

## Challenges and Dilemmas Faced by Civil Society Leadership in Conflict and Post Conflict Situations: A Case Study of Civil Society Organization for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU).

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### Abstract

Since 1986 violent conflict raged between the government of Uganda and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda. The conflict which lasted for over 20 years caused untold suffering characterized by displacement, killings, and exile. After 2009, violence ceased and the conflict became more latent in nature, making it possible for post conflict reconstruction programs to commence in northern Uganda. The prolonged war called for interventions aimed at bringing sustainable peace to northern Uganda. Many civil society organizations such as Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, Gulu Support the Children Organization, World Vision International, Center for Conflict Resolution, Peoples Voice for Peace, Human Rights Focus, Gulu, Justice and Peace Commission Joint Forum for Peace etc, all sought to forge a way forward for achieving peace in order to alleviate the suffering of civilians in the north.

By 2002 participating individual civil society organizations recognized that they could not make a significant impact in bringing lasting peace due to worsening insecurity. Consequently the leaders of the various Civil Society Organizations formed a Coalition of Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU) with major aim of finding a 'just and lasting peace.' Though now with stronger voice and impact in the peace building process, CSOPNU still face many challenges and dilemmas.

Whereas there have been some achievements made by CSOPNU, the return of total peace is yet to be realized. Hence this study seeks to explore the challenges and dilemmas faced by CSOPNU leadership in the context of northern Uganda. The main Objective of the study is to identify the specific challenges and dilemmas faced by leaders of CSOPNU in the struggle to seek alternative methods of bringing about lasting peace in the conflict stricken northern Uganda. This research methodology employed in this study is a case study in combination with desktop research method so as to explore and understand deeply the problems and dilemmas faced by CSOPNU in trying to bring about peace in Northern Uganda. The case study will be used because of its uniqueness. It brings new knowledge about a particular phenomenon. However, findings from a case study cannot be generalized or applied other similar scenarios.

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The expected outcomes of the study were mainly identifying major bottlenecks to realization of lasting peace in northern Uganda. The study revealed that the leadership of the civil Society organizations (CSOPNU) faced serious challenges and dilemmas in their pursuit of lasting peace in war ravaged northern Uganda.

The most outstanding challenge was that CSOPNU frequently found itself at crossroads as both the rebels and government of Uganda perceived them as not worthy of trust. From the study, finding further revealed that corruption was yet another challenge and a serious cause of poverty and under development in Uganda. The study made conclusions and recommendations to the government of Uganda and Civil Societies Organizations working in northern Uganda with regard to achieving lasting peace.

**Keywords:** Conflict resolution and management; Challenges and Dilemmas; peace building; Leadership; Civil society Organizations; Conflict management; Post conflict; northern Uganda; Peace building.

## 1. Introduction

This paper addresses the Challenges and Dilemmas Faced by Civil Society Leadership in Conflict and Post Conflict Situations: A Case Study of Civil Society Organization for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU). However, it is pertinent to understand the origins of the conflict in northern Uganda. From the study, the conflict in northern Uganda has its root cause in serious dissatisfaction among Acholi in the north. The Acholi were allegedly the favored military and law enforcement group in the British colonial administration and subsequent regimes [1]. When Yoweri Museveni became president in 1986, the Acholi lost power, influence and favor. Therefore, this explains the motive for their rebellion. The conflict is fundamentally between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The extent of the conflict stretches from Gulu, Pader, Kitgum, Lira, Soroti, and the Karamoja sub region. It should be pointed out that the civil war also affected the West Nile sub region especially Adjumani [2]. The major areas affected by the conflict are shown in figure 1.



**Figure 1** A map of Uganda showing conflict affected areas in northern Uganda

From figure 1 above, the conflict that raged for over 20 years required intervention strategies that are multifaceted from different stakeholders including Uganda government, the affected local civilians, the international community, and the rebels. As a result of the devastating effects of the war on people of northern Uganda, civil society organizations continued to play a crucial role in the peace building process.

## **1.1. Organizational Structure of the paper**

The structural arrangement of the article is as follows: introduction which comprises the research topic, background of the study, statement of the problem and objectives; research questions, methodology, outcomes, implications for leadership and conclusions and recommendations.

## **1.2 Background to the study**

From figure 1 above, the conflict that raged for over 20 years required intervention strategies that are multifaceted from different stakeholders including Uganda government, the affected local civilians, the international community, and the rebels. As a result of the devastating effects of the war on people of northern Uganda, civil society organizations continued to play a crucial role in the peace building

The prolonged war in northern Uganda called for interventions that would bring about lasting peace. Consequently, many civil society organizations concentrated their services in the region such as Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, Gulu Support the Children Organization, World Vision International, Center for Conflict Resolution, Peoples Voice for Peace, Human Right Focus, Gulu Justice and Peace Commission, Joint Forum for Peace etc. The mentioned civil society groups largely sought to find the way forward for achieving peace in order to alleviate the suffering of war affected civilians in the north. By 2002 individual civil society organizations operating in northern Uganda recognized that they could not make a significant impact in bringing lasting peace due to worsening insecurity situation. As a result, the leaders of the various civil society organizations sought to form a coalition which became known as Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU) with the major aim of finding a solution to facilitate building of 'just and lasting peace due to worsening security situation.' The now seemingly larger and stronger civil society organization began to gain influence with regard to the peace building process in the region. However, CSOPNU appeared to face many challenges and dilemmas which the paper seeks to explore. The study recognizes that there were some achievements made by CSOPNU. However, the return of total peace is yet to be realized. The discussion of the background now leads to research objectives. In this section the objectives' of the study are discussed.

## **1.3 Objective of Research**

1. The discussion of the background now leads to the study objectives. The main Objective of the study is to find out the challenges and dilemmas that confronted CSOPNU in the struggle to seek alternative methods of bringing about lasting peace in the conflict dilemmas and challenges of faced by CSOPNU in the quest for lasting peace in northern Uganda.
2. To examine the role played by the CSOPNU leadership in the building of sustainable peace in northern Uganda?
3. To find out the extent to which CSOPNU met its objectives stricken northern Uganda. The specific objectives include:
4. To identify the specific problems SCOPNU faced in the execution of their peace building work in northern Uganda.

## **1.4 Research Methodology**

- 1) This research used a case study in combination with desk research and interview key leaders of CSOPNU. Both methods were used to explore and gain insights into the challenges and dilemmas CSOPNU has had to deal with in promoting peace in Northern Uganda. First, it is important to understand what a case study is. A case study is study of human affairs because it is down to earth and can hold a lot of attention. However, findings from a case study may not be a suitable basis for generalization [1]. The Case Study is supported by two types of desk research methods: internal and external desk research. These techniques involve collecting data by review of existing resources including: internet, press reports, documents, books,

articles etc from within and outside of the organization. The desk top technique is grounded in qualitative approach which enables gaining of deeper insights into the behavior of leaders of CSOPNU and the rationale for such conduct. The use of qualitative approach makes it possible to investigate why and how decision making process was done by leaders of CSOPNU on whom the function and role of decision making was vested on. The generated information is unique to the case understudy, that is, CSOPNU. The case study method brings new knowledge about a particular phenomenon which in this case it is about Civil Society Organization for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU). As mentioned before, the findings from a case study cannot be generalized or applied other similar scenarios although lessons can be learnt from there in. The raw data collected from desktop and interviews were subjected to coding, and categorization, interpretation, and report writing [4].

## **2 Review of Related Literature**

The discussion of the introduction and the study background; the statement of the problem; Objectives and research methodology and the organizational arrangement of the paper now lead to review of related literature.

### **2.1 Origins of the Conflict in Northern Uganda**

No sooner had Yoweri Kaguta Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) regime come to power in January 1986, through a military coup than a rebellion organized by the Democratic People's Movement/Army (UPDM/A) against the ruling NRM government ensued. On August 20<sup>th</sup> 1986, there began the longest bloodiest conflict in Ugandan history. In June 1988 the UPDM signed an agreement with the government at Pece Stadium in Gulu. This peace agreement was witnessed by Bishop Cyprian Kihangire. As the UPDM rebellion was ending, Alice Ouma also known as Lakwena who claimed spiritual powers began mobilizing a fighting force against the government.

Lakwena, meaning messenger in Acholi, advanced southwards through Lango, Teso before being defeated in Jinja in Eastern Uganda in 1987. She fled into exile in Kenya. The Lakwena group who believed in spirits as their strategy of warfare was identified as the Holy Spirit Movement. Lakwena's father, Severino Lukoya, took over the leadership of the Holy Spirit Movement after she went into exile in Kenya. Lukoya soon surrendered to the government. At this juncture, Joseph Kony, a cousin to Lakwena, emerged as the new leader of the rebellion. He rallied the survivors of the Holy Spirit Movement and renamed it, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) [2] Like Lakwena, Kony claimed to have spiritual powers and his rebellion was alleged to be based on the Christian principles of the Ten Commandments. However, a critical analysis of the rebel activities showed no close resemblance to the Decalogue which contains Christian principles that is, a 10 point program.

As mentioned before, the root cause of the conflict was dissatisfaction among the Acholi, who were viewed by many Ugandans as favored by the colonial British and subsequent regimes. However, they fell out of favor and lost influence when Yoweri Museveni became president in January 1986. From 1986-2005 hostilities between government and the LRA escalated. In order to mitigate the conflict, in 1993 initial contact were made between the government of Uganda and the LRA leader, Joseph Kony. However, the negotiations flopped when President Museveni gave the rebels a 7 days ultimatum to leave the bush. Kony asked for three months to regroup his army as they prepare to come out of the bush. Instead, he shifted his bases to the South Sudan from where the LRA carried out numerous attacks mainly on Ugandan civilians before relocating his base to Central African Republic where he still operates and terrorizes civilian populations there to date. The government attempted to end the conflict using militaristic approaches which yielded little desired results. For instance, in March 2002, the Ugandan Government launched "Operation Iron Fist, a military offensive designed to rout the LRA from its bases throughout southern Sudan; capture or kill Joseph Kony; and rescue thousands of children who had been abducted and conscripted into the rebel army. [But] Iron Fist was a humanitarian disaster." [5]. The fiasco of operation Iron Fist culminated into large number of rebels reentering northern Uganda. Violence increased to new levels. Frequent ambushes on roads,

attacks on displaced people's camps and massive abductions characterized life in northern Uganda [6]. Now this discussion of damages caused by the conflict on people of Northern Uganda are discussed in the net section. The discussion of the conflict situation in northern Uganda leads to analysis of impact of on civilians in the north.

## **2.2 Understanding Civil Society**

Before delving into the background, it is necessary to understand the concept of civil society. The notion of civil society is not new in the academia. It is a term that was frequently used by political philosophers [7]. However, scholars hold varying views on the notion of civil society [7]. It is clear that the term civil society means different things to different people. The etymology of the word civil society comes from the Latin word *civilis societas*, meaning communities which conform to the norms that rise above and beyond the laws of the state [8]. Civil society implies power relationships between government and citizens which creates checks and balances state use of power. This suggests the civil society is able to curtail government's excessive use of power and influence [9]. The institutional perception of civil society as exemplified by UNICEF defines civil society as involving diverse actors within and across countries. Mainly that civil society is the sphere of autonomous associations that are independent of public and for profit sector and it is designed to advance collective interests and ideas. Civil society organizations may be informal or formal and works with a broad range of political, legal, economic, social, and cultural contexts. Civil society organizations are as diverse as the people and issues around which they organize. These include national and international Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community Based organizations (FBOs), Faith Based organizations (FBO), social movements, advocacy groups, women's' groups, trade unions, foundations, professional voluntary associations, social networks, independent media, think tank and research institutes [10].

It is important to note that civil society organizations do not represent a unified or a coherent set of values and ideology; rather they represent diverse contexts, values, goals and interests. Scholars like Wanyande, Peter define civil society as an assemblage of associations outside of the state and government that would otherwise wish to influence the direction of public affairs including political discourse and action by using and expanding political space [11]. Whereas scholars define the notion of civil society differently, there is a common thread that runs through these multiple definitions. There is a sense of agreement among some scholars that civil societies are autonomous, informal or formal and often operate on voluntary basis [7].

## **2.3 Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU): Social Context**

As mentioned earlier, by the mid 1990s, Ugandan civil society organizations began considering alternative approaches to resolving the dispute. Numerous civil society groups concentrated their activities in northern Uganda to deliver services to the war affected people. However as individual groups, their impact remained wanting. The recognition of this limitation prompted the formation of CSOPNU in May 2002. Its aim is to promote strategies which can bring about long lasting peace in Northern Uganda. The organization is made up of 86 civil society groups. Some are locally founded and others have international identities. Unlike the government which uses militaristic strategies most of time, CSOPNU believes that sustainable peace in northern Uganda would be achieved through peaceful political processes such as dialogue and reconciliation. These processes should involve stakeholders in finding root causes and possible solutions to the conflict [13]. CSOPNU is run by a Steering Committee (SC) of 12 members elected from the membership within the coalition. The committee oversees the management and operations of CSOPNU, which is hosted by CARE International Headquarters in Kampala. The committee has an executive chair person and a General Secretary. The discussion of origins of the conflict, understanding civil society and the social context of CSOPNU leads to the analysis of the damages caused by the conflict, activities of CSOPNU leaders and the challenges and dilemmas they face in achieving sustainable peace in northern Uganda.

### **3 Damages Caused by the Conflict on the People of Northern Uganda**

In this section, the damages of the conflict on the people of northern Uganda are discussed because it then provides some evidences on the extent of war damages.

#### **3.1 Displacement of People into Concentration Camps**

Since 1986, the civil war in northern Uganda led to gross violation of Human Rights of men, women and children. The conflict caused untold suffering characterized by displacement, killings, and exiles. A population of almost 2 million people was living in 200 concentration camps known as Internally Displaced People's (IDP) where they experienced horrible human conditions, characterized by high levels of appalling sanitation and hygienic conditions, which contributed to numerous diseases and deaths. Many people experienced gross humiliation and despair. The displacement and overcrowding in camps not only were a health hazard but also affected the economic status and social fabric. That is, it resulted into death of culture and values systems [12].



**Figure 2** shows a camp for Internally Displaced Persons' Camp Site

Source: <http://www.ugandapeacefoundation.org>

#### **3.2 Abductions and Night Commuting**

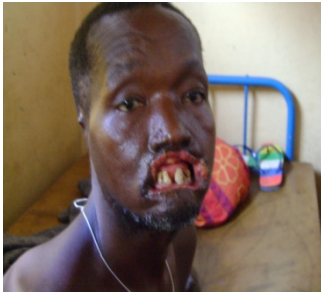
The instability that affected the northern region of Uganda led to numerous abductions and forceful recruitment of people especially children into the rebel forces. The research indicates that more than 20,000 children were kidnapped and brutalized by the rebel LRA. Over 40,000 children became known locally as 'night commuters' who trekked many kilometres to find place of safety in verandas of shops, streets, and schools in Northern Uganda. The picture below shows conditions of night commuters.



**Figure 3** shows the crowded conditions of night Commuters. Source: Bruno Stevens [www.brunostevens.com](http://www.brunostevens.com)

### 4.3 Increased Cases of Disabilities and Mutilations

The conflict led to increase in instances of people with disabilities. The people who were not abducted would often have their limbs chopped off by the LRA so that they could not inform the government forces of rebel presence in villages. Other people would have their mouths mutilated so that they would not report the rebels to the government soldiers. Mutilation was one of the strategies the LRA used to intimidate civilians. Victims of LRA mutilations are as shown in the pictures below:



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3

**Figure 4** shows pictures of victims of LRA Atrocities. Source: Moses Akena: [//www.ugandapeacefoundation.org](http://www.ugandapeacefoundation.org)

### 3.4 Sexual Abuses and Violence against Women and Girls

As shown in figure 4 above, due to resulting hostilities, the cases of rape and sexual abuses became the norm in the course of the conflict. Several reports have documented, rape and generalized sexual exploitation, especially by government soldiers (both those stationed in the camps and the mobile units) normal.” The soldiers feel entitled to take any woman or girl and do anything with her without complete impunity. As noted in a recent report by Human Rights Watch, “women in a number of camps told how they had been raped by soldiers from the Ugandan army. It is exceptionally difficult for women to find protection from sexual abuse by government soldiers [12]. Rampant sexual violence also increased the rate of HIV/Aids infections in northern Uganda.

### 3.5 Severe Trauma and High Rate of Suicide

Furthermore, the conflict in northern Uganda created a situation of hopelessness and desperation which resulted into increased suicide cases. A study conducted by Foundation for Peace Initiative (2006), revealed that 85% of people affected by the conflict suffer from trauma and depression. Incidences of suicide were common among mothers exasperated by the inability to provide for the basic needs such food, and access healthcare services for their children [12]. The discussion on effect of conflict on civilians in northern Uganda leads to discussion of activities of civil society organization (CSOPNU) in northern Uganda.

## 4 Activities of CSOPNU

Since its foundation in 2002, CSOPNU has been at the forefront of providing ground breaking research, analysis and public debates about the underlying causes and consequences of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) conflict [12]. In this research, two member organizations of the CSOPNU coalition were selected in order to have an in-depth understanding of the role of CSOPNU leadership in building of sustainable peace in northern Uganda. These include Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) and World Vision Uganda. The choice of ARLPI as sample was based on the fact that its leadership are outspoken and their actions could be described as bold, selfless and courageous. Therefore, ARLPI has been outstanding among the civil society groups that constituted CSOPNU. The faith based civil society organization (ARLPI) began in 1995 when Bishop Macleord Baker Ochola of Anglican Diocese of Kitgum and Priests from Comboni missionaries came together in an ecumenical spirit to speak for those who could not speak for themselves. Bishop Ochola participated in the failed peace talks of 1993-4. In 1996, an

interfaith group in Gulu known as Acholi for Peace and Reconciliation organized a peace training workshop and the first public prayer. This meeting was almost banned because government regarded any group advocating for dialogue as rebel sympathizers.

In 1997, Bishop Macleord continued to chair a series of meetings between Catholic and Anglican leaders. They were later joined by the Muslim leaders. By August of the same year, the religious leaders organized a peace rally in which they issued a message appealing to the LRA to stop violence against civilians. This was after the rebels massacred 250 people in cold blood at Atiak County, 22 kilometer from Sudan Border. More people were massacred in Kitgum in Lamwo County. The people were faced with a government who could not effectively protect them and rebels who reined terror on them. The only avenue available was praying for divine intervention. Without a formal organization, all the ecumenical effort of the religious leaders could not yield much fruit.

In February 1998, ARLPI was inaugurated and it began to mobilizing the people for healing sessions and June of the same year, ARLPI with support of United Nations Development Program (UNDP) convened consultative meetings known in Acholi as *Bedo Piny*, meaning sitting down. The meeting brought together different categories of stakeholder to reflect and share ideas about the conflict situation and to find ways of resolving it. During the consultative meeting the religious leaders were mandated to go to London and take the “voice and cry for peace” to the grand Meeting, also known as *Kacoke Madit*. The grand meeting was organized by the Acholi community in the Diaspora in London.

After the return of ARLPI leaders from London, they organized a retreat in September. The retreat was attended by local leaders and members of Parliament. The retreat was intended to forge a way forward by developing a common and shared vision to be pursued by the various leaders. It was observed that the Acholi community needed to be prepared for reconciliation and peace. Peace education was identified as best approach to achieve the set objective of the retreat. The outcome of retreat, largely funded by Acholi in Diaspora, was community Peace building Program that was developed to respond to the need sensitize the entire Acholi community in the peace building process [10].

Since 1999, the Leadership of ARLPI organized yearly public prayers and rallies for peace. The leaders issued joint messages on community peace during the prayer meetings focused on specific themes such as “Hope for Peace in the Year 2000,” “Have Hope for Peace,” “Peace is better at Home: Dismantle the Camps” and “Stop Fighting: Start Talking” in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 respectively [6]. By 1999, ARLPI had become widely known in Uganda. Due to the capability of the leadership, they were able to make strong demands for negotiations between the Government of Uganda and the Rebel Lords’ Resistance Army (LRA). As a civil society, ARLPI played a significant role when the leadership initiated the first contacts between the government and rebels, thereby linking up the two conflicting parties. The main focus of ARLPI was to work and advocate for an end to the conflict in northern Uganda [14].

In July 2001, the leaders organized a consultative meeting bringing together religious leaders from northern Uganda, the Uganda Catholic Secretariat, the Uganda Joint Christian Council and South Sudan. In this way, the ARLPI leaders achieved unity of purpose as they advocated for dialogue and peace in the region. Their ability to work together gave hope and confidence to the people of northern and the leadership became role model of how people from diverse back grounds could work together for the common good. The leadership became a source of inspiration to other religious leaders. The ARLPI facilitated the formation of religious initiatives in Karamoja such as Kotido Peace Initiative (KOPEIN) and Teso to address the conflict prevailing between the two communities [12].

Between March and April 2002, the Karamojong cattle keepers, who frequently migrated to Acholiland in search of pasture and water, killed over 80 people. Anger, bitterness and frustration overwhelmed the local communities who felt that government was not protecting them effectively. The villagers decidedly requested for guns for self protection. Accordingly, the central government agreed to release at least 700 guns to the local communities.



Recognizing the prospect for retaliation, the ARLPI leaders vehemently opposed the move to supply communities with fire arms. They then quit membership of the local Joint Forum for Peace [6].

After their withdrawal from the Joint Forum for Peace, the ARPI leadership consulted with the affected local communities for an opportunity for dialogue in view of discussing what transpired between the Acholi and Karamojong communities. In partnership with KOPEIN, ARLPI leaders facilitated a peace process between Acholi and Karamong (Jie) referred to as Peace Dialogue and Reconciliation. The successful resolution of the conflict between Acholi and Karamong led to the Iteso people requesting for similar support to resolve the conflict between the Iteso and the Karamong (Bokora and Pian social groups) [6].

In addition, the ARLPI leaders engaged both government and the rebels. They continued to advocate for dialogue as the best option to end the violent conflict in Acholiland. In 2000, the leaders met President Museveni and persuaded him to implement an Amnesty to encourage rebels to stop the rebellion and come out of the bush. The Amnesty Act of 2000 targeted not only northern Uganda but also western Uganda where the Allied Democratic Front (ADF) rebels were active. The amnesty stated that:

Any Ugandan who has at any time since 26<sup>th</sup> January 1986 engaged in or is engaged in war or armed rebellion against the government of the Republic of Uganda by (a) actual participation in combat; (b) collaborating with perpetrators of the war or armed rebellion or (c) committing any other crime in the furtherance of the war or armed rebellion or (d) assisting or aiding the conduct or prosecution of the war or armed rebellion [2].

The amnesty law which came into operation in January 2002 was largely because the ARLPI leadership engaged the amnesty commission on the need for amnesty law to be implemented to encourage rebels to cease hostilities. Unfortunately, the law which was implemented discriminated against LRA leadership. The implementation of amnesty saw many ex-combatants come out the bush. In 2005, some of the high ranking LRA commanders responded to the amnesty. Spokesperson and peace negotiator Sam Kolo and operational commander, Onen Kamdulu were a case in point [1]. Encouraged by government's implementation of amnesty, the ARLPI leaders made concerted efforts in reaching out to the rebel leadership for possible contact, dialogue and negotiation. Their efforts paid off when the rebels began to send messages to the government with ARLPI leaders as middlemen [12].

#### **4.1 Advocacy for Peace**

By May 2002, CSOPNU had made a lot of efforts to publicize the benefits of amnesty and also sensitize the public by carrying sensitization program using mass media, especially the FM radios: Radio Mega (Gulu), Radio WA (Lira), Radio Peace (Kitgum) and Radio Palwak (Pader). Whereas this sensitization targeted the rebels, it also intended to prepare the ground for reconciliation and integration of people back into local communities in northern Uganda. According to Lakot Tartisia [12], the CSOPNU leadership invested resources into training of peace animators who worked on voluntary basis. Initially 60 persons were trained. Their main role was to animate peace in the grass-root communities of Acholiland. The radios were instrumental in the implementation of the peace education program of CSOPNU leadership [1].

The advocacy for dialogue greatly contributed to the Juba peace talks in 2006. The Juba Peace talks were a landmark and expectations were high among Ugandans especially among the people of northern Uganda for peaceful resolution of the conflict. The ARLPI leaders who formed a big part of CSOPNU leadership camped in Juba as monitors and observers. Four of the CSOPNU executives namely, the chairman of ARLPI, Archbishop John Baptist Odama, Bishop Ochola, Monsignor Odongo and Sister Tartisia Lakot participated in that historic peace event in Juba. In fact, While in Juba, they sought audience with Joseph Kony before the onset of the Peace Talks. While the men went to meet Kony, the rebel leader, the women leaders remained in Juba where they continued advocacy and lobbying activities [12]. Although no formal agreement was signed at the Juba in South Sudan, no

hostilities against civilians in northern Uganda were experienced to date. It would seem that the CSOPNU leaders managed to convince Kony to opt to consider peace instead of the reining Terror [12]. The fact that the leaders of CSOPNU met Kony in person cleared the myth that Kony was long dead and only his spirit lived on. The activities discussed above no doubt earned CSOPNU leaders and civil society organization fame and the leaders became widely known in Uganda and abroad. It should be pointed out that their contribution to peace building process made some of CSOPNU leader's winners of Nobel Peace Prize. John Baptist Odama, in September 2012 received the Peace Prize Award.

#### **4.2 Research and Conflict Analysis**

Research and Conflict analysis is another activity of CSOPNU leadership. For example, in December 2004, CSOPNU Commissioned a study titled, *No Where to Hide: Humanitarian Protection Threats in Northern Uganda*. Through this research and analysis, CSOPNU brought to light many conflict issues including: the atrocities committed against civilians by both rebel and government forces; the prevalence of violence and rampant human right abuses. Most importantly, how the LRA threatened civilians with a brutal combination of psychological, physical violence, and coercion on daily basis. Yet serious protection vacuum existed in the region in reference to national and international awareness about the conflict situation in northern Uganda [16]. The CSOPNU leaders conducted many other studies and published papers on the subject of peace such as, *The Implications of the Referendum in Southern Sudan on Peace, Security and Reconstruction Process in Northern Uganda*.

Furthermore, continued advocacy for peace in Northern Uganda gained international perspective. The CSOPNU leadership made international press releases in USA, Canada, United Kingdom and Belgium to inform and educate the international community about the plight of people in Northern Uganda. In January 27<sup>th</sup> 2006, while in USA, the Archbishop John Baptist Odama, one of the outspoken leaders of CSOPNU coalition addressed the United Nations Security Council saying:

I have come to bring to you the ears of people who can do something for the crying children, the cries of their beloved mothers and families ... There are some who describe this war as forgotten, for many it is the planet's least known conflict. What should I say to the people of Northern Uganda when I return from New York? That the members of the Security Council will continue to remain silent while children are kidnapped and killed, men and women continue to suffer violent attacks every day? [14].

As result, the United Nations Security Council appointed **Joaquin** Chicanos of Mozambique as its special envoy to pursue the option of peace. Frequently, some of the leaders would for a whole week walk to Gulu town and sleep in the streets, bus stations and verandas of shops to show solidarity with the suffering children who were commonly known as night commuters. The CSOPNU leaders even had shelters in the IDP Camps [12]. This resulted into increased awareness about the war and suffering in Northern Uganda. Other campaigns included Gulu-walk which heightened international awareness on the need to end the war in Northern Uganda championed by Miss Angela Katatumba.

#### **4.3 Prayers and Moral Support**

According to Archbishop John Baptist Odama, CSOPNU is deeply involved in bringing sustainable peace in Northern Uganda [15]. The leadership of CSOPNU organized thematic prayer services focusing on forgiveness, reconciliation and peace on annual basis. In fact, these prayer meetings gradually became an annual event attracting peace loving people from all works of life from northern Uganda, Karamoja, Sudan and Kampala. Although this prayer rally is organized on a large scale to sensitize, inform, lobby and educate the public, individual CSOPNU leaders continue to dedicate a whole day on weekly basis to pray for peace [15]. Furthermore, the activities of CSOPNU are evident in World Vision Uganda.

#### **4.4 Rehabilitation and Reintegration of War Children**

As mentioned before, World Vision Uganda is one the members of CSOPNU, a coalition of over 80 civil society organizations working for peace during and in post conflict northern Uganda. World Vision Uganda is involved in the rehabilitation and reintegration of the children that were formally kidnapped by Lord Resistance Army (LRA). When the government forces rescued children from the LRA, it would contact World Vision Uganda. The World Vision Uganda then collected the children returnees from the Uganda Peoples' Defense Forces (UPDF).

When the abducted children are handed over to the World Vision Uganda, they are first checked their health status to ascertain their wellbeing. Each case is treated differently. In some instances children returnees have gunshot wounds and others were malnourished. Those with gunshot wounds were taken to hospital and the malnourished are put on nutritional balanced diet [16].

When these children are found to be in good health, they would be taken to rehabilitation centers where they are monitored closely. After rehabilitation, the World Vision Uganda reintegrates them into their respective communities. World Vision often gives financial assistance to children returnees who are being reintegrated into their communities.

One of the approaches World Vision Uganda uses for the rehabilitation of formerly kidnapped children is counseling to address the problems of trauma. The counseling processes take place at individual and group levels. At group level, the World Vision Uganda uses prayers and morning devotion, singing Christian songs and giving testimonies to enhance the counseling of former abducted children. It also uses preaching which focuses on topics such as the Ten Commandments, forgiveness and peace. All the above-mentioned activities are intended to instill Christian values in the children returnees. At individual level, counseling takes place at private settings. The individual counseling sessions are aimed at getting hold of child returnee's biography so as to be able to track his/her kinsmen. It also aims at helping the child to process his/her memory and to be able to handle the violent situations he or she experienced. Often, special attention is given to the child's active participation in horrific acts such as murder, rape and body mutilation of the civilians. The intention of the counselor is not demonize the child. Rather, it is to bring to their attention that it was not their making that they participated into such horrific acts. They were forced by the situation they were forced into. Finally, the counsellor advises the child returnee to forgive those persons who forced him/her to commit such atrocities and also try to erase such acts in his/her memories [16].

When the children are sufficiently rehabilitated, the World Vision Uganda liaised with the Acholi traditional leaders to perform the initial rehabilitation and reintegration processes. The Acholi traditional leaders perform cleansing ceremonies on the children returnees. The children are instructed to go through cleansing rituals by stepping "on eggs (*nyono tong gweno*) or sprinkle water on his or her feet using leaves of the olwedo tree." [16]. The Olwedo tree is used for therapeutic reasons. It is believed to put off the angry spirits which enters someone's physical body and it forces that individual to seek appeasement more particularly in form of sacrifice. The person who is possessed by the angry spirit will experience nightmares and sickness and mysterious deaths to the possessed person and to his/her family members. The reintegration in the community is done by the World Vision Uganda counselors. Before the child is reintegrated, the counselor goes to the child returnee's home or next kin and informs them about bringing back their child home. In order to make the child to be accepted fully in his or her community, the World Vision Uganda gives some financial assistance and household utensils. Usually two or three counselors accompany the child back to his/her home [16].

#### **5 Dilemmas and Challenges Faced by CSOPNU in the Peace Building Processes**

First, it is important to understand what dilemma and challenge are in the context of this study. A challenge is something that needs a lot of skill, energy, and determination to deal with or achieve, especially something you have never done before and will enjoy doing [17]. Hence challenges provide an overview of the issues that could lead an

organization and an individual into a state of dilemma. Hence, a dilemma is a sticky situation or a tight spot. It is state of no answers, a lack of direction and generally a position of weakness. A dilemma is characterized by uncertainty and fear. However, it does provide opportunity for reflection, innovation, and new learning. Dilemma can help reposition individuals as well as an organization strategically in search for clear direction for the future [18]. Therefore, dilemma calls for a redefinition of goals and objectives for specific and appropriate interventions.

The discussion of the above selected examples of civil society out of the numerous organizations (86) show how diverse civil groups concentrated in northern Uganda, sometimes resulting in duplication of services. If civil society is diverse in composition, even more varied are their goals, missions and strategies making it difficult to significantly influence government policies and prevailing social situations. Therefore, the realization by the leaders of the inability of individual civil society organization to greatly influence situations politically, economically and socially gave rise to the great need to fuse the numerous civil society organizations into something bigger. Consequently, in 2002, the leadership of civil society organizations sought to form a loose coalition commonly known as Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU). The thrust of the counseling interventions targets experiences during and in post conflict era in northern Uganda in view of understanding leadership dilemmas and challenges encountered by CSOPNU, but first statement of the research problem.

### **5.1 Impact of ICC Indictment of LRA on CSOPNU**

The Hague (Netherlands).based International Criminal Court (ICC) posed serious challenge to the peace process and the effective operation of CSOPNU in northern Uganda. In July 2005, the ICC indicted the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) leadership Joseph Kony and his senior commanders accusing them of war crimes and crimes against humanity [1]. On the onset of the Peace talks in Juba, there were great fears that carrying out the arrest warrant would jeopardize the peace process aimed at ending the conflict and the accepted traditional approach for conflict resolution. Whereas arresting the LRA leadership would serve justice, the urgent need for peace and reconciliation hanged in the balance. The rebel LRA vowed not to sign any peace agreement unless the ICC arrest warrant was lifted. The United Nations Security Council was torn between choosing administration of justice and securing the long awaited peace in northern Uganda. Therefore, caught up in this dilemma of whether to choose justice or not, the UN Security Council's Jan Hegel recommended the option for peace instead of arresting the leadership of the LRA. Since the ICC warrant was not officially withdrawn, no peace agreement was ever signed by the government of Uganda and the Joseph Kony to end the conflict. CSOPNU hence watched the situation with great concern as to what the failed peace talks would mean for the peace of northern Uganda in the long term as the conflict remain latent in nature. The fact that there is no human security means that the people cannot fully engage in developmental activities.

### **5.2 Lack of Adequate Financial and material Resources**

CSOPNU like other civil societies faces the challenge of inadequate financial and material resources making it difficult to expand service delivery. The need for constant soliciting of financial and material resources is inevitably ever present in most civil society organizations including CSOPNU. Sometimes the sources of funding may be the government which often is the subject of civil society activism. The scenario repeats itself again and again when international donors are involved. Consequently, the lack of material resources causes a serious dilemma indeed. CSOPNU sometimes finds itself pushed against the wall. This is because the leaders could be forced to accept resources from government or donors who often attach strings to the support given to the civil society [18]. For example, when in 2011 the Uganda government and some civil societies protested against same sex marriages, USA, UK, Swedish governments and other donors threatened to cut off their aid to Uganda. If CSOPNU as a civil society accepts funding from government then it has to comply with bureaucratic procedures and red tape in order to support governments or donors' agenda and campaigns. Furthermore, over dependence on donor funding not only comes with strings attached but also some of the programs implemented in most cases do not benefit the people of northern Uganda. Moreover donors often demand laborious accountability systems for which CSOPNU is not

equipped with. Thus, CSOPNU is increasingly in a state of dilemma to maintain a sense of independence as a civil society or gain access to material resources it so badly needs to continue operations and expand service delivery. Therefore, this makes it difficult for CSOPNU to assert its autonomy and independence from state influences and donors. This situation weakens and constrains CSOPNU from challenging some bad government policies and leadership practices [18].

### **5.3 Impact of Financial Mismanagement on CSOPNU Activities**

CSOPNU was expected to spearhead efforts to develop early warning mechanism and indicators of conflict in northern Uganda. The CSOPNU leadership, as a watch dog, was expected to lead in monitoring financial investments of Government and management of Peace Recovery Development Programs (PRDP) [13]. However, CSOPNU fell short of these expectations. The Presidential elections of February 2012 in Uganda increased fears that the political campaigns could result in possible diversion of public funds which in effect would hinder the post conflict reconstruction in northern Uganda. After the Feb. 2012 elections, delayed or nonpayment of salaries for civil servants became the normative practice in Uganda. CSOPNU's worst fears were confirmed when investigation reports by the Parliamentary Accounts Committee (PAC) in 2013 revealed that over 50 billion worth in aid for post conflict recovery programs was misappropriated in the Prime Minister's Office. The embezzled money was intended for post conflict reconstruction programs in northern Uganda [19]. The news of this high level corruption culminated into the donors suspending all aid to Uganda thereby paralyzing completely all Post Conflict Recovery Development Programs in the region [20]. The fact that CSOPNU had to watch with great concern the plight of conflict affected returnees women, men, and children languish without the financial support they badly need to reintegrate into communities posed a big dilemma for the civil society organization in its pursuit of long lasting peace for the people of northern Uganda.

### **5.4 Lack of Technical Expertise**

The majority of CSOPNU membership is drawn from local civil society organizations which lack capacity and human resources. It should be noted that volunteer work is mainly part time and largely depends on personal commitment of the individual volunteer to the values and vision for a better world and society free of insecurity and wars [17]. This implies that CSOPNU relies heavily on cheap volunteer labor force for mobilization, training, community education and counseling. However, overdependence on both local and international volunteers compromises the effectiveness and accountability of civil society organizations in general. Although volunteers have certain skills in mobilization, civic and community education, training and counseling, they frequently lack organizational commitment and leadership skills in financial management and report writing.<sup>21</sup> This makes it difficult for civil society organizations such CSOPNU to expand and intensify post conflict program activities. This has caused a big challenge with regard to CSOPNU's growth and in making a fundamental impact in the peace building processes in northern Uganda.

### **5.5 Lack of Enabling Political Environment**

Whereas the government of Uganda expects CSOPNU leadership to mediate peace in Northern Uganda, the leaders cannot act independently with regard to the peace building processes. As much the government wants the civil society to increase service delivery in Northern Uganda, the state wants to maintain an upper hand in the peace-building processes. On the other hand, the government is too suspicious of some of CSOPNU leaders' activities and methodologies. As mentioned earlier, the initial efforts to engage the LRA rebels in peace talks earned the CSOPNU leaders respect and trust. However, with time this trust and respect eroded away. For instance, Reverend Father Carlos Rodriguez who first mediated between rebels and the government was soon misunderstood by the government to be pro-rebels. His engagement put him in direct conflict with the Ugandan government. The government demanded that he leaves the country because he was no longer viewed as a trustworthy person. According to ARLPI reports, Father Rodriguez had primary information implicating the Ugandan military who

sometimes dehumanized people in Northern Uganda. A case in point was when a camp for the Internal Displaced People (IDP) in Pabo (Amuru District) was set ablaze by the government soldiers [14]. Therefore, the lack of enabling political environment makes it difficult for CSOPNU leadership to fully realize their objective of achieving sustainable peace in northern Uganda.

### **5.6 Media, Repressive, and Intimidation**

As mentioned before, the media especially the FM Radios were instrumental in the sensitization and peace education. Nevertheless journalists appear not to be free to air their views about the conflict in northern Uganda. This explains the extended news blackout initially. Moreover journalists were reported to have been harassed by the Police Force.

During a radio broadcast on Independent Radio Station Choice FM, The police frequently accuse the journalists and media of being a security threat. After a program aired, a local court issued a warrant allowing police to search the station's premises. News Editor, Sam Lawino told the Committee to Protect Journalists that the Police confiscated audiotapes and disks and ordered the station to turn over a copy of its license, its programming policy guidelines, and a recording of the broadcast. Managers at the station sought to comply with the order but they did not have a recording of the broadcast because their equipment malfunctioned. Police arrested Program Manager, Martin Ojara Mapenduzi and held him overnight without charge. He was released after paying bail. Police have since threatened to prosecute Mapenduzi and other journalists at the station on charges of failing to turnover all the documents that were sought after [22]. Therefore, due to the repressive and intimidating media policies, the CSOPNU leadership often fails to find appropriate media to air their views. Likewise, the CSOPNU leadership fears for its life. The point being emphasized is that because of repressive and intimidating environment, CSOPNU leaders failed to adequately inform the international and the local community about the situation in the northern Uganda.

### **5.7 CSOPNU and People's Expectations**

While CSOPNU and its leadership had good intentions of achieving sustainable peace in northern Uganda, its limited resources also paused yet another serious challenge. After the war, people's expectations increased immensely. The people not only had lost their social fabric, but they also lost their economic power. That explains why there is increasingly a growing culture of begging and apathy that never existed before the conflict.<sup>1</sup> The people expected to recover their former glory socially, economically, and politically. However, in reality, peace building is about restoring people's livelihoods and making sure that they are elevated from the level of servitude to the level where they can determine their destinies. Restoring people's history and livelihood is pertinent as it creates a fertile ground for reconciliation and forgiveness critical to peace building processes. For this reason, "sustainable peace must be built on measures that address the core grievances, structural injustices, causes of poverty, and its alleviation, social empowerment, and the reduction of horizontal inequalities." [24]. Due to people's great expectations, CSOPNU leadership has been under pressure to meet all of this wide range of needs. It becomes extremely frustrating when leadership falls short of meeting people's expectations. This also has a big impact on the pace of peace building processes in northern Uganda.

### **5.8 Religious Sectarianism**

This research revealed that the faith based civil societies often engaged in inter-religious dialogues under the umbrella organization such as the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC). A lot of water has gone under the bridge and UJCC is making headway in the struggle for unity and peaceful coexistence including northern Uganda. However, most faith based civil society organizations still have a hangover of colonial mentality which hinders them from working as a united force. For example, the Catholics still hang onto their Paris identity, the Anglicans to Canterbury and the Muslims to Mecca. Moreover, these civil society organizations tend to compete among themselves for material favors and recognition especially from the government. For example, it is common practice

to see the president or a senior politician as the chief guest on religious functions and events. Consequently, in some cases their impartiality and integrity has been compromised. This in turn undermines the sustainability of the post conflict reconstruction and peace building programs in northern Uganda. This is in line with [6] who argued that divisions exist among believers:

Despite the apparent unity of the Christian community, churches still compete among themselves in the search for additional members and financing. Most of the churches are so fragile and affected by the conflict of their members over financial and leadership issues, resulting sometimes in the creation of new rival factions from the initial mainstream ones [8].

From the above quotation, sectarian tendencies are not mutually exclusive to the Christians. Similar divisions exist among the Muslim brothers. The rivalry for power and resources among the Muslim leaders in Uganda in 2011 is just a tip of the iceberg of what is happening in some Muslims sections in Uganda. In order for the peace building to be sustained, leaders of CSOPNU need to move beyond their religious attachments.

### **5.9. Limited scope and Focus**

Civil society has great capacity to respond to different needs and interests and numerous ways of mobilizing resources in order to meet specific concerns and needs. As mentioned before, CSOPNU is made up of 86 member civil society organizations. This means that the different components of institutional membership could seek to retain their identity and choose to articulate different values and even serve in selected geographical areas thereby creating the problem of limited scope and focus. Due to localization of services and operations, CSOPNU could not respond equally to pressing needs outside of its designated sphere of influence, northern Uganda. A case in point was the land slide disaster in Bududa District which displaced and killed many people in recent years.

### **6.0 Local Government and Civil Society Relationships**

The study reveals that there is unequal small scale informal relationship between local government and the civil society organizations. This is made worse by lack of capacity by most local governments to coordinate and regulate civil society activities. Usually a civil society expects to be treated as equal partner and as an organization which has a stake in the democratic process where the mode of operations is characterized by transparency, accountability, information sharing on development plans, budgets and feedbacks. The degree of collaboration and partnership depends on the availability of resources. Where the resources such as funds are easily available and accessible, collaboration is shown in the exchange of manpower and information sharing is much more visible [21]. The health sector, for example, exhibited a higher level of collaboration in area of HIV/AIDS/STD programs.

However, both local government and civil society are constrained by three things: (i) lack of policies, strategies and mechanisms that promote partnerships. (ii) Competitive central government and donor funding through proposal writing which does not promote collaboration between the civil society and local government because of the fear that the information might be used by a competitor. This hinders effective collaboration that is expected of local government and civil society organizations. (iii) The civil society often perceives government as corrupt, bureaucratic and inefficient. Conversely, government sometimes considers the civil society as not being transparent and guided by ulterior motives known only to themselves and their home governments. This often explains the refusal by civil society to be transparent about their budgets and financial resources. Resultantly, such behavior creates an environment that does not promote trust and openness [21]. Having discussed challenges and dilemmas CSOPNU faces, the next section discusses the implications for Leadership.

## **6.1 Conclusion and recommendations**

## **6.2 Implication for Leadership**

One of the implications for leadership is that the political leadership in Uganda needs to recognize civil society organizations as indispensable development partners. The achievement of sustainable peace requires the contribution of all stakeholders: government, citizens, civil society organizations, and the international community. It is beyond reasonable doubt that the CSOPNU leadership has played a crucial role in the establishment of relative peace now prevailing in northern Uganda. However, the government of Uganda needs to move an extra mile to remove suspicious and cold relationships between it and the CSOPNU's leadership. There is need for Ugandan government to have transparent methods of operations with regard to coordination and communication strategies. Transparency would create trust between Government and the CSOPNU's leadership. Moreover, this would not only paint a good picture of the government of Uganda, it will also create a firm ground for CSOPNU leadership to advance their agenda with regard to peace building processes.

## **6.3 Continued Diplomacy by CSOPNU's Leadership**

Just as the political leadership, the CSOPNU leadership needs to continue playing their game in a diplomatic manner. This is because should the LRA establishes that the trust between the government and CSOPNU's leadership is restored; the LRA might in effect lose complete trust in them which would jeopardize the peace building processes in northern Uganda. While there are some in northern Uganda who are pro-peace building, there are those people who still believe that LRA is fighting for the right cause. It is clear that CSOPNU leadership often finds itself in a crossroads since the leaders have to strike a balance between maintaining positive working relationship with the government and also good working relationship with the LRA.

## **6.4 Social Capital and Peace Building**

In line with Putnam Robert (2000), the study observed that both the government and the CSOPNU leadership need to strengthen the social fabric of the people of northern Uganda by capitalizing on the importance of social capital. The fundamental idea of social capital is that social networks have great values. These networks can positively or negatively impact the performance of individuals and communities. The social capital is very important because it can mend broken relationships which were lost due to the war. Putnam emphasized that social relationships are very important since they are beneficial and necessary in mobilizing solidarity which is critical for peaceful coexistence' [25] Although it is not easy to reconstruct social relationships, it is nevertheless important to invest in social capital because it is pertinent for peace building in northern Uganda.

## **6.5 Analysis of Activities of CSOPNU Leadership**

This analysis is based on two objectives of the study. First, to identify the dilemmas and challenges of faced by CSOPNU in the quest for lasting peace in northern Uganda. Secondly, to examine the role played by the CSOPNU leadership in the building of sustainable peace in northern Uganda. From analysis of the objective one of the study, the findings reveal that, CSOPNU leadership faces some real challenges and dilemma in their endeavor to achieve sustainable peace in northern Uganda. These include: Impact of ICC Indictment of LRA on CSOPNU, Lack of Adequate Financial and material Resources, Impact of Financial Mismanagement on CSOPNU Activities, Lack of Technical Expertise, Lack of Enabling Political Environment, Media, Repressive, and Intimidation, CSOPNU and People's Expectations, Religious Sectarianism, Limited scope and Focus and Local Government and Civil Society Relationships.

The second objective of this research was to examine the role played by the CSOPNU leadership in the building of sustainable peace in northern Uganda. To a great extent CSOPNU met its objective of building sustainable



peace in northern Uganda. Although the Juba Peace talks did not culminate in the signing of a formal peace agreement to end the conflict CSOPNU leadership was able to influence Kony to cease hostilities towards the people of Northern Uganda. Relatedly, the leaders of CSOPNU managed to convince government of Uganda to change strategies from purely militaristic to dialogue and negotiation. To date, Majority of the Internally Displaced Persons have been resettled in their own local communities and the IDP camps officially closed in 2009 as a result of the prevailing relative peace to which CSOPNU was a great contributor.

## **6.6 Expected Outcomes**

The expected outcome (s) of the study was mainly identifying specific challenges and dilemmas confronting leadership of CSOPNU in the realization of sustainable peace in northern Uganda with specific reference to the involvement of civil society organizations for peace in northern Uganda (CSOPNU). As observed already, the major goal of CSOPNU was to pursue justice and long lasting peace in the northern region of Uganda. However, the Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda faced numerous challenges and dilemmas both internationally and nationally which are discussed in the net section of the paper.

## **6.7 Recommendations**

The research set out to explore the Challenges and Dilemmas Faced by Civil Society Leadership in Conflict and Post Conflict Situations: A Case Study of Civil Society Organization for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU). The study concludes that CSOPNU faces serious challenges and dilemmas both national and international. Among the most outstanding challenges is corruption which is a serious cause of poverty and under development in Uganda. In particular, the embezzlement of donor funds to the tune of 50 billion Uganda shillings from the Prime Minister's office for peace recovery development programs was a death blow to people of northern Uganda. The donors stopped all financial aid to Uganda and the people of northern Uganda paid the ultimate price.

The study recommends:

- The government of Uganda needs to practically implement a culture of a zero tolerance of corruption. Since the vice of corruption needs a concerted effort to contain, the CSOPNU should monitor and sound an alarm when government officials misappropriate public funds earmarked for specific development projects.
- As a civil society organization, CSOPNU role in the peace building processes in northern Uganda is critical. It is recommended that CSOPNU increase building development partnerships with all levels of government and donors. This partnership should emphasize transparency and accountability.
- With regard to Media repression and intimidation, the study recommends that the state respect the constitutional right of freedom of press. This is because the press crucial in bringing checks and balances on government excessive abuse of power and fundamental human rights. By providing information, the mediate informs and creates public awareness, which contribute to governance and peace building. Processes

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