

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	249
Land:	Uganda
Kilde:	Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN)
Titel:	Rebel amnesty reinstated in Uganda
Udgivet:	30-05-2013
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	03-09-2013



Rebel amnesty reinstated in Uganda

GULU, 30 May 2013 (IRIN) - Civil society in northern Uganda has welcomed the reinstatement of legislation granting blanket amnesty to members of armed groups who surrender.

Key sections of Uganda's Amnesty Act were allowed to lapse in May 2012, meaning that members of armed groups, notably the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), no longer automatically escaped prosecution if they willingly abandoned their armed struggle.

Earlier this month, these sections of the act were reinstated and will remain in force for two years. Only top LRA commanders are ineligible for amnesty.

"We will endeavour to make known widely the decision of the government to restore the amnesty and will play our part to encourage any person still involved in armed rebellion to take advantage of the amnesty, which is a gesture of reconciliation and goodwill on the part of the people of Uganda," said of a press statement by a coalition of civil society organizations in northern Uganda.

The region has yet to recover from decades of conflict.

"Big opportunity"

"Restoring the amnesty law in its totality is a big opportunity for the country to answer prayers for people, particularly in northern Uganda, crying for their person still held in captivity by the Lord's Resistance [Army] rebels," noted Stephen Oola, a transitional justice and governance advocate with Makerere University's Refugee Law Project.

"We hope that it [the amnesty law] will stay to achieve its main objectives of facilitating a peaceful end of conflict and reintegration of rebels back to their communities. This therefore demands for all actors to engage in credible solutions to peacefully end the LRA conflict," he said.

"I have been living in fear knowing that somebody from this village would take me to court because you know when you are in the LRA doing bad things is hard to avoid." Janet Awor, who abandoned the LRA in 2012 and returned to her village of Awor, in northern Uganda, said: "I have been living in fear knowing that somebody from this village would take me to court because you know when you are in the LRA doing bad things is hard to avoid."

She continued, "Now I need to go and check if my certificate is ready at the amnesty office in Gulu, because I had applied for it at the office of the Amnesty Commission upon my arrival in Kampala."

The act has granted blanket amnesty to more than 26,000 members of armed groups, mostly from the LRA, since it came into force in 2000.

Uneven application?

In Uganda, former LRA mid-level commander Thomas Kwoyelo is being tried for war crimes in the first case of its kind before the High Court's International Crime Division.

The trial has been viewed by some analysts as a case of selective justice; former high-ranking LRA commanders, such as Brig Kenneth Banya and Brig Sam Kolo Otto, have all received amnesty, according to Human Rights Watch.

Another LRA leader, Caesar Acellam Otto, who was captured by the Ugandan army in the Central Africa Republic in May 2012, has also not benefited from the amnesty.

Accelam's wife, Nightly Akot, who was captured alongside him said: "Let him be [set] free because he is no different from other senior LRA commanders enjoying the amnesty."