in relation to key populations such as minorities or indigenous peoples. As policy development moves forward, the reality of such commitments will be seen in implementation.

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