



# The Extent to Which Land Conflicts Affect Food Security: A Case of Kasese District, Western Uganda

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the effect of land conflicts on food security in Kasese district, Western Uganda in 2018. Exploratory and descriptive research survey designs were adopted using a population of 1999 and sample size of 445. Self administered questionnaires, interview guides and documentary checklists were used to collect data from the field. Majority respondents 92.5% revealed that there's inequitable distribution of land among individuals and ethnic groups; 62.2 % of land is owned by men; 71.1% of the population depended on small scale farming; 91.75% agreed that there was restriction on utilization of government owned land; and 89.5% agreed that land conflicts destabilize food production. The proportion of causes of land conflicts differed which ranked in the order; protection of minority groups 35.9%, survival tendencies 24.4%, quick cash 21%, and investment 18%. The study concluded that: the major cause of land conflict is inadequate distribution and that there was no strong relationship between land conflicts and food sustainability. The gaps in Ugandan land laws and policies are the breed birth of land conflicts in Kasese district. The study recommended comprehensive review of the existing land laws, policies and apportioning part of government owned land to increase land access in Kasese district. The community-based arbitration units like local councils should be empowered to handle land related disputes to ease access to quick justice. Finally, the stakeholders should intensify community awareness levels on sustainable food production, nutrition and optimum land use through a multi-sectoral food security approach to ensure peaceful co-existence in Kasese.

**Keywords:** Conflict, Land, Food, Food Security, Food Sustainability

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## 1. Introduction

A conflict is a struggle and a clash of interest, opinion, or even principles. Conflict will always be found in society. Throughout the world, land conflicts have increased due to high demand for land resulting from the growing population. Therefore, land conflicts are not only a peculiar phenomenon to Uganda but a shared world

problem. According to Food and Agriculture Organization (2014), the global demand for land has steadily increased over the past 50 years. Bridge 2014, as cited by Adams Sebugu, et al., 2020; points out that, food security issues have attracted attention of many top conferences globally. It is believed that there is more than enough food to feed everyone in the world and yet the number of people facing hunger is still unacceptably high. Food and Agriculture Organization (2017), states that the

number of people facing hunger increased from 777 million in 2015 to more than 820 million in 2018 with two billion people suffering moderate or severe food insecurity worldwide (FAO; IFAD; UNICEF; WFP; WHO, 2019). Reports have revealed that, the world number of registered land cases and property rights in the primary courts account for nearly half (50 percent) of all the disputes in courts (World Bank, 2009). Also, there has been a noticeable increase in the acquisition of agricultural land in the global South by multinational firms and foreign state agencies for commercial agricultural production. Land is by and large acquired through negotiation with governments, which then grant way in to land according to leasehold contracts or, more rarely, through outright purchase (Huggins, 2011)<sup>1</sup>. Whereas Akina Mama Wafrika (2015) calls this a “new wave” of land deals on the continent which has caused considerable threats to local populations and the future trajectories of agrarian change. As much as the land dispossession of rural African communities’ dates back to colonial and post independence eras, land grabbing has intensively picked pace since the global food crisis of 2007 - 2008; Tinyade (2010).

Like other parts of Uganda and the world, land conflicts are very common in Kasese district.

There are limited studies on whether land conflicts influence food production and accessibility.

Reports have revealed that Kasese is food insecure in spite the fact that, it has incomparable fertile soils in the region (IPC report, 2017). This study was carried out to investigate whether land conflicts play any role on food security. Whereas there many factors that account for food security, this study focused on direct food production in terms of crop and animal products since farming is the major source of food among the people of Kasese.

The legal changes aiming to reduce the incidence and impact of conflict have not vehemently generated any significant success. The Ugandan Land Act Cap 227 is not effective in resolving the deadlock between landowners and tenants. Despite massive objection, there are rampant mass evictions by registered landowners or their agents or purchasers which is progressively un cordoned. The future of Kasese and Uganda in general is unpredictable with floating undertones of amending the 1995 constitutional land law. It is feared that the proposed land bill if signed into law, will likely escalate land conflicts in Uganda, Kasese District Land Committee Report (2018)<sup>1</sup>. In Kasese, public

land accounts for about 65% of the land. The remaining 35% is shared for the several land uses including cultivation, grazing and housing. The widespread land conflicts among individuals and groups significantly obstruct food production and productivity. The land tenure system in Kasese fall under four facets notably; customary ownership, freehold, leasehold and public land. On a silent but most sensitive, Mailo land also exist with individuals and former allies of the Toro Kingdom who quietly claim huge chunks of land in the district. The Kasese District Land Committee Report, (2018)<sup>2</sup> highlights that, if these claims are fulfilled, land conflicts are likely to reach to unimaginable proportions.

However, if land is fully utilized, Kasese district would serve as a "food basket" for the entire region and other neighboring regions including neighboring countries like Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda due to existence of fertile soils. This ray of opportunity is increasingly diminishing because of heightened land conflicts which affect production levels among farmers.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 The concept of land Conflict

Conflict like any other social concept, has been perceived differently. Nassè (2019) defines conflict as a misunderstanding between individuals and groups due to a given misbehavior that affect a group of people or a community. Marfo (2013) connotes violence or negativity; others perceive it to be functionally positive in social systems. Boudreaux et al. (2017) asserts that, land conflicts can result from historical injustices, ill-advised government policies, conflicts of interest, corrupt leadership, or more generally from competition over land and resources. Conflicts can be clearly apparent, involving violence or damage to property, or may be latent or dormant. By raising the economic stakes in the area, new commercial or development projects can revive old conflicts, and ignite ongoing tensions. Disputes over land are an enduring feature of African politics. Although many of these issues are not new, they change continuously and are extremely complex and embedded. This may lead to the inability to deal with such issues and, subsequently, to questions about the legitimacy of the forms of intervention and prevention of conflicts, (Anseeuw, & Alden, 2010).

According to Coser (1991), the cause of conflict can be categorized into material and non-material relations. The material causes of conflict refer to distributional unevenness of power, status, and resources; and the non-material causes refer to inconsistency of value conceptions and beliefs. Coser thinks that the degree of seriousness of conflict depends on different degrees of interrelationship between social structure and emotions, values and beliefs.

Dahrendorf, 1999, as cited by Rugadya, 2009<sup>1</sup> points out that some important concepts underlie dialectical conflict approach, including authority and authority structure, interests, quasi-groups and interest groups. He believes that such concepts can be used to describe and understand the specific social structure and can also be used to explain the generation of conflicting groups, conflict forms and consequences. These concepts indeed play an important part in my evaluation of the conflict between the two sides.

Young and Korir (2011)<sup>1</sup> also deliberates that, minority groups' access to land, water, forests and other natural resources in East Africa is dependent on national legal regimes, state practice and customary frameworks within minority communities. Formal laws include constitutions, national and local laws, as well as policies and administrative regulations. Minorities are disadvantaged ethnic, national, religious, linguistic or cultural groups who are smaller in number than the rest of the population and who wish to maintain and develop their identity. Many minority groups in East Africa can often also be described as indigenous peoples, whose livelihood, culture, and identity are intimately linked with their traditionally occupied territory. Minority groups in Kenya, South Sudan, and Uganda represent a diverse mix of livelihoods, community size and structure, community governance, and land tenure status (Young and Korir (2011)<sup>2</sup>. There is a bond between authority structure and social status which has consequences on conflict development. Such conditions that influence conflict creation would concurrently influence structural change dialectical conflict approach which provides a way to evaluate the causes and structure of conflict (Dahrendorf, 1999)<sup>2</sup>. This is true with Kasese with many tribal groups, majority being Bayiira/Bakonzo whereas minority group include, Banyabindi, Basongora, Bachingwe among others.

As a response to the situation, in September 2000, the government of Uganda decided to relocate the 8,000 Basongora pastoralists with 50,000 heads of cattle who occupied part of Queen Elizabeth National Park to new areas including Ibuga Refugee Settlement (3,500 acres), Ibuga Prison Farm (1,400 acres), Hima Army Production Unit (3,500 acres), Mubuku Prison Farm (5,300 acres), Karusandara (1,100 acres), and Muhokya (1,000 acres). Additionally, the Basongora ancestral land in Bukangara and Rwehingo totaling 25,000 acres was to be shared between the cultivators and the pastoralists. This gave the pastoralists (17,000 acres) and (8,000 acres) to Bakonzo cultivators. The government also was to develop a long-term plan and budget for the modernization of the Basongora community. Land was partitioned like a cake in a ratio of 1:3 (cultivators and pastoralists) respectively. This did not leave any sustainable land remedy between the Basongora cattle keepers and other groups, Rugadya, (2009).

## 2.2 Economist theory on land

FAO (2016); conflict has strong and unambiguous adverse effects on food security and nutrition. It is the major driver of food insecurity and malnutrition, both acute and chronic. Conflict has lasting impacts on human development as a result of increased malnutrition, which tends to affect children the most and leave lifelong physical and/or mental handicaps. Theory in land economics has long suggested that increased tenure security classically defined in terms of private freehold ownership recognized and protected by the state will lead to increased productivity by stimulating greater access to and demand for credit and investment, reducing conflicts over ownership, and permitting the most efficient farmers to outbid less efficient farmers in the land market (Barrows & Roth, 1990). Moyo, 2012, as cited by Boutchouang, 2019; the rapid increase in the commodification of land, or the globalization of agriculture and its market value, encourages an "accumulation by the top on a socially narrow and geographically narrow basis. Land grabbing in Sub-Saharan Africa is part of a historical process in which land alienation, land accumulation strategies and dispossession of peasants have deconstructed African food production systems and redefined the agrarian productive forces.

## 2.3 Economist approach on land and food security

Economic approaches to food insecurity have evolved greatly over the latter half of the twentieth century. Macroeconomic conceptions of food security date back to Robert Malthus, who predicted that limited land availability and agricultural productivity would contribute to widespread famine under rapid population growth. Even up to the 1974 World Food Summit, food security was largely conceived as a problem of limited national agricultural supplies (Barrett 2002; Webb et al 2006). Under this macroeconomic framework, economists measured food security by national stock levels and then calculated per capita food availability based on population. Meanwhile, health perspectives focused on the micro level manifestations of food insecurity, such as wasting, kwashiorkor, and marasmus. Within this framework, food security was thought to be best addressed through creating more favorable terms of trade for food poor countries and through large scale efforts to increase agricultural supply through seed and production technologies (Webb et al, 2006). Faced with rapid population growth in India and Southeast Asia, this logic was a major driver of the introduction and dissemination of Green Revolution technologies in the late sixties and early seventies.

## 2.4 Nature of current land conflicts

The inequitable distribution of land has contributed to the declining state of resources in Uganda, thereby creating the conditions that lead to food insecurity. These environmental security problems induce conflicts at the regional and district levels, the class and racial levels and at the local level. The inequitable distribution of land has contributed to the declining state of resources in Southern African countries, thereby creating the conditions that lead to food insecurity. These environmental security problems induce conflicts at the inter-state and intra-state levels: the class and racial levels; and at the local level.

In Uganda, the land conflict level between pastoralists and farmers is on the rise, and conflict has turned out to be the main threat to farmers (UNLP, 2013, Uganda ministry of Agriculture, 2010). With the declining soil fertility and population growth rate at 3.4% per annum, land tenure security needs to be safeguarded in order to address the growing

demand for food (World Bank, 2008). Land conflict reduces agricultural productivity, but fortunately, the government has recently realized the economic and political impacts of such conflict on the country's agricultural production capacity (Kairaba, 2002). Francis and Tomoya (2013) found that land conflict could reduce agricultural productivity on plots by 17%. Unfortunately, this affects vulnerable groups like female-headed households and widows (Deininger & Castagnini, 2004). The lack of attention to women's land right has continuously made it difficult for women to avoid "inheritance land related conflict" (Deininger & Castagnini, 2004).

The net effect of land and natural resource conflicts is the destabilization of food production, degradation of the environment and, in the case of armed conflicts, creation of open access conditions for natural resources. One of the main reasons underlying the increased incidence of land conflict in African countries is the failure of the prevailing land tenure systems to respond to the challenges posed by appreciation of land in a way that would enhance effective tenure security and thus provide the basis for higher levels of investment and productivity-enhancing land transfers rather than the dissipation of resources in conflict over land. Such appreciation can come about due to increased population and other exogenous factors including technical change, improved terms of trade for agriculture, or non-agricultural demand for land. Factors that have made an effective response difficult include a lack of clarity about the role of formal and informal institutions in land administration, the limited outreach of the former, and the fact that reaching a consensus on land policies is made difficult by the structural inequalities inherent in these systems, e.g. along gender and ethnic lines. As a result, traditional interventions such as titling, which were very effective in other parts of the world, have proven inadequate in many African contexts where, instead of fostering growth, they may even have led to higher levels of conflict (FIG, 2014).

Furthermore, tenure insecurity in Uganda is a source of conflict within families, between groups and between communities. Overall, land issues are increasingly sensitive and political, as was shown for example when female residents of Uganda's northern Amuru district stripped naked before government ministers to protest a land deal. Specific land governance issues in the country are the landlord tenant relations on *mailo* land; land

tenure insecurity in post-conflict Northern Uganda; disputes over government expropriation of land; the implications of oil exploration and mining for local land tenure systems and rights, especially for pastoral livestock systems; and accusations of land grabbing in rural and urban areas. Finally, Uganda concluded the development of its National Land Policy (NLP) in August 2013, a process that saw the participation of the entire citizenry in its development. While land in the new policy is no longer viewed in terms of rights recognition only, but also in terms of its productive capacity and as an enabler for economic empowerment and political participation (LANDac, 2016h), implementation of the NLP is still to be seen.

It has been shown that even limited land conflicts can erupt into large-scale civil strife and violence (Andre and Platteau 2000), especially if “political entrepreneurs” capitalize on the underlying grievances to further their cause (Fred-Mensah 2000, Daudelin 2002). At the same time, there are few detailed studies of conflicts relating to land rather than general conflicts or efforts aiming to separate the impact of changes in the legal framework governing land relations as compared with the myriad of other factors that can have an impact on the incidence of conflict. As a result, it is far from undisputed whether land related conflicts are a serious enough issue to warrant attention by policy makers or outside support. To determine whether this is the case, it is necessary to show that over and above the social problems and direct costs that may be caused by land conflicts, these conflicts affect productivity of land use and thus reduce the scope for future growth.

## **2.5 Availability and access of land on food sustainability**

Conflict reduces availability of production input and income, increases the number of days households rely on less preferred foods, and limits the variety of foods eaten and the portion size of meals consumed (Tracy et al., 2022). Helland and Sørbø (2014) as cited by Sabogu & Osumanu (2022), access to food is a very important determinant of food security. If there is abundance of food in the market or farm and one cannot access it, then you cannot say there is food security.

In terms of land distribution, the major problem relates to unequal access to land according to race, gender, class, and ethnic distinctions. In some

countries, multinational companies and the State also own large areas of land. The limited land rights for some groups of people have brought into sharp focus on the question of access to land, rights and how land transfers take place under both market and customary systems. In general, there is a tendency for land to be unequally distributed, with the population pressure under which customary systems often operate, meaning that most groups of people in such systems have limited land rights. In some instances, the State, private companies (local and international) and a few individuals, hold more land than they are able to fully utilize. Yet the discussion on food security is largely tabled from the production point of view, where access to good quality land becomes a prerequisite for households to produce food for their own subsistence and for sale. Essentially it is the equity and efficiency aspects of unequal land distribution that underlie concerns with policy on food security and agricultural development (Moyo, 2001).

Access to land and land tenure relations are critical where communities depend on control of land to ensure their food security. ‘Food security’ is the capacity of households, communities and the state to mobilize sufficient food, through production, acquisition and distribution, on a sustainable basis. Food security thus depends on the land resources available to the household or community and their ability to mobilize resources for the production and/or distribution of food to achieve an active and healthy life. However, for communities or regions with inadequate land resources are highly susceptible to food insecurity. ‘Food entitlement’ is a concept derived from the entitlement approach developed by Amanor Kojo, (2003) following the severe Ethiopian drought in the early 1980s. He argued that famine conditions exist not because there is no food, but because the individuals lack adequate income to acquire food. This has subsequently been used to broaden the interpretation of access to land and natural resources.

## **2.6 The role played by land conflicts on food security**

Building resilience through peacebuilding efforts is critical for food security and nutrition. Little is known about how, and to what extent, improved food security could prevent conflict, and build and sustain peace. Yet, depending on context-specific conditions, food aid and social protection, as well

as helping communities' complete harvests, tend to contribute significantly to peacebuilding (FAO, 2016). The land conflicts issues that affect food security include manifestations of unequal distribution of land, sub-optimal utilization of land and insecure tenure. Where the security of tenure is weak in general, livelihoods can be constrained. Thus, tenure remains key for improving land management practices. And, where land distribution structures are highly unequal, the negative food security trends are exacerbated.

The net effect of land and natural resource conflicts is the destabilization of food production, degradation of the environment and, in the case of armed conflicts, creation of open access conditions for natural resources (World Bank, 2001).

Studies on the motives of war have found conflict to be closely associated with underlying factors affecting food insecurity. For instance, Political studies of the economic motivations of war have argued that conflict was precipitated in some cases by "*greed*" (the desire to control resources) and in others by "*grievance*" (the perception of unfairness by those receiving the short end of contested resources) (Collier 2000, Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). Although most of the studies on greed and grievance have concentrated on non-renewable, non-agricultural resources, high value agricultural resources may also be responsible when competing groups fight over access to land and water sources to produce high value commodities like coffee or cotton. For example, the collapse of coffee prices led to a sudden drop in income for small farmers in Uganda (Uvin 1996, Messer and Cohen 2006).

Food shortages or other dimensions of severe food insecurity are an obvious consequence of conflict in many cases. Conflict typically reduces availability, access, and utilization of food. It also leads to poverty, high infant mortality, inequality, and declining per capita incomes. The growth inhibiting impacts of conflict can be observed in the rapid resumption of agricultural growth following peace, as experienced in Mozambique. One of the most direct effects of conflict on food security is the displacement of people. In 2001, there were more than 12 million refugees, 25 million internally displaced people (IDPs) and an unknown number of people trapped in combat zones (FAO, 2002). Most of these need temporary food assistance until they can return to their homes or find new livelihoods. Contributing to meeting the food needs of refugees' places an additional burden on recipient

communities where food security is already marginal leading to sometimes acute food shortages. Refugees fleeing fighting in northern Chad upset markets in western Darfur during the drought years 1983-85, transforming that food shortage into a famine (Messer et al. 1998).

Land and resources cause conflict, the reality is much more complicated. Land is usually one factor among many drivers of conflict. Conflicts are driven by physical threats, including direct violence such as armed attacks for example, as well as by perceived threats to livelihoods and well-being, threats to group identity, and a perception that institutions, policies and laws of the state are discriminatory. The role of land in conflict also changes over time. Legitimate land-related grievances can evolve over the course of a conflict into a complicated system of political and economic incentives that affect the conflict in different ways. The original grievance may remain, but addressing the conflict requires tackling structural and proximate causes, as well as the incentive structures that may emerge during conflict (Ballentine and Sherman (2003).

Food shortages or other dimensions of severe food insecurity are an obvious consequence of conflict in many cases. Conflict typically reduces availability, access, and utilization of food. It also leads to poverty, high infant mortality, inequality, and declining per capita incomes. Conflict destroys land, water, biological, and social resources for food production. Thirty million people in more than 60 countries were displaced or had their livelihoods destroyed by conflict every year in the 1990s (WFP 2004). FAO (2002) has estimated losses of almost \$52 billion in agricultural output through conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa between 1970 to 1997, a figure equivalent to 75 percent of all official development assistance received by the conflict-affected countries. Estimated losses for all developing countries averaged \$4.3 billion per year – enough to have raised the food intake of 330 million undernourished people to minimum required levels According to Delgado et al., (2021), food insecurity not only is a consequence of violent conflict but can also be a contributing factor to the emergence and duration of such conflict. Food insecurity is linked to deficiencies in food systems. When combined with other risk factors, food insecurity can become a contributing driver of violent conflict. The most common factors that exacerbate the risk of food insecurity contributing to violent conflict include environmental stress and climate-induced food

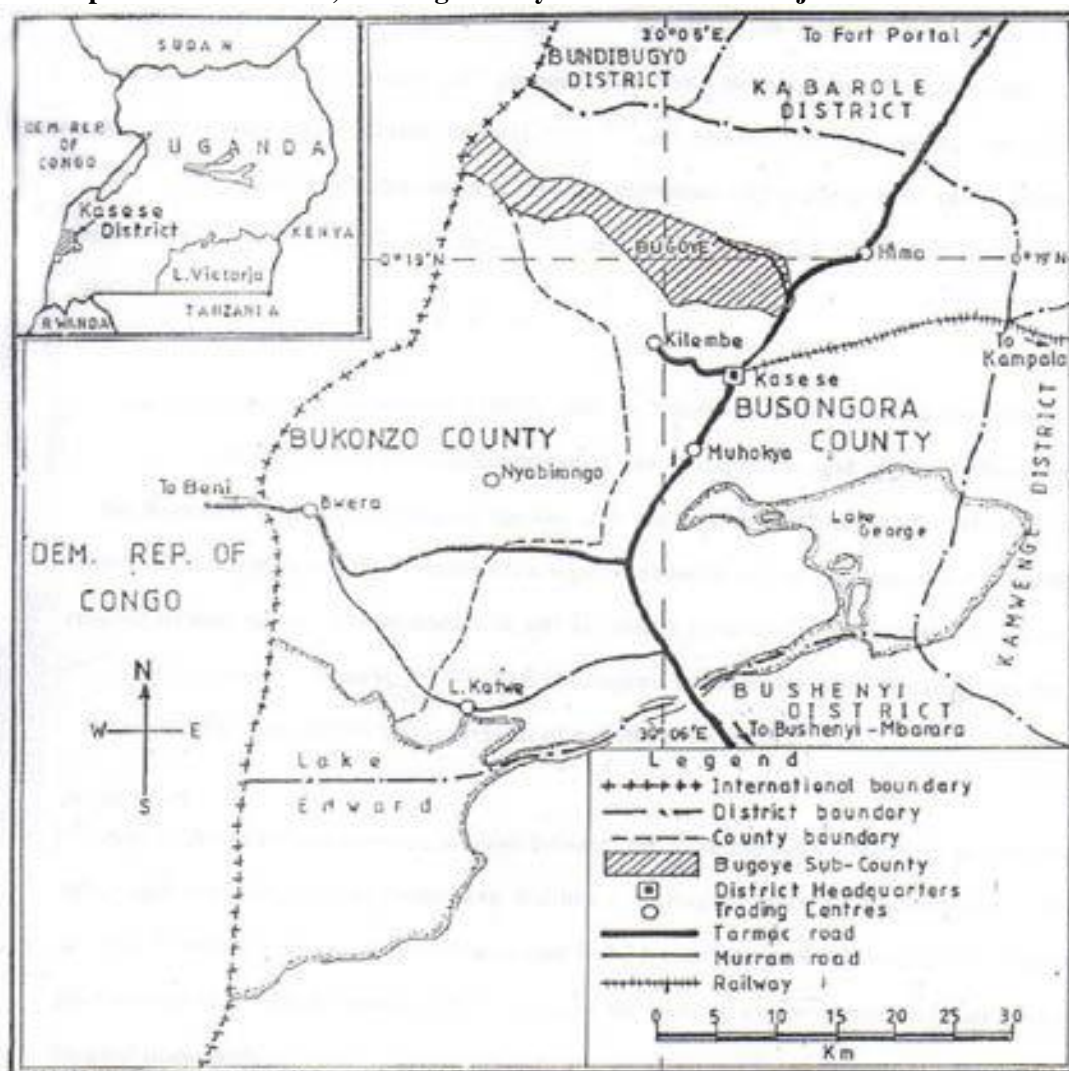
shortages, production resource competition, and grievances related to social issues and food price.

### 3. Methodology

Kasese district is located in western Uganda and it lies approximately between latitudes 0012'S - 00 26'N and longitudes 290 42'E - 300 18'E. The total surface area of Kasese District is 3,389.8km<sup>2</sup>. Of

this, the total land area is 2,911.3km<sup>2</sup>, the total area of water bodies is 409.7 sq.km and the total area for wetlands is 68.8km<sup>2</sup>. About 63% of the land surface is occupied by nature and wildlife conservation schemes and other government projects such as prison land and irrigation farms (KDLG statistical abstract, 2009). Kasese district has a total population of 702,029 persons with a population density of 450 persons per square kilometer (UNBS, 2014).

Map of Kasese District, showing County boundaries and major natural features



The soils range from clay loams, sand loams to murram in most areas of the district. Vegetation is mainly open Savannah grass which is, in some places, mixed with woodland.

This study was conducted in four Sub-Countries of Kasese which include; Nyakatonzi, Nyakiyumbu

(from Bukonzo County) and; Karusanda and Kitswamba (from Busongora County) respectively. From each sub county, two parishes were selected. The selection of parishes depended on the closeness to the gazetted national parks where land conflicts have been rampant. The parishes per sub-county were selected as follows: from Nyakiyumbu

(Katholhu and Rwehingo parishes), Nyakatonzi (Nyakatonzi and Bukangara parishes), Karusundara (Kanamba and Kabukero parishes) and Kitwsamba (Ibuga and Kitswamba parishes). These sub-counties are spread in the two Counties of Bukonzo and Busongora in Kasese district. The study used exploratory and descriptive designs. Exploratory research designs were used to assess the effect of land conflicts on food security in Kasese district. On the other hand, the descriptive research design was used to explore the nature of current land conflicts in Kasese district.

The study involved the use of a case study in particular considering one district (Kasese) as the area of interest in relation to the study. This design was chosen to enable adequate time to obtain in-depth information about the land conflict and sustainable food security in that one district under study instead of several districts, (Amin 2005)<sup>1</sup>. In this study, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were applied. The quantitative approach enabled the researcher to obtain information that was quantifiable while qualitative approach was used to solicit information that could not be quantified (Mugenda, 1999). By combining numerical and textual information helped to enrich the interpretation of findings of the study.

The study population included cultivators, pastoralists, the district land board officials, local leaders, politicians, religious leaders and cultural leaders. The respondents were visited in their homes and offices at convenient occasions for a period of two weeks. The researcher sought permission from authorities like LCs to gain access to the community members. Where key respondents were not readily available for on spot data gathering, questionnaires were left behind for them to fill at their convenient time and later collected.

The sampling frame for each village was the list of all households in the village. The sampling unit was the household. Proportionate sampling was used to select the number of respondents from each village. The sample size depended on the population size of each village since each village had a population which ranged between 1000 to 2000 people; hence a sample of 317 was used. Questionnaire surveys were used to collect data from elite members of the community considering a proportionate number from each village. In depth interviews and focused group discussion were conducted to obtain qualitative data from a proportionate number of respondents, while observation was applied to

examine the relationship between land conflict and food security.

Since the population was so big with some villages having over 1000 residents; this study only used accessible population. Hence, the study targeted 1815 residents, 140 community leaders, 5 members of the district production committee and 6 district land board committee members. Thus, the total study population was 1966. In order to determine the sample size, the study based on a sample size determination table using the formula provided by Krejcie and Morgan as cited by Amin (2005), where a sample size of 445 respondents to participate in the study was applicable. A probability sampling method was used, which involved a random selection. In order to have a random selection method the researcher used a simple random sampling method to select residents and community leaders. In this case, each individual member of the study population had an equal chance of being chosen, or probability, of being selected, (Miller D. 1996).

A questionnaire survey method was administered to collect data from a selected group using a standardized format. The selected group in this study was the community leaders. This method involved collecting information from a sample of community leaders and committee members in a systematic manner. Questionnaire surveys were used to this category of respondents to save time because they were many to be interviewed. Whereas face- face interview was applied to collect data to enable the interviewer to directly communicate with the respondents as recommended, Fowler, 2002. This was used to collect data from district officials, chiefs and politicians because they were not many. This enabled the study to acquire firsthand information directly from respondents. This also enabled the researcher to clarify questions and answers which were obtained through in-depth information through probing. Semi-structured interviews were designed to collect data for this study.

Documentary review was used which involved the use of outside sources, documents, to support the viewpoint or argument of academic works as recommended by Scott, 2006. The analysis of the documents in the documentary research was both quantitative and qualitative. Both primary and secondary data was collected. Primary data was collected through interviews, questionnaire whereas secondary data was collected from reports



of the land board committee, Government technical reports on land both at regional and national level. Both books and papers specifically journals, were very useful in this piece of work. The written texts provided information that could not readily be available in spoken form and accessible at a low cost. Again, written documents provided permanent historical insights and were well reviewed repeatedly as suggested by Denscombe, 1998 and Hodder, 1994.

## 4. Results and Discussion

Land conflicts are disagreements which occur among individuals or groups of people over land

ownership and utilization. Information gathered from the field revealed that major land conflicts have occurred between two ethnic groups: Basongora and Bayiira/Bakonzo in Kasese district.

At a 95 C.I, it was revealed by majority 92.7% that land is not equitably distributed among ethnic groups. This was evident in Kitwamba and Karusandara Sub-counties. In both counties of Bukonzo and Busongora majority people own land which ranges between 1 - 3 acres, which meant that production is largely at subsistence level. It was therefore revealed that majority 71.1% who are farmers depend on small scale farming, 17.5% small scale business, whereas 11.5% get their income through civil service.

**Table 1: Shows response on inequitable distribution of land between ethnic groups**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agree	292	92.7
Disagree	51	7.3
TOTAL	315	100%

*Source: Primary Data, 2018*

The study further revealed that, in both Busongora and Bukonzo Counties, there are many unresolved land disputes. The court ruling on Rwehingo land in 2015 in Nyakiyumbu sub-county had been dishonored by one party in this dispute.

Land grabbing emerged as the main cause of land conflicts in Kasese district with 93.2 %, followed by wild animals which destroy food crops at 40.7%, government resettlement at 29.3%, manmade and natural disasters at 7.1% and the least as climate change at 4.1%.

On land availability and food availability, at 95 C.I it was revealed that there was negative significant relationship between land availability and food production. The Pearson Chi-Square value 52.274; implied that there was less association between land availability and food production in Kasese District.

The tested P-value on land conflicts and per capita income  $0.02 < 0.05$ , correlation coefficient 0.064, implied negative significant relationship between land conflicts and per capita income.

**Table 2: Shows, Correlation co-efficient between land conflicts and volume of food produced**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.071	.227		9.104	.000
	Role played by land conflicts on food availability	.529	.100	.248	5.301	.000

*Source: Primary Data 2018*

From table 2 above, the study revealed  $0.00 < 0.05$  which meant that there is no correlation between land conflicts and volume of food produced.

Whereas land conflicts are common in Kasese, they do not greatly affect the quantity of food produced.

## Discussion of findings

Whereas land conflicts have not greatly affected food availability and sustainability, the study revealed that land conflicts have contributed to loss of lives. In 2013, eleven (11) cultivators were killed by Basongora cattle keepers in areas of Rwehingo, in Nyakiyumbu and Nyakatonzi sub-counties respectively. While in 2015, a revenge like attack took place in Bigando parish of Karusanda sub-county in which ten (10) people were killed including cattle keepers. These conflicts were preceded by the redistribution of land in 2009 in the ratio of 1:3 i.e one acre to a cultivator and three acres to a cattle keeper. This is agreement with earlier research by Boudreaux et al. (2017) who asserts that, land conflicts can result from historical injustices, ill-advised government policies, conflicts of interest, corrupt leadership, or more generally from competition over land and resources. And that conflicts can be clearly apparent, involving violence or damage to property, or may be latent or dormant. Similarly, according to UNLP, 2013, Uganda ministry of Agriculture, (2010), the land conflict level between pastoralists and cultivators is on the rise, and conflict has turned out to be the main threat to crop farmers.

This study revealed that, land conflicts in Kasese district exist in three main dimensions; between individuals, between groups and between institutions. The first dimension involves issues of inter-boundary conflicts, rights of occupancy, misrepresentation, selling and purchase; the second dimension involves cultivators and animal herders; whereas the third dimension involves institutions and existing frameworks. To note on the latter, there are conflicts between Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and surrounding communities, land grabbing and special interest groups.

Wild animals like elephants have destroyed crop gardens since there is limited control over them. Farmers revealed that when crops are destroyed by wild animals, they received no compensation. This resulted into continued conflicts between the surrounding communities and Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). The study revealed that some households in Nyakiyumu, Karusanda, and Nyakatonzi sub-counties many times have gone without any harvest due to crop destruction by elephants.

It was also found that in Karusandara Sub- County in Busongora County, residents do not have full land rights. Here farmers, were not allowed to lease or acquire titles because they occupied land belonging to Mubuku irrigation scheme which is government land. On the other hand, the study revealed that renting land in Bubuku irrigation scheme ranged between Shs. 200,000= to 300,000= per acre which was expensive to an ordinary citizen hence affecting food sustainability. This relates to the study by Young and Korir (2011)<sup>1</sup> who pointed out that, minority groups' access to land, water, forests and other natural resources in East Africa is dependent on national legal regimes, state practice and customary frameworks within minority communities.

The study further revealed that the settlement of land disputes in courts of law had left a lot to be admired. It was revealed that most often prolonged court procedures accelerated delays in accessing and utilizing the disputed land which resulted into suspicion and mistrusts among the worrying parties. Therefore, despite efforts made by government to address land-related issues, the land sector in Kasese still experienced several hiccups which included insecurity of tenure, overlapping and conflicting land rights, and inequity in access to and ownership of land (*Annual District Land board committee Report, 2017*). Unfortunately, as earlier pointed out by Rugadya, (2009), in a bid to reduce land conflicts in Kasese, land was partitioned like a cake in a ratio of 1:3 (cultivators and pastoralists) respectively. This did not leave any sustainable land remedy between the Basongora cattle keepers and other groups.

Land is as an inimitable factor of production that facilitate livelihoods including agriculture for direct food production. The heightened land grabbing of public and private land by individuals and groups of people accelerates land conflicts.

It was revealed that the common types of food crops grown in both Busongora and Bukonzo Counties were: maize (corn), beans and cassava. However, since majority produced for home consumption, this affected the levels of income. In both counties, majority cattle keepers owned animals between 10 to 30 heads of cattle, and their level of milk production ranged between 10 to 50 liters per day which is very low. This relates to previous research, Food insecurity is not the only factor that is conducive to violent conflict, but may be part of a pattern whereby groups of people are it for the

ethnic or political affiliation, their regional alliance or their religious practices are treated differently than others (World Bank, 2001).

The study revealed that many cattle keepers had resorted to keeping fewer animals because land was not enough for extensive grazing. It was further revealed that, sometimes when pastures are scarce, animals were grazed illegally within the national park. Due to this, it was found that majority cattle keepers were transiting from traditional pastoralism to a settled communal grazing.

The study revealed that in both counties, some individuals owned land which they did not use for cultivation or grazing. This meant that land availability did not necessarily cause food sustainability.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

The research concludes that land conflicts do not play a big role on food availability and access in Kasese district since  $R= 2.295$ ,  $P\text{-value } 0.02(<0.05)$ . However, it is important that land matters in Kasese should be given serious attention to provide immediate, medium and long term remedies to condense land conflicts. The 1995 constitution is a hallmark which should be protected by the legislation body, because if very well effected and implemented land related cases can be reduced. This must however, go hand in hand with the will and mutual trust among the key stakeholders. The communities of Bakonzo/Bayira and Basongora have lived together for many years without tensions until recently when external forces have created high speculation and demand for land in the region, hence the need to restore the lost mutual respect, tranquility and co-existence.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The research recommends that Government should put in place appropriate land laws concerning effective land utilization. By doing so, absent landlords who own huge pieces of land will reduce thereby minimizing land grabbing. Whereas extensive idle land owned by government should be equitably distributed among residents in fair proportions. Where land conflicts have been resolved, court recommendations should be highly respected by concerned parties. Kasese District local government should strengthen the capacities

of lower-level leaders in different communities to embrace diverse co-existence of different groups specifically the cultivators and cattle keepers through peaceful dialogue and reconciliation meetings.

The study further recommended that Government through the Ministry of Lands, housing and urban planning (MLHUP) together with other line ministries should fully support sustainable farming systems with a comprehensive land reform policy that will benefit both cattle keepers and crop farmers to ensure increased food availability, access, and utility in Kasese District. Finally, a comprehensive package of food security and sustainable nutrition mechanisms should be well integrated in all sectors.

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