

## **Peace-building from Abroad: The Influence of the Acholi-Diaspora on the Peace-building Process in Northern Uganda.**

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From 1986 to 2006 Northern Uganda – locally referred to as Acholiland - was ravaged by a civil war between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) . The conflict resulted in countless deaths and the abduction of over 10.000 children. More than 95% of the local population was displaced and the social and economic infrastructure of the region was destroyed.

The Acholi-Diaspora always played a crucial role in the dynamics of the conflict. Some individuals were supporting the agenda of the Lord's Resistance Army but the vast majority of Acholi people who fled their home country were engaged in peace-building processes on different levels.

The influence of the community outside the homeland can be viewed and assessed on multiple scales. Remittances by private persons to family members were and are very important for re-establishing of the social and economic infrastructure in Acholiland. Furthermore organisations founded by Acholi in their host country were not only important for the awareness raising in countries outside Uganda but also played a crucial role in supporting and facilitating peace talks between the conflicting parties. Up to now these organisations are involved in the establishment and sponsorship of local development projects that help the region to recover from the 20-year conflict. Since 2006 former Internally Displaced People are leaving the camps and trying to start a new life in their former villages and homesteads. As the flow of information between migrants and non-migrants never stopped individuals from the diaspora are investing more and more in their home country. These investments range from the building of private homes up to establishing businesses that are supporting local education and development.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Northern Uganda and Great Britain the paper will analyse the role of the Acholi Diaspora in London in the peace-building process in Northern Uganda.

The focus of the presentation will be to highlight the different definitions of peace-building and development of migrants and non-migrants with an emphasis on the contributions of the diaspora through family networks – meaning mainly financial remittances and on an institutional level – meaning financial remittances as well as exchange of ideas and services.