

Internal Displacement in Northern Uganda: From Policy to Reality



Marijt Regts

Radboud University Nijmegen



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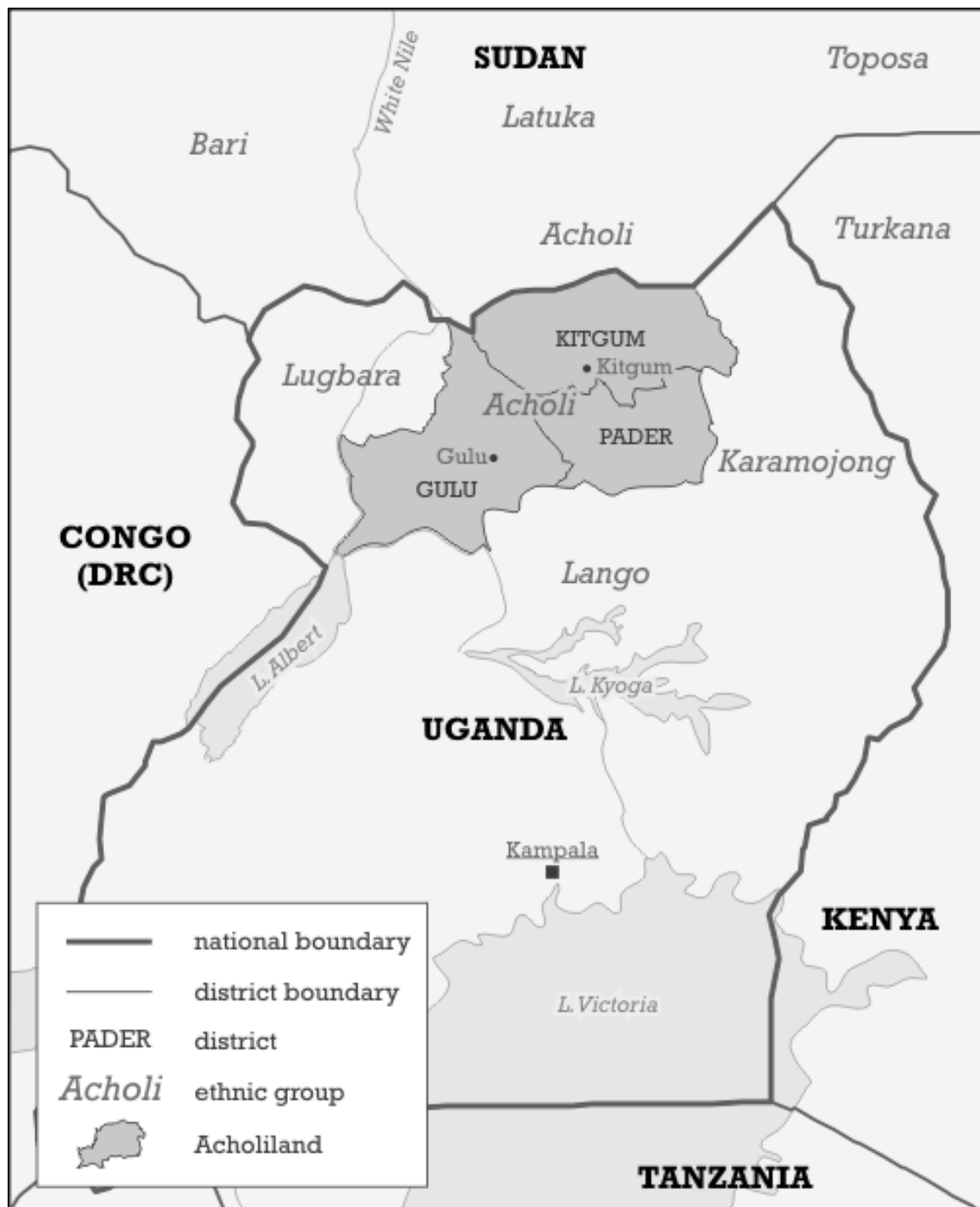
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Supervisor: dr. Jair van der Lijn
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Front cover: Photo of a demolished hut among huts still habited by IDPs. Lalogi, June 2010.
Next page: Quote of a staff member IOM, Gulu, 2 July 2010.

'We have peace. We have security. People say it like it is a conclusion. It will be pure grace and luck that nothing happens.'

Figure 1 Map of Uganda



Source: commons.wikimedia.org

Acknowledgement

Driving back from an intensive and satisfying day in the field I was just staring at the landscape we were slowly passing by, until my thoughts were interrupted by Alfred, saying 'this is survival my dear', while pointing at the women and children working on their land and carrying loads of sugar cane. I will never forget this particular moment. It was this moment that really woke me up, followed by many more: standing on top of the mountain where Kony received his holy spirit or hearing the story of a young mother explaining why she wished she had never returned from the bush. It hit me that the legacies of a war might not directly be visible from the outside, but the luggage that people must carry with them is unimaginable. The impact of a war on people and the dreadful aftermath of a conflict is of course huge, and it is difficult, maybe even impossible to understand it if you have never lived it. However, the longer I stayed in Gulu, the more I had these little moments of reflection and the more I tried to grasp the unimaginable. It were also these moments that made me realize the strength of the people and how admirable their optimism is. My respect for the Acholi has only grown. It made Gulu a great place to stay. Talking, laughing, learning and reflecting with them have also changed me, and I am thankful.

To conduct this research successfully I received a lot of help. First of all during my starting period in Kampala Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) provided me with several contacts which have been of great help in the explorative stage of the research. Once I arrived in Gulu, I was able to conduct a great number of interviews due to the helpfulness and enthusiasm of NGOs, donors and government officials. Targeting the IDPs and the former IDPs would never have happened if it was not for the great assistance I received from both AVSI and DRC (Danish Refugee Council), my thanks goes to them in particular.

My time in Gulu has been an inspiring one and I learned so much on so many levels. Of course there were difficult times during my days in the field. With my dearest friends scattered throughout the world, from Afghanistan to Trinidad to Ghana, and of course in the Netherlands, it was not always easy to share the special, difficult or the ordinary-day moments. However, I treasure the moments that we did, especially those with Lotte, who was able to help me forward in many ways. And also those with Rineke, with her always patient and enthusiastic support. Furthermore, I am grateful for the support and brainstorm sessions I had with my friends in Kampala and Gulu.

In the process of writing this thesis, I am very grateful for the feedback and support of Nienke, Lieselot, Karlijn and Dirk. Moreover, not only would I like to thank my supervisor, dr. Jair van der Lijn for his feedback, critical comments and motivational input, but also all the other lecturers and my fellow students from the Master Conflict, Territories and Identities. I had a great year, both due to my research in Uganda, and due to this Master. I have discovered which subjects really strike me, what makes me enthusiastic and where my ambitions are.

Marijt Regts,
December, 2010

Abstract

For years internal displacement has been neglected on the international agenda. Only recently the phenomenon is receiving more attention. Consequently, more debates and more approaches arise concerning whether or not internally displaced persons (IDPs) should be considered as a separate category of concern, and which approach is best in order to end internal displacement. In this arena of discussion the framework for durable solutions has been developed, providing as a guiding line for national authorities and the international community. The framework presents various factors that should determine the end of internal displacement, meaning that durable solutions for IDPs have been achieved. The starting point in the search for durable solutions is that IDPs have been able to choose their place of solution either through settlement at the place where they found refuge or through return to their home village or through resettlement someplace else. Subsequently, the framework distinguishes between the processes through which solutions are found and the actual conditions of former IDPs at their place of solution.

Uganda is one of the many countries that suffers from the impact of internal displacement. A conflict between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has troubled the northern region of Uganda since the 1980s. In the 1990s the government called for the protected villages which was the starting point of a massive uproot. IDPs lived in dire situations for many years. Since 2006 stability has returned in the region. The LRA crossed the borders of Uganda into Sudan, Central Republic of Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Despite many attempts, a peace agreement between the government of Uganda and the LRA has never been signed. Nowadays, many IDPs have returned to their home village, the search for durable solutions has started. The central aim of this research is to map the solutions of the government and draw conclusions on how these solutions contribute to the achievement of durable solutions for IDPs. Hence, the central research question is to what extent are the solutions provided by the government of Uganda as a response to the plight of internal displacement durable. The central solution in this research is the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP). To answer the central question, this research draws upon a literature study and an empirical field study conducted in Gulu, northern Uganda.

Based on the factors included in the framework for durable solutions, conclusions can be drawn on the main findings of this research. Having analyzed the government interventions under the PRDP, the conclusion will show that there is a discrepancy between policy and practice. The PRDP as a document corresponds to all factors included in the framework for durable solutions. Therefore, the document gives high hopes that durable solutions for IDPs will be achieved. However, the practical interventions conducted by the government under the PRDP draw a different picture. First of all, these interventions do not correspond to all factors described in the framework for durable solutions and secondly, those that do correspond are profoundly based on the establishment of hardware structures, like schools, roads, and police posts. Due to a lack of training and empowerment programs, the software component is being neglected, resulting in poor access and functionality of these structures. Overall, the solutions initiated by the government under the PRDP will contribute to durable solutions. However, whether they will be achieved within the timeframe of the PRDP is highly questioned. Derived from the research, various recommendations towards the government of Uganda can be made in an attempt to increase the effectiveness of the PRDP.

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List of abbreviations

CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CAR	Central African Republic
CBO	Community Based Organization
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DDP	District Development Plan
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EVI	Extremely Vulnerable IDP
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
GoS	Government of Sudan
GoU	Government of Uganda
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMTC	Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee
INGO	International non-governmental organization
LC	Local Council
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NURP	Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Program
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OPM	Office of Prime Minister
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PRDP	Peace, Recovery and Development Plan
PSN	Persons with Special Needs
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UPDA	Uganda People's Defense Army

UPDF	Uganda People's Defense Force
US	United States
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WFP	World Food Program

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1. Introduction

‘I have seen situations where the displaced continue to live in rundown camps or collective shelters years after a natural disaster has struck because the political will or the capacity to reintegrate them into society is lacking. I have visited places where the displaced were not able to return to their homes because of unresolved property disputes. I have met with displaced persons, whose initial hope after a disaster has given way to frustration about unmet expectations and desperation about the lack of perspective due to lack of access to livelihoods. And I have come across far too many displaced persons who were not able to fully enjoy their human rights and faced discrimination and marginalization and yet officials called the recovery process a success’ (Kälin, 2010).

For a long time the issue of displacement has been focused on those who cross their countries’ borders, i.e. refugees. However, the global trend nowadays is that displacement becomes internalized, people move within their countries, making them internally displaced people (IDPs). The starting quote of this chapter reflects on the complexities and challenges that are globally present. They can easily be illustrated with practical experiences such as Darfur or the DRC where IDPs deal with an ongoing struggle for an adequate standard of living while facing serious neglect from the government side; or Haiti and Pakistan, where a high number of people have been forced to leave their homes due to a natural hazard, now living in dire situations in constructed camps in rural areas or in poor shelters in the suburbs.

Not only do these experiences and examples reflect on the difficulties and challenges concerning IDPs, so does the literature on internal displacement. Debates on IDPs as a separate group of concern, the ending of internal displacement and the search for durable solutions for IDPs are the most common recurring themes. Although opinions within such debates are widespread, there is consensus on the often dire situations of IDPs. National governments carry the primary responsibility to respond to such situations followed by the international community. But no matter how strong the will of these actors is, responding adequately and sufficiently is still a struggle. Making solutions strong and operational in situations of insecurity, where actors are dealing with vulnerable and traumatized people while facing strong cultural embedded values, formulating such solutions asks for approaches which are comprehensive, inclusive and effective. The development of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement is a framework which should make such a process easier. These principles form a guiding framework for national governments and the international community to follow in situations of internal displacement. With return, local integration or resettlement as a starting point, these principles should help in the achievement of durable solutions for IDPs. Today, some national governments have adopted the Guiding Principles into their national policies, while others use it as a guiding tool in their assistance. Yet, the reality remains that finding durable solutions is never easy:

‘It is a gradual and long term process, during which human rights, humanitarian development and reconstruction challenges need to be addressed. It also requires the close coordination and co-operation of national and local authorities, humanitarian and development actors’ (Kälin, 2010).

1.1 Case study: Uganda

Uganda has been one of the first countries who has developed a national IDP Policy that bases itself on the Guiding Principles. Formulating this IDP Policy ‘played a significant role in raising awareness of the needs and rights of IDPs and mobilized support within the country and among partners abroad’¹. Northern Uganda, once called ‘the world’s worst humanitarian crisis’

¹ Tarsis Bazana Kabwegyere, Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Kampala, Uganda. Fragment from a speech held during a conference in Oslo: ‘ten years of Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement’, 16 October 2010.

(Egeland, 2003) is now working towards peace and stability. But also here, the struggle to provide IDPs with durable solutions is significant. Some people have lived in IDP camps for decades where they constantly faced situations of fear, neglect, vulnerability, vigilance and social disruption. Responding to the needs of IDPs, the government of Uganda claimed it was doing its share by placing the community in the so called protected villages, where the Ugandan army provided the IDPs with safety and security against the attacks from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The international community only started to respond to this dire situation long after the war had started and high numbers of people were already uprooted from their home villages, living in dire situations. Such neglect by the international community was not only visible at this local level, worldwide internally displaced persons received little attention from the international community.

The situation in northern Uganda serves as a perfect example of the rise and the intensification of the awareness to and the intervention in situations of internal displacement. Since 2003 Uganda faced a mushrooming of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) actively responding to the needs of the IDPs. Today, the point of a stable and secure environment has been reached, resulting in a turning point: the overcrowded IDP camps are deflating, people are finding their way back home – places some have left over twenty years ago – now trying to pick up the life they were once forced to leave. Assistance is no longer focused on humanitarian aid to those living in the camps, rather, the international community, together with the government, has shifted their attention to those who have returned.

Today, in a context where the majority of the IDPs have returned home, new programs have to be developed that respond to the needs of both the returnees and those still living in the camps, with the ultimate goal of achieving durable solutions. But this is exactly the challenge I referred to in the starting quote of this chapter, internal displacement is a complex phenomenon where not only the situation itself is often dire, but in many situations political interests, economic failures and a lack of social reintegration contribute to this complexity. Thus, formulating a framework that aims to achieve durable solutions asks for a specific approach responding to the specific movements on the ground. Although frameworks are formulated, guiding principles are written and national policies are adopted, this is not a guarantee for any success on the ground. As Kälin emphasized, finding durable solutions is a gradual and long term process which asks for a lot of effort from both a national government and the international community. The government of Uganda together with the international community is trying to come up with a strategy to make such a process successful, meaning that durable solutions for IDPs are achieved. This combined effort resulted in the development of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), a framework with the aim to uplift the northern region of Uganda. Though not only aiming at IDPs, the framework does place specific attention to this group, thus making the PRDP an attempt to provide for durable solutions for IDPs.

1.2 Research domain and research question

Since the awareness on internal displacement has grown, so has the literature on it. For a long time the focus has been on refugees, but now that displacement is internalizing an academic and theoretical shift is visible from refugees to IDPs. Questions need to be answered, approaches need to be determined while debates are still ongoing. Different authors reflect on this. This research places itself in some of the ongoing debates while at the same time it adopts some of the relevant theories.

In the process of seeking durable solutions, it is important to acknowledge that it is about the process leading to either return, reintegration or resettlement, and the conditions that are being created allowing for a durable solution. The role of the national authority is central in this idea. In the context of northern Uganda, where the majority of the IDP population has returned home,

this research aims to answer the question to what extent the government takes up its responsibility and how its actions contribute to durable solutions for IDPs.

The central thought behind the research is whether the Peace Recovery and Development Plan is expected to contribute to durable solutions. This comprehensive plan links programs and resources of the government, (I)NGOs and donors to each other. The PRDP was officially launched in 2008, during a time the return of IDPs was already in progress. There should be no misunderstanding that only the PRDP functions as a response to the plight of the IDPs. Instead, the plan recognizes the issues concerning IDPs and former IDPs, and on paper it responds to these issues. So, in the light of this research, the PRDP is approached as one of the solutions provided by the government to respond to the situation of internal displacement and the search for durable solutions. It must be noted that in this research the PRDP cannot be seen separately from other programs or initiatives that have taken place. Instead, the PRDP is approached as a contribution to a process that is already proceeding – that is, the process of achieving durable solutions for IDPs. Tete argues that the proof of effectiveness of any policy, especially if it is to be called a durable solution, can and should be assessed at the local level. Policy discourses and practices are there to serve the needs of those for whom they are designed, so it is only logical to find answers on how a target group of a policy perceives solutions that are designed for them and their current circumstances (Tete, 2000, p. 53, 54, 58). Besides the target group, independent and objective third parties also have a decisive view on how policy is proposed and how it functions in practice. This results in the following research question:

To what extent are the solutions provided by the Government of Uganda as a response to the plight of internal displacement durable?

To be able to answer the central research question, the following sub-questions should be taken into account:

1. *What has caused the large amount of IDPs in northern Uganda?*

In order to explain the development of the PRDP, it is fundamental to have an understanding of the past of Uganda. Societies are formed by their political, social and economic processes, both in the past and in the present. In order to grasp the present one has to go back to these historic processes first. Understanding the past enables one to put the present in the right context and consequently current processes and movements can be further explained. Hence, with this question I aim at historic processes which can be appointed as the root causes of internal displacement in northern Uganda after which the consequences of internal displacement on its society can be explained.

2. *What are durable solutions?*

Explaining different concepts, elaborating on current debates and discussing various approaches this question will unravel the concept of durable solutions in order to make the research operational. This in turn will lead to the framework for durable solutions which will form the basis of this research.

3. *Through which processes are solutions being found in northern Uganda?*

Derived from the theoretical framework, this question addresses the processes that have been put in place that enabled IDPs to choose their place of solution, either through resettlement or through integration in the camp. More specifically, this question aims to include the contribution of the PRDP. Linking the programs of the PRDP to the factors that determine the processes through which solutions should be found, conclusions can be drawn on the PRDPs contribution.

4. *What are the actual conditions of the (former) IDPs in northern Uganda?*

Derived from the theoretical framework, this question wishes to explain how (former) IDPs perceive their current living condition and how the government is responding to this. More specifically, this question focuses on the structures the government is establishing that will contribute to the achievement of durable solutions. This question will have a particular focus on the PRDP and its contribution to these conditions. The conditions that should be in place for (former) to achieve a durable solution are being linked to the activities conducted under the PRDP.

5. *How does the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan contribute to durable solutions for IDPs in northern Uganda?*

Where the former questions will be answered in line with the factors determining the end of displacement derived from the theoretical framework, this question aims to move beyond these factors. This can provide the research with other insights or new points of debate that in turn might have their effects of the actual contribution of the PRDP. Consequently, if such factors come to the fore, they should also be included in the final conclusion.

To be able to answer these questions, I adopt the framework for durable solutions. This framework, which is partly based on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, provides a list of factors that should contribute to durable solutions for IDPs, with the central idea that when these factors are achieved, one can conclude that IDPs are no longer a separate group of concern, thus, internal displacement has ended. The next paragraph will elaborate on the relevance of the research. From paragraph 1.4 on, an overview will be given of the used methodology to bring this research into practice and how the collected data have been analyzed. Before linking theory to practice, an analytical methodology has been determined. First I will clarify the selection of the research location and the explanation of the units of analysis. This will be followed by elaborating on the methods used for the data collection and how in turn this data collection will be interpreted. By reflecting on the research period, I will make some important notes about the reliability of this research. This chapter will conclude with an overview of how this study is structured.

1.3 Relevance

Internal displacement is not only a problem within northern Uganda. In the past fifteen years the number of IDPs has grown worldwide, where the current number lies at approximately 26 million internally displaced. Worldwide governments and aid organizations are struggling with the issue of IDPs. With the establishment of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement recommendations are being made to governments and aid organizations, however, it is not a legal framework where IDPs can base their rights on. The framework for durable solutions – also partly based on the Guiding Principles – describes clear factors that in the end will determine whether or not IDPs have achieved a durable solution. An increasing number of governments and NGOs are adopting this framework in their activities in an attempt to achieve durable solutions for IDPs. Interestingly, there are some clear concerns on whether IDPs should be approached as a separate group of concern, and thus whether such a framework provides the right criteria to end their dire situation. This debate stems from the question whether or not IDPs are still citizens of their country, thus falling under the responsibility of the national government. On the other hand, some argue that IDPs should not be considered as a separate group of concern, neither by the international community nor by national authorities. Hand in hand with this comes the question of the responsibility of the government. Although a government should look after its citizens, it does not always have the capacity to take this responsibility, often resulting in a serious neglect of the issue of internal displacement.

The government of Uganda did take their responsibility by signing the IDP policy in 2004 which is designed in accordance with the Guiding Principles. This policy provides the government with guidelines in order to end internal displacement. Furthermore, in 2007 the government started with the development of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan with the central aim to stabilize and uplift northern Uganda. The PRDP pays specific attention to the problem of internal displacement. This research will draw conclusions on the contribution of the PRDP to durable solutions for IDPs. With the outcomes of this research I do not only wish to make a scientific contribution, this research will also have a social relevance directed at the actors active in northern Uganda.

The scientific relevance of this research will be found on various levels. First of all through this research, useful, original and up to date data from different actors in northern Uganda have been collected. Consequently a comparison can be made between the activities conducted under the PRDP and the factors determining durable solutions. Resulting from this analysis, the contribution of the PRDP to durable solutions for IDPs can be determined. Secondly, by conducting a thorough literature study I have come across some case studies dealing with durable solutions for internal displacement. Yet, the majority of this literature has an absolute theoretical nature. So this study on northern Uganda provides an added value in the already existing studies. Moreover, case studies are an interesting way of discovering possible new trends in the existing theoretical fundamentals. This brings me to my final point of relevance. When looking beyond the particular factors that determine the end of internal displacement, I aim to place this research within various scientific debates. First of all this research can provide an additional value in the debate on whether or not IDPs should be considered as a separate category of concern. This can be concluded from the current approach from the government of Uganda and the actual current needs that might still be present under IDPs. Secondly, derived from the international discussion on how to respond to internal displacement and which means should be used to determine its end, a relevant conclusion can be drawn on the question whether or not the framework for durable solutions provides the right means to achieve durable solutions.

Besides the scientific relevance which is profoundly based on its theoretical positioning, this research will also have a social relevance. It will both provide insights on the current situation of internal displacement and the progress that is made in the achievement of durable solutions for IDPs. Moreover, it will clearly show what the interference of the government and NGOs mean for IDPs, and to what extent these interventions have an additional value in their current situation. Consequently, conclusions can be drawn on the effectiveness of the programs both from NGOs and government. Moreover, the research will be able to identify any possible gaps arising from needs of the IDPs and the implemented programs. Finally, by providing concluding recommendations this study also aims to increase the effectiveness of the PRDP and its contribution to the actually achievement of durable solutions.

1.4 Selection of research location and units of analysis

The research took place in a three month period, from May till August 2010. Since 2006 – after more than twenty years of violent conflict – peace and stability have finally returned, meaning that changes within the society are taking place. Among other things, the government is initiating new initiatives of which the PRDP is the most recent launched plan. The overall aim of the PRDP and other initiatives is to contribute to positive changes within society. Also, the amount of IDP returnees is reaching high numbers. During the most intensive years of the war, northern Uganda suffered sincerely and many people fled to the IDP camps. Acholiland was the heartland of these high numbers of the internally displaced. In 2006, Acholi counted 121 IDP

camps with a total population of 1.110.000 IDPs², by far the highest number of northern Uganda. Gulu district was the core of these IDP camps, in 1997 – a year after the government called for the protection villages – already counting 23 IDP camps with a population of 270.000 IDPs (WFP, 1999), a number that only increased during the following years. However, since 2006, these numbers are seriously declining. Figures in chapter two will present up to date numbers on camp closure and population movements. These numbers show significant changes within the districts. Due to such internal changes and several governmental investments, Gulu is now moving from a geographical area with almost the entire population being displaced towards a district that is to be called the center of northern Uganda with Gulu town as its capital. Due to these societal and geographical transformations, Gulu district has been chosen as the focus area of this research.

Most of the NGOs working in the field in Acholi are located in Gulu town. During my research period, this was also mainly my point of departure. Here I interviewed several national and international NGOs as well as government officials and donors. The second half of the research period I spent in the field. I made a distinction between two target groups, the first group contained the IDPs that were still living in an IDP camp. I chose to focus on two camps in two sub-counties, that is Lalogi and Odek. Lalogi is still characterized by a relative high number of IDPs, compared to a lower number of IDP camps and IDPs in Odek.³ In both sub-counties I visited the camps with the highest population of IDPs. Lalogi camp counted a number of 74 households with a total of 265 IDPs and Acet in Odek counted 156 households with a total of 1.273 IDPs. Comparing the two camps, I visited a camp with a relative small and relative high number of IDPs.⁴ Furthermore, I based my choice of the camps on the distance from Gulu town, with Odek being further away from Gulu compared to Lalogi. The second group contained the former IDPs, those who have left the camps and returned home or settled elsewhere. For this group I also chose to focus on two sub-counties, these were Bungatira and Palaro. These sub-counties were also based on their distance from Gulu, where Palaro is a very remote area and Bungatira is much closer to Gulu town. Comparing these two, Bungatira counts more villages than Palaro, making it a larger sub-county.

By making these distinctions between sub-counties for both groups – based on density of the camps or villages and based on the distance to Gulu town – I intended to target a comprehensive group of people and to minimize any geographical or community based influences on the research. In order to target all groups within society I made a distinction on age and gender. The groups I formed were youth, ranging from 10 to 18 years; adults, from 19 to 49 years old and elders from 50 years and older. All three groups were divided according to gender. So, with all these features I wanted to establish an inclusive research where I considered age, gender, geography and sub-county structures (particularly the density of the camps or villages) to be of influence on the outcome of the research.

1.5 Methods of data collection and data analysis

In this study I base myself on a qualitative research. The qualitative research method enables me to ‘observe social interactions and communications’ (Jansen, 2010) and leave room for my own observations in the field. It is important to note that this study deals with three different social settings, that is the government, the international community and the local community, all with their own interpretations on social processes and movements within society. Adopting this qualitative research method, I believe in the idea of Anderson where qualitative research ‘emphasizes inductive, interpretive methods applied to the everyday world which is seen as subjective and socially created’ (Jablin & Putnam, 2005, p. 162). In this assumption, qualitative

2 Numbers retrieved from IDMC. See annex I and II.

3 Numbers based on June 2009. See annex III for the map on IDP camps and returning sites Population, IMU, UNOCHA Uganda.

4 Numbers based on May 2010. See annex IV for an updated figure on Gulu camps population, AVSI.

research is proposed as an interpretation of what is happening in society. More specifically, in this study I adopt the philosophy of realism as a basis of knowing the world, this idea acknowledges that ‘the world *exists* largely independently of our knowledge of it, but our *descriptions* of it do not, for they clearly depend on available knowledge [...] social phenomena are intrinsically meaningful or concept-dependent’ (Aitken & Valentine, 2006, p. 98, 103). With this idea in the back of my mind during my research, I am aware that there is not just one truth, rather every truth is an interpretation of social phenomena. So instead, I adopt one truth, which is the framework for durable solutions - summarized in chapter 3.5 – and I attempt to place this into the study, recognizing that the three social settings mentioned earlier have their own interpretations of this particular truth. So when conducting a qualitative research, I leave space for these interpretations, thus making the truth according to the different social settings more understandable and reliable. It must be noted that the aim of the research is not to see through these different interpretations of the truth, rather it formed a constant realization of what I was doing and of what I was hearing, recognizing the different interpretations and perceptions of reality during the discussions and the interviews.

The first research period took place in Kampala which served as an introduction and a familiarization of the research topic and the upcoming research period. I did this first by gathering more literature and reports on the related topics of the research, and secondly by setting out a network. Within this network I held several explorative interviews with experts, either on the topic of internal displacement or on the topic more focused on the government interventions, specifically discussing the PRDP. With the information I gathered I was able to put up a strong and integrated list with guiding questions with which I could go into the field. In Gulu, I targeted several groups: staff members of (I)NGOs ranging from program officers to program managers to directors, international donors, government officials and the community members – IDPs and former IDPs. Figure 2 shows an overview of the individual interviews and the focus group discussions held during the research period. This in turn will be followed by the different methods that I have used during my research in order to be able to answer the central research question.

Figure 2 Overview of conducted interviews

	Kampala	Gulu	Bungatira	Palaro	Odek	Lalogi	Total
(I)NGOs	5	12	-	-	-	-	17
Donors	1	3	-	-	-	-	4
Government officials	-	2	-	-	1	2	5
IDPs	-	-	-	-	9	9	18
Former IDPs	-	-	4 groups (total of 64 former IDPs)	4 groups (total of 65 former IDPs)	-	-	8 groups (total of 129 former IDPs)

1.5.1 Literature review and secondary data

This research derived from an intensive literature study on the central concepts of internal displacement and durable solutions. Together with the relevant literature on Uganda and more specifically on the conflict and the post-conflict situation in northern Uganda, I was able to implement the theoretical basis into the practical case study. Not only before I went to the field, but also during and after this period, I kept searching and reading relevant literature. It helped me reflect on situations I was facing and it enabled me to interpret specific information. Besides that, it kept me focused on the topic I was working on and the context I was working in.

Throughout the study I have also been reading a lot of secondary data. This included several reports, impact studies, minutes of meetings and articles from newspapers and journals relating to topics such as the impact of government programs, the PRDP, the work and impact of NGOs

and the current situation of (former) IDPs. This data has also been used in combination with the collected research data from the field and the literature. By continuous reflection and interpreting, this enabled me to make an appropriate analysis.

1.5.2 *Semi-structured interviews*

With the background information from the literature combined with the additional information that was gathered in Kampala, I was able to set up a guiding questionnaire that enabled me to conduct in-depth interviews. In general, the guiding questionnaire addressed questions about the current situation of the IDPs and the process that led to their current situation, the attempts of the government and NGOs to contribute positively to their current and past situation, and the development and proceedings of the PRDP and how this contributes to the situation of IDPs, thus its expected contribution on durable solutions. In practice, the particular focus of the interviews would differ, depending on which group was being interviewed. While talking to NGOs, the main focus would be on the current situation of IDPs, the government attempts and the PRDP. When interviewing donors, the focus would be more on the proceedings of the government and NGOs in relation to the IDPs, and the PRDP would be discussed intensively. Interviews with government officials, focused more on the development of the PRDP and the applicability of this framework (although this was also dependent on who I was talking to, interviewing Local Council 1 or Local Council 2 we also extensively discussed the situation of the (former) IDPs). The in-depth interviews with NGOs, donors and government officials were both conducted in Kampala and Gulu (see figure 2). These in-depth interviews would take between an hour and an hour and a half and occasionally longer.

Interviewing the IDPs, the emphasize would lie on their perceptions of their current living conditions, the role of the government and NGOs in their current situation and the kind of assistance IDPs are receiving now and what kind of assistance they received in the past and from whom. I would conclude these interviews with questions about the PRDP, whether they are aware of the plan, how they received information about it, and what the plan entails. I chose to conduct individual interviews with the IDPs since in the current situation we are dealing with a relative small numbers of IDPs still remaining in the camps. There is often a reason of why these people are still living here, differing from one individual to another. Because of such individual or personal situations, I chose to target this group of people on an individual basis. As figure 2 shows, I conducted a total number of 18 interviews with IDPs in Odek and Lalogi. These interviews were conducted with a translator. They took about an hour and a half.

Besides the officially documented interviews, I also had a lot of informal conversations with people, whether it would be experts on the topic or persons who have lived the conflict, all were able to share a lot of valid information. This was important to include in the research, since such information sometimes would give new insights on specific topics, or it gave the opportunity to adopt new or more specific questions into the guiding questionnaire.

1.5.3 *Focus group discussions*

To target the former IDPs, I chose to conduct focus group discussions. This decision is based on several reasons. First and foremost focus groups provide rich qualitative data where a researcher finds out about perceptions of the reality. According to Donini: ‘they constitute a useful tool that allows the canvassing of a much wider range of people than one-to-one interviews [...] perceptions are important in their own right. They tell us more about meaning than about facts. They influence behavior and are symptomatic of a particular time or situation’ (Donini, 2007, p. 158). Secondly, the literature (chapter 3) will show us that during a period of internal displacement, social structures are disrupted. The current situation in the IDP camps does not make it any easier to resume social structures since the majority of the IDPs have left the camp. This results in the observation that it are mostly the individuals who stay behind. Yet, those who return come back in a community where old structures are resumed as much as

possible. Thus, I considered that this group of people would be more of a community with specific community needs and challenges, rather than the IDPs still living in the camp, thus targeting them in a group appeared logical. In these focus group discussions I tried to create a setting open for discussion by posing open questions and giving space for everybody to answer, explain, elaborate or exemplify and letting people respond to each other. The size of the groups differed, the youth were interviewed in a setting of ten – five boys and five girls. Adults and elders were mostly between the fifteen and twenty-five people where in the adult group male and female were separately targeted. In the group of elders, male and female were targeted together. These four focus groups were mobilized both in Bungatira and Palaro. As figure 2 already showed, a total of eight focus group discussions were being conducted. Such focus group discussions took about two hours each, depending on the group.

1.5.4 Methods of data analysis

With this qualitative research, I attempted to collect as much in-depth data as possible which resulted in a pile of valid and useful information. By using different methods of data collection, I submitted myself to the concept of triangulation which is important in the construction of a fundamentally strong research. This also made it possible to look at the research topics from different points of view, which helped me to ‘validate observations and information’ (Mikkelsen, 2005, p. 96). In order to adequately and efficiently analyze the collected data, I used the method of coding. According to Mikkelsen, coding is a ‘useful way of organizing qualitative data [...] a researcher organizes the raw data into conceptual categories and creates themes or concepts, which are then used to analyze data’ (ibid. p. 181). More specifically, the method of selective coding has been used where I selectively looked for illustrations of specific themes. Concretely, this method of data analysis enabled me to categorize the data into specific topics according to the research design – that is, using the factors contributing to durable solutions described in the framework for durable solutions (chapter 3.5) – through which the data could be analyzed.

1.6 Methodological reflection

Although I did my best to avoid any problems to occur during the research, I could not prevent some obstacles from happening anyway. However, by identifying them, by adopting the method of triangulation, and by continuous reflecting, the reliability of the research is not bypassed. One of the first and most important problems occurred during my visits in the IDP camps. Before starting the interview, I would explain the research and the kind of questions that were going to be asked. In addition, I emphasized that my translator and I were not directly attached to an NGO. However, it often happened that after an interview, the interviewee was wondering what would be the next step. No matter how much we emphasized the fact that I was an individual researcher, they would still associate me to a setting where they could benefit from. Reflecting on this, it might have influenced their responses to some of the questions, especially those about their current needs and challenges in the hope that they can gain from any action taken in response.

Another challenge I faced was working together with a translator. This is always difficult when doing research abroad. The information passes from me to the translator who interprets and translates, then coming to the interviewee who in turn interprets the question and answers it. The same way the question reached the interviewee, the answer will reach me. This is a problem which is difficult to overcome. Embracing this challenge, we would discuss every interview afterwards.

A third weak point actually flows from a strong approach, which is the use of focus group discussions. I have argued in paragraph 1.5.3 the importance and usefulness of having these focus group discussions. Organizing them however, faced some difficulties. Beforehand, I thought about placing specific groups of people together, according to age and gender. Gender

however did not always work, especially among the elderly, due to the fact that many of the male have died during the war, sometimes leaving only a handful of men in a village. They would settle up together with the women during the discussions. I was afraid that in this situation one gender group would overrule the other so I was extra alert to prevent this from happening. In the case of the elderly, this however was not a problem at all, it might have even resulted in an enrichment of the research. However, it also occurred once with the group of adults. I ended up in a mixed focus group discussion, unfortunately it were mainly the men who were talking. Afterwards, I decided to conduct an extra focus group discussion with only women. Besides the issue of gender, in a setting of focus group discussions the danger is that the researcher misses out on individual, specific cases.

Besides these concrete examples of difficulties during the research, as a researcher you are dependent on so many other things as well. That is, the willingness of people to cooperate in the research, or simple things like the weather or timeframes where people are working in, this sometimes results in missing out opportunities to talk to people. One such example had to do with formal procedures that need to be followed. This resulted in the unfortunate fact that there was no time left to interview somebody from the Office of the Prime Minister in Kampala. Furthermore, people are busy, they have to make time to sit down with you for an interview, and sometimes they simply do not have this time, or dates are being postponed, ending in no interview at all.

1.7 Structure of the study

This study is divided into five chapters, with this chapter as the starting one introducing the central research question of this study together with its research aims and research methods. The next chapter will elaborate on the context in which this research took place. It explains the causes of the conflict which have led to the uproot of almost the entire population of northern Uganda. Specifically, this chapter will address the rise of the Lord's Resistance Army, how the war has continued for over twenty years and it will discuss the impact of the war on Uganda's society. This chapter will finalize by explaining the response of the Government of Uganda in the form of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan.

Chapter 3 forms the theoretical framework of this research. Several debates concerning internal displacement will be touched upon in order to explain the complexities and challenges with the phenomenon of durable solutions for IDPs. Furthermore it will discuss the causes and impact of internal displacement. This chapter serves as the theoretical basis leading to the operationalization of the research. This is constructed according to the framework for durable solutions, which is a practical framework serving as a guiding line for national governments and the international community to determine the end of internal displacement.

Chapter 4 will discuss the main results of the research. It will do so in line with the framework for durable solutions, that is, by discussing the processes through which solutions took place and by elaborating on the actual conditions of former IDPs. The contribution of the PRDP in these processes will be included. More specifically, a link will be made between the processes through which IDPs find their place of solution (either return or settlement in the camp) and the reasons for IDPs to actually return or settle in the camp. The analysis will show that this assumption is not necessarily true since the reasons of return are not exclusively linked to processes that have been in place. Secondly, this chapter will describe the actual conditions of former IDPs. Also here a link is made between the actual conditions that are in place and the perceptions of (former) IDPs on their current living situation. The rationale behind this is that the conditions that are put in place respond to the descriptions (former) IDPs put forward on their current living situation. Finally, this chapter will explicitly discuss the PRDP. It will do so by focusing on the awareness among the local community, by discussing criticism expressed by different actors, and by

approaching the PRDP separately from the framework for durable solutions. By doing this, I aim to answer the question whether or not the PRDP contributes to durable solutions for IDPs, that is, does it contribute to the process through which solutions are found and does it contribute to the actual living conditions of former IDPs. These results will be demonstrated in chapter 5, the conclusion of this research. Moreover, this chapter will reflect on the research and its used theories. This will be followed by the scientific and social contribution of the research and the chapter will finally conclude with some recommendations.

2. Past and present: internal displacement in Uganda

Every country in Africa has its own reality. Although South Africa is known for its apartheid, Rwanda for its genocide and Ethiopia for its repeated famines, such images are not representative for a society. The current reality of a country is shaped by its history where human interaction and geographical changes play decisive roles. Understanding a country's present reality cannot be done without looking at what has happened in its past.

This chapter describes the local context in which this research took place. Uganda has been a playing field of ethnic violence for many years. This violence is one of the most important markers when trying to understand Uganda's present. But not only violence itself, also the social and political structures that hide behind the violence are strong determinants for the current situation. Therefore, before focusing on the actual topic of this research, Uganda's complex past needs to be recognized first. This chapter will start with a short summary of the geographical division and the political system of Uganda. Because the current situation of (northern) Uganda is especially due to the legacies of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the second paragraph will continue with describing the rise of this rebel group. Subsequently, the third paragraph will deal with the war between the LRA and the National Resistance Movement (NRM), after which the legacies of this war will be described. The fifth paragraph focuses on Uganda in its regional context. I will touch upon the idea that the LRA is being used as a legitimization for other conflicts in the region as well, i.e. the proxy war bringing together Uganda, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and even the United States. Also important to point out is that political movements within neighboring countries can have a major impact on the stability in Uganda. I will finalize this chapter by elaborating on how the government steps in to resolve current situation in the north.

2.1 Uganda

In this paragraph the geographical division and the political system will be addressed. Figure 1 shows the map of Uganda, where Acholiland is marked dark grey⁵. The cultural and geographical identity of the north is represented by the Acholi. The homeland of the Acholi identity is Acholiland, which is formed by the four districts of Gulu, Amuru, Kitgum and Pader. The LRA conflict particularly took place in Acholiland, where Gulu was mostly and deeply affected by abductions, mutilations and looting.

During the war most people in Acholiland were displaced. They were living in camps where traditional social and political structures were absent and new camp rules determined everyday life. Nowadays, with the majority of the displaced having returned home, the system of the decentralized governance is operational again. This decentralization finds its roots in a period the National Resistance Movement (NRM) came into power. Museveni, leader of the NRM, introduced the Local Councils on five levels, LC1 to LC5, where LC1 functions on the village level, LC2 on the parish, LC3 on the sub-county, LC4 on the county or municipality and LC5 on the district level (Finnström, 2008, p. 93). In theory, this political commitment to decentralization should result in more responsibilities for decision-making, planning and budgeting, finance and service provision to the five levels of LCs. However, the reality in Uganda sometimes shows otherwise: 'decentralization has not brought about increased voice and power for local citizens, responsive policy-making and efficient service provision to the extent intended' (Steiner, 2007, p. 178, 179). Indeed, the capacity of the local government is often questioned, however,

⁵ The map shows district Gulu, formed by Kitgum, Gulu and Pader. However, it should be noted that at this moment the process of decentralization is continuing and more districts are created and old districts are divided into more, so this card is not fully representative.

decentralization in Uganda has taken its roots and the process of decentralizing districts is continuing.

2.2 The rise of the Lord's Resistance Army

The origin of the Lord's Resistance Army as an organization occurred after Museveni took control of Uganda in 1986. But to understand the root causes of the conflict in northern Uganda – and thus the rise of the LRA – one has to go back to the colonial period (Vinci, 2005, p. 346).

'Uganda's post-colonial experiments in state-building were based on the army as an instrument of domestic politics. Domestic politics itself was increasingly a function of ethnic retaliation. This not only hardened ethnic boundaries, but created a sizeable and almost unemployable 'lumpen militariat' class, which solidified violence as a means of interaction in society' (Van Acker, 2004, p. 338).

This quote summarizes a very important movement in Uganda that took place after the colonial period. The struggle that the country was facing after independence has left its marks in society. Up till now, these marks are still visible in cultural divisions and they can be used to explain different events in the past up to processes taking place in the present. There has been a cycle of political violence within Uganda since its independence in 1962. Describing the rise of the LRA, I will elaborate on two crucial characteristics of the recent political history of Uganda: the widening gap between north and south, and the militarization of politics (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999, p. 7).

The roots of the gap between the north and south lie partly in the colonial period. Under colonial rule, the British reserved the southern region of Uganda for industry and cash crop production, while the north became a region where cheap labor was being employed into the south (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999, p. 7). However, the most pronounced division was in recruitment of the armed services. Southerners were mainly employed in civil services and northerners were placed in the armed forces by the British (Jackson, 2002, p. 29). 'The Acholi, far from being 'born warriors', were transformed into a 'military ethnocracy', a decisive step in the formation of a proto-nation' (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999, p. 8). Jackson explains that this created a socio-economic division between north and south Uganda, where the economy of the south contained Uganda's educated elite and was relatively more developed compared to the rest of the country, while the northern region remained poor, cattle dependent and reliant on military service for non-agricultural income (Jackson, 2002, p. 29). Jackson continues by stressing how this socio-economic division 'has fuelled continuous ethnic violence' (ibid.). Finnström emphasizes this widening gap by directing to the absence of the Acholi during the neocolonial successes of economic liberalization, development, progress and increasing political stability (Finnström, 2008, p. 63).

Against this background of increasing divisions, movements within the political arena resulted in an accumulation of frustration which in turn can explain the emergence of the Lord's Resistance Army. In 1962, Milton Obote became prime minister of an independent Uganda. Obote inherited armed forces which were dominated by the northern Acholi. Doom & Vlassenroot describe the Acholi at this period as an ethnic group who saw the profession of arms as their natural vocation, or as 'the military backbone of the state' (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999, p. 8). Soon enough Obote would discover that military power was the key factor in settling political disputes. In 1971 Amin used the army to take over political control. His regime took revenge on the Acholi during the 1970s. While Obote favored the Acholi, Amin's regime was dominated by people from West-Nile origin. 'During the early years of his violent rule, Amin ordered mass killings of Acholi army personnel as well as executions of prominent Acholi intellectuals and politicians' (Finnström, 2008, p. 65).

In turn, after the overthrow of Amin in 1979 the Acholi returned under Obote II. It would not take long before they were involved in the deaths of thousands of civilians in the south and west. Meanwhile, Museveni established the National Resistance Army (NRA) which he used to fight the current government of Obote II and his Ugandan National Liberation Army (UNLA). During the war against Museveni and the NRA, the UNLA reacted with strong reprisals against civilians out of frustration (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999, p. 9). Finally, the NRA succeeded in taking all of the major towns in the districts and it seemed that the war was over (Jackson, 2002, p. 29, 30). However, the reality showed otherwise. The NRA was still convinced of a true enemy in Acholiland so they continued the search and the fight, meanwhile trying to incorporate the rural population in the region. Stemming from the ethnic violence in the past, many Acholi feared that the NRA would soon take reprisals on them. Branch describes the new pattern that emerged as follows: 'Since this enemy could not be found, the NRA fought it by attacking the population they believed supported it. To 'pacify' Acholiland, the NRA undertook a counter-insurgency without the insurgency [...] Violence only served to make the Acholi even more 'uncooperative' with the NRA' (Branch, 2005, p. 10).

This resulted in the mid-1980s in the mobilization of the Acholi into several groups, including the Uganda People's Defense Army (UPDA), opposing Museveni. Although the initial success of the UPDA, they could not follow up and many former soldiers came to think that they could not win a war against the NRA. As a result, the UPDA splintered into several insurgency movements and many people came to join (Jackson, 2002, p. 37, 38). One of these groups became to be known as the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), which generated enormous support from Acholi and others. This group was however defeated and followed by an even more violent group headed by Joseph Kony. Doom & Vlassenroot give the following analysis of this period:

'With a population still suffering from shock and an army and civil organizations operating in a twilight zone between occupation and legal administration, one could hardly expect harmony to blossom overnight. Moreover, poverty and structural violence, personal feuds and criminality, mutual suspicion and organized denunciation were part of daily life. Probably the bending of the spears was only half-hearted, but an overwhelming majority of Acholi wanted to be left in peace. This was the hour of Kony' (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999, p. 20).

It was this group, the Lord's Resistance Army, led by Joseph Kony, that was to take the war back to Museveni. Led by the biblical Ten Commandments, Kony's overall goal was to overthrow the southern-dominated government and to purify and reinstall the Acholi culture. From the 1990s onwards, it became clear that both of these goals were to be achieved through violence (Jackson 2002, p. 30). The next paragraph will elaborate on this period, starting in 1986 and ending in the present.

2.3 The course of the war since 1986

'The roots of Kony's war stretched all the way back to the north-south divide crystallized under colonial rule, then nourished by Uganda's cycles of post-independence bloodshed. But as long as the conflict was portrayed as the result of one man's seemingly inexplicable 'evil', there was no need for people to look any deeper. And blaming one 'madman' played right into Museveni's hand' (Green, 2008, p. 312).

This quote presents two perspectives on the war, on the one hand it narrates a history that explains the current grievances. These grievances nourished differences within society to become bigger and have finally resulted in the current conflict. On the other hand, the conflict is presented as a madman's war, fought by one man with no sense for reason. The long history prior to the conflict is forgotten and instead, the LRA has become synonym for evil, or as Branch describes it: 'The LRA, embodied in Joseph Kony, is portrayed as simply insane, the latest manifestation of incomprehensible African violence' (Branch, 2005, p. 4). Either way, Museveni is fighting a war where the brutalities of the enemy are used to legitimize the actions of the

Ugandan military. In this section I will elaborate on how it has got to the point where at first the LRA seemed to be a group with a clear political agenda has now become a guerilla fighting group that is hiding in and operating from the bushes of Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central African Republic (CAR).

The actions of the LRA did not start out to be so atrocious. Up to 1994, the LRA was relatively unsuccessful on the ground. The Acholi were ready to end the permanent conflict. At this point, the aims of Kony were still politically clear, with the primary goal to overthrow Museveni and create a political autonomy for the Acholi. However, 1994 showed a turning point where violence erupted (Jackson, 2002, p. 41). This was probably due to three changes, first was that the LRA now received full support from the Sudanese government (also see paragraph 2.5). The second change was that violence was no longer only used in the achievements of their aims, but 'Kony now appeared to blame the Acholi people for all of the failures he perceived in terms of not winning the war or achieving peace' (Jackson, 2002, p. 42). The way of recruitment marked the third change, where the abduction of young people became the mode of recruiting soldiers for the LRA (ibid.). Jackson (2002) describes how from these changes on, the war had taken a turn into seemingly random violence: 'Gone are many of the earlier political aims, replaced by violence as an end in itself' (Jackson, 2002, p. 43). The LRA became responsible for many years of 'willful killings, beatings, large-scale abductions, forced recruitment of adults and children, sexual violence against girls whom it assigns as 'wives' or sex slaves to commanders, large-scale looting and destruction of civilian property, forcing the displacement of hundreds of thousands and being a prime factor in the destruction of the economy of northern Uganda and the resultant impoverishment of its inhabitants' (Human Rights Watch, 2005, p. 14). Throughout these years, the LRA lost almost all the support. The rebels were now killing and displacing the same people that in the beginning it stated to fight for (Hemmer, 2008, p. 1).

Especially during the first years of the war the Acholi felt neglected by the government. Rather than providing them protection, the government reserved its military force for use against suspected collaborators of the LRA (Branch, 2005, p. 15). By late 1996, the government responded with the strategy of 'protected villages' where people from widely scattered small villages could come to and enjoy protection from the government. These protected villages arose from small trading centers, only now with the presence of the military with the purpose of protecting the people from the LRA (Dolan, 2005, p. 78). Later these villages came to be known as the IDP camps, where living conditions were often poignant. Van Acker describes this control of people as one of the main characteristics of the war. Rather than territory, control of the population is a key strategic objective for both the UPDF and the LRA where 'the government forces people to move, and the LRA tries to abduct them' (Van Acker, 2004, p. 350).

Since 1994, there have been several peace talks between the LRA and the Government of Uganda (GoU), however, every peace talk resulted in failure and in the resumption of violence. Some would argue that the peace talks in 1994 were the only talks where the chance on peace was closest (Dolan, 2005, p. 131). One of the major reasons these talks broke down, was that Museveni accused the LRA taking part in the peace negotiations in order to build up their military capacity together with assistance from the government of Sudan. Ongoing mistrust towards one another made sure that every negotiation ended in a deadlock. In 1999, the government of Uganda and of Sudan signed the Nairobi agreement. With this agreement, both governments consented to renew its diplomatic ties and to stop supporting the rival rebel movements. Jackson explains that as a result of this move 'the LRA is now attacking a hand that formerly fed it' (Jackson, 2002, p. 43), meaning that with the signing of the Nairobi agreement the LRA no longer received support of any kind from the Sudanese government, however, their violent activities in Sudan continued implicating that now the government of Sudan was also indirectly being attacked.

Together with the support of the government of Sudan, the Uganda People's Defense Force (UDPF) – formerly called the NRA – launched several offenses. The first big campaign was operation Iron Fist where LRA bases in Sudan were being destroyed and hundreds of people were killed. Consequently, many LRA rebels retreated deeper into Sudan while others divided into small units and moved south of the border. Allen explains the failure of operation Iron Fist pointing to the abduction of a large number of people (Allen, 2005, p. 23). Nowadays, the LRA has crossed the Ugandan border entering southern Sudan, the DRC and CAR where rebels are threatening the security and stability (Hemmer, 2008, p. 1). However, because of isolation from its regional support and due to its widespread desertions, their strength seems to be decreasing.

Will a peace agreement then ever be reached? This question brings us back to the beginning quote of this paragraph, where the complex reality of the conflict is being drawn by emphasizing what the GoU is actually fighting for. Is it fighting to resolve historical problems that nourished the current conflict or is it fighting one man that has become synonym for evil? According to Green (2008) the answer is clear, the GoU is fighting a one madman's war. However, the grievances that are felt among the Acholi and the initial support the LRA received already deny that the war is fought by only one man. The reality shows that the underlying causes of the war are complex and plural also meaning that it is impossible to simply describe it as a one madman's war:

'Vacillating between futile jingoism and demanding the surrender of men he had branded 'terrorists' or 'hyneas' when the time came to talk, Museveni never really seemed to acknowledge the genuine grievances nursed by the Acholi [...] As long as Kony was seen as an isolated lunatic, constantly on the verge of defeat, there was no compulsion to look at the reason why the conflict persisted or think more carefully about what might be done to end it. The rebellion's longevity was not so much a tribute to Kony's skill as a leader, more the symptom of a deeper malaise' (Green, 2008, p. 313).

With offenses such as operation Iron Fist, Museveni is clearly fighting its enemy, but whether it will also resolve the conflict with all its layers should be questioned. History learns that these fights have not resulted in any resolutions, rather it has shifted the conflict from an Ugandan problem to a regional problem.

2.4 Legacies of a twenty year conflict in northern Uganda

After the violent days of Obote and Amin, Uganda is nowadays viewed as an African success story although this has not always been the case (Allen, 2005). Although relative stability has returned in the north, the country is still coping with the legacies of the LRA insurgency. This rebel group has engaged in large-scale killings, mutilations, abduction of children and sexual violence. 'Not accepted as a liberation movement representing all Acholi, the LRA used extreme violence, especially against civilians, to instill terror in the local population [...] killings through brutal means were widespread' (Pham, Vinck, eds. 2007, p. 15). Because internal displacement in northern Uganda has been a direct consequence of conflict, this paragraph will have a clear focus on conflict as the initiator of internal displacement.

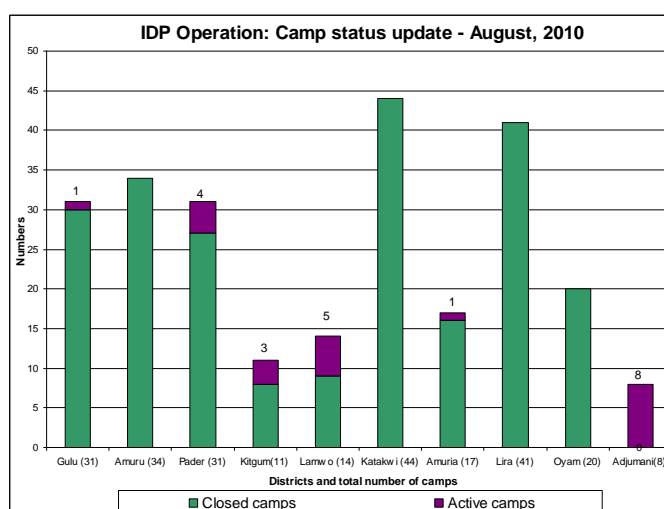
The biggest impact of the conflict has obviously been on the civilian population. The fear of abduction has determined the daily lives of many people. It was not uncommon for people, especially children, to flee every night from their village to the urban areas or to the centers of IDP camps out of fear for the LRA, a phenomenon called night commuting. The scale of abduction is a matter of speculation, but it is estimated that the number of abductees lies between the 24,000 and 38,000 where about a third were under the age of 18 (Pham, Vinck, eds. 2007, p. 15 & Allen, 2005). Besides this movement of the night commuters, the war has also resulted in a massive flow of internally displaced people. Displacing the local population into the protected villages, the government explained it as a way to protect its citizens from the LRA. At one point

during the war, more than 80 percent of the population in the northern region was living in IDP camps. Life in the camp is often being narrated as a situation where the government failed to adequately protect the people living here. Not only was there a lack of protection, the government also provided the IDPs with little or no food, water, or medicine to the camps (ibid.). Civilians were often exposed to violence and abuse of those who were actually supposed to protect them – the UPDF (Pham, Vinck, eds., 2007, p. 15). Branch describes life in the camps as following: ‘many LRA troops fight because they are forced to, but some male abductees remain with the LRA because the only alternative that the Ugandan government presented them with – life in the camps – is bad, if not worse, than life as a rebel’ (Branch, 2005, p. 21).

After a visit of the UN under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs in 2003, the situation in northern Uganda was declared as ‘the world’s worst humanitarian crisis’. In turn, the number of international donors and NGOs mushroomed and a great dependency on foreign humanitarian agencies arose in the IDP camps. This sudden rise of the international community has been highly criticized. On the one hand aid focused on the camps where it tried to bring some relief to the dire situation of the people living there. On the other hand, many argue that the high interference of the international community created an environment that might have worsened the situation. Dolan describes this intense involvement of international donors and NGOs as one where these actors were ostensibly present in the search of peace but potentially in the spoils of war (Cleaver, 2003, p. 59). ‘There is thus such a sense in which partial or incomplete peacebuilding attempts have not merely failed and thereby left the situation as it was before the collapse; they are correlated with a worsening and intensification of the situation rather than any improvement’ (ibid.). So, some would argue that aid has been ineffective and insufficient, not leading to significant improvements in the dire situation within the IDP camps. On top of that, it has resulted in a great dependency on aid among the IDPs, also called the dependency syndrome.

Currently, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reports that the return of IDPs is proceeding across northern Uganda. Now, more than twenty years after the outbreak of the war between the LRA and the GoU, the situation is relatively peaceful. The LRA has moved away to Sudan, CAR and the DRC. IDPs are slowly returning to their homes and the government has called for a phase-out strategy for the camps. Figure 3 shows the current status of camp closure, it shows that up to August 2010 only a small number of camps is still open.

Figure 3 Status of Camp Closure in Acholi



Source: UNHCR Sub-office Gulu, 3 August 2010

Figure 4 illustrates the number of IDPs still living in camps in Acholiland. As Kofi Annan once emphasized: ‘the return of refugees and internally displaced persons is a major part of any post-conflict scenario [...] Indeed it is often a critical factor in sustaining a peace process and in revitalizing economic activity’.⁶ As UNHCR argues, ‘the scale of return and success of reintegration are two of the most tangible indicators of progress in any peacebuilding process. Specifically, the return of displaced populations can be an important signifier of peace and the end of the conflict’ (Koser, 2009, p. 6). However, still many IDPs fear leaving their relatively safe camps until a final peace agreement has been signed and the LRA fighters have been demobilized (Vinck & Pham, 2009, p. 61).

Figure 4 IDP Population Movement Acholi

District	Current estimated IDPs in camp Source: UNHCR IPs	Estimated IDP % remaining in camp Source: UNHCR IPs	Estimated IDPs in transit sites/areas Source: LC1
Amuru	36.404	14%	12.000
Gulu	14.029	7%	3.000
Kitgum/Lamwo	15.509	5%	41.000
Pader	10.894	3%	87.000
Total Acholi	76.836	7%	143.000

Source: UNHCR Sub-office Gulu, Quarterly Field Updates June 2010

Due to displacement, the northern region has been placed at the bottom of the ladder of economic development and it keeps the pace of economic development moving on slowly. There is a major disparity within the economy measured by the national poverty line (less than US\$1 a day). In Gulu district 65 percent lives below this national poverty line compared to a 35 percent for the rest of the country (Pham, Vinck, eds., 2007, p. 14). Pham, Vinck, eds. (2007) explain this difference in figures as an ‘inadequate and negligent response to the conflict by the government’ (ibid.). Finnström summarizes it rather well by emphasizing how the disadvantaged northern economy works as a catalyst for war:

‘As much as it may be the expression of a deepening of ethnic divides, the war in Uganda is increasingly about the marginalization of the war-torn north from the rest of Uganda and its developments. What the opposition groups in the north and east of the country have in common is not ethnic identity or cultural traditions [...] but a history of being only peripherally included in the economic structures and processes of the country’ (Finnström, 2008, p. 101).

A report of CSOPNU (2009) underlines this growing gap between the north and the rest of the country as a consequence of internal displacement by explaining how displacement has reinforced the old north-south divide which goes back to the colonial economic policies which were further maintained by the post-independent governments (CSOPNU, 2009).

2.5 From a local to a regional spoiler

Many scholars present the conflict of Uganda as a proxy war where various parties and different interests come to the front. Since the mid 1990s, the LRA has moved from northern Uganda into southern Sudan, the DRC and CAR causing a genuine threat to the regional security. But not only is the LRA a threat to the regional security, so is the political situation of Uganda’s neighboring countries. This in turn might have a negative effect on the current stable situation in northern Uganda. In this paragraph, both the proxy war and the regional influences on northern Uganda will be addressed and explained.

The presence of the LRA in Sudan started in the early 1990s, but it was only during the mid 1990s that the LRA became a constant threat in southern Sudan. Although the GoU explains the

⁶ Kofi Annan to the UNHCR Executive Committee in 2005 (Koser, 2009, p. 8).

presence of the LRA in Sudan as a reaction to UPDF military pressure, Schomerus explains their presence with a politically driven motivation. The LRA claims that they were invited by the Government of Sudan (GoS) to become one of their pro-government armed groups. Schomerus continues in her explanation that in the conflict between the GoS and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in the south, soon a partnership between Khartoum [GoS] and the LRA would be established that would benefit both: 'Khartoum ran a proxy war through the LRA against the SPLA and the UPDF, while the LRA obtained supplies and assistance in its attempt to overthrow Museveni' (Schomerus, 2007, p. 18, 19). In this fight, the LRA was used to undermine the position of Uganda, since the GoU was supporting the SPLA (Van Puijenbroek & Plooiier, 2009, p. 5).

So from the mid 1990s on, the war was no longer limited to the northern region of Uganda, as Van Puijenbroek & Plooiier emphasize: 'the operation also had a devastating effect on the already very bad security situation in South Sudan' (ibid.) and it would not take long before the LRA would set foot in the DRC. The Nairobi agreement of 1999 and five years later the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed between North and South Sudan gave high hopes for a durable peace in Sudan. Nevertheless the LRA continued to destabilize the region in 2006 and 2007 (Marks, 2007, p. 26). Prunier (2004) explains how not only Sudan, but later on also the DRC was used as an outside battlefield 'where proxy guerrilla organizations either fought each other or fought the armies of their sponsor's enemy' (Prunier, 2004, p. 359). From 2005 on, the number of LRA rebels entering the DRC was increasing. Marks (2007) makes clear that this move was not very surprising since the decline in support from the GoS, Ugandan operations against the LRA were forcing the rebels to seek cover. 'The group found the dense, verdant forests of northern DRC attractive destinations (Marks, 2007, p. 26, 27).

Several joint military operations between FARDC (Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo), the SPLA and the UPDF have pushed the LRA in the direction of CAR (Spittaels & Hilgert, 2009, p. 15). It was only since 2008 that the LRA have entered CAR, presumably to resupply and recruit (Hemmer, 2008). Such joint military offenses have made the LRA split up in smaller groups, scattered over a large area which makes it even more difficult to attack them. Presence of the LRA in CAR nowadays has major consequences on the fragile security situation in the area (Spittaels & Hilgert, 2009, p. 15).

This proxy war does not only limit itself to the neighboring countries of Uganda. Especially the United States seems to be having special interests in the continuation of the war. It gives them a leeway in their fight against terrorism, where Museveni is a leading ally of the United States (Dagne, 2009, p.9). Branch elaborates on why the war has not yet come to an end:

'That is, military incompetence and corruption, the army's economic interests, the government's political interests, and American and European interests have converged to create a situation in which it is to no one's benefit to end the war. All the parties with political or economic power – Museveni, the UPDF, the United States, the other donor governments – have aligned themselves so that the continuation of the war either serves their purposes or at least does them no significant damage' (Branch, 2005, p. 4).

So according to Branch, the parties involved in the conflict in this sense benefit from the continuation of the war. Mutual benefits play the decisive role here. Because of the unconditional support of Museveni in the war on terror, the US responds with a substantial amount of military aid. The emphasize of the US on a military approach rather than on peaceful resolution has in the past only continued further instability in the region and it moved the LRA away from negotiations. This could play right into the hands of Museveni. Due to instability in his country, he claims to need more aid from the US in order to fight the LRA. The US responds to its faithful ally and moreover, because the LRA is on the United States' list of foreign terrorist organizations, they are willing to grant their financial assist (Quaranto, 2006, p. 140-143).

Thus, from the 1990s on, the LRA has become a regional spoiler. The conflict has shifted from northern Ugandan soil to its neighboring countries, South Sudan, the DRC and CAR. However, this does not mean that stability in the northern region of Uganda has returned. There is, what scholars call, a negative peace, which can easily be broken down because of the unstable political situation in the region. What happens in the Great Lakes region can have great implications for the regional peace. Especially the current political situation of South Sudan is expected to be influential to the current stability of northern Uganda. According to a report of the International Crisis Group (2010) the referendum of 2011 in South Sudan will most likely result in a secession from the North. Neighboring states are increasingly focused on the current circumstances and the likelihood of a new independent state in the region. The report continues with highlighting the consequences of this referendum if it will not go according to the agreed plan: 'if Khartoum attempts to manipulate, deny or delay the exercise or its result, regional states and institutions will need to consider how best to respond to ensure respect for the CPA and the right of self-determination and to avoid a new conflict' (ibid.). More specifically for Uganda, which the report calls the 'most unambiguous supporter of independence', insecurity and instability in South Sudan will endanger the already porous borders between the two countries. Uganda 'seeks a stable buffer on its northern border, not least to ensure that the LRA insurgency does not return to its doorstep' (ibid.).

2.6 The Government is taking steps: the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan

Against the background of the conflict in northern Uganda, different programs have been launched with the aim to stabilize the region and recover it from its troubled past. However, many of these programs have been highly criticized due to several reasons. For example, the first Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Program (NURP1) is often being criticized as a failure because of high levels of corruption within the program. Besides the little money of the estimated budget actually spent, the implementation had a top-down fashion by central government and did not connected to the communities it said to be targeting. In response to the shortcomings of NURP1, NURP2 was launched in 1999. One of the most significant initiatives of NURP2 was the World Bank funded Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF). A report of the Beyond Juba Project points out the flaws of NUSAF 'which provides grants directly to community groups that apply with project ideas of their own design [...] however, reports of corruption call into question how much of this funding is actually reaching project beneficiaries' (Beyond Juba, 2008, p. 2).

With the difficulties of national or regional programs in mind, the GoU prepared a new plan that should uplift northern Uganda to the level of the rest of the country. The Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee (IMTC) – a team responsible for the preparations of the plan – would identify and analyze 'the magnitude of the development gaps and needs in northern Uganda in comparison with current interventions and prepare a comprehensive post-war recovery plan' (ibid. p. 3). In the preparations and building of this framework, the implementation of the plan would be based on a thorough understanding of the needs of the population in the north and 'the perspectives of stakeholders on the most appropriate strategy for bringing peace, rebuilding communities and revitalizing the economy in the region' (PRDP, p. 20). The efforts of the IMTC together with other stakeholders resulted in the national Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP). 'The PRDP is a commitment by government to stabilize and recover the north in the next three years through a set of coherent programs in one organizing framework that all stakeholders will adopt when implementing their programs in the region' (Introduction PRDP). The objectives of the PRDP are in line with those of the national Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). 'The commitment is to improve socio-economic indicators to be in line with national ones in those areas affected by conflict and a serious breakdown in law and order' (PRDP, p. 16). After a period of producing several draft versions of the PRDP, the final draft was officially launched in 2007. However, the implementation was extended to financial year 2009-2010 due

to a delay in availing funds and setting up frameworks for the recovery phase (NRC, IDMC, 2009, p. 1).

The PRDP is active in the northern region of Uganda: 'The overall goal of the PRDP is stabilization in order to regain and consolidate peace and lay foundations for recovery and development in northern Uganda' (PRDP, p. 32), where northern Uganda is divided into three regions: the North West sub-region, the North Central sub-region and the North East sub-region. The PRDP document is basing the target areas on conflict mapping and vulnerability: 'by adopting a conflict mapping framework it is recognized that in some districts, particularly those most distant from active hostilities, other shocks and stresses affect vulnerability. In calculating targets and investments, the PRDP has weighted those districts to include other vulnerability factors' (ibid. p. 31). At this moment, the PRDP covers 40 districts. To achieve this overall goal, the PRDP consists of four central objectives, outlined in box 1.

Box 1 The four strategic objectives of the PRDP ⁷

Strategic objective 1: Consolidation of State Authority

The primary purpose of this objective is to make investments that create an enabling environment for stabilizing the political, economic and social conditions in the region. This implies enhancing the state presence, functionality, good governance, rule of law and effectiveness as a pre-requisite for further investment. This will also involve transformation from a purely military framework to reinforcement of civilian administration including civilian police and law and order agencies.

Strategic objective 2: Rebuilding and Empowering of Communities

The main aim is to empower people to be able to participate in the recovery, re-settlement and reintegration processes in a manner that leads to improvement in their livelihoods. The communities will be empowered to better plan and control their livelihoods. This will necessitate increased provision of basic services and ensuring that vulnerable groups are able to access these services.

Strategic objective 3: Revitalization of the Economy

The PRDP will promote both subsistence and commercialized economic activity within the region. This will involve revitalization of the production sectors and marketing systems and investing in capitals – natural, physical and human. The skills and productivity of the labour force will be stepped up in order to enhance the population's participation in the recovery and development process.

Strategic objective 4: Peace building and Reconciliation.

The primary aim under this objective is to address the social challenges in Northern Uganda that have arisen as a result of fractured social relationships in order to resuscitate the peace building and reconciliation processes. This will require putting in place mechanisms for rehabilitating the victims of war and facilitating their re-integration into the communities while strengthening the local conflict resolution mechanisms and the relationships between civilians and government/public administration.

Source: Peace, Recovery and Development Plan 2007-2010

The set up of the PRDP is that it functions as a framework for all active stakeholders in the northern region of Uganda. All actors, including NGOs, are supposed to implement their development initiatives in accordance with the PRDP. Therefore, 'development partners seeking to operate in northern Uganda are all expected to first report to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), and share their intentions, activity plans, budgets, and specific area of operation. NGOs shall align their activities to the District Development Plans and Annual District Work Plans' (Deniva, 2009, p. 12). The funding of the PRDP is as following: the GoU has a contribution of

⁷ This summary of the four strategic objectives is derived from the PRDP document itself, PRDP (2007), p. 33, 34. I have literally copied from the document to prevent any misinterpretations.

thirty percent of the total budget of the PRDP activities. The other seventy percent will be brought in by development partners. These include humanitarian support and special programs (Deniva, 2009, p. 11, 12).

To conclude, in this chapter I have attempted to give a clear and thorough background of Uganda. I have addressed all the necessary topics that need to be understood in the broader picture of this research. Analyzing the underlying causes of the conflict enables us to look at the consequences of the conflict and it provides us with a better understanding of current political decision making and social movements within societies. The next chapter will extensively explain the central topic of this research, moving from the causes and consequences of internal displacement to durable solutions for internally displaced persons.

3. Durable solutions theoretically embedded

'Internal displacement has emerged as one of the great human tragedies of our time. It has also created and unprecedented challenge for the international community: to find ways to respond to what is essentially an internal crisis. The severity of the problem, both in intensity and scope, is obvious from the numbers of the displaced, now estimated at between 20 million and 25 million, and the fact that virtually no region of the world is spared from this epidemic' (Annan, 1998)⁸.

Kofi Annan presents internal displacement as a global problem, he even calls it an epidemic that no region in the world can evade itself from. Whether it is due to war, violence, or natural disasters, on every continent countries can be identified with groups of people that have been uprooted from their homes and forced to live in other parts of the country. Uganda is not the only African country that deals with a large number of IDPs, so is Sudan where internal displacement is caused by an ongoing conflict. Haiti in Central America exemplifies an uproot of thousands of people as a result of a natural disaster. More recently another example of a natural disaster can also be found in Pakistan, Asia. In Afghanistan internal displacement is caused by years of war and violence and several countries in Europe also face the problem of internal displacement, for example Georgia and Cyprus.

Besides the scope of the problem, Annan emphasizes the challenge of the international community to react. Although the number of IDPs over the world is much higher compared to the number of refugees, it has only been recognized as a worldwide concern since the mid 1990s. Compared to what has been written on refugees, the literature on internal displacement is relatively new and it raises some interesting debates. One of the most discussed debates on internal displacement is whether or not IDPs should be recognized as a separate category. In essence, this debate comes down to a discrepancy: while IDPs are still citizens of their own country and thus fall under the responsibility of their own government, the international community tends to approach them as a separate category of people with specific vulnerabilities, thus distancing them from their 'normal' status as citizens. What is the right approach here? This debate will be extensively touched upon in the first paragraph. In the next paragraph the focus lies on the causes and the impact of internal displacement. This paragraph will end with the discussion that addresses the question 'when does internal displacement end?' The third paragraph further builds upon the latter discussion and specifically focuses on the long term vision, which is the achievement of durable solutions for IDPs. It focuses on the three durable solutions that should mark the starting point of the process and it discusses the link between durable solutions and durable peace. In the last paragraph I will introduce and explain the research design.

3.1 Growing awareness of internal displacement

Only in the recent fifteen years the issue of internal displacement is recognized as a legitimate matter on the international agenda. From then on the worldwide attention to internal displacement and the plight of affected populations increased. The international community started to identify it as a global crisis (Mooney, 2005, p. 8). Not surprisingly, it was in these years that the international working definition of internally displaced people was formulated. Until then it were only refugees who were given a special status under international law. The recognition of an accurate working definition of these IDPs was and still is essential in 'identifying the population of concern and their particular needs, compiling data, and framing laws and policies designed to assist them' (ibid., p. 10). The definition used around the world by governments, the United Nations, regional bodies, non-governmental organizations and other actors is the following:

⁸ Preface by Kofi Annan in 'Masses in flight: the global crisis of internal displacement' (1998) by R. Cohen & F. M. Deng

‘Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border’ (Kälin, 2008, p. 2).

At the end of 2008, the number of people internally displaced by conflict, generalized conflict or human rights violations across the world stood at approximately 26 million (IDMC, 2009, p. 9). Although IDPs are now widely accepted as a group of concern and efforts are made to address them after too many years of neglect, there is still debate on the term *internally displaced people*. Central in this debate is whether or not IDPs should be considered as a category or as a part of the broader term *vulnerable people*. The ones who accept the idea of a separate category base themselves on the weak and ineffective aid given to IDPs, on the rights and entitlements that IDPs have or should have and on the responsibility of governments. The objection specifically focuses on the one hand on the distinctive treatment of IDPs as a separate category, and on the other hand on ‘their separate identification amongst all actual and potential vulnerable groups’ (Mooney, 2005, p. 15). The next two sub-paragraphs will elaborate on both sides of the debate concluding by bringing together these two views into a broader approach, according to Mooney much more effective and fair.

3.1.1 IDPs as a separate category

The tension within the debate considering the categorization of IDPs particularly lies on the rights and entitlements of the IDPs. One side of the discussion focuses on the specific needs and rights of IDPs. Since the worldwide attention on IDPs is increasing, so is the awareness on whether or not human rights and humanitarian law provide for sufficient protection for IDPs. Unlike the international refugee law, there is not an international IDP law offering legal protection for IDPs. It is concluded that the existing law shows a significant number of gaps and thus it does not cover enough protection for IDPs. Drafting new international laws would be very complex, this is why a normative framework – the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (from now on referred to as Guiding Principles) – has been formulated which governments and international aid organizations can apply⁹ (Bennet, 1998, p. 5, 6). The need for such a framework has grown since there is an international policy shift on refugee flows that is moving towards *internalizing* displacement instead of crossing the borders. Hence, with these principles more attention is given to a group that has been invisible for a long period of time. Moreover, it provides the international community and national governments with a normative framework on how to approach this group of concern.

The lack of rights and entitlements make IDPs more prone to vulnerable situations. That is why it is argued that IDPs should receive specific attention. Worldwide people are still caught in situations of internal displacement where they face various barriers to their enjoyment of rights and entitlements. This could result in an increasing risk of their immediate safety or the denial of equal access to certain entitlements (IDMC, 2009, p. 21). Many violations of human rights are found in the physical safety and integrity of IDPs, in a reduction in access to the basic necessities of life including food, clean water, shelter, adequate clothing, health services and sanitation. Furthermore, IDPs often do not have an adequate standard of living, they are deprived of the means to restore self-reliance. On top of this, IDPs’ movements and free choice of residence are often arbitrarily restricted and, they have no access to personal documentation which in effect leaves them out of their civil rights (IDMC, 2009, p. 21, 24). These violations contravene with the general notion that IDPs should enjoy the same rights and freedoms under international and domestic law as do other persons in their country, and that they should not be discriminated

⁹ ‘Although there is not a formulated international legal framework, some countries have adopted comprehensive legal or policy frameworks for protection, restating IDPs’ rights and the various actions to be taken by responsible parties at the various stages of displacement, including protection from arbitrary displacement, the emergency and post-emergency phases of displacement, and durable solutions’ (IDMC, 2009).

against in the enjoyment of any rights and freedoms due to their status of being an IDP (Kälin, 2008, p. 11). It is exactly this contradiction that is used as the main argument of approaching IDPs as a separate category of concern. Two main arguments are addressed that explain this point of view. The first one bases itself on the assumption that governments are often incapable or unwilling to look after this group of people, in turn resulting in neglect. The second argument stems from the experience that IDPs are often exposed to additional threats and needs, thus needing separate attention.

The first argument thus turns to the role of the government. According to one of the Guiding Principles: 'national authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction' and IDPs 'have the right to request and receive protection and humanitarian assistance from these authorities' (Kälin, 2008, p. 18). However, there are situations where the government has *initiated* the process of internal displacement and uses this situation to enlarge its own power. Although IDPs might have the right to receive protection and humanitarian assistance from their own government, the political situation is not always in place to ask for this. In this regard, an IDMC report (analyzing worldwide internal displacement) clearly points out the importance of addressing the protection and assistance not only of the IDPs themselves, but also of the host populations in areas of displacement, resettlement and return (IDMC, 2009, p. 24). The second argument shows how IDPs are more vulnerable and more prone to additional threats and needs. Unquestionably, IDPs are not the only people who have specific needs, but what distinguishes them from others 'are their unique needs and heightened vulnerabilities that arise as a result of displacement. The objective fact of being displaced implies particular needs and exposes those affected to additional risks' (Mooney, 2005, p. 18). Besides their unique needs and high vulnerability, IDPs are also often the ones who get the least help. So the purpose of subscribing IDPs to a special category is not to privilege them over others, but to identify their specific needs along with those of others in a given situation (Cohen & Deng, 1998, p. 27).

3.1.2 The irrelevance of IDPs as a separate category

The previous sub-paragraph emphasizes the purpose of identifying IDPs as a distinct category of concern. On the contrary, Brun (2003) stresses that there are some seriously unintended consequences of addressing IDPs as such. The question that needs to be asked here is what happens to the status of citizenship when people move within their borders. Brun explains that citizenship refers to membership of a political unit, and defines it as bounded populations where people are entitled to a set of rights as well as duties. 'It refers to a range of formal and informal processes that determines people's inclusion in, and exclusion, from a variety of symbolic and material spaces and resources' (Brun, 2003, p. 378). When citizens become IDPs, although formally they are still citizens, the access to their citizenship changes. In such a situation, a struggle for citizenship arises that is about finding or re-establishing one's place in society. The danger is that the status of IDPs becomes separate from other citizens, resulting in a restriction of rights rather than securing them (*ibid.* p. 379, 376). Brun concludes by stating how the categorization would develop into a social category and identity on the ground. It separates the IDP from its co-citizens, which 'indirectly leads to discrimination, instead of preventing it' (*ibid.* p. 377).

In addition, the reality shows us that IDPs are not a homogenous group formed only by deprived people. Instead, there are IDPs who are better off than other vulnerable groups, including the people who did not flee their homes though facing the same insecurity and violence (Borton, Buchanan-Smith & Otto, 2005, p. 11). This is why it might be more appropriate to address *situations* instead of concentrating on *categories* of persons (Cohen & Deng, 1998, p. 27). Hashimoto argues that the term internally *displaced* people does not describe the problem entirely. He argues that the term *displaced* has 'increasingly become irrelevant in terms of actual protection and assistance activities' (Hashimoto, 2003, p. 104). Assistance to IDPs is not based

on the fact that they are internally displaced, but rather on the fact that they are facing a humanitarian crisis and thus that they are in desperate need of aid. Because IDPs become the priority of assistance, the danger arises that humanitarian needs of the local communities are not being counted in. As a consequence, IDPs become privileged over other vulnerable groups (Borton, Buchanan-Smith & Otto, 2005, p. 11). This leads to an uneven distribution of aid and consequently results in 'deep resentment and hostility' from the local community towards IDPs that in the end endangers their security (Mooney, 2005, p. 20). Instead, Borton, eds. (2005) recommend that rather than using displacement as a defining target group, it should be used as an 'indicator of potential vulnerability' (Borton, Buchanan-Smith & Otto, 2005, p. 12). Others would argue that perhaps the term *Internally Stuck People* better applies to this group of people that are in need of (inter)national support. As Hashimoto underlines: 'Such a categorization has the advantage of not dismissing the special needs of non-displaced people [...] who should not be forgotten or neglected when planning and implementing emergency operations' (Hashimoto, 2003, p. 104, 105). Others prefer to use the concept of the *needs approach*, this approach targets assistance on the basis of need, not on the basis of individual circumstances (Cohen & Deng, 1998, p. 27).

Whichever suggestion given by the different authors to the term and the meaning of IDPs, they all base themselves on the idea that when approaching IDPs as a separate category of concern one ignores the needs of the community as a whole, or at least, those of the other vulnerable groups within society. Because there may not be a sharp distinction between the humanitarian needs of IDPs and those of other vulnerable groups within one country, a solution to this problem might be to approach the IDPs in a broader national framework. I would agree with the emphasize Mooney puts on the of humanitarian programs: 'In humanitarian assistance programs, identifying priority interventions and striking a balance between general programming and targeted assistance for IDPs should be the goal' (Mooney, 2003, p. 20). So the need within humanitarian programs should emphasize the development of programs that are not limited anymore to solely IDPs but they should also include impoverished members of the local community.

3.2 Causes and impact of internal displacement

There is never one cause of internal displacement. Explaining the phenomenon usually results in multiple, overlapping and interrelated reasons. The general definition of internal displacement simultaneously explains the root causes of the phenomenon, stipulating that internal displacement results from armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters (see paragraph 3.1 for the complete definition). Eschenbächer explains that worldwide internal conflict is the main cause of internal displacement: 'The overwhelming majority of situations are the result of civil wars, inter-communal violence or government repression' (Eschenbächer, 2005, p. 51), often leading to violations of human rights and forcing people to leave their homes. In many of such cases, already existing structural problems embedded in daily life are the direct causes that initiate internal displacement. In such situations, civilians mostly have two options, either they are free to choose to leave their homes, or they are forced to by military or government interference (Hulme, 2005, p. 97). In other situations, it is the abuse of human rights in a country that leads to internal displacement. Examples of such cases are Rwanda during the genocide, or South Africa during the apartheid regime (Deng & Cohen, 1998, p. 22), where in both situations particular groups were highly discriminated and excluded, up to the point that general violence was used against these particular groups. This in turn led to the uproot of thousands of people either in neighboring countries or within the country. In situations where natural disasters occur, like earthquakes, floods, drought or cyclones, people simply don't have a choice except to leave their homes, fleeing from a certain crisis. What should be recognized in such circumstances is that often natural or human made disasters go hand in hand with 'severe neglect or abuses of human,

political, or civil rights' (Korn, 1999, p. 12), thus resulting in a flow of people leaving their home areas. Furthermore, socioeconomic factors can also be identified as a cause of internal displacement. In a case study on forced migration in Aceh, Indonesia, Czaika & Kis-Katos (2009) clearly put forward the thin line between urbanization and internal displacement. Such socioeconomic factors indicate an 'ongoing rural-urban migration movement [...]. We find that population displacement [...] is not only caused by the fear of violence, but also by traditional socioeconomic migration variables' (Czaka & Kis-Katos, 2009, p. 400).

In the light of this research, I will elaborate on *conflict* as the main cause of internal displacement. Chapter 2 explained displacement as one of the consequences of the northern Ugandan conflict, which highly affected the local population. Indeed, conflict, whether it is international or domestic, always affects the local population (Hulme, 2005, p. 91). This paragraph will further explain how displacement might become a result of conflict. I will do this in two ways, first by looking at the problem from an external perspective and secondly by focusing on the internal and more local level. After this, the impact of internal displacement on the local community will be discussed. I will conclude this section with the debate on when people should stopped being considered as an IDP.

3.2.1 *Internal displacement as a result of conflict: external and internal causes*

Cohen & Deng (1998) describe a relation between the Cold War and internal displacement. The matter of internal displacement over the past two decades was often caused by or related to conflict that either took place during the Cold War or were highly affected by Cold War policies (Cohen & Deng, 1998, p. 19). They argue that internal displacement is considered as a post-Cold War phenomenon, since it only became noticeable until after the Cold War (ibid.). The struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union contributed to the development and intensification of internal conflicts in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The two superpowers allied with governments or political opposition movements and supplied them with arms. This made it possible for these governments or political opposition movements to establish or enlarge their power over a state or even to initiate a war against rebellion groups or against an opposing state (Cohen & Deng, 1998, p. 19). As Cohen and Deng continue: 'many of the major instances of internal displacement during the 1970s and 1980s took place in regions and states that were the locus of Cold War proxy wars' (ibid.). Although the end of the Cold War brought high promises of a new world order, instead, the ending of the Cold War made way for new wars. It were no longer the monopoly of states that determined the international arena, instead, the period of the Cold War left spaces where weak states had collapsed or withdrawn (Richards, 2005, p. 2). War throughout the world has generated high levels of generalized violence, human rights abuses, ethnic conflicts, internally displaced persons or other deprivations (Lee, 1996, p. 33).

On the other hand, many outbreaks of conflicts developed independently from the Cold War. These causes can be found on a local level, where civil conflict played a central role in the occurrence of internal displacement. Cohen & Deng argue that most of the conflicts leading to mass displacement have a strong ethnic component (Cohen & Deng, 1998, p. 22). Here, I will discuss this ethnic component from two local movements within societies. The first explains the gap between the government and minority groups resulting in conflict. The US Committee for Refugees argues that the cause of the internal displacement as a consequence of civil conflict lies in an unbalanced gap between a government and a minority. Minorities in these situations feel abandoned or mistreated by their government which could lead to a civil war in order to achieve their goals, which include gaining more political power and cultural autonomy. The gap between a government and a minority often stems from factors of identity and ethnicity. A frequent consequence of repressing these movements is the abuse of human rights. This level of human rights abuse in turn is often the principal cause of displacement (ibid.). Civilians may choose freely to leave their homes and escape the fighting, however, many are forced to do so as a result of 'unlawful military tactics or under a policy of displacement' (Hulme, 2005, p. 97).

The second explanation of how ethnicity might lead to conflict and consequently into internal displacement is the mobilization along ethnic lines. Ethnicity is often being used as a mobilizing factor in order to enlarge one's own power, where there are at least three patterns that explain the participation in civil war. The first one are grievances that underlie participation. The second one emphasizes the importance of selective incentives where participation in a civil war should not only be beneficial for a group but also to individuals. And the third argues for the importance of social sanctions where individuals indulge to the social pressure of a strong community (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2008, p. 493). In all three patterns, the concept of ethnicity and identity play a decisive role, it is being used in order to mobilize groups of people to stand up for what they want to achieve. Most times, such movements are strongly repressed by the government, often resulting in the opposite: 'refusing to see them as legitimate members of the nation and preventing truly multiethnic societies from developing, governments often strengthen the very separatist movements they fear' (Cohen & Deng, 1998, p. 21), frequently resulting in violent conflict. Civilians are often the victims of such violent outbursts, this may lead to situations where they decide to flee their homes, within or crossing the borders.

Whether it are internal or external reasons that cause the internal displacement, broadly it can be said that it is a crisis of identity. Crises like these have 'engendered massive violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms, grave compromises of economic and social development, breakdowns of civil order, and attempts of ethnic cleansing and even genocide' (Korn, 1999, p. 10).

3.2.2 The impact of internal displacement

This section describes the impact of internal displacement on a national level by focusing on three groups who suffer most from the enormous movement of people. Not only does it radically affect the lives of the displaced population, also the lives of the ones who have stayed behind are significantly disrupted as well of those who all of a sudden have to share their living space with a large group of uprooted people.

Before going into the direct impact of internal displacement on society, it should be mentioned that during or after a crisis leading to internal displacement, one does not enter a blank space composed by people with zero capacities. Or, put in other words, a humanitarian crisis, such as a conflict, is not a *state of exception* where old habits have lost their meaning. Adopting the idea of this state of exception, Cramer (2006) links this to the 'makeover fantasy'. Cramer argues that during or after a conflict the international community steps into a political and economic vacuum, where they can construct and reconstruct the society in their own terms. What is often not being recognized is that life goes on, also in IDP camps where people might suffer and struggle to survive. When the international community enters a crisis situation, they want to bring relief to the people as soon as possible in order to make the transitional process out of crisis achievable. In such processes, they should acknowledge the existing structures that are already on the ground. As will be mentioned later in the paragraph, during internal displacement community structures change and socioeconomic activities transform. Old structures however do not disappear, instead, they are often the fundamentals of new ones. People in crises fall back on certain coping mechanisms that in reality are not so much different compared to the mechanisms they know during normal life, or put in other words, they tend to hold on to the normality of life as much as they can while adapting to the new living situation. This could mean that informal economies are build, children are going to school, people grow their own crops and people attend church. Cramer emphasizes that: 'war often *accelerates* differentiation [...] by failing to account for the reality and its shaping during war, the post-conflict makeover fantasy passes up opportunities to encourage a progressive turn in the dynamics of change and avoids the chance to determine policies that can clarify realistic escape routes from poverty' (Cramer, 2006, p. 261). So in sum, when the international community enters a crisis situation, they should recognize that they are not entering a void. Rather, in order to make the transition out of a crisis

situation possible, it should be acknowledged that during or after a crisis this particular community has evolved their own structures which are based upon structures they are already familiar with from before the crisis situation. These may even be intensified in meaning.

The impact of internal displacement can differ, depending on the context and the intensity of displacement. Although internal displacement is mostly understood as a harmful process, thus leaving its negative marks in communities, it can also point to some positive developments within society. Often due to a proliferation of humanitarian assistance during internal displacement, camps are being transformed into places with a supply of adequate social services. In addition, it is generally thought that after internal displacement IDPs want to return to their homes as soon as possible. However, there are situations where this is not the case. This is on the one hand due the lack of livelihood and housing in their returning areas (IDMC, 2009, p. 17). Also, IDPs are often not able to return due to 'ongoing insecurity and difficulties in accessing property and livelihood opportunities (ibid.)'. On the other hand, IDPs might think that they are better off in their new living conditions due to these new developments with its accompanying infrastructural projects, like roads, water points or health centers. There is also a trend of displacement to urban areas. The main reasons for this are the opportunities provided here, IDPs have a 'wider variety of services and benefit in some cases from wider livelihood options' (ibid.). However, these relative positive effects of internal displacement simultaneously carry along negative consequences as well. As Deng & Cohen highlight, camps and settlement may cause significant damage for rural areas, 'subjecting them to unusual patterns of land use and ecological pressures, because of short-sighted survival strategies' (Deng & Cohen, 1998, p. 42).

Especially in situations where internal displacement occurred among the majority of people in a region, as in northern Uganda, and where it took decades before a relative safe and stable environment was apparent, the impact of internal displacement is often severe leaving its marks on the entire community. Let me first discuss the impact on IDPs themselves. Besides ongoing exposure to insecurity and violence in the places the IDPs fled to, they have to deal with economic, social, and cultural problems as well as severe reduction in access to the basic necessities of life, including food, clean water, shelter, adequate clothing, health services and sanitation (IDMC, 2009, p. 21, 22). In the long term, the problem of 'de-skilling' arises, where people cannot use their skills in the new areas they are now living in (Cohen & Deng, 1998, p. 25). The lack of education also contributes to this problem. On a social level, patterns of social organization, behavioral rules, usage of community resources and cooperation become totally interrupted and will finally become latent or they will even disappear (ibid.). The displacement results in a complete unstructured social life and a breakdown of social relationships, patterns of community life are disrupted and socioeconomic activities have changed. In the long run, it is often difficult if not even impossible to return to previous patterns.

Internal displacement does not only have implications for the IDPs themselves, instead, it disrupts whole communities and societies. Of course, every country or region has its own pattern of displacement, but in general it can be said that it are often the elderly and the very young ones who are left behind. This has great consequences for the retaining of property and agricultural land. In addition, homes, buildings and infrastructure may also suffer from the displacement. Those who remain behind are often not able to take care or maintain their functioning. As was already mentioned as a severe consequence for IDPs, it are also those who stay behind and those who have to share their lives with the population inflows that need to deal with the impact displacement has on a community organization. Issues of property rights, questions of land tenure, environmental impact, overload of social services, water supplies, and sanitation facilities and change in the size of households and changes in patterns and gender roles become a great matter of concern (Cohen & Deng, 1998, p. 24, 26). 'Displacement thus has ripple effects throughout entire societies' (ibid. p. 25).

3.2.3 When does internal displacement end?

There is no clear determination on when internal displacement ends. Together with the discussion on when a person should no longer be considered as an IDP, this makes it difficult to mark the exact end of internal displacement. While some emphasize the need for security and the means enabling IDPs to return home (Cohen & Deng, p. 37), others would rather use the duration of internal displacement as an indication of the ending of internal displacement (ibid.). Again others would argue that internal displacement ends upon IDPs return, thus a reversal of their internal displacement (Mooney, 2003, p. 22). The most common assumption stresses that voluntarily return together with the absence of the factors that caused displacement are required in order to determine the end of internal displacement (Cohen & Deng, 1998, p. 36).

Mooney explains that these various interpretations on when internal displacement ends are not mutually exclusive and some even have overlapping elements. She describes three different approaches on how to look at the issue of when internal displacement ends. The first emphasizes the *causes* of internal displacement. As soon as these causes are no longer in existence, or the circumstances have changed, i.e. by a replacement of the government or by the ending of the conflict, the incentives for internal displacement are no longer there. The second one focuses more on the *solutions*: when IDPs have the ability to return home or resettle in another community, they are no longer considered as IDPs. And the third group think of the *need* approach as a solution for determining when internal displacement ends, that is when the needs and vulnerabilities specific to IDPs no longer exist (Mooney, 2003, p. 6). Although all three approaches describe when internal displacement should end, they do not provide for an exclusive answer. Still difficulties arise when determining the exact moment of ending. In some cases the causes of internal displacement can slowly change into other factors rather than that of conflict or persecution (Cohen & Deng, 1998, p. 37). This is why Mooney argues for an integrated approach which includes elements of all three approaches. This *integrated* approach combines the solution-based and needs-based sets of criteria 'to ensure that IDPs have options – to return, resettle or integrate locally – and that the specific needs and vulnerabilities created by displacement are addressed so that these solutions are effective and durable, all the while recognizing that cause-based criteria will often be an enabling factor' (Mooney, 2003, p. 6).

To summarize, this integrated approach does not only look at the exact moment of ending displacement, rather, it has a long term vision, focusing on the solutions to be effective and durable for IDPs. But what does this mean, how can such solutions become durable? The next paragraph will elaborate on this question, focusing on either return, local integration or settlement elsewhere as a starting point of durable solutions.

3.3 Finding durable solutions for IDPs

The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement stipulate that 'internal displacement shall last no longer than required by the circumstances'¹⁰. IDPs are often exposed to particular risks, insecurity and vulnerabilities. Paragraph 3.2.3 already described different approaches applied to the question of when internal displacement ends and it concluded with the integrated approach to be most viable. But concretely, what does such an approach mean for IDPs? Obviously, bringing an end to their status – that is ending internal displacement and finding durable solutions – is the ultimate goal, but simultaneously this is also one of the most complex challenges in situations of displacement (Reilly & Risser, 2000, p. 170). The most common solutions that are being described in order to achieve durable solutions for IDPs mirror those that are already available for refugees. In most cases, IDPs have three options: they can locally integrate in the area where they sought refuge, they can resettle in another part of the country, or they can voluntarily return to their place of origin (Reilly & Risser, 2000, p. 170). This

¹⁰ Principle 6.3 of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

paragraph will elaborate on the question of how durable solutions can be achieved, building on Mooney's integrated approach with return, local integration or resettlement marking the starting point of the process. I will first get into the matter of who is responsible in the process of achieving durable solutions. Here I will touch upon the territorialized notion of the nation state and how this results in the short and long term responsibilities of national authorities. Two dimensions are central in this discussion, the institutional and the human rights dimension. Hereafter, a thorough discussion will follow discussing the three solutions that should mark the end of internal displacement. I will conclude by outlining the most important factors that determine these solutions to be durable.

3.3.1 Responsibility for seeking durable solutions

Formulating policies on return, Tete (2009) argues the importance of place and territoriality and how people give meaning to their homes. Furthermore, the right to return always plays a crucial role when formulating durable solutions for IDPs. She continues arguing that various return policies are being justified by the idea of people always having a strong desire to return home, to the place where their roots are founded. Besides that, the territorialized nature of the nation state are highlighted which functions to create the feeling of home, land and security: 'forced displacement is both a threat to, and a product of the international system of nation states which seeks to reproduce itself as a viable and morally legitimate political community [...] the nation state usually does not only cause displacement but also assumes responsibility for attempting to reduce the undesirable effects of its consequences [...]' (Tete, 2009, p., 52). It is from this idea that the state carries the responsibility to provide for durable solutions for internal displacement.

Because of this relationship between the nation state and territorialized sense of place, it is the primary responsibility of a national authority to ensure that IDPs are able to return to their original homes, locally integrate them in their place of refuge, or resettle them safely elsewhere. The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement emphasize this primary responsibility of the government. Important in the process of achieving durable solutions is not only a focus on the exact moment of return, reintegration or resettlement, but also a strong emphasize on what happens next to the former IDPs, where (former) IDPs should be involved in the process:

'Competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, that allow internally displaced persons to return voluntarily, in safety, and with dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. Such authorities shall endeavor to facilitate the reintegration of returned or resettled internally displaced persons'.

'Special efforts should be made to ensure the full participation of internally displaced persons in the planning and management of their return or resettlement and reintegration'¹¹.

These principles suggest that the government should take the initial responsibility to allow for the process of return, local integration or resettlement by establishing the right conditions. However, creating a long term solution necessitates involvement of the IDPs themselves as well, meaning that they should participate in the planning and managing of these long term efforts. Reich (2006) argues that conflict transformation even asks for complete ownership 'in order to guarantee effectiveness and sustainability'. This stems from the experience that in the past conflict transformation has been done in a top-down manner, where governments implemented their policies, often resulting in a mismatch of what is actually needed on the ground thus ending in a failure of the policy. Instead 'strengthening, fostering and supporting the local actors with an active interest in building peace can thus be seen as a key principle of civil conflict management' (Reich, 2006, p. 6).

¹¹ Principle 28.1 and 28.2 of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

So, to make the process of resettlement or integration durable there must have been a durable change in the situation that the IDPs have fled from. The national authority carries the responsibility for establishing the right social, economic, political, legal and secure conditions (Reilly & Risser, 2000, p. 175). That is why the responsibility of the government is twofold, first to ensure the process of return, resettlement or reintegration, and secondly to integrate the IDPs into this process in order to make it lasting and durable. The timing of such a process is strongly dependent on the conditions that are in place that enable the IDPs to return. Determining what are acceptable conditions for the return is a complex matter. The common criteria for this are based upon the idea that the process of return should be safe and with dignity. UNHCR Handbook on Voluntary Repatriation provides for a working definition for these two concepts. Return in safety is being defined as the following:

‘return which takes place under conditions of legal safety, physical safety and material security’

and return with dignity is being described as:

‘in practice, elements must include that refugees are not manhandled; that they can return unconditionally and that if they are returning spontaneously they can do so at their own pace; that they are not arbitrarily separated from family members; and that they are treated with respect and full acceptance by their national authorities, including the full restoration of their rights’¹²

The former makes clear that there is a strong relationship between return and human rights. To make the process of return possible, this should happen within a human rights context to ensure national and international accountability (Reilly & Risser, 2000, p. 176). Altogether, finding solutions of forcible displacement has both institutional and human rights dimensions which are strongly interrelated (Reilly & Risser, 2000, p. 171).

It must be noted that in many situations of internal displacement the national authority is unwilling to seek solutions to the plight of the IDPs. As has been put out earlier, competent authorities should take the responsibilities concerning IDPs. However, especially in conflict or post-conflict situations, national authorities are not always in the position to take up these responsibilities. Rather, they are weak, they lack the authority or they lack the internal capacity and necessary resources to provide the returning community with any solutions. Reasons for their incapability can also be found in the unwillingness of governments, for example when governments had a deliberate political strategy in the process of internal displacement. Another reason for this unwillingness occurs in situations ‘where communities are forcibly displaced by government authorities as a counter-insurgency strategy to weaken political opposition’ (Reilly & Risser, 2000, p. 172). And a final explanation can be found in situations where the government views the IDPs as the enemy within. This happens when national authorities associate the IDPs to the opposition or rebel groups and are thus not willing to protect or assist the IDPs. It also works the other way around, where insurgent groups may view IDPs as siding with the government. As Reilly & Risser point out, in these situations the national authority is either not able or not willing to protect the IDP community or provide them with durable solutions, that is, providing for the process of local integration, return or settlement elsewhere. In these circumstances, the international community should take up the responsibility for seeking lasting solutions for civilians uprooted within their own country (Reilly & Risser, 2000, p. 171, 173).

3.3.2 Durable solutions and durable peace

Prevention of internal displacement is of course the best solution to the problem. Unfortunately, the process of displacement is sometimes inevitable. For a war torn society to end up again in a peaceful society, it is broadly thought that the repatriation of refugees and the return of IDPs is a

¹² UNHCR Handbook on Voluntary Repatriation: International Protection, Geneva, 1996, (from Reilly & Risser, 2000, p. 176).

prerequisite for peace. Some authors would argue that if countries are able to find durable solutions for IDPs, this would point to an overall success of the peace process. According to this literature, this would imply that every peace agreement must provide for it. So in order to properly deal with the problem and to make sure that not only this particular community gets back on track in the long term, but also those who did not flee their homes as well as those who have shared their living spaces with an enormous inflow of people, it needs to be recognized when a solution is considered to be durable. By referring to several approaches the following section will discuss the relation between durable solutions and durable peace and how this can be established.

Koser argues that displacement is a logical result of most armed conflicts. In an attempt to resolve the problem of internal displacement and to work towards peace, Koser addresses that 'the return of refugees and durable solutions for IDPs are hard to achieve where there is a lack of security, the rule of law is not re-established, property is not restored, and conditions for sustainable solutions are not in place' (Koser, 2009, p. 5). He continues by emphasizing that the process of peace cannot be initiated as long as the displaced are not being involved in the process. Some countries have such a high number of displaced, not incorporating the needs of the displaced nor ensuring their active participation would make the achievement of a peaceful future unrealistic. In addition, the return of IDPs is an accurate signifier of a peace process. As UNHCR argues: 'the scale of return and success of reintegration are two of the most tangible indicators of progress in any peacebuilding process' and former Secretary-General Annan emphasizes that: 'the return of refugees and internally displaced persons is a major part of any post-conflict scenario [...] Indeed it is often a critical factor in sustaining a peace process and in revitalizing economic activity'¹³.

However, this assertion of an inextricable link between return and peace is debated. The other side of the debate argues that refugee or IDP return poses significant risks to a peace process as long as there is no objective aiming at durable solutions. This mirrors the idea that there is no connection between refugee and IDP repatriation and peace. Tete ascribes this to the notion that when finding durable solutions for IDPs, policy and practice adopt the idea that IDPs want to return home. However, the challenge to policy makers is to incorporate the sense, meaning, feeling, perceptions and explanations of home of refugees and IDPs. She strongly emphasizes that implementation of a set of prescribed durable solutions should help address 'the security situation, without which the very basics of voluntariness, safety and dignity would be seriously undermined' (Tete, 2009, p. 75, 58). Although return is often desirable or preferred, it is often not possible given the prevailing circumstances (ibid.). The former thus points to the idea that a durable solution will only be successful and effective when IDPs have a certain amount of self-sufficiency. Only then we can speak of a positive relationship between durable solutions and durable peace.

The previous thus stipulates a possible positive relationship between durable solutions and durable peace. This in turn needs more elaboration on when a solution is considered to be durable. Exactly for this matter a framework for durable solutions (2007) has been formulated by the Brookings Institution. Its central aim is to show that 'the ending of displacement occurs not at one point in time but is a gradual process during which the need for specialized assistance and protection for IDPs begins to diminish' and to 'assist governments in devising national legislation, policies and programs that promote solutions to internal displacement'. Besides national governments, it also guides international organizations and civil society organizations (Framework, 2007, p. 5). The framework profoundly bases itself on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Following the literature on internal displacement, one finds that the majority of the authors base themselves and their research on these Guiding Principles. This is

¹³ Kofi Annan to the UNHCR Executive Committee in 2005 (Koser, 2009, p. 8).

why a logical step in this research is to do the same, thus refer to the framework for durable solutions when discussing the end of internal displacement.

According to the framework for durable solutions, solutions are durable when they are based on three elements, which are: 'long-term safety and security, restitution of or compensation for lost property and an environment that sustains the life of the former IDPs under normal economic and social conditions'. The importance of integrating the IDPs as part of the mechanism providing for the solutions is highly recognized (Tete, 2009, p. 47). As McCleskey emphasizes, in order to fully consult and encourage IDPs in the return, reintegration or resettlement plans, special attention should be given to the participation of minority groups. In this way, decisions on return should be determined by positive pull-factors, rather than by push-factors. This can be reached with social development where planning for stability requires a multifaceted program that ensures sufficient development in all domains and at all levels of society (McCleskey, p. 209). This idea of integration can be made possible by the right of IDPs to make informed and voluntary decisions as to whether they want to return, or integrate where they found refuge or settle someplace else. Voluntary programs often have different degrees of voluntariness, the displaced person may have a clear and open choice, it can also be a choice between returning voluntarily when asked to do so perhaps by gaining financial or other incentives as a result, or voluntary can mean an absence of force in removal (Black & Gent, 2006, p. 19). Either way, it is all about the freedom of movement as a fundamental right and every effort should be made 'to ensure that the decision to choose a durable solution is voluntary and that the decisions of individual IDPs whether to return home or settle elsewhere must be respected and facilitated' (Framework, 2007, p. 10).

The framework for durable solutions emphasize the importance of examining the *processes* through which solutions are found, and the actual *conditions* of returnees who have integrated or settled elsewhere in the country in order to determine to what extent a durable solution has been achieved (see paragraph 3.4 for the complete explanation on these two concepts according to the framework). The process through which solutions are found means that IDPs should be able to make informed decisions upon their return, local integration or resettlement without any feeling of coercion and they should be part of the planning process of such decisions. The government in turn should then 'take the appropriate measures to establish conditions and provide the means for such durable solutions' (Tete, 2009, p. 47). Central in this idea is that the conditions in the area that people choose to live in are reasonable, that is, do people have access to an adequate standard of living, are their human rights being respected, etc. Furthermore, the framework subscribes four criteria contributing to durable solutions: '1) the national authorities have established the conditions conducive to safe and dignified return or settlement elsewhere, 2) formerly displaced persons are able to assert their rights on the same basis as other nationals, 3) international observers are able to provide assistance and monitor the situation of the formerly displaced, and 4) the durable solution is sustainable' (Framework, 2007, p. 10). Finding durable solutions is a very complex process and takes many challenges. Kälin describes the four main challenges, first the human rights challenge where finding durable solutions is about restoring the human rights of IDPs. Secondly there is a humanitarian challenge, which entails the continuing humanitarian needs of IDPs. Third is called the development challenge which means that in achieving durable solutions key development challenges are identified by the Millennium Development Goals. And finally is the peacebuilding or reconstruction challenge which subscribes the local or even national political, economic and social stabilization in achieving durable solutions (Kälin, 2008, p. 11).

3.4 Research design

This chapter has served as a theoretical basis on the topic of internal displacement and the search for durable solutions. By discussing several debates and views concerning internal

displacement, the foundation has been laid down for this research. In order to make the theory applicability I will need to take a closer look at what it means when focusing on the processes through which solutions are found and the actual conditions provided by the government or international community. I will base myself on the Framework for Durable Solutions (2007). This framework is first and foremost based on the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which sets up a normative framework which governments and international organizations can apply when dealing with IDPs. Besides the Guiding Principles, the 'refugee experience by analogy was explored' and finally the framework is based on a number of specific case studies concerning internal displacement (Framework, 2007, p. 5). In order to prevent any misinterpretations or misconceptions which could result in a decrease of the viability of this research, the following section is directly taken from this framework. Box 2 explains the process through which solutions are found and subsequently box 3 explains the actual conditions of former IDPs.

Box 2 Processes through which solutions are found

<p>1. <u>Information and consultation:</u> IDPs are able to make an informed decision as to whether to return to their home communities, remain where they are, or settle elsewhere in the country. The information needed to make an informed decision has to be in a language understood by the IDPs and, at a minimum, includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General situation in the community of origin or settlement, including mechanisms to protect the rights of people. This includes objective information as to whether the causes of displacement have been resolved. Information should also be provided on what mechanisms have been put in place in order to ensure a smooth (re-) integration of the IDPs with the local population. • The procedures for returning, integrating locally or settling elsewhere, including information what items IDPs can take with them, what transport will be available, etc. • The condition on return, local integration or resettlement, including access to housing, land, livelihoods, information on mine risks, employment and other economic opportunities, availability of public services, conditions of buildings and infrastructure for schools, health clinics, roads, bridges and sanitation systems, and assistance available from national, international and private agencies.
<p>2. <u>Participation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDPs, including women, minorities and others who may not have representation, participate fully in the planning and management of return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country. • To the extent possible, arrangements have been made for IDP representatives to visit and assess conditions for return or settlement elsewhere. The visits should include women and men as well as a broad representation of ethnic, racial, religious and political groups. • Decisions to return home should be voluntary, just as it is adopted in the Refugee Policy in the principle of non-refoulement, that is not forcibly being returned. That is why the UN has stated that coercion – including physical force, harassment, intimidation, denial of basic services, or closure of IDP camps or facilities without an acceptable alternative – have been used to induce or to prevent return, local integration or settlement elsewhere. Voluntary return will make sure that the return of IDPs will be safe and it also makes it more likely to be lasting and sustainable.
<p>3. <u>Risk reduction and safety measures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No coercion—including physical force, harassment, intimidation, denial of basic services, or closure of IDP camps or facilities without an acceptable alternative—has been used to induce or to prevent return, local integration or settlement elsewhere. • National authorities, where appropriate with the support of the international community, have taken appropriate measures to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, that enable IDPs to return voluntarily, in safety and dignity, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country and to facilitate the (re)integration of returned or resettled IDPs. The responsibility of national authorities includes: taking measures to ensure respect for human rights and humanitarian law, providing safe transit for IDPs, offering adequate assistance

and protection of physical safety upon relocation.
<p>4. <u>Access to monitoring and humanitarian assistance:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National authorities grant and facilitate safe, unimpeded and timely access of humanitarian organizations and other relevant actors to assist IDPs to return, locally integrate or settle elsewhere.

Source: When Internal Displacement Ends: a Framework for Durable Solutions, 2007

Box 3 Actual conditions of former IDPs

<p>1. <u>Safety and security:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formerly displaced persons do not suffer attacks, harassment, intimidation, persecution or any other form of punitive action upon return to their home communities or settlement in other locations. • Formerly displaced persons are not subject to discrimination for reasons related to their displacement. • Formerly displaced persons have full and non-discriminatory access to national and sub-national protection mechanisms, including police and courts. • Formerly displaced persons have access to personal documentation, which typically is needed to access public services, to vote and for administrative purposes.
<p>2. <u>Property:</u></p> <p>Formerly displaced persons have access to mechanisms for property restitution or compensation regardless of whether they return or settle in the area where they found refuge or a new location</p>
<p>3. <u>Conditions allowing for sustainability at the place of solution</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formerly displaced persons enjoy without discrimination an adequate standard of living, including shelter, health care, food, water and other means of survival. National authorities have the principal responsibility to ensure that those who return, integrate locally or settle elsewhere in the country have access, on a sustainable basis, to essential food and potable water, basic shelter and housing, and essential medical services and sanitation. Humanitarian organizations may be called upon to help ensure that these basic needs are met. Initially, IDPs may have needs for assistance to obtain the means of survival that differ significantly from that of the resident population. However, if adequate attention is being paid to their specific situation, the needs of IDPs are likely to resemble that of other residents over time. To the extent that the needs merge, the continuation of IDP-specific programs could become discriminatory towards the other residents. More specifically, formerly displaced persons will have access without discrimination to: • Employment opportunities and income generation. Displacement ends when IDPs have no barriers to employment and income generation opportunities that relate specifically to their displacement. • Formerly displaced persons have been able to reunite with family members if they choose to do so. • Formerly displaced persons are able to exercise the right to participate fully and equally in public affairs.

Source: When Internal Displacement Ends: a Framework for Durable Solutions, 2007

4. Internal displacement and durable solutions: an analysis

This chapter describes the results derived from the data analysis of the interviews and the additional secondary information. Chapter 3 thoroughly discussed the criteria that determine the end of internal displacement, thus, when durable solutions for IDPs have been achieved. The chapter concluded with the framework for durable solutions. The first part of this chapter is designed according to this framework where the paragraphs are constructed in line with the different criteria determining durable solutions for IDPs. When discussing the process through which solutions took place, it is assumed that because of such processes people decided to choose their place of solution. This is why in the first paragraph the reasons for the place of solution will be discussed both for the IDPs settling in the camp and for those who have returned. Paragraph 4.2 in turn will discuss the processes through which solutions were found according to the framework for durable solutions. I will do so by focusing on the role of the government in these processes and in addition the role of the PRDP will also be addressed. Moreover, when gaps between the framework and reality are identified, I will take a closer look at whether the PRDP is able to fill these gaps. I will maintain the same approach when discussing the actual conditions of former IDPs in paragraph 4.3. This paragraph will be followed by an elaboration on the perceptions IDPs have on their current living situation in paragraph 4.4. The final paragraph will discuss the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan by moving beyond the framework for durable solutions. This will be done by addressing the awareness among the local community on the plan; secondly by elaborating on the criticism that was broadly given by donors and NGOs. This chapter will conclude by discussing the region's current reality and explain how the PRDP positions itself in this.

4.1 Reasons for place of solution

'People were quite confident of going home. It became a fact that you could not know the actual situation home until you are really there. If you would keep on imagining from the camp, you would not find out. So people started moving' (Interview NGO Forum, Gulu, 9 June 2010).

It has become clear that the large majority of the IDPs have left the camps. June this year, all camps in Gulu have been closed except for one due to an ongoing land dispute. Although all camps in Gulu have been closed except for one, fact remains that there is still a significant number of people living in these camps. The question is whether these people are still IDPs. A part of this group might have decided to settle here, meaning that they no longer fall under the category of IDPs, rather, they are citizens of this place. Others might still have the desire to return to their home village. It will become clear that both cases are true. Some have found their place of solution while others still prefer to return home. If we want to understand the processes under which IDPs were enabled to choose their place of solution – that is of course if they have already found their place of solution – we first need to understand the main reasons of their return or the main reason of remaining in the camp (either through permanent settlement or through an inability of any kind to return). It is likely that the two are linked to each other: because of processes that have been put in place, IDPs were able to return home, or to permanently settle down in the camp. However, the question is whether this nexus is true. That is why first the core reasons of people's current living area will be discussed, followed by an elaboration on the processes through which solutions are found (paragraph 4.2).

4.1.1 Reasons of return

As one respondent of an NGO in Gulu explained, 'people have driven themselves out of the camps because life there was really rough, the population just decided to go home and regain their life' (Interview USAID-NUTI Gulu, 15 June 2010). This observation summarizes the considerations of the IDPs to return home quite well. Indeed, all the former IDPs would emphasize the

uncomfortable and difficult life they were living in the camps. When discussing the life in the camps with the former IDPs from Bungatira and Palaro, the respondents had a very clear reasoning of why they decided to leave this life. In general, there were four main reasons that would reoccur in their answers. First of all, getting food in the camps was a struggle. Especially during the most intensive period of the war, IDPs were dependent on the food aid coming in. IDPs were not able to grow their own crops, first of all due to the insecure environment and secondly because they were not living on their own land. After many years of violence and a slowly improving security situation, it became easier to move around and cultivate on your own. Still, the IDPs had to move up and down to their land. Since the security did not always provide for this movement, they were not able to sustainably grow their own crops, provide their own food and cultivate on their own land. Consequently they were still dependent of the World Food Program (WFP). The respondents would subsequently express how uncomfortable and stressful they found living on other people's land. People in northern Uganda have always been self-sustainable. Due to internal displacement as a consequence of the war, all structures have been disrupted, making them very dependent on the help and willingness of others. They would emphasize that as soon as they would have returned home, they would be able to regain their old structures and provide their families with their own cultivated food, or, to put in other words, be self-sustainable again.

A second reason of return that was often addressed and that closely relates the previous one is that IDPs wanted to protect their ancestral land. Especially men would express this issue; they feel that it is their responsibility and their duty to go back to their ancestral land to resettle there with their family and to protect it. A third reason of return is simply that the peaceful environment enabled for it. 'Why would we stay longer in the congested camps while there is now relative peace and security?' (Interview adults, Palaro, 14 July 2010). Government officials dispersed the message that people had to go back the same way they came. That is, without any pressure and with the freedom to move. The IDPs would respond to this government instruction.

Finally, women and elderly in both Bungatira and Palaro would often express concerns about their children. The camps were crowded, congested, dirty, and there was too much pressure on how to live your life. These living conditions made it almost impossible to properly educate your children. The Acholi have a form of informal education where children are being taught about norms and values within their communities, about the history and development of their clan, how you can become a wise person and how to live as a good Acholi. But in the camps, children were disrespectful and not willing to do what they were told. Both parents and children would blame it on all the distraction children had in the camp (Interviews youth, Palaro, 16 July 2010; elderly, Palaro, 14 July 2010; elderly, Bungatira, 12 July 2010; women, Bungatira, 4 August 2010). There were so many people and more importantly, so many children, that they simply would not do as they were told. Parents knew that when they would return home, this distraction would diminish. They would simply be living in their own homes with their own families, where it would be easier to discipline their children again and teach them according to the informal education system.

In addition, the former IDPs from Palaro clarified that they actually wanted to return earlier, but instead of returning, they have been living in transit sites for many months to even years before they made the final decision to return home. These transit sites are constructed settlements which are located closer to their homes but also not too far from the IDP camp. In explaining why they would not permanently return to their home village, former IDPs from Palaro gave Palaro being a sub-country close to the border of Sudan as a reason. The IDPs were informed that the LRA had crossed the borders, but to them there was no certainty that the LRA would not come back so they did not feel secure enough to return home. Staying in the transit sites enabled them to monitor the situation better and in cases of real insecurity they would be able to quickly return to the IDP camps. Furthermore, during the conflict, Palaro was the core of the battlefield.

This has left many unexploded ordnances (UXOs). The government conducted surveys and removed these UXOs, however, this took quite some time to complete, so this in turn also delayed their permanent return (Interviews elderly, adults, Palaro, 14 July 2010).

4.1.2 IDPs remaining in the camps: settling down or returning home?

A common assumption among NGOs as well as within the government is that IDPs want to return home. As one respondent from an NGO expressed, the interests of IDPs should not be underestimated (Interview NGO Forum, Gulu, 7 June, 2010). Most IDPs have been living in the camps for many years, some were raised in the camps and others were even born there. Again others have been living in the camp since the outbreak of the war, now over twenty years ago. Either way, from the interviews with the IDPs it became clear that they have adapted to the new living situation and they have found a way of sustaining themselves. Either they have small businesses or they have bought themselves a piece of land they can cultivate to grow their own food. These people have made their living in the camp, they can sustain themselves here and they have now decided to settle permanently. In addition, there is also a movement, mostly of young people, who do not want to return because they are not used to the way of living in their home village (Interview Save the Children, Gulu, 9 June 2010; UNHCR, Gulu, 16 June 2010). One young man from Odek explained that his relatives have moved back and up till now they are trying to adjust to their new living situation which they encounter as a struggle. People have forgotten their lifestyles from the past and now they have difficulties coping. He now prefers to stay in the camp (Interview man, Odek, 28 July 2010). Another young man who has been living in the camp since 1997, he was five years old when he moved here, explained that he is now witnessing a flow of people returning back to the camps from their home village because life home turned out to be too difficult to adjust to. It turns out that a lot of people cannot sustain themselves adequately at their returning village. This trend is especially visible among the young population (Interview man, Odek, 27 July 2010).

Unlike those who prefer to settle down in the camps, there is also still a significant number of IDPs who do want to return to their home village. There are various reasons why this group of people has not yet been able to return. An LC1 from Odek explained that most people who are still living here do not have the capacity or the strength to build their own hut and those relatives who already have returned are not always able to help them in the starting process of return (Interview chairperson LC1, Odek, 5 August 2010). Indeed, it was largely the elderly and the women with children who made the claim that they have not returned yet because they are not able to construct themselves a hut. They are either not able to find the right materials needed for the hut construction, or they cannot find the help from relatives to assist them with the construction. One elder woman explained that people have become so much more individualistic; people have lost their feeling of belonging to a community and the habit of helping your relatives. Now she is left behind in the camp with no one to look after her anymore, she feels lonely and desperately wants to return (Interview elder woman, Lalogi, 20 July 2010).

A second common heard reason for not returning is the problem of water. The statement that was frequently heard is 'water is life'. However, in many of the returning areas there is no access to clean water, there are only one or two boreholes in the sub county or the water point is too far from their home. Especially for old and disabled people this causes great problems since they are not capable of walking long distances to fetch water. This in turn means that they are better off staying in the camp, where there is plenty of clean water and where water points are nearby. Nevertheless, they would express that when adequate water points would be in place in the returning sites, this would fasten their decision to actually return.

A final explanation can be found in people's inability to access their ancestral land because it is taken by others. In order to understand these land disputes, some understanding of customary land owning is needed first. Within villages it has always been clear who owned which piece of

land. Boundaries were agreed upon by the owners, using a mixture of natural features, like stones, trees, or swamps. Such pieces of farming land are owned by individual families and generally it is the grandfather who provides plots to each family member according to their need and their perceived ability to use the land (CSOPNU, 2004). However, during the war, many families left their home villages and sought refuge in the IDP camps. They have not been back on their family land for many years. Natural boundaries have been disrupted, making it impossible to recognize and more importantly, difficult to reclaim ones land. In addition, many of the grandfathers have died during the war, they were often the only ones who knew which plot belonged to whom. This in turn resulted in other relatives or authorities claiming pieces of land. There are still quite some families both in Lalogi and Odek who are living in the camps because of such land disputes. They are now moving up and down to their home village in an attempt to settle the issue, but in some cases these 'new owners' simply refuse to share the land or to give it back.

4.2 Process through which solutions are found

'Everybody has a home. Help them start a living.' (Interview World Vision, Gulu, 3 June 2010)

The previous paragraph elaborated first on the main reasons of IDPs' return and secondly why a large group of people is still living in the camps. It has become clear that not every person has chosen their place of solution yet. Some IDPs still have the desire to return to their home village. This paragraph will focus on the process through which solutions are found, and what the role of the PRDP has been in this. It focuses both on the IDPs who have already chosen their place of solution – the former IDPs – but also on the group of IDPs who still have the desire to return – the IDPs. Explaining the process through which solutions are found, this paragraph will be in line with the factors described in the framework for durable solutions. Hence, the first section of this paragraph elaborates on the information and consultation upon return, secondly I will address the participation of IDPs upon return or settlement, followed by information about risk reduction and safety measures. Finally the access to monitoring and humanitarian assistance will be addressed.

4.2.1 Information and consultation

The majority of the people who are still living in the IDP camp in either Odek or Lalogi believe they are well aware of the situation in their home village. Mechanisms through which they receive this information are mainly based on their individual collection. They would emphasize that waiting for information from the government would mean they would not receive information any time soon. As one respondent put it, you only really know what is going on in your home village: 'by seeing it with your own eyes and experiencing it with your own body' (Interview elder woman, Lalogi, 20 July 2010). Most of their homes are not that far away from the camp, so people have the opportunity to move up and down to their home village and most do so, mainly for cultivating activities. Another way these people receive information about their home village is because their relatives occasionally come back to the camp. They will inform their family about the situation, which facilities are in place and how they perceive their living conditions. There were few IDPs who claimed that they are not aware of the conditions in their home villages. Although they do trust that it is now safe because recently so many people have returned, they explain that they have no idea what to expect in their home village (Interview man, Lalogi, 22 July 2010; woman, Odek, 27 July 2010). This is often due to either the distance from their home village to the camp which makes it impossible to move up and down, or their relatives have passed away during the war so they now remain on their own in the camp. For these IDPs, getting information about the situation from their home village is difficult, sometimes even impossible.

The former IDPs from Bungatira and Palaro agree with the IDPs from Odek and Lalogi that the provision of information by the government about their returning villages has been poor. They had no idea what to expect when it came to the access and quality of their land, the access to water, whether schools and health units were still in place, or, summarized, what their quality of life would be like back home. When it came to assistance from the government in terms of movement, IDPs did not receive information about this, nor the help, nor did they expect this. Often people would not take their time to wait for such mechanisms that would return them home to be put in place. Instead, they would first go to the transit camps located closer to their village. This way, it took a couple of years before people had really reached home. Although former IDPs did not really expect any help from the government in terms of movement, they did expect basic services to be in place as they were told that after their return, social and public services would follow soon. Especially the youth expressed that they had no idea what kind of struggles they would face upon their return, they would just follow their parents or other relatives to their village of origin. Their biggest surprise, which has now become their biggest struggle, is that there is no easy access to clean water (Interview youth, Palaro, 16 July, 2010). It is not surprisingly that particularly this group of young people is experiencing these struggles. For them, living in the context of war has become the norm of living. A lot of these youth has never lived in the situation back home and many of them do not want to live it either.

The former IDPs put forward the importance of information before their actual return. Now they struggle with things they were not expecting. If they would have known beforehand, they could have changed their expectations and consequently better adapt to their new living conditions. As said before, they were told that as soon as they would return, other structures and social services would follow. Therefore, people moved back. One man recalled: 'I just took my spear and went back home' (Interview elder man, Palaro, 14 July, 2010). NGOs confirm that the government did not provide the relevant information on the returning areas when it came to social and public services. They explain that IDPs were simply tired of being in the camp, there was relative peace and that is what pushed people to go back home. Unlike this poor information on social and public services, government officials and several NGOs explained that there have been programs providing IDPs with information and consultation about their returning areas in terms of safety. Local authorities, the residence district commissioners in Gulu and other officials have been in charge of this. They would inform IDPs about landmines and other UXOs in their returning areas. 'I think there was a relevant and decent attempt towards communication on this matter' (Interview Survival Corps, Kampala, 19 May 2010). The former IDPs from both Bungatira and Palaro indeed say that they received information from the government when it came to their security. As these former IDPs recall, the government conducted a survey to map the UXOs and removed them after which the IDPs were told by the government that it was now safe to return back home. These respondents indeed would conclude that security wise they were well informed by the government and NGOs, but the information upon access to social services has been very poor.

Yet, fact remains that people were not attracted by any pull factors created in their return areas, no mechanisms were created that would ease the process of return nor were they completely informed about the returning sites. 'Throughout this conflict, it was the government who was pretending' (Interview NGO Forum, Gulu, 9 June 2010), it were the IDPs themselves who knew better than anyone else about the situation back home. Discussing the role of the PRDP in this, it became clear that the PRDP is a needs-based plan, formulated from the district development plans (DDPs) (Interview NUREP, Gulu, 8 June 2010). So in theory the PRDP should respond to the needs on the ground both in the returning sites and in the camps. If the PRDP is used well, it will provide many required resources. In essence, the PRDP is a bonus on top of the general district budgets, so districts have an extra resource to finance the return process and the requirements in the area (Interview USAID, Gulu, 2 June 2010). According to the document, the PRDP should allocate money to the completion of the returning process. More specifically, the

PRDP document states that with its implementation, the process of return will be completed, they will do so by 'building confidence and understanding of the IDPs about the necessary peace and security conditions and processes for return and resettlement' (PRDP, p. 63), on security, livelihood and access to social services. However, as the former already mentioned, in practice none of the (former) IDPs were informed about any provision on information on social services in the returning sites. Both IDPs and NGOs emphasized that the decision to return was made on an individual basis, founded on their own information or the information they received from their relatives. Despite what is written in the document, in practice the PRDP does not seem to put any additional value in this matter, at least, not more than the government was already doing. One respondent from an NGO in Gulu explained the role of the government in the provision of information during the returning process as follows:

'People started to move back and forth and this has been going on for a period of time. That is how the information was passing from the return sites to the camps. Some information may have been provided by the field staff but not a high percentage. We have not created a massive information system where people could come and collect the information. People were, even before the creation of the freedom of movement, already moving out of the camps' (Interview AVSI, Gulu, 7 June 2010).

In addition, there have been talks of creating a system which could serve as an information provider for IDPs. UNHCR has a massive data collection system. Several NGOs were supposed to collect relevant data about villages from this system and subsequently bring this back to the district level. From there this information could trickle down to the sub-county and from the sub-county to the parish level and from there down to the IDPs. But this system never really worked properly.

4.2.2 Participation

When we look at participation of the IDPs in their returning process, according to the framework for durable solutions there are three central elements to focus on. The first one is to what extent IDPs participate in the planning and management of return. The second element is the kind of arrangements that have been made for IDP representatives to visit and assess conditions for return. The final element is whether decisions of return or settling in the camp have been voluntary. By discussing all three, there will also be an emphasis on the role of the PRDP.

The official position of the government is that they want everybody to return to their homes. Through coordination meetings the government would inform the LCs that IDPs can now be informed that it is safe to return home (Interview World Vision, Gulu, 3 June 2010). Yet, from the interviews both in the camps and in the returning sites, it turned out that planning meetings with LCs and IDPs upon return processes have been very poor. Only in Palaro I heard about a few cases where the LCs would call for meetings with the IDPs where the process of return would be discussed. During such meetings they would discuss the rebuilding of their huts and the planning of when the return process should start (Interviews adults, elderly, Palaro, 14 July 2010). In Bungatira, Odek and Lalogi it became clear that if there ever were any planning or community meetings, these meetings would only be for the village leaders, the IDPs were not directly included in them. When it came to community meetings, IDPs would explain that they were either not aware, or they never took place. The majority of the respondents would explain that their decision to return was not based on any discussions within the community, rather, it was a decision made on the individual or on a household level. Because the implementation of the PRDP started a few years after the first IDPs started returning, the plan does not put an additional emphasis on such planning or coordination meetings where the process of return is thoroughly discussed. Now that the process of return has already started, IDPs are following each other, moving out of the camps on an individual basis.

The same goes for the assessments. IDPs claim that processes through which return took place were not based on any arranged assessments for the IDPs. IDPs would rather come and go to their home village and assess the situation themselves, on an individual basis. The information they received from these personal assessments would normally be shared in the camps. There has been one NGO that explained they have conducted group assessments together with the IDPs. They would take a small group of strong men back to the villages, sometimes under escort and they would spend the night there. Back in the camp, these men together with the NGO would tell the IDPs about their experience in their home village. By doing this, they would send the message that things are better now, it is safe to go back home (Interview DRC, Gulu, 7 June 2010). Although neither the IDPs nor the former IDPs would explain on any arranged assessments which included them, some did recall how the UPDF soldiers have gone into the villages to assess the situation, but they would not take the IDPs with them (Interviews adults, elderly, Palaro and Bungatira, July 2010). If the IDPs wanted to collect information on the situation back home, they would have to go and have a look for themselves. So they did, either by cultivating land, go hunting or by collecting firewood they would simultaneously assess the land, often in groups.

The PRDP document writes the following about the security assessments: 'local government and community leaders work together with security organs to assess conditions and provide information to the IDPs about which areas are secure enough to return' (PRDP, p. 64). So although the PRDP gives space for security assessments conducted by local government and community leaders, the document does not talk about the involvement of IDPs. Simultaneously, the research shows that the PRDP has not assisted the IDPs with group assessments. Similar to the provision of information and consultation, this can also be explained by the fact that in the process of return, the implementation of the PRDP responded relatively late. Nowadays, such assessments are no longer a necessity since many family members or relatives have already moved back, or IDPs are easily able to move up and down to their home village on their own strength.

Discussing the voluntary return of IDPs with NGOs, IDPs and former IDPs, the opinions were divided. One respondent from an NGO in Gulu stated the following:

'If you know that this camp where you have been living for the last decade is going to disappear, where homes will be demolished and services are closing down, you have to go. There is enough doubt in my mind to question how voluntary this process is. I think it is a choiceless decision [...] when you are destroying things, what does that say? What will you do when the borehole that you have been using for many years is going to be demolished? That is what is happening during the camp phase-out, so what freedom is that?' (Interview IOM, Gulu, 2 July 2010).

Many IDPs who still remain in the camp, but also many of those who have returned, would agree with the former statement. Although the government would not put direct physical consequences, many IDPs and former IDPs express that when the government came in to tell that the camps were now officially closed, they felt pressure to leave. Others explain that there was no direct force, but there was some pressure when food distributions were stopped, consequently leading to food shortages in the camps. Together with the demolishing of huts, this has been a real boost for the IDPs to leave the camps and return home. It certainly fastened the movement from the camp. Although the research did not find stories about evictions from the IDPs themselves, NGOs would give some examples of evictions that have taken place in the past. Moreover, there have been cases where the government gave deadlines to IDPs to leave the camp, or landlords were motivated by government officials to ask for higher rents for the land IDPs were living on, consequently pushing IDPs away. Through the signing of the IDP policy, the government has submitted itself to the process of voluntary return. As one respondent explained, the understanding of the IDP policy by the government is sometimes very limited where personal interests of government officials play a part. UNHCR would explain how they

moved around and sensitized these government officials together with the landlords about the IDP policy (Interview UNHCR, Gulu, 16 June 2010). Lately they have not heard about any of such cases anymore. The PRDP document also embraces the voluntary return to place of origin or resettlement (PRDP, p. 63). However, the accountability of the voluntary return nowadays is difficult to determine due to the IDP policy of 2004.

Besides the government dispersing the message that the camps are now closed and that people should return, in many cases IDPs and former IDPs also experience pressure from their landlords. Now that the camps are officially closed, different mechanisms come to place and IDPs cannot fall back on the support of the government any longer. IDPs are dependent on the willingness of the landlord whether they can stay on the land or not. The landlords often ask them to leave and there have even been cases where landlords would put up fires to scare away the IDPs living on their land (Interview NUREP, Gulu, 8 June 2010). Besides such extreme cases, there are many examples given both by IDPs and former IDPs where landlords started asking for rent, or where they prohibited the IDPs to work on the land any longer. In addition, one IDP would explain how his landlord does not put in any deadlines nor does he ask for rent, but as soon as someone misbehaves, the landlord sends this person away by demolishing his hut (Interview man, Lalogi, 22 July 2010).

Despite these experiences of pressure, indirect and sometimes direct force, there were also many opposite opinions on the issue of voluntary return where IDPs and former IDPs have not felt any force or pressure to leave the camp. Many of those who are still living in the camp have come to a compromise with their landlord, either by renting or by buying a piece of land, or by a silent agreement where the landlord acknowledges the struggles of the IDPs thus granting them more time to return. Local Councils both in Lalogi and Bungatira would agree that leaving the camps is a free choice. It now depends on the agreements made between the landlord and the tenants. In the past there might have been gaps, but they claim that nobody has been directly forced to return (Interview chairperson LC1, Odek, 5 August 2010).

4.2.3 Risk reduction and safety measures

There have been many issues in the past where security forces and other authorities were misusing their powers. However, nowadays, significant improvements are being made: the government is sensitizing communities, building up institutions and human rights bodies are being put in place. The government seems to be re-strengthening its position. When it comes to their responsibility upon the returning processes the opinions are divided:

‘We are now in the period that the government should take the stage, they should take the centre of everything. They now have the responsibility to provide for services to its citizens. But the government is slowly picking up this role’ (Interview USAID-NUTI, Gulu, 15 June 2010).

‘You see that the insurgencies that have been here for two decades have disorganized the government structure, law and order was totally broken down. Therefore, people did not think that the government was in place [...] but now, the development of justice, law and order played a key role in assuring that people could walk out of the camps, let them stay safe and let them have confidence in the government’ (Interview District Disaster Management Committee, Gulu, 15 June 2010).

When it comes to the ability and reliability of the government to reposition itself and to take up its expected role, again, opinions differ:

‘When development organizations leave they will need to hand over [their activities] to the government, but I do not see the level of commitment of the districts owing these things [locating resources and putting up structures] and moving them down to the people’ (Interview CARE, Gulu, 11 June 2010).

'They [the IDPs] did not have the confidence that the government officials were able to protect them, but now we see that this confidence is growing' (Interview UNHCR Gulu, 15 June 2010).

This section will focus on which measures have been established and which means have been provided that enabled IDPs to choose their place of solution. As the framework for durable solutions in chapter 3 already describes, I will here address the assistance and protection regarding IDPs' physical safety upon relocation, secondly the compliance of human rights and humanitarian law and I will conclude with the provision of safe transit to the place of solution. When addressing these three factors, I will also include the role and contribution of the PRDP.

First I will elaborate on the question to what extent the government has taken appropriate protection measures to establish conditions and provide the means enabling IDPs to return in safety. When displacement started, the government offices were completely disrupted. Nowadays, capacity building initiatives are needed to strengthen the district level again. One respondent stated that the government has responded too late to the process of return. The government did not create any incentives for the IDPs to return home. He continued explaining that people started to return anyway, it was only by then that the government started focusing on the process of return (Interview Save the Children, Gulu, 9 June 2010). Nowadays, this situation is changing. The Ugandan Human Rights Commission (UHRC) explained that during the war UN agencies and other humanitarian agencies took over the security services and other social services. At that time, the international partners were responsible for the security provision of the IDPs. Everybody got used to it, including the IDPs and the government (Interview UHRC, Gulu, 17 June 2010). But now, as the respondent from UHRC explained, time has come for the international agencies to plan their exit strategy: 'Of course, people must be helped to attain a durable solution, the impact of the war was huge and there still are some major challenges in the recovery phase. But let this be the challenge of the government, let them take up this responsibility' (ibid.). Now UHRC is taking over the cluster of protection from UNHCR and other NGOs.

Especially now, during a time where the NGOs are slowly moving away, permanent agencies need to be put in place that assure peoples' safety. The government is taking measures to improve the humanitarian situation, among others it sets up committees that deal with human rights. Especially the adoption of the IDP policy in 2004 makes the government more credible in the provision of risk reduction and safety measures. Among others, the document advocates for freedom of movement and return in safety and dignity. Through this policy, the government can now easily be held accountable for its actions (Interview NRC, Gulu, 11 June 2010). Discussing the protection measures with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of Gulu, he argued that under the PRDP a lot of effort has already been put in the restoration of justice, law and order. This has profoundly been carried out under the first strategic objective of the PRDP – consolidation of state authority. The document puts forward the following: 'a priority will be set on expanding police, judicial and prison services as well as strengthening effective and efficient local administration [...] priorities will be on providing rule of law services in areas of return' (PRDP, p. 38). As the CAO continued, not only is the local government re-strengthening, but also are protection bodies restored like police posts, humanitarian protection bodies and the legal system. IDPs and NGOs acknowledge this current change in risk reduction and safety measures, however, at this point in time the efficiency of such structures was often perceived as poor and inadequate.

Asking the (former) IDPs which exact measures the government took and is currently taking in terms of safe and protected return, they would profoundly address that nowadays the existence of police posts provide safety in the returning sites. The biggest request of the IDPs in the process of return was the presence of law and order. Consequently, police posts have been put up and slowly the police are taking over from the soldiers again, however, they still need to learn how to police their country (Interview UNHCR, Gulu, 16 June 2010). IDPs who are still living in

the camps in Lalogi and Odek agree that the presence of police and police stations is contributing to a safer environment. Besides the police, they also emphasize that the LCs are important in the provision of risk reduction and that they contribute to the feeling of safety. Both the police and the LCs move around and provide the community with information and sensitization about safety, human rights violations and how to behave well. Moreover, in order to assist IDPs with a safe return, the government has been informing everybody on the rights of IDPs. They especially emphasized to the landlords not to forcefully evict the displaced. In addition, the former IDPs in Bungantira and Palaro recognize the attempts of the government concerning their protected return, especially when it comes to risk reduction. The former IDPs from Bungatira and Palaro state that the government together with the NGOs are up till now adequately doing their work by identifying and removing UXOs (Interviews adults, elderly, Bungatira, 12 July 2010; men, Bungatira, 4 August 2010; adults, elderly, Palaro, 14 July 2010). Furthermore, they witness the process of institution building, where police posts are put in place, the LC system is functioning again and there are different human rights agencies. These structures are now developed under the PRDP.

Secondly, discussing compliance to human rights and humanitarian law, it became clear that the government is increasing its responsibility. The PRDP document emphasizes it as a core objective and a guiding principle in all their interventions (PRDP, p. 32). The first and biggest step through which this should be established is by handing over from UNHCR to UHRC. It became clear that indeed the Ugandan Human Rights Commission is strengthening and intensifying its presence. Many NGOs however are critical when it comes to the internal capacity especially of UHRC, they explain how they still do not have enough staff members and they are not accessible in every district yet. Consequently, they question their current capacity in taking over the protection cluster from UNHCR (Interview DRC, Gulu, 7 June 2010). The Human Rights Commission however responded that they are working on these issues. They explain that upon return, IDPs are scattered throughout the district so it is difficult to enter and target everybody sufficiently. UHRC is still lacking in the districts that suffered most during the war (Interview UHRC, Gulu, 17 June 2010). When it comes to these humanitarian bodies, most IDPs and former IDPs are aware of the existence of certain human rights offices. Indeed, as the LCs would explain, bodies like UHRC and Human Rights Focus have been active to sensitize the community and to put volunteers in position in the sub-counties of Odek and Lalogi (Interview chairperson LC1, Odek, 5 August 2010; vice-chairperson LC3, chairperson LC1, Lalogi, 3 August 2010).

However, despite institution building, (former) IDPs are not fully satisfied with these structures. If people want to report any form of offense, crime or harassment, the accessibility of these institutions is rather difficult. More importantly, the former IDPs claimed that the absence of their basic human rights, which they described as schooling, health centers, water and roads, has made their return extremely difficult. With the launch of the PRDP, there is a response in terms of access to these basic human rights by putting up developmental infrastructure, like schools, health units and access roads. 'Many of the plans focus on water, health units, education and access to roads [...] the plan indicates a positive trend towards finding solutions for the returning IDPs' (Interview USAID, Gulu, 2 June 2010). Indeed, the PRDP ensures that pull factors are being created that should motivate people's return (Interview NUREP, Gulu, 8 June 2010). However, when we look closer at what is really being done on the ground, we find that there are some major gaps. This will be further elaborated on in the paragraph discussing the actual conditions of former IDPs.

Thirdly, concerning the provision of a safe transit both for the IDPs still living in the camps and for the former IDPs in the returning sites, these groups were asked what kind of help the government provided them. It can be concluded that although the government did respond in terms of safe transit by removing UXOs, the overall provision to ensure safe transit has been inadequate. The majority of the IDPs who still desperately want to return to their home village

would argue that the government is neglecting them as a group of concern who might still need the assistance from the government. In their opinion, the government does not help them in the process of return and now that the camps are officially closed they do not fall under the protection of the government any longer. They are left to the goodwill of their landowner in the camps, meaning that they have to negotiate over land. Living in the camp has now become a private arrangement and IDPs can no longer expect support or intervention from the government. Moreover, those who are still remaining in the camps due to a land dispute in their returning area would emphasize how they miss the interference of the government in solving these disputes. Many cases are too difficult to resolve only with the help from the LCs and the IDPs feel that it should be the duty of government officials to intervene in situations where negotiations are stuck (Interview woman, Lalogi, 26 July 2010). The IDPs would largely conclude that in the current process of return, the government is no longer providing them with any assistance to make a safe transit happen. The PRDP addresses the needs and the responsibility to move certain vulnerable groups to their new living locations (PRDP, p. 64), however, the interviews did not address any of such activities from the government side. But under the PRDP there are NGOs who take this responsibility. Their programs are exclusively targeted at the identification and return of the EVIs. Yet, these programs are diminishing and the focus of intervention is indeed on the returning sites where structures are created that should also motivate the return of those still living in the camp. Nowadays, there is little assistance to ensure people's transit.

4.2.4 Access to monitoring and humanitarian assistance

The previous sub-paragraphs already gave away that the humanitarian sector has been very much at the forefront during the process of return. The government has never hindered the humanitarian agencies to enter the camps, nor in their provision of humanitarian aid coming in during and after the conflict. As one respondent from an NGO stated:

‘Although the situation has been really bad in the camp, the government did its best to reach the community with the right services. When you look at other displacement camps in the world, governments would block the reach of services from emergency organizations, that has not happened here (Interview NRC, Gulu, 11 June 2010)’

In 2004 the Government of Uganda signed the IDP policy. NGOs have been and still are very much focused on the government's compliance of the IDP policy during the process of return. If actions are not in line with this document, the government can easily be held accountable. It has happened several times that this was necessary, mostly in cases of eviction. Not only during the crisis of internal displacement did humanitarian assistance have free access, also after the crisis agencies are still able to operate without any hindrance. The PRDP is an explicit example of how the government of Uganda is permitting the presence of the international community. The Government of Uganda is working together with donors and NGOs in the framework of the PRDP with a clear goal of achieving a stable northern Uganda. Because the current government has often been accused of neglecting the north, the PRDP is perceived as a positive turn where the plan concentrates on the northern districts of Uganda. Moreover, with the implantation of the PRDP, more responsibility is given to the local governments. As one respondent from an NGO expressed, ‘normally I would say that the local government does not have enough capacity. However, we [the international community] are now working together with the district level. I think by working hand in hand, it is also a way of building capacity and identifying gaps’ (Interview ARC, Gulu, 8 June 2010). So, through a monitoring function in reference to the IDP policy, through a humanitarian function in the camps and returning sites and through a cooperative function together with central and local government, the international community has free access to provide aid and assistance during and after the conflict.

4.3 Actual conditions of former IDPs

'People who are returning are still displaced. Because movement has taken place, this does not mean that they leave their problems behind. The humanitarian need in the returning villages is still demanding. A durable solution is not about movement, it is about recovery, about livelihood, about social cohesion, it is about their poverty level and it is about property recovery, land, housing and property' (NRC, Gulu, 11 June 2010).

As the previous paragraph elaborated on the processes through which solutions were found, this paragraph will discuss the second part of the framework for durable solutions: the actual conditions that are in place in the life of the former IDPs. Not only will I discuss the actual conditions of the former IDPs, but also those of who are still living in the camps. This group of people is no longer considered as a special group of attention by the government since the closure of the IDP camps, therefore the government approaches them as former IDPs. According to the framework for durable solutions I will first address the issue of safety and security in people's life followed by the topic of property restitution or compensation. This paragraph will conclude with the conditions that allow for sustainability at the place of solution. Analyzing the government's role in the establishment and improvement of the actual conditions, the contribution of the PRDP will be included.

4.3.1 Safety and security

The framework for durable solutions divides the condition of safety and security into four factors. First it addresses that former IDPs do not suffer any form of punitive action upon return; secondly, former IDPs have non-discriminatory access to protection mechanisms; thirdly, former IDPs are not subject to discrimination due to reasons related to their displacement; and finally former IDPs have access to personal documentation. This section will be explained in line with these factors.

In general, (former) IDPs feel they are now living in a harmonious and safe environment where they do not suffer the kind of attacks, fear, intimidation or any other forms of punitive action they have been suffering in the past. The IDPs and former IDPs would explain that the government officials are not misbehaving when it comes to their protection. However, when there are cases of rape, abuse, theft or any of that kind, it is sometimes difficult to make sure that police responds adequately. When police is asked to come out and help, they will often ask for payments. When people are not willing to pay, the case is simply closed without having done anything. The LCs would explain that in cases of physical harassments like abuse or rape, there are several bodies in place that provide support, like the Ugandan Human Rights Commission in Gulu, or Human Rights Focus, also based in Gulu (Interview vice-chairperson LC3, chairperson LC1, Lalogi, 3 August 2010; chairperson LC1, Odek, 5 August 2010). Overall, both IDPs and former IDPs would stress that they feel secure in their current living situation, the only actions they witness are coming from their community members in the form of theft, harassment, robbery or other actions alike, they do not witness any of the kind from the side of government officials.

The (former) IDPs explain that this feeling of safety and security is coming from the presence of the police and the local leaders. People have to behave according to law now. Indeed, as we saw before in paragraph 4.2.3, nowadays law and order, justice and human rights protection are being instituted and promoted under the PRDP. However, (former) IDPs do face restrictions in the accessibility of such institutions. In terms of quick access to these services there is a major gap at the community level. Surely, a lot is being done already, but the focus is mainly in and directly around Gulu town. When one moves further into the sub-counties, there is little presence of such protection systems, thus for (former) IDPs there is a threshold to enter such bodies (Interview UNHCR, Gulu, 16 June 2010; DRC, Gulu, 7 June 2010; CARE, Gulu, 11 June 2010; Save the Children, Gulu, 9 June 2010). However, this access threshold does not relate to the current or former status of IDPs, it is solely a gap in the system that needs to be worked on.

These gaps could be filled with money of the PRDP. One of the central aims of the first strategic objective is to improve the population's accessibility to protection services by increasing police presence in northern Uganda, a withdrawal of the UPDF replaced by civilian police, ensure staff equipment and strengthen the legal and judicial system and (PRDP, p. 44, 52). However, the research shows that currently the implementation of these structures is mainly focused on quantity rather than functionality. Components like personnel and accessibility do not yet receive the attention they need. As a consequence, although institutionalization is so much needed, its service delivery becomes inadequate. As one respondent expressed, 'the real focus of the PRDP is on infrastructure. They stopped the soft component [...] but the first 'P' [peace] is also very important and I do not know how the government will ensure that' (Interview AVSI, Gulu, 2 June 2010). Whether there is peace or not, IDPs feel safe, not only due to the presence of police, but also due to the decrease in fear of the LRA. The majority of the IDPs and former IDPs feel that the government is now strong enough to find and defeat the LRA. The presence of the UPDF at the border regions gives them a guarantee that the LRA will not be able to come back easily. Life is normalizing now and that is what is perceived to be most important nowadays.

While discussing whether or not formerly displaced persons are subject to discrimination for reasons related to their displacement there was an overall consensus among (former) IDPs and NGOs that it is impossible to discriminate someone on their former IDP status, simply due to the fact that almost everybody in Gulu has been an IDP. However, sometimes there was some hesitation in the answers of (former) IDPs. Especially from those who have never been a beneficiary of NGOs. They would explain that the LCs have never registered them as a beneficiary while others were being registered. They witnessed people around them receiving support either in the form of certain items or in the form of assistance in their returning process. After some further questioning it became clear that this is due to an ignorance of how NGOs are working. The LCs would explain that when NGOs come in and want to do a program, they have a list of exactly who they want to target. They ask the LCs to identify these people. That is why some do come on a beneficiary list and others do not (Interview vice-chairperson LC3, chairperson LC1, Lalogi, 3 August 2010; chairperson LC1, Odek, 5 August 2010). However, due to a lack of transparency or communication, this way of working has never become clear to the (former) IDPs, so in some cases they would explain that on the subject of economic benefits they feel discriminated. In addition, in a later stage of the returning process the local community has been more involved in the processes of identifying the beneficiaries. They were asked which persons in the camp are the most vulnerable ones and thus who need the assistance of the NGOs most. This was done in order to avoid preference and benefit some over others (Interview UNHCR, Gulu, 16 June 2010). Whether there was indeed a form of discrimination in this matter is hard to tell, but fact remains that it has never been based on the fact that these people were IDPs. The PRDP document does not put specific emphasis on such non-discriminative treatments. However in this case, a complementary role of the PRDP is not necessary since it can be concluded that (former) IDPs do not feel discriminated due to their (former) status of being an IDP.

When it comes to the accessibility of public services, voting and administrative purposes, the research did not come across cases where the former IDPs are restricted to this due to denial of access to their personal documentation. The only issue that occurred was that IDPs who are now settled in their place of refuge are not able to put themselves up for election because they are not originally from there. Persons that do not traditionally belong to this community are not taken seriously meaning that they cannot exercise their political rights (Interview girl, Lalogi, 29 July 2010; chairperson LC1, Lalogi, 3 August 2010). Different programs within the PRDP call for specific attention to IDPs in order to make them a viable part of society again. However, access to personal documentation is not being embraced as part of these objectives.

4.3.2 Property

'Challenges that seriously need to be addressed are those of the host communities, these are the communities who let their ground be used for the IDP camps for many years. These people need a lot of support in terms of the status they had prior to the situation of internal displacement back. The government should help them in this process. They need to be able to use the productivity of their land again.' (Save the Children, Gulu, 9 June, 2010).

There is definitely a need for the host communities in terms of property restitution or compensation, but also for those who have been displaced and who have lost all their properties, their land and their homes. There are some associations where one can be registered. One example of this is the Acholi War Depth Claim Association. However, such groups are seriously questioned in terms of their reliability and transparency (Interview men, Palaro, 14 July 2010). Many former IDPs claim that before they came to the camp they were promised they would be compensated for all their lost assets, however, such promises have never materialized. The national IDP policy of Uganda states the following concerning restitution or compensation:

'Local Governments shall to the extent possible, endeavor to protect property and possessions left behind by IDPs against pillage, destruction, arbitrary and illegal appropriation, or occupation for use [...] Local Governments shall endeavor to assist IDPs to return, resettle and reintegrate, by acquiring or recovering their land [...] Where the recovery of land is not possible, Local Governments shall endeavor to acquire and allocate land to the displaced families' (National IDP Policy Uganda, 2004).

However, a problem of compensating land is that land is divided and owned by the customary system, the government did not keep up a record of this landownership. Now that the return process is largely taking place, officials cannot attribute pieces of land to the original owners since they simply do not know the original ownership of land, in addition they also cannot determine what to give back to the former IDPs in terms of compensation. The PRDP document does not call for any mechanisms through which property restitution or compensation of lost assets should be attributed, so logically, the PRDP does not contribute in any way in property restitution or compensation. On the other hand, the PRDP document does mention the provision of returning kits containing food and household items. On arrival, seventy percent of the returnees should have been provided with such a kit (PRDP, p. 64). Paragraph 4.3.3 will show that hardly any returnee has received such a returning kit.

4.3.3 Conditions allowing for sustainability at the place of solution

In line with the framework for durable solutions, this sub-paragraph will describe the conditions that allow for sustainability. The framework addresses first of all that former IDPs should enjoy an adequate standard of living, without discrimination. Secondly, former IDPs should have opportunities for employment and income generation. Thirdly, former IDPs should be able to reunite with family members and finally former IDPs can exercise the right to participate fully and equally in public affairs.

This first section will discuss whether (former) IDPs are enabled to enjoy an adequate standard of living without any discrimination. The most profound struggles found in the returning areas, where people are struggling to access basic social services. Especially sustainable access to food, water and medical services seems to be the biggest problem. Structures are in place, however, they are either very poor or the quality is not up to date. Although these former IDPs see assistance coming from the government and NGOs – some parts of the land are being opened for cultivation, boreholes are being drilled and institution building is progressing – the current effects remain to be questioned. Moreover, when the access to their land is still limited or their pieces of land are not big enough for self-sustainability, (former) IDPs perceive it difficult to find other means for income generation. This in turn also limits the accessibility of education and medical care. Many NGO respondents in Gulu indeed agreed that there are some major

challenges in the actual conditions of former IDPs. 'The process of return has been seen as a sign that things are good and that northern Uganda is doing well' (Interview CARE, Gulu, 11 June 2010), as a consequence, many humanitarian agencies have moved out of northern Uganda, while they are still needed there. Movement of IDPs alone does not allow for a sustainable living condition for a person, it is all about the conditions that are in place at their place of settlement, either in their returning village or in the camp.

Interestingly, it is not only because of the emphasis of the international community that such basic social services are in place, also the community members themselves are demanding it from both NGOs and the government. There has been a change in the mentality of the (former) IDPs. Before the war, people were living in small communities. When the war continued, people were moving into the IDP camps where they were forced to live in bigger community settings. This situation obviously disrupted all of their old structures. Although the situation in the camps was terrible, the IDPs did have access to a nearby health center, schooling and clean water. In time, people got used to what it was like to have access to such basic social services. At the end of the day these IDPs are returning to their homes, back to their old structures, but they still have this knowledge and they are not afraid to demand for such basic services in their returning villages as well (Interview AVSI, Gulu, 2 June 2010). What is needed in response is more ownership, both of the government and of the local community (Interview IOM, Gulu, 2 July 2010). Linking this to the PRDP, a general statement was that the local government should take more responsibility for the objectives it encounters in the PRDP, which in turn would mean more participation, ownership and empowerment of its beneficiaries. Furthermore, the government should emphasize the responsibility of the citizens as well. As one respondent explained: 'the PRDP is flat, it does not care about the targets of development, which are the IDPs [...] Gulu requires a lot of things, but for most making people responsible for themselves, let them do it on their own. The government should abandon the idea of being a giver. They should also think of the potential that the people have. People should be planning their destiny' (Interview, NGO Forum, 7 June 2010).

In addition, those who are still stuck in the camps, mostly the EVIs, lack the physical capacity to move out of the camps, to construct their own hut and arrange their livelihoods in the returning villages. In the past, before the war, they could have counted on their strong social network. Up till now, the government still believes in this strong social network. However, many NGOs witness a change in such social trends. Displacement has had a huge impact on this social protection network, social values have gone down and people are not intrinsically taking their responsibility. A focus on this responsibility in turn will enlarge the ownership of communities and by that they can take more responsibility for their own future (Interview NRC, Gulu, 11 June 2010).

One of the programs of the PRDP, conducted under the fourth strategic objective, aims at the provision of 'basic needs to IDPs in order to improve their living conditions while they are still in the camps' (PRDP, p. 62). A second program is more focused on the returnees, 'to provide social services in areas of return as well as other areas that have not been disrupted by war in the North and to support people's livelihoods in order to enhance household incomes' (PRDP, p. 65). During the discussions with the (former) IDPs and the local councils it became clear that there is a clear focus on the delivery of social services in the returning areas where several things are already being put in place under the PRDP. People are mostly aware that the PRDP functions to reconstruct the war affected areas in terms of infrastructural development. They mostly witness the building of schools, health centers, roads, teacher quarters and programs of land opening. Indeed, the PRDP is very much focused on the construction and reconstruction of public services both in the returning areas as in the former IDP camps, with an emphasis on education, water and sanitation and health (PRDP, p. 65, 68, 70). However, discussing the PRDP in practice with donors and NGOs, they would explain that the profound focus of the PRDP is on the delivery of

these public services only in the returning areas. They do so by putting in place hardware structures. The efficiency and usability of these structures remain highly criticized. Many schools have been reconstructed or new schools have been built, however, there are not enough teachers to make the education sector work properly. Health centers have been constructed, but there is not enough adequate staff nor are the medicines always there (Interview DRC, Gulu, 7 June 2010). Water points are constructed, but since the returning process started, people are scattered throughout the district, making it difficult to reach everybody.

Surely, there is improvement in the actual living situations of people, however, the region does not yet have the infrastructure nor the basic social services necessary for sustainability. This brings me to the second factor which should contribute to sustainability, that is, whether former IDPs have opportunities for income generation. As one of the donor respondents addressed:

'We have to develop the whole area in order to make them [the former IDPs] more comfortable and let them be able to access all services. But, having access to services is one, having an income is a second stage [...] the very next step must be to assist them in having an income, a livelihood. Some implementing partners are already working on this' (Interview NUREP, Gulu, 8 June 2010).

Hence, in order to achieve sustainable living conditions, livelihood recovery is a core issue. However, livelihood recovery is a major challenge and up till now people do not have the right means of generating their own income. Upon return, IDPs were promised they would receive a returning package as a mean to start their living. Among other things, these packages contained basic items to help start up their cultivation and iron sheets for their house construction. However, the actual delivery of these packages has been poor. Out of all the returnees I spoke to, only one man received the iron sheets, he remembered: 'I thought I was just being lucky' (Interview elder man, Palaro, 14 July 2010), he was not aware that this was part of any program. As the former IDPs already addressed themselves, they need certain means to build up and strengthen their livelihood in order to achieve sustainable living conditions. A consequence of this challenge in the returning sites, former IDPs and especially youth decide to move to town in the hope to generate an income. Often other problems arise, like crime in town (Interviews NUREP, Gulu, 8 June 2010; IOM, Gulu, 2 July 2010; UNHCR, Gulu, 16 June 2010). Another movement is that people, also mainly youth, decide to move back to the camps because they find life to be easier there. They do not find the right conditions in their returning areas to settle with, so they leave (Interviews Save the Children, Gulu, 9 June 2010; UNHCR, Gulu, 17 June 2010).

Thus, in terms of income generation opportunities for former IDPs, there is still an obvious need of support. The PRDP document aims at livelihood recovery. It sets up several structures in the returning sites in order to make opportunities for income generation more viable. The overall strategy to boost income generation is to focus on 'stimulating production and marketing in the North in order to move agriculture from being largely subsistence to medium scale farming, benefiting larger communities' (PRDP, p. 80). The most profound interventions the research came across were the programs of land opening in the returning sites. However, many former IDPs are not fully aware of these programs. It often happened that during the interviews former IDPs were made aware of these interventions as being part of a government program. As one man from Palaro recalled, 'I thought it was just a rich man who could afford a tractor' (Interview man, Palaro, 14 July 2010). Due to a lack of participation of the local community in the livelihood recovery programs, the former IDPs generally feel that such programs are inadequate and not reaching its beneficiaries. As the CAO of Gulu already emphasized, the third objective of the PRDP, revitalizing the economy, still asks for a lot of effort and involvement of the community members as well (Interview DDMC, Gulu, 15 June 2010).

Thirdly, while discussing the ability for family reunification, it has become clear that every respondent has been able to reunite with their family members. This does not automatically

mean that they are now living together. Even though the resources for family reunification were in place, the opportunity for this is not always in place because they either do not have the means to build enough houses for every family member, or the distance to education is too far for their children so these children stay in the camps. The local government had a department for community services and has been working closely with the Ugandan Red Cross Society in order to identify and document missing family members. During the days in the camp they were able to reunite a lot of families through such programs. Moreover, the fourth strategic objective of the PRDP, peacebuilding and reconciliation, addresses that ex-combatants will be facilitated with reunification with their family members (PRDP, p. 101). Nowadays, reunion is not longer necessary (Interview NRC, Gulu, 11 June 2010).

Finally, when it comes to participation in public affairs, the research did not come across any cases where (former) IDPs were restricted in this right due to their status of being a former IDP. One of the aims of the PRDP document is to strengthen the local government and to have a democratic and participatory local government system (PRDP, p. 54). However, not all institutions within the local government system are in place yet, or they are not working properly, resulting in limited accessibility. Consequently, participation can become challenging. When discussing the rights of former IDPs to participate in politics, some respondents of the NGOs in Gulu and Kampala were a bit reluctant (Interviews National NGO Forum, Kampala, 25 May 2010; CARE, Gulu, 11 June 2010). Among the population in northern Uganda, there is little trust in the current government, their main argument is 'how can you convince me that what took place in the past will not take place again in the near future? It is, after all, the same government' (Interview DRC, Gulu, 7 June 2010). Respondents from NGOs would explain that there is a lot of pressure and sometimes even intimidation on the population in northern Uganda, especially now that national elections are getting closer. People do not feel that they can freely discuss their opinions any longer. But again, this form of participation is not based on their status of being a (former) IDP, yet, it is an issue within Uganda.

4.4 Perceptions on current living conditions

'You kept me over twenty years, I had no land and you actually told me that I would survive on hand outs for the rest of the period living in the IDP camp. Those who were born in the camp became adults in the camp. What type of life do you think they had? You cannot expect those people to live their life in the returning villages as if it is their home. They are now used to this situation, where they get money. They now only think in terms of money' (Interview DRC, Gulu, 7 June 2010)

Having addressed the actual conditions of (former) IDPs, this paragraph will provide a follow up by elaborating on the perception that (former) IDPs have on their current living situation. During the interviews the primary challenges of IDPs and former IDPs were questioned. Moreover, we discussed their perception on an adequate standard of living, what they need to achieve this and whether or not they are satisfied with their current living situation. The results of these discussions will be demonstrated in this paragraph. Comparing this paragraph to the previous one, possible gaps can be identified between the conditions that are being established under the PRDP and the perceptions that IDPs have on their current situation.

4.4.1 Identifying challenges

There is a clear difference between people from the IDP camps and those from the returning villages considering the challenges they are facing. Below the distinction will be made between the IDPs, which are those who still live in the camps, and the former IDPs, those who have returned to their home villages.

Challenges of the IDPs

Both the LCs from Lalogi and Odek would address three main challenges they witness within the group of IDPs. First of all the problem of poverty. Most IDPs do not have money, nor are they able to participate themselves into income generating activities. This has several consequences, one is that they cannot afford the school fees which makes sending their children to school often difficult, or in cases of need for medical treatment this lack of money becomes an issue. Secondly, food security is a major challenge. Most IDPs in the camps do not have free access to land resulting in an inability to cultivate their own food. They either have to rent a small piece of land, or they have to move up and down to their home village for cultivating activities. And thirdly the LCs would address the poor medical health care. Odek does not have its own health unit; people have to move up to Lalogi. In Lalogi there is a government hospital, however, this hospital is dealing with a lack of adequate staff and medicines are often not available. An alternative would be to visit private clinics, however, most IDPs are unable to afford this kind of medical health care (Interview chairperson LC1, vice-chairperson LC3, Lalogi, 3 August 2010, LC1, chairperson Odek, 5 August 2010).

Indeed, discussing the current challenges with the IDPs, these former mentioned issues addressed by the LCs would come across. Concerning the issue of food insecurity and access to land, the IDPs would emphasize that they always have to negotiate with the landowners whether they can access the land either for digging activities or for living. This is an ongoing struggle and every month they have to find a way to realize the money to pay their landowner rent. In order to earn enough money to either pay for rent, education, medical treatments or food, these IDPs have to find alternatives to generate money. They often work on their neighbor's land. However, not every IDP is in the position to do such activities, either because they are disabled, old or sick, or the amount of money they earn is not enough to sustain themselves and their family members. These people have to beg and are dependent on the willingness and helpfulness of their neighbors. Some additional challenges IDPs often addressed were first of all the problem of small crime. Especially young men are causing a lot of problems in the community. They are involved in cases of theft, robbery, or harassment of their neighbors. The camps are turning into small crime places. One lady from Lalogi explained how she is reluctant to leave her home, afraid when coming back her livestock will be missing (Interview woman, Lalogi, 26 July 2010). Secondly, the problem IDPs would address is educating their children. Educating and disciplining them according to the informal system is an enormous struggle in the camp. In addition, the quality of education on schools is often poor due to a serious lack of motivated teachers (Interview chairperson LC1, Lalogi, 3 August 2010). Finally, IDPs would frequently address that they are disappointed that the NGOs are no longer providing their assistance in the camps. As the LC3 would express, the situations that people came from is terrible. Up till now, people still have the desire to return. Yet, due to different reasons they are not able to return on their own so they could still use the support of NGOs (Interview vice-chairperson LC3, Lalogi, 3 August 2010).

Challenges of the former IDPs

Interestingly, those IDPs who have decided to settle in the camp – they are no longer IDPs – would not address many of the challenges addressed by the IDPs in their current living situation. They explained that they can cope and sustain themselves with the resources they have now. The only concern they would express is their lack of savings and thus their inability to pay for unexpected events (Interview man, Odek, 28 July 2010; man, Lalogi, 22 July 2010; boy, Lalogi, 29 July 2010).

The main challenges the former IDPs in the returning areas addressed were first of all access to clean water, this was especially often mentioned in Palaro. This sub-county only counts two boreholes, so people either have to walk long distances in order to fetch clean water, or they take dirty water from the stream (Interviews women, elderly, Palaro, 14 July 2010; youth,

Palaro, 16 July 2010). Secondly, both the returnees from Palaro and Bungatira would express the issue of cultivation. Although since their return former IDPs have open access to their land, they do not have the proper tools to work it (Interview men, elderly, Palaro, 14 July 2010; elderly, Bungatira, 12 July 2010; men, Bungatira, 17 July 2010). People are seriously lacking the right farming inputs. In the past they worked with oxen and ploughs, however, nowadays they do not have these means anymore. This makes it extremely difficult for them to open up new pieces of land for cultivation. Not every family is able to sustain themselves with only their crop, thus resulting in food insecurity. Simultaneously, although the returnees are able to engage themselves in cultivation, they do not have the right means or the capacity to do this on a big scale (ibid.).

A third major challenge addressed is education for their children. First of all schools are often far so children have to move long distances to attain school. The former IDPs would continue explaining that although the government provides for free universal primary education, parents still have to come up with small amounts of money, either for books, uniforms or other items. They cannot always afford these kinds of expenses. On top of this, secondary school is often not even an option for their children due to this lack of money (Interview elderly, women Palaro, 14 July 2010; elderly, Bungatira, 12 July 2010). This also brought up the issue of income generating activities, both of the parents and their children. The former IDPs explained that there is a lack of income generating opportunities nowadays. In the past people used to have their livestock, if an emergency would come up they could sell one or more of their animals. Nowadays, they have to look for different ways to raise money to support their family. In order to create some savings for unexpected expenses, they have to sell some of their farming outputs on the markets (Interview women, Bungatira, 4 August 2010; elderly, Bungatira, 12 July 2010). However, access to the market is often a problem, especially in Palaro where the access to public roads is difficult, making it impossible for some to enter the trading center of Palaro (Interview youth, women, elderly, Palaro, July 2010). Here one can see how intertwined the challenges of returnees in reality are and how one challenge is reinforcing the other.

A final major challenge that every target group of the former IDPs in both Palaro and Bungatira would address is the access to health facilities. They explain that they have to move long distances to access health centers and when they do, the quality is often lacking. There is inadequate staffing and drugs availability is poor. If they can get drugs from the health unit, they often only receive half of the recipe, the other half they have to come up with themselves from private clinics. Obviously, they do not have the kind of money to buy drugs for themselves so they often turn to traditional care and medicine.

4.4.2 *Understandings of an adequate standard of living*

There are some different understandings of an adequate standard of living. Again, a distinction arises between IDPs and former IDPs. Generally IDPs would emphasize 'everything that is keeping you well' (Interview boy, Lalogi, 29 July 2010), that is having access to medical health care, access to food and food security, access to clean water and access to proper education. In addition, some IDPs would emphasize that all of this will start with a peace of mind; only then people are able to freely enjoy the social services that are actually in place (Interview elder woman, Lalogi, 20 July 2010; elder woman, Odek, 28 July 2010; woman, Odek, 21 July 2010). Related to this, especially widows would express the importance of people around you who can contribute to an adequate standard of living: you need people around you which you can talk to, share ideas with, laugh with or who can help you out. Moreover, to most IDPs money is a very important indicator in the determination of an adequate standard of living. IDPs need money to pay for their children's school fee, they need money to access medical health care, money to rent a piece of land for cultivation or for renting a piece of land for housing.

IDPs were quite clear on what they would need to achieve their described adequate standard of living. The most common answer would be ‘if there could be a body that can provide us with some money, we would be able to improve our life’ (Interview man, Odek, 27 July 2010) or ‘money can uplift our standard of living’ (Interview woman, Lalogi, 26 July 2010). If they would receive some money, they had different ideas on how to spend it, some expressed they would put the money in their digging activities by getting better tools. Others would invest this money in a small business to generate an income. Again others would use it in order to send their children to school. Discussing the needs to achieve an adequate standard of living, others would emphasize the responsibility of the government. As one respondent explained, it is the duty of the government to provide communities with clean water and other social services (Interview man, Lalogi, 22 July 2010). Again others would say all they need is their strong social network, in case they need something, they can call upon these relatives (Interview man, Lalogi, 22 July 2010; woman, Lalogi, 20 July 2010; elder woman, Odek, 28 July 2010;).

In the determination of what an adequate standard of living should be, just like the IDPs, the former IDPs would also address the indicators of access to water, to medical health care and schooling. In terms of schooling and health care, the emphasis would lie on the accessibility. Moreover, former IDPs would put a lot of emphasize on food security. As one respondent from Palaro stated, they are only able to sustain themselves when they have achieved food security and they have the ability to keep their own livestock (Interview man, Palaro, 14 July 2010). While discussing the needs of the former IDPs to achieve this adequate standard of living, they were very much focused on investments supporting them in the long term. They would put forward the need for assistance from NGOs in terms of empowerment and capacity building in order to better learn how to sustain themselves. Furthermore, they call for assistance from either the government or NGOs in terms of improving their food security. They would like to gather themselves in cooperative groups in which they can work together in order to optimize their farming outputs which they can sell on the markets. This would not only ask for technical support on farming techniques and training of the farmers, but also for better farming inputs and quality seeds (Interview men, Bungatira, 4 August 2010; men, elderly, Palaro, 14 July 2010). Furthermore, the former IDPs would address that the government needs to start working on the road network. A better road network means on the one hand more and better opportunities to carry on their businesses, on the other hand it would make access to education and health care much easier (Interview elderly and adults, Palaro, 14 July 2010; elderly, Bungatira, 12 July 2010; adults, Bungatira, 4 August 2010).

4.4.3 Satisfying living situations?

The majority of the IDPs who still have the desire to return home would express the difficulties of living in the camp. Their so called dissatisfaction certainly stems from the fact that these people are still living in the camp where they have no access to their own land. For some, life in the camp has become purposeless if they cannot access their own land and sustain their own families with that. Some would even claim that the situation is getting worse since WFP has stopped their food distribution (Interview man, Lalogi, 22 July 2010; elder woman, Lalogi, 20 July 2010; chairperson LC1, Lalogi, 3 August 2010; elder woman, Odek, 28 July 2010; man, Odek, 28 July 2010; girl, Odek, 5 August 2010). Furthermore, watching people leave gives the IDPs an uncomfortable feeling that makes them want to go home as well. However, some simply do not have the opportunity to leave (see paragraph 4.1.2 for their reasons). Furthermore, many IDPs express they do not feel safe anymore in the community. There is an increase of theft and robbery in the camps. In addition, women would often express how they are running the household on their own because their husbands have too much distraction at the roadside spending their days drinking (Interview woman, Lalogi, 26 July 2010; girls, Lalogi, 29 July 2010). Other IDPs however would be more positive about their situation, although they would not say they are satisfied – they still have the desire to return home – at least in the camp they have easy

access to water, there is a nearby school and they are living close to the trading center where they can buy everything they need.

A large majority of the former IDPs claimed that they are pleased with their current living situation, especially when they compare it to life in the camps. Here they have fresh air and there is no more overcrowding compared to the life in the camp which was terribly packed. Parents are able to educate their children again. The most common explanation for peoples' satisfaction is their ability to access their own land again, this was generally expressed by men and elderly (Interview elderly, men, Bungatira, 12 July 2010; men, Bungatira, 4 August 2010; elderly, men, Palaro, 14 July 2010). Rather than waking up and start drinking, men are productive on their land again. The only problem is that there are times that there is not enough food. Moreover, the former IDPs have the space to keep their livestock and birds and they would address that at the returning areas there is plenty of firewood (Interview elderly, Bungatira, 12 July 2010; women, Bungatira, 4 August 2010; elderly, women Palaro, 14 July 2010).

Although life back home is better, most groups in the returning sites would argue that they do not have any reason to be completely satisfied yet. As one man would explain, 'how can we be satisfied with what we have? What we have now is only for survival, not for sustainability' (Interview elder man, Palaro, 14 July 2010). Upon their return the former IDPs are still facing serious food insecurities, besides, they would address that people cannot be satisfied as long as basic services are lacking such as clean water, schools and proper health care and when access to the market is still difficult. The youth in particular had their doubts on whether they would prefer life at home over life in the camps. Life in the returning sites is rough, they have to work hard on the land and they are lucky if they make it to school. They would explain that their parents do not see the value of education since it does not directly bring money into the household. In the camps children were obliged to go to school. Because of this, some of the youth would argue that they prefer life in the camps over life in their returning sites (Interview youth, Palaro, 16 July 2010).

To conclude, discussing the perceptions of (former) IDPs on their current living situation different challenges and needs came to the frond. Derived from the previous paragraph it becomes clear that activities conducted by the government under the PRDP respond to these challenges and needs, however, only to a certain extent. The focus from the government side is on the hardware delivery. In that sense, these activities match with the needs of the (former) IDPs. Yet, this picture changes when it comes to the accessibility and functionality of these structures. Moreover, with this profound focus on the construction and reconstruction on the visible hardware, many donors and NGOs argued that the government is using the wrong parameters. Rather than focusing on human development and empowerment, the government uses physical structures to measure the success of integration and return. As a result, accessibility and especially functionality are ignored.

Moreover, there is little attention to social cohesion and peace within communities. 'Peacebuilding does not happen by constructing roads, by building schools and setting up health centers, peacebuilding happens by changing people's attitude' (Interview Save the Children, Gulu, 9 June 2010). A consequence of this lack of attention to peacebuilding might be that the underlying reasons of conflict are not being resolved, thus they are still alive in people's mind:

'The fact is that the conflict that we have gone through was because of a lack of appreciation of values of peace [...] now if we are trying to establish infrastructure without addressing the underlying factors that led to the conflict, it is most likely that in the future the conflict will reoccur. If the challenges former IDPs are currently facing are not being dealt with, they will find other solutions to their problems' (Interview CARE, Gulu, 11 June 2010).

The interference in the software component is mainly left to the activities of CSOs and the NGOs. Consequently, the government will not be held accountable for the human side of recovery and development, while in fact this should also be the responsibility of a government. Many respondents would indeed argue this responsibility, 'NGOs are doing it [recovery and development] out of charity, as the government and local governments have a mandate to ensure that services are available but also to make sure that factors that affect the existence of the communities are dealt with' (Interview CARE, Gulu, 11 June 2010).

4.5 Durable Solutions: the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan

'Most people have gone back to the villages, they are not called IDPs anymore, they are citizens of Uganda, they are back home and they need assistance. That is where the PRDP really comes in [...] we basically have a commitment from the government with a certain amount of money. I think the PRDP was a signal of commitment.' (Interview NUREP, Gulu, 8 June 2010)

'Probably the biggest problem with the PRDP implementation is that those things that are not material are being neglected. The person that the PRDP is talking about is not there. The PRDP is about classrooms and roads. The PRDP is about uplifting the human being, but how? Classrooms have not been an IDP. It is the people who have been IDPs. So let *them* develop.' (Interview NGO Forum, Gulu, 7 June 2010)

In the previous paragraphs the contribution of the PRDP has been discussed according to the factors determining the end of internal displacement. This paragraph will look beyond these factors. In order to give final conclusions on its contribution in chapter 5, I will here look at the awareness of the PRDP among the (former) IDPs, followed by a paragraph discussing the criticism on the PRDP expressed by donors and NGOs. The chapter will finalize with a discussion on the current state of the art, that is, where does northern Uganda stand on the ladder of development and how is the PRDP positioning itself in this.

4.5.1 Awareness of the PRDP among (former) IDPs

Generally, it can be said that the majority of the IDPs and former IDPs have heard of the PRDP. However, the extent to which they are familiar with the plan differs. Those who claim to be familiar with the PRDP – both IDPs and former IDPs – explain that they heard about it either over the radio or through community meetings where the PRDP was being clarified to them. However, there is a division between those who have heard about it and those who can really describe it. As one girl explained, she became aware of the PRDP over the radio, however she cannot explain what it means. She continued that there are many more people who do not have the right information about this particular plan. She argues that if the government would be sincere with their programs, they would come down to the community and sensitize them so much better as they did now. 'Now it is easy for the government to start and succeed a program because information can easily be hidden' (Interview girl, Lalogi, 29 July 2010). Only a small amount of the IDPs and former IDPs were able to explain what the PRDP really entails:

'I know that under the PRDP the government has renovated and constructed schools and other forms of infrastructure. Also the people received new inputs in the form of return packages, livestock items and seeds. The government opened pieces of land for community members. The program is targeting people who have already returned to their home areas, not those like me, who are still living in the camp.' (Interview man, Lalogi, 22 July 2010)

Indeed, others would also explain that the PRDP is coming to construct schools, roads and hospitals (Interview elderly, Palaro, 14 July 2010). However, these people would also put forward their question marks on whether the real changes that the PRDP is promising will indeed become reality since they have not seen much happening just yet. However, during the interviews it also became clear that (former) IDPs were not always aware that certain programs were conducted under the PRDP. This might also explain why some (former) IDPs would claim to have never heard of the PRDP. They would broadly explain that now that the camps are

officially closed, the government has left, simultaneously, so have their programs (Interview man, Lalogi, 26 July 2010; boy, Lalogi, 29 July 2010; woman, Lalogi, 20 July 2010; girl, Odek, 5 August, 2010; woman, Odek, 27 July 2010). However, as the last two paragraphs thoroughly described, there have been certain changes in the living environment conducted under PRDP. So the ignorance of the PRDP for some people does not necessarily mean that they do not see things happening under the PRDP, they are simply not aware of it.

4.5.2 Criticism on the PRDP

“The PRDP is a government intention to make northern Uganda run in order to catch up with other parts of the country that have been walking during times that northern Uganda was standing still. The PRDP is meant to top up government responses, to direct interventions of development partners so that this part of the country gets to the level where other parts have not experienced a setback. So if the government and the development partners can work together with the same understanding of this plan, it will achieve the intended goals and objectives. So we should appreciate this PRDP, it will help us in a more focused manner to complete the return process, provide the basic services that are required and within the three years we should be having very concrete durable solutions achieved in Gulu’ (Interview DDMC, Gulu, 15 June 2010).

There is an overall feeling of restraint among the NGO sector concerning the PRDP. Although the majority would say that the PRDP is a great plan, or as one respondent described it, ‘if you read it, it is a fantastic document and it gloriously talks about the future of the north’ (Interview NRC, Gulu, 11 June 2010), there are several points of concern why the majority of the respondents would think that the PRDP will not necessarily bring about the changes it wants to. It all starts with a misunderstanding of what the PRDP stands for. The problem seems to be hidden in the final P (Plan) of the PRDP. Rather than approaching it as a plan, people, especially the community, are inclined to perceive it as a program. Therefore they are waiting to see direct ‘PRDP results’ on the ground. However, the PRDP is a framework where donors and NGOs can fit in their activities (Interviews AVSI, Gulu, 2 June 2010; World Vision, Gulu, 3 June 2010; National NGO Forum, Kampala, 25 May 2010). In line with the DDPs, donors have to written their activities in northern Uganda, consequently the PRDP is constructed out of these DDPs. So the PRDP merely functions as a framework rather than a program in which NGOs will coherently work towards the recovery and development of northern Uganda (Interview, DDMC, Gulu, 15 June 2010).

Moreover, the design of the PRDP causes confusion on what the PRDP will achieve in terms of its money allocation. Even before the PRDP was launched, donor programs were already moving forward. Now, with the implementation of the PRDP, the issue rises which results can be attributed to the PRDP and which ones to the NGOs (Interview USAID, Gulu, 2 June 2010). Moreover, with the division that is made within the PRDP where thirty percent of the total budget is allocated by the central government and seventy percent by the donors, many NGOs would express that they find it confusing and unclear how the money can be tracked and thus how results can be measured. In addition, several NGOs spoke about the allocation of the government’s resources. A large amount of the PRDP budget goes through the central government and the government is meant to insert it. However, due to a lack of accountability, transparency, bureaucracy or even corruption, the money does not reach its intended goals (Interviews DRC, Gulu, 7 June 2010; IOM, Gulu, 2 July 2010). As one respondent explained, ‘we were supposed to get money for twenty housing blocks, we only received the money for four. If we asked about the remaining sixteen, the government replies that the money is simply not there.’ (Interview IOM, Gulu, 2 July 2010). This example shows that there are cases where the PRDP money is not being inserted adequately and thus programs do not get the opportunity to be completed successfully.

As some would express their positive opinions concerning the attention that is now given to the north, others would criticize this attention by addressing the coverage of the PRDP. Initially, the

PRDP was supposed to cover eighteen districts in northern Uganda. However, as the plan was being revised and rewritten, it ended up covering forty districts. Questions, concerns and critical points that arose during the interviews were largely about the following:

'Look at how enormous PRDP has become. It means that some of these actual inherent reasons for PRDPs existence – addressing these post conflict recovery of northern Uganda – are lost because other interests have been brought in. It got extremely peripheral compared to the central problem of northern Uganda. Are you actually trying to address the impact of conflict or are you trying to address the overall problem of economics of Uganda, the underdevelopment?' (Interview USAID, Gulu, 2 June 2010).

Another question that reoccurred during the interviews concerning the coverage of the PRDP was: how can you write up one plan that covers so many districts where priorities are all based at another level? (Interview AVSI, Gulu, 2 June 2010; NGO Forum, Gulu, 7 June 2010) Despite the increased coverage of the PRDP, its budget has not changed. Is the money enough to recover half the country with this budget? (Interview NGO Forum, Gulu, 7 June 2010) The money of the PRDP is seen as a national cake which needs to be divided equally. However, there are districts that have suffered more by the war than others, should they therefore not receive more resources? (Interviews Save the Children, Gulu, 8 June 2010; UNHCR, Gulu, 16 June 2010). Consequently, are these districts receiving enough resources to meet its community needs? (Interviews DRC, Gulu, 7 June 2010; NRC, Gulu, 11 June 2010; IOM, Gulu, 2 July 2010).

Other concerns expressed themselves in the fact that for so many years the government did not have any comprehensive program enabling for the recovery of the north. With the launch of the plan in 2007 and the actual implementation in financial year 2009-2010, it all seems to be cumulating into the elections in 2011. Northern Uganda has never felt that they were part of the policy of the current government, consequently, the north has traditionally voted against Museveni. Some would indeed explain that with the launch of the PRDP the current government is now trying to create goodwill among the northerners, thus, trying to win votes for the coming elections (Interviews DRC, Gulu, 7 June 2010; USAID, Gulu, 2 June 2010; NUTI, Gulu, 15 June 2010; AVSI, Gulu, 2 June 2010; National NGO Forum, Kampala, 23 May 2010). Consequently, the PRDP has now become less to do with recovery of the north and more with a political program. 'So the politics around the PRDP makes it less likely that it will be effective. It is just marketing' (Interview, National NGO Forum, Kampala, 23 May 2010).

4.5.3 PRDP and the current state of the art

Through the PRDP the government has attracted a lot of donor attention. However, due to the design of the PRDP it forces donors to move out of recovery into the development phase (Interview NRC, Gulu, 11 June 2010). The question is where does northern Uganda stands nowadays on this line that moves from one end – recovery – to the other – development. There was a sure consensus among the NGOs that at this point northern Uganda is still in the phase of recovery, obviously it differs from one place to another, but broadly it can be said that the region is still struggling. During the planning of the DDPs, attention was profoundly on the need of social services, that is water, health care and education. As mentioned earlier, the PRDP has been constructed from these DDPs. Everybody would agree that the need of social service delivery is indeed present in Gulu, however, many would argue that its construction is completely inadequate. The approach of the PRDP is for the long term where the government argues that infrastructure, education and health care can boost the economy. In essence this is true, the question however is whether or not northern Uganda is already in that phase. At this moment, there is still an extreme lack of basic services, access to public services and the capacity of local governance is weak. This is still the transition phase with a lot of humanitarian focus and that is not an environment where development can flourish. (Interviews IOM, Gulu, 2 July 2010; NRC, Gulu, 11 June 2010; World Vision, 3 June 2010; DRC, Gulu, 7 June 2010, ARC, Gulu, 8 June 2010). As one respondent emphasized, 'we are now in a phase of recovery. Those who need to recover

are the people and the people in turn will recover the economy. How can you begin to recover the economy while leaving the people out?' (Interview DRC, Gulu, 7 June 2010). Recovery is critically connected to economic issues and it has a strong livelihood component. 'There is peace when the stomach is full, but what happens if the stomach is empty? Issues will come up' (ibid.).

What is mostly needed is recovery and reintegration on the household level. If the PRDP manages to boost the livelihoods of families, full reintegration and recovery will be a consequence. Although there is now relative peace in northern Uganda, this is not a precondition that things are going well in the region. Just because there is no conflict at the moment does not necessarily mean that there is peace. The theoretical framework stated that there is a link between the achievement of durable solutions and durable peace. How does this link translates itself in northern Uganda? The current situation in Uganda and its neighboring countries 'contains everything that is needed for the perfect storm.' (Interview IOM, Gulu, 2 July 2010). Not only are the elections coming up in Uganda in 2011, so are the elections in southern Sudan. Furthermore, the LRA is causing a lot of turbulence in CAR, DRC and Sudan and nobody knows what will happen in the near future. Although there is no longer a physical threat caused by the LRA in northern Uganda, there is a lack of human security. Within the borders of Uganda people still carry some resentment because many are not satisfied with their current living situation. If this results in a feeling of neglect by the government or even a feeling that they are not able to integrate in the community, this might have extreme consequences during times that turmoil is present in the region. Reintegration is a key in the recovery of a country. If that is lacking, human security is not being provided. Many people have held a gun before and it will only take a handful of people to create hysteria (ibid.). Moreover, 'it will only take one minute for people to run back to the camps again' (Interview, AVSI, Gulu, 2 June 2010). However, with the main government's focus on the hardware delivery, these activities seem to be missing the point of human security and with that the point of recovery at the community level. As one respondent expressed himself:

'This country is going to recover, but it is not going to be today or tomorrow. But it will recover, you need to combine the efforts of the government and the international community. For the recovery process to be meaningful, the assistance should be directed to the community' (Interview DRC, Gulu, 7 June 2010).

5. Conclusion

This study has focused on the contribution of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) to durable solutions for IDPs in Gulu. Chapter 2 explained the root causes of internal displacement in northern Uganda. Chapter 3 dealt with the central concepts considering internal displacement concluding with the framework for durable solutions. The analytical chapter was designed according to this framework. It looked at how the PRDP contributes to the processes through which solutions were found and to conditions of former IDPs at their place of solution. Derived from the preceding chapters, this chapter will conclude on the main findings of this research by answering the central research question: *‘to what extent are the solutions provided by the Government of Uganda as a response to the plight of internal displacement durable?’*, where the focus is on the efforts of the government through the PRDP to achieve the ultimate goal of durable solutions for IDPs. The coming paragraphs will answer this central research question where the first paragraph will conclude on how an integrated approach – the PRDP – contributes to durable solutions for IDPs. This will be followed by a paragraph reflecting on the framework for durable solutions discussed in the context of northern Uganda. Moreover, the contribution of this research will be explained. The chapter will finally conclude by making several recommendations to the government of Uganda.

5.1 PRDP from policy to practice: contributing to durable solutions?

To determine the end of internal displacement and ultimately to achieve durable solutions, this research adopted the idea of the *integrated approach* which has a long term vision where solutions should be effective and durable. This approach calls for a combination of the *solution based approach* (if the ability to return is there, IDPs are no longer considered as an IDP), the *needs based approach* (the vulnerabilities specific to the situation of IDPs are no longer there) and the *causes* of internal displacement are no longer present. When looking at the strategic objectives of the PRDP one can see that this plan perfectly melts into this integrated approach: besides taking away the incentives for internal displacement, it also creates the ability for IDPs to return. Moreover, it aims to empower people and improve their livelihood. More specifically, the plan emphasizes those vulnerabilities that are specific to IDPs in an attempt to overcome them.

Concluding that the PRDP document is an integrated approach brings high hopes that the PRDP will have a decisive role in the achievement of durable solutions. In order to actually determine what the PRDP does in response to the plight of IDPs, its practical implementation will give the decisive answers. Overall, it can be said that the PRDP will leave its marks, and by that, it will *contribute* to the establishment of durable solutions. However, the question remains whether these durable solutions will actually be *achieved*. With the current emphasis of the government’s interventions, there is enough doubt whether the solutions that are put in place will actually be durable.

5.1.1 Processes through which solutions were found

To determine the extent to which the PRDP contributes to the processes through which solutions are found, the analysis showed that the PRDP as a document carries a lot of the factors embraced by the framework on durable solutions. Nevertheless, the reality sometimes gave another picture. This section will conclude on the contribution of the PRDP in the processes through which solutions were found and it will show the gaps between the PRDP document and its practical implementation.

Information and consultation

The PRDP states that in the completion of the process of return, the IDPs should be informed about the peace and security conditions, about the livelihood abilities and the access to social services. The research however showed that the only information IDPs receive is about their physical safety through the provision of information on landmines and other UXOs. When it comes to the information about social services in the returning sites, all information has been collected on an individual basis. So despite what is written on paper, the PRDP does not completely follow its own words nor does it correspond to the framework for durable solutions. In the past both IDPs and former IDPs received information about the safety in the returning sites. Currently, the PRDP does not put any additional value in the provision of information nor are (former) IDPs consulted on their returning sites, it solely comes down to their individual explorations.

Participation

When it comes to the level of participation of the IDPs in the process of return, the analysis focused on three factors. First of all the research dealt with the planning and management of the returning process. The PRDP document does not allocate a role in the organization of planning or management meetings. In addition, the research showed that only in Paloro meetings were conducted in order to plan the process of return. However, this was not under assistance from the government side. Coordination meetings nor planning meetings involving the IDPs were being arranged on government's initiative. Basically it came down to the willingness of the NGOs and the own initiative of the IDPs themselves.

Secondly, the level of participation is determined by the arrangement of assessments involving IDP representatives. The PRDP document states that the UPDF will perform security assessments together with community leaders and local government and subsequently inform the IDPs on this. Indeed, the analysis showed that based on these assessments the IDPs were informed that the situation home is safe enough to return to. However, through the analysis it also became clear that although the PRDP leaves room for security assessments, there has been no assistance in the arrangement of group assessments involving representatives from the IDP community.

And finally the voluntariness of the process of return was studied. The PRDP document is very clear on the voluntary return and it makes sure that those returning, return voluntarily. Although in the past there have been cases of direct force by the government, such issues are rare these days. Although still a number of IDPs experience pressure from their landlord to leave the camp, claims of direct force by the government cannot be made any longer. This decline can be explained by two main reasons. First of all, since the camps in Gulu have been officially closed, it is no longer a matter of the government, therefore, leaving the camps has become a private issue between IDPs and their landlord. Secondly, this decline can be ascribed to the increasing responsibility of the government. Whether this increasing responsibility is due to the implementation of the PRDP or due to the adoption of the IDP policy is difficult to say since both give guidelines for voluntary return.

Risk reduction and safety measures

In terms of risk reduction and safety measures, the study distinguished three factors. The first was the assistance and protection regarding IDPs' physical safety upon relocation. The PRDP document puts a lot of emphasis on the provision of rule of law that should protect the returnees. It does so by re-strengthening local governance and restoring protection bodies like police, humanitarian bodies and the legal system. Indeed, the research showed that more police posts and courts are constructed, humanitarian protection bodies are developed and volunteers are trained. Besides, it was found that both IDPs and former IDPs argued to feel safer and more secure due to the presence of police and local leaders. In that regard, IDPs and former IDPs are

gaining from these structures, they do no longer fear to choose their place of solution, whether it is in the camp or in their returning sites.

The second factor focused on the compliance of human rights and humanitarian law. Although the document is not very explicit about the compliance of human rights and humanitarian law, it does address the increasing role of the government in appropriating its responsibility. Indeed, currently the Ugandan Human Rights Commission is taking over the security and protection cluster of UNHCR and it is putting up various humanitarian protection bodies. But despite this institution building, (former) IDPs express that they are not fully satisfied due to a lack of accessibility. Moreover, they argue that the government is not adequate yet in its response to their basic human rights, lacking on adequate education, health care and clean water. Although the PRDP responds by building schools, teacher quarters, health centers and water points, the research makes clear that the accessibility and functionality of these basic human rights is still inadequate.

Finally, the focus was on the provision of safe transit to the place of solution. The PRDP addresses the need and responsibility to move vulnerable groups to their new living location. However, the research showed that nowadays the government is not providing the IDPs with any assistance to make their safe transit happening. Those who have already returned, returned on their own, and those who still want to return are no longer assisted by the government. The government relies on the strong social network of individuals. However, through the analysis it has become clear that such networks have been disrupted as a consequence of internal displacement. Currently assistance in the actual return depends on the activities of the NGOs. With the official camp closure, the government has withdrawn itself from this responsibility.

Access to monitoring and humanitarian assistance

Finally, in the process through which solutions take place, it is important that national authorities grant and facilitate access to monitoring and humanitarian assistance. From the analysis it became clear that presence of the international community has never been an issue. The implementation of the PRDP proves that the government of Uganda acknowledges the presence and the role of donors and NGOs. Local and national government even work together with the international community in order to stabilize northern Uganda.

Conclusion on the processes through which solutions are found

Two conclusions can be drawn on the contribution of the PRDP. First of all, the PRDP did not provide any assistance in the process for those who have already returned. On the one hand this can be explained by the fact that most of the respondents have started their returning process already before the PRDP was actually implemented. Although currently these returnees witness positive changes in their areas of return through the safety and protection measures taken by the government under the PRDP, this has not contributed to their *process* of return. On the other hand, the research showed that the addressed reasons of return do not correspond with the processes that the government did set up. Except responding to the message that it was safe to return, returning home happened on an individual decision and was motivated by individual reasons. From this it can be concluded that also before the implementation of the PRDP, the government attributed little assistance in the process of return.

Secondly, the research showed that for those who are still living in the camps and have the desire to return home, the government does little to make the return of this group happening. It can be concluded that the current processes through which solutions are found only partly correspond to the framework for durable solutions, and they do not respond to the reasons of people's remaining in the camps. Following the framework for durable solutions, the research did not find any current activities from the government's side conducted under the PRDP for this

particular group of people. Consequently, without a possibility to return, these people are still living in the camps unwanted. This lack of government's interference in the process of return can be explained. Since the IDP camps are officially closed, it is no longer the responsibility of the government to approach the inhabitants of the camp as internally displaced. IDPs should not expect that the government will come up with any other processes that will initiate or assist their return. So whatever structures are being put in place by the government, they do not specifically target this particular group of concern. Indeed, current activities that do correspond to the framework for durable solutions – like protection and safety measures and cooperation with the international community – are targeting northern districts as a whole, without making a distinction between returnees (former IDPs) and IDPs. The delivery of basic social services is the only response from the PRDP that responds to the reasons of IDPs remaining in the camps. Yet, this service delivery does not enable the IDPs with assistance in the actual process of return, so again, the current activities of the government conducted under the PRDP do not correspond with the framework. So for this group of people it can be concluded that the processes through which solutions should be found are not present.

To conclude, the contribution of the government through the PRDP to the processes through which solutions take place is poor. For those who have already returned, the implementation of the PRDP came too late; and for those who are still in the IDP camps, the government does no longer approach them as a specific group of concern, consequently, no assistance is provided to them in their process of return.

5.1.2 Actual conditions of former IDPs

Based on the analysis according to the framework for durable solutions it has become clear how the PRDP is contributing in the establishment of certain conditions. Drawing the conclusions, both the PRDP document and the PRDP in practice will be linked to the factors from the framework for durable solutions.

Safety and security

The analysis focused on the contribution of the PRDP in the provision of safety and security by focusing on four factors. First a conclusion can be drawn on how the PRDP ensures that former IDPs do not face any form of punitive action upon their return. Through the establishment of police forces and the re-strengthening of police conducted under the PRDP, (former) IDPs express they feel safe to move around. However, moving along to the second factor – accessibility to protection mechanisms – it became clear that if there ever are cases of harassment, theft, intimidation, or any of that kind, accessing these protection mechanisms is too difficult. As the current situation in Gulu already proves, the PRDP is very much focused on the establishment of protection structures. However, the analysis showed that the implementation of these mechanisms is profoundly based on the quantity rather than on functionality. Components like personnel and the accessibility do not receive the attention they need. So although the PRDP calls for institutionalization of protection mechanisms and it asks for its accessibility, the functionality of hardware becomes useless without this software side. This results in a reality where service delivery is left to be inadequate and poor.

The third factor contributing to safety and security is determined by the fact whether or not former IDPs are subject to discrimination for reasons related to their internal displacement. The PRDP does not call for specific attention to this matter, nor is it necessary. The analysis made clear that there are no such issues present in Gulu which can be explained by the fact that the large majority of Gulu has been an IDP. Finally, the research explained that former IDPs have had no problems accessing their personal documentation which they need to access public and administrative services. Again, the PRDP does not call for specific attention to this matter, nor does practice show it to be necessary.

Property

The framework for durable solutions claims that former IDPs should have access to mechanisms for property restitution or compensation. Besides the delivery of returning kits – which have failed to reach the returnees – the PRDP document does not call for any formal mechanisms through which property restitution or compensation of lost assets should be attributed. The research did not find any case where an IDP or former IDP has been compensated or restituted in any way. Concluding, the PRDP does not contribute anyway in property restitution or compensation.

Conditions allowing for sustainability at the place of solution

Finally, in order to achieve durable solutions, the framework stresses that certain conditions should be in place that allow for sustainability at the place of solution. First of all it addresses that former IDPs should enjoy an adequate standard of living. The PRDP document is in line with the framework for durable solutions. Both in the returning sites and in the IDP camps, the PRDP aims at the provision of basic needs in order to improve the living condition of (former) IDPs. Interestingly, the factors that determine this adequate standard of living also correspond with the current needs and challenges that (former) IDPs addressed. Yet, the analysis showed many gaps between the framework and the PRDP in the establishment of such conditions. The international community and (former) IDPs mostly witness that under the PRDP there is a profound emphasis on the delivery of hardware structures. However, the efficiency and usability of these structures remain highly criticized because there is a lack of software programming. This results in a reality where schools do not have enough teachers, health centers do not have the drug stocking they need or the trained personnel, and water points that are constructed do not reach everybody. Consequently, at this point the government is not succeeding in the establishment of an adequate standard of living through the PRDP.

The second factor focuses on the employment opportunities and income generation. The PRDP has a clear focus on livelihood recovery. The document sets out a promising goal of boosting the economy through production and marketing stimulation. In the field it was found that most activities are currently focused on land opening. However, (former) IDPs are not well aware of these programs, nor do they think that such programs reach the communities. It is only a small number of people who are actually benefiting. Especially outstanding was that the youth perceives it very difficult coping in their new living environment after return. They cannot easily adapt to their new living situation and as a consequence they return to the camp or move to Gulu town. While this group can play a viable role in boosting the economy, their employment opportunities are low. Through the PRDP, the government does not put any additional emphasis to this group of concern.

Thirdly, discussing the ability for family reunification, it has become clear that nowadays this is no longer necessary in Gulu. Although the PRDP does call for reunification of ex-combatants with their family members, it can be concluded that this is not an issue of concern in the current circumstances. Finally, when it comes to participation in public affairs, the research did not come across any cases where former IDPs were restricted in this right due to their status of being a former IDP. Under the PRDP the government is still re-strengthening the local government aiming at a democratic and participatory system. Currently, not all institutions are in place yet, nor are they completely functioning which limits its accessibility. However, it can be concluded that such limited access is not due to the former status of persons being an IDP.

Conclusion on actual conditions of former IDPs

Under the PRDP, the government steps in where improvement of the actual conditions of former IDPs is needed. Following the activities of the PRDP in Gulu, the plan profoundly focuses on the delivery of hardware through infrastructural development, which results in the construction of schools, health units, water points and access roads. Furthermore, it attempts to boost the

economy among others by opening pieces of land. Although the preceding shows that there is improvement in the actual living situations of people, the region does not have the infrastructure nor the basic social services yet necessary for sustainability, nor does it in practice closely responds to the current needs of the (former) IDPs. This can be ascribed to a lack of software intervention. The expectation is that when there would be more focus on the development of self-reliability of the community and on training and empowerment programs, the accessibility and functionality of the hardware structures will increase.

To answer the central research question, it can now be said that although on paper the PRDP contains almost all factors needed to achieve durable solutions for IDPs, reality shows that its implementation is lacking on many levels. In the process through which solutions are found the government is no longer attributing its resources to those remaining in the camp. In the establishment of conditions for former IDPs the government is more active, aiming at various factors included in the framework for durable solutions. However, their role is limited to the establishment of only hardware structures. Overall, it can be said that the PRDP will certainly contribute to durable solutions for IDPs, however, if the government continues their current course of intervention, the actual *achievement* of durable solutions will become difficult.

5.2 Reflection and contribution

Now that the central research question has been answered, this paragraph will provide a reflection on the study and explain its contribution. Reflecting on the research, the emphasis will lie on the used theory, and more specifically on the framework for durable solutions. This will be discussed within the context this research took place. Secondly, clarifying the contribution of this research, I will explain both its scientific and its social relevance.

5.2.1 Reflection on the research

In order to answer the central research question this study used the framework for durable solutions. This framework provides a comprehensive list with factors determining when internal displacement ends. Using this framework in the research, I was very well able to map the current situation in Gulu and to measure the contribution of the government of Uganda through the PRDP. However, during the research it became more and more clear that the framework on durable solutions misses a component. This especially came to the front in the analysis showing the difficulties integrating youth. They are struggling in their new living situation and in many cases those still living in the camp do not necessarily want to return home. Achieving reintegration, the framework for durable solutions uses various viable factors listed under the processes and conditions of (former) IDPs. During internal displacement, IDPs have gone through a lot and many of them are wishing their old lives back. Surely, by assisting them in their return and putting up adequate structures, this enables them to actually regain their old lives. However, the framework does not include any factors writing about rehabilitation, reconciliation or psycho-social care. What if former IDPs do not feel integrated in their community – which is very common among youth – how can one say that a durable solution is achieved? Through this research it became clear that the assistance in the process of return and the establishment of different conditions is not all there is when it comes to durable solutions. I would like to call this missing part the *emotional component*. Interestingly, the PRDP does embrace this emotional component through the fourth strategic objective, peacebuilding and reconciliation. But because this research followed the framework on durable solutions, this part of the PRDP has not been fully explored.

Moreover, the framework for durable solutions talks about safety and security of the (former) IDPs. Although according to the analysis, (former) IDPs are currently safe and they are being protected through different mechanisms, fact remains that the current situation in northern Uganda is still unsettled. A major determinant for solutions to be really durable is the situation

of Uganda's surrounding environment. The underlying causes of the conflict have never been resolved and there is no peace agreement. The core of the problem, the LRA, has crossed the borders of Uganda into Sudan, the DRC and CAR. Although there is now relative peace in northern Uganda and the LRA has not been active in the region for almost five years now, political movements and changes across the borders do not guarantee the safety, stability and peace in northern Uganda. The most present threat these days is the current situation in south Sudan. In 2011 elections will be held concerning independence of the south. Considering the past between the two countries, it will be likely that the turmoil in south Sudan will not only limit itself inside their borders. It is broadly thought and feared that the LRA will grasp this moment to move back into northern Uganda and disrupt the whole region again. It will not take much for the IDPs to move back into the camps again. So, there is fear of a complete reversion of the situation. In order to make a positive link between durable solutions and durable peace, the framework for durable solutions assumes a country's situation to be stable and peaceful. Although northern Uganda is presented as stable and peaceful, the contextual background has made clear that this is only true at the surface. In order for the government of Uganda to be constructive in its policies and practices and to work towards durable solutions and actually achieve them, solid and embedded peace in the country is a crucial component and this cannot be reached through the establishment of infrastructural development.

5.2.2 Contribution of the research

This research has made a great effort to map the contributions of the government through the PRDP in order to draw the main conclusion. As a result this study contributes both on a scientific and on a social level. Let me first discuss the scientific contribution. The research builds on a rich collection of data gathered both in Kampala and Gulu. As mentioned before, the literature on durable solutions for internal displacement is very much focused on theoretically embedded articles and studies. Because this research applies the academic literature in a case study, this research is an enrichment in the already existing literature. As a result this research has been able to give new additional insights to the already existing theories by putting a critical note to the framework for durable solutions.

Moreover, the research is also able to position itself in the theoretical debates and it provides them with clarifying contributions. The central debates discussed first of all whether or not IDPs should be considered as a separate category of concern; and secondly, it asked the question when internal displacement ends and which approach can be best used to end internal displacement. Through this research it has become clear how valid these discussions are, and how complex it is to solve. Let me first shortly place the research in the first debate. The IDPs in northern Uganda have been approached as a separate category of concern. The current situation shows how small the discrepancy is between citizens and IDPs. Officially closing down the camps, the government of Uganda no longer acknowledges the category of IDPs. Inhabitants of the camps are now considered as citizens of the settlement. However, the research showed that, although the remaining number of those living in the camp is relatively low, these people still have specific needs, distinguishing them from the normal citizens. The danger arises that in their current activities, the government is ignoring them. The basic assumption in the literature is after all that the end of internal displacement starts when people have found their place of solution. Hence, joining the debate on whether IDPs should be considered as a separate category of concern or not, from this case study I conclude that in order to prevent ignorance of certain people with special needs and challenges, it is important to still consider them as a separate group of concern, at least until they have found their place of solution.

This debate closely relates to the second one, that is when internal displacement ends and which approach should be used to end internal displacement. This research has adopted the integrated approach in an attempt to end internal displacement. With a long term vision and a focus on effective and durable solutions, the PRDP aims to end internal displacement. Through the

research it has become clear that solely focusing on either taking away causes, or only providing solutions or only responding to needs of IDPs, will not be enough to end internal displacement. Thus, joining in the debate which approach is best to end internal displacement, I agree that the adoption of an integrated approach is needed to achieve durable solutions, together with a dedicated government and a stable peace.

In terms of the social relevance, this case study has contributed to the identification of the progress of internal displacement. It draws conclusions on the effectiveness of a government's program by an in-depth study talking to IDPs, former IDPs, actors in the international community and government officials. Consequently, it has now become clear where the most profound needs of both IDPs and former IDPs are, what challenges they are currently facing, how they themselves see them being solved and how they perceive the interventions from the government, whether it is through the PRDP or not. Moreover, in terms of the government's intervention, this research shows the gaps between the PRDP document and the PRDP in practice. It has now become clear that on paper the PRDP interventions corresponds to the needs and challenges of the (former) IDPs, but interestingly, in practice the interventions do not meet these needs and challenges. In order to let the practical applicability of the PRDP match with the needs and challenges of the (former) IDPs and simultaneously with the framework on durable solutions, I will end this chapter by providing some relevant recommendations.

5.3 Recommendations

Because this research has focused on the activities of the government of Uganda in an attempt to respond to internal displacement, I will focus my recommendations mostly to the government of Uganda. The PRDP is a very comprehensive plan containing a lot of different components in order to stabilize northern Uganda. Through the PRDP, together with the international community, the government of Uganda acknowledges the needs in the northern region, hence, proving their responsibility by taking necessary steps to end internal displacement. Nevertheless, the PRDP has been highly criticized by donors and NGOs. Moreover, derived from the research, conclusions show that the plan is not completely responding to all factors included in the framework for durable solutions. So in an attempt for the government to take its full responsibility and be more effective with their activities, the following recommendations can be made to the government:

- Currently, the responsibility for ending internal displacement is slowly taken over from the international community by the GoU. The role of the government is growing and through the PRDP the GoU makes a commitment of leading the process of ending internal displacement. However, there is still a lot of confusion on how the PRDP works and how NGOs should make their contribution. Consequently, it becomes unclear who has the lead in the process of ending internal displacement. Therefore, I argue that the government should delegate better to the international community concerning their role and their contribution to the PRDP. When the assignment of the responsibilities is clear, a better cooperation between the government and the international community will be established, resulting in an increasing effectiveness of the PRDP;
- The government is giving signals to be responsible for the stabilization of northern Uganda. And it is taking its responsibility which is profoundly visible in the hardware structures. However, reality proves that the delivery of these hardware structures becomes inadequate when there is no focus on software programs. Therefore, in order for the government to be more effective in its interventions, focus on training and empowerment programs and participation of both community members and local government is important in order to increase the usability and accessibility of these hardware structures;

- In order to achieve durable solutions for IPDs, the government should pay more attention to particular groups of concern. One of them is youth. Due to various reasons they do not feel integrated in the community and they find it difficult adapting to their new living environment. It is important for them to gain a goal in life again; trainings, education and empowerment programs are the fundamentals for this. Secondly, although the PRDP calls for it, the government does no longer take notion of the IDPs who are still living in the camp. They also deserve to choose and be at their place of solution. If needed, they should still receive some assistance in their process of return;
- A very important component of solutions to be durable is that there is durable peace in northern Uganda. Although currently the situation is stable and safe, the underlying causes of the conflict have never been solved. To prevent a relapse into conflict, signing the peace agreement is crucial. With a current relative peace in the northern region, the focus of governmental intervention is on other components. Yet, it will not take much to disrupt the society again. Thus, rather than strengthening a society in a situation of negative peace with a fear of disruption, the government should work towards a situation of positive peace in order to further develop the region;
- Closely related to the latter recommendation, the government also needs to acknowledge that northern Uganda has not reached the phase of development yet. The PRDP is very ambitious in its planning. However, when moving too fast to a phase of development, its goals will not be reached. Although Gulu town might be in the developmental phase, many remote regions in Acholiland are not. When recognizing the stage of recovery or development will result in a better connection between interventions and current needs within society.

To the Brookings Institution, the designers of the framework for durable solutions, I would like to make the following recommendation:

- Include an 'emotional' component in the framework. Although it is difficult to measure people's feeling of integration, it is a determinant component in the achievement of a durable solution. I suggest that the framework for durable solutions includes a section where the responsibility from governments is addressed where they reach towards the IDPs and former IDPs in the form of programs dealing with reconciliation and psycho-social assistance.

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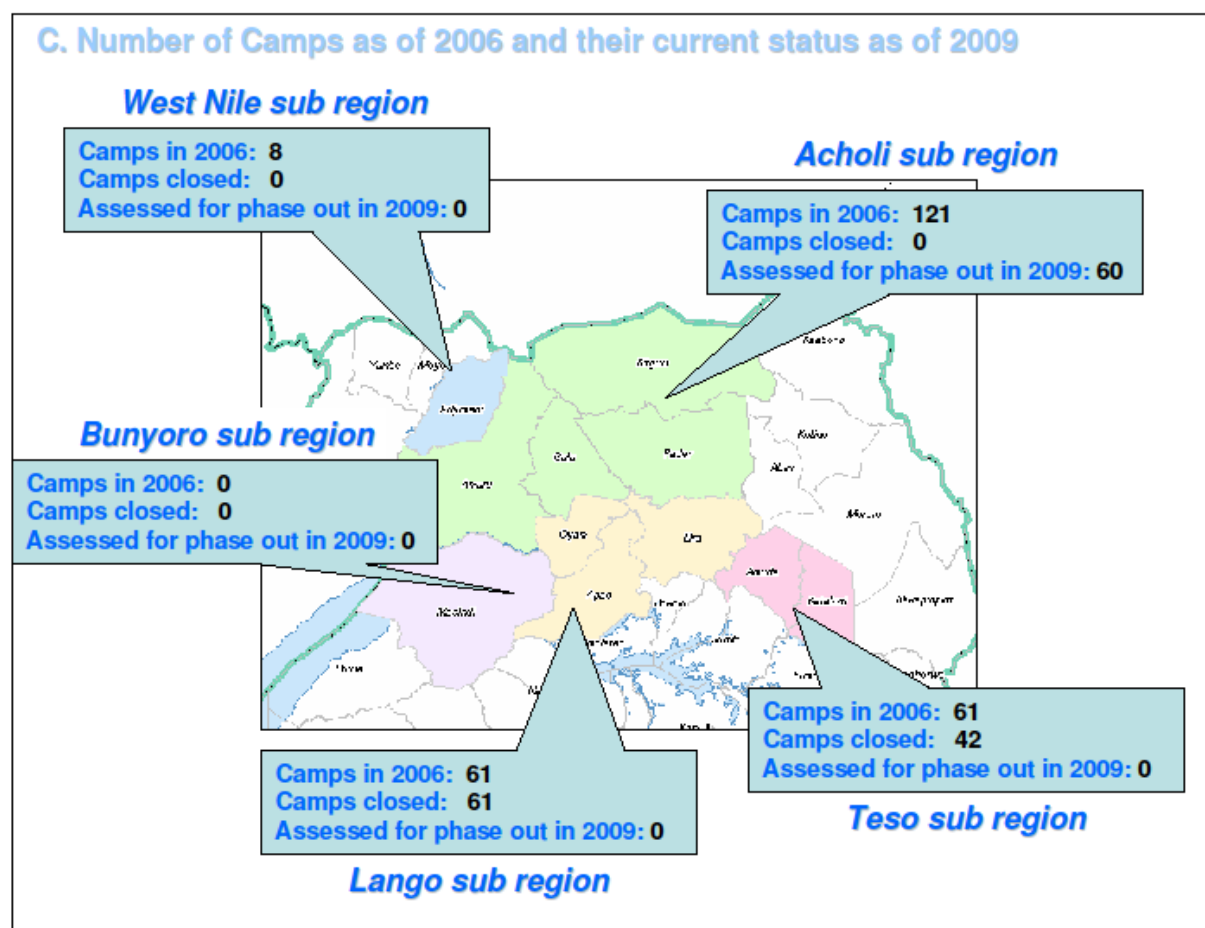
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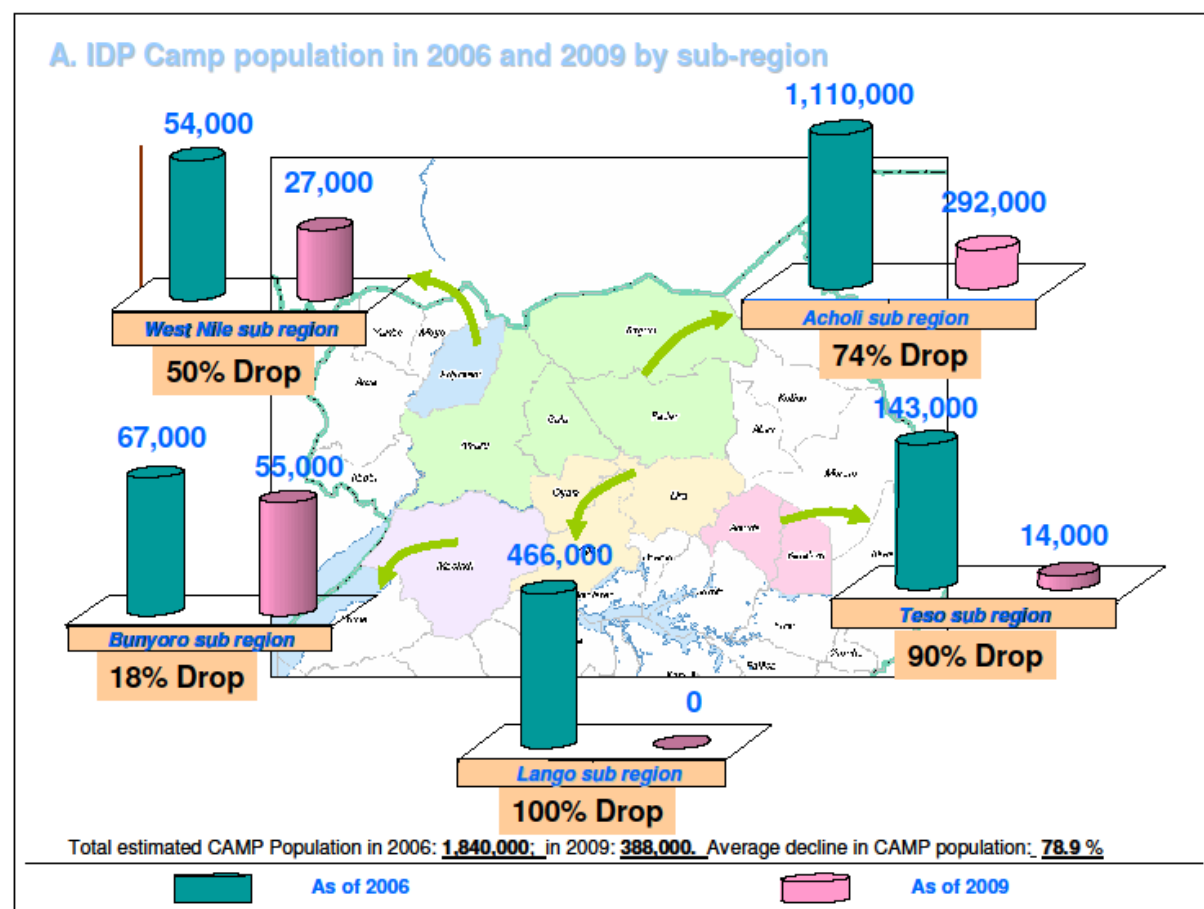
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Appendices

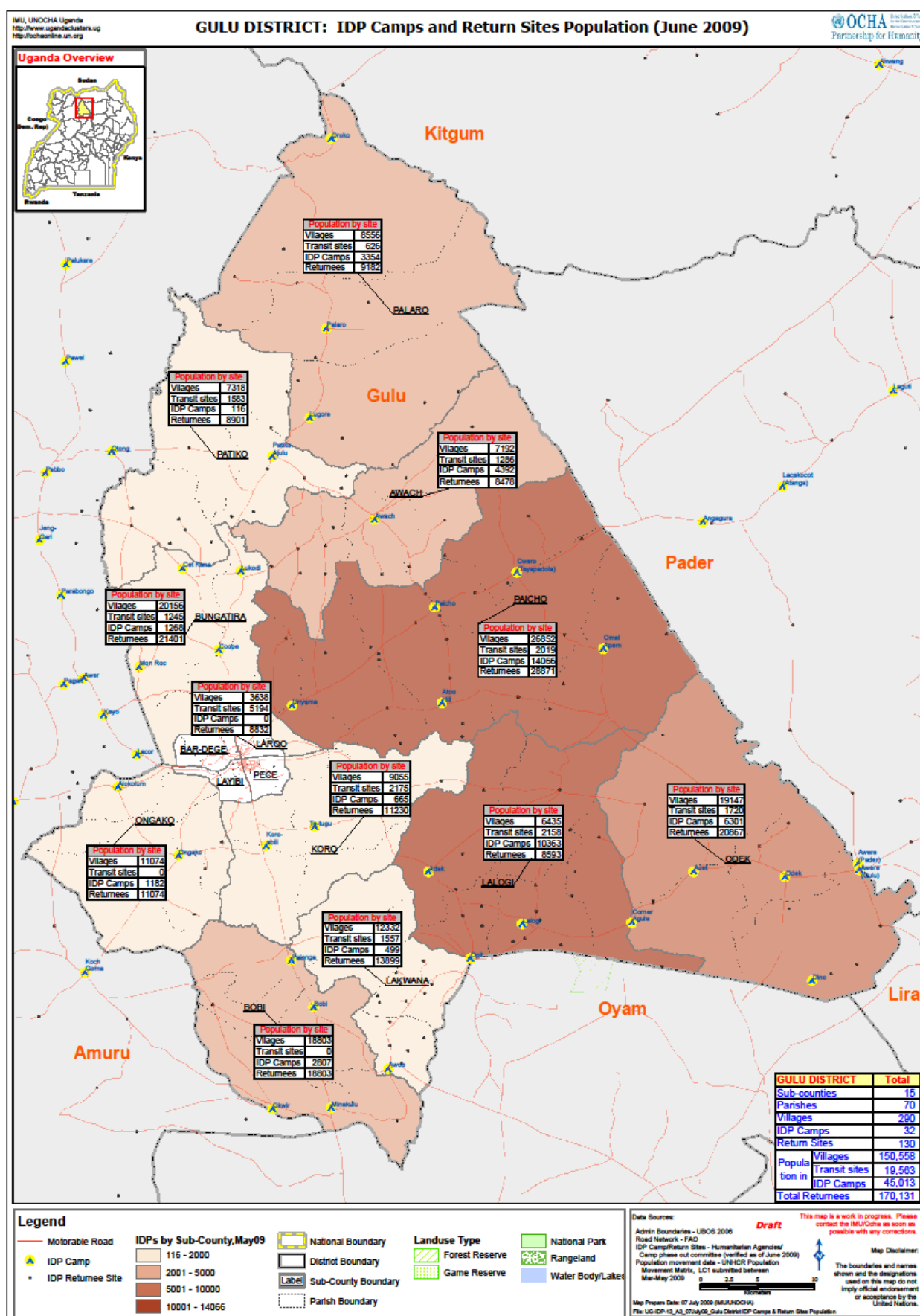
Appendix I Number of camps 2006-2009



Appendix II IDP camp population 2006-2009



Appendix III IDP camps and return sites population



Appendix IV Gulu camps population

AVSI GULU CAMPS POPULATION MAY 2010

No.	Sub County			Household Number	0-5		6-18		19-34		35-59		60+		SEX	SEX
		Camp	Zone/ or Block		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	Male	Female
1	Paicho	Omel Apem	4	206	119	150	172	178	129	120	80	50	30	18	516	530
2		Paicho	4	342	145	159	212	248	84	109	105	144	20	31	691	566
3		Atoo Hill	4	40	10	11	42	38	19	20	29	17	3	3	89	103
4		Cwero (Teyapadola)	7	274	96	95	179	198	125	115	92	49	28	9	466	520
5		Unyama	8	213	64	77	138	184	108	63	73	59	16	7	390	399
6	Odek	Dino	4	30	20	11	14	29	6	7	14	12	3	2	61	57
7		Awere (Gulu)	3	74	28	37	58	57	19	22	32	20	10	4	140	147
8		Corner Agula	4	97	28	67	44	80	36	42	68	55	34	40	284	210
9		Acet	14	156	102	122	165	137	188	143	114	130	109	63	595	678
10		Odek	6	46	11	16	32	54	19	8	11	2	5	4	84	78
11	Lalogi	Lalogi	6	74	20	36	46	50	27	27	25	21	9	4	138	127
12		Adak	4	14	4	4	7	9	3	1	3	3	2	0	17	19
13	Lakwana	Opit	8	185	101	117	180	226	79	75	79	45	16	6	469	455
14	Awach	Awach	4	126	65	59	71	109	55	51	47	34	9	5	258	247

Appendix V List of interviews

Interview AVSI, Program Advisor, Kampala, 17 May 2010

Interview DENIVA, Program Officers, Kampala, 17 May 2010

Interview ARC, Country Director Uganda, Kampala, 18 May 2010

Interview Survival Corps, Country Program Coordinator Uganda, Kampala, 19 May 2010

Interview National NGO Forum, Director of Programs, Kampala, 25 May 2010

Interview Isis-WICCE, Program Officer, Kampala, 27 May 2010

Interview USAID, Conflict specialist on peace, reconciliation and reintegration, Gulu, 2 June 2010

Interview AVSI, Area team leader Gulu/Amure, Gulu, 2 June 2010

Interview World Vision, Program Manager Gulu, Gulu, 3 June 2010

Interview Gulu District NGO Forum, Program Manager, Gulu, 7 June 2010

Interview AVSI, Program Coordinator Protection and Livelihoods, Gulu, 7 June 2010

Interview DRC , Program Manager, Gulu, 7 June 2010

Interview NUREP, Regional Coordinator, Gulu, 8 June 2010

Interview ARC, Coordinator Durable Solutions, Gulu, 8 June 2010

Interview Save the Children of Uganda, Team Leader, Gulu, 9 June 2010

Interview NRC, Project Manager, Gulu, 11 June 2010

Interview CARE International, Office Coordinator, Gulu, 11 June 2010

Interview USAID-NUTI, Program Development Officer, 15 June 2010

Interview District Disaster Management Committee, CAO, Gulu, 15 June 2010

Interview UNHCR, Field/Program Officer, Gulu, 16 June 2010

Interview UHRC, Regional Human Rights Officer, Gulu, 17 June 2010

Interview IOM, sr. Reintegration Officer, Gulu, 2 July 2010

Interview Refugee Law Project, Director, Kampala, 16 August 2010

Interview, Elder woman, Lalogi, 20 July 2010

Interview, Elder woman, Lalogi, 20 July 2010

Interview, Elder man, Lalogi, 22 July 2010

Interview, Adult man, Lalogi, 22 July 2010

Interview, Adult woman, Lalogi, 26 July 2010

Interview, Adult woman, Lalogi, 26 July 2010

Interview, Adult man, Lalogi, 26 July 2010

Interview, Youth boy, Lalogi, 29 July 2010

Interview, Youth girl, Lalogi, 29 July 2010

Interview, LC3, Lalogi, 3 August 2010

Interview, LC1, Lalogi, 3 August 2010

Interview, Adult woman, Odek, 21 July 2010
Interview, Elder man, Odek, 21 July 2010
Interview, Adult woman, Odek, 27 July 2010
Interview, Adult man, Odek, 27 July 2010
Interview, Elder woman, Odek, 28 July 2010
Interview, Elder man, Odek, 28 July 2010
Interview, Adult man, Odek, 28 July 2010
Interview, Youth girl, Odek, 5 August 2010
Interview, Youth boy, Odek, 5 August 2010
Interview, LC1, Odek, 5 August 2010
Focus group discussion, Elderly, Bungatira, 12 July 2010
Focus group discussion, Adults, Bungatira, 12 July 2010
Focus group discussion, Youth, Bungatira, 13 July 2010
Focus group discussion, Adults, men, Bungatira, 4 August 2010
Focus group discussion, Adults, women, Bungatira, 4 August 2010
Focus group discussion, Elderly, Palaro, 14 July 2010
Focus group discussion, Adults, men, Palaro, 14 July 2010
Focus group discussion, Adults, women, Palaro, 16 July 2010
Focus group discussion, Youth, Palaro, 16 July 2010

