

The overall economic cost of livestock rustling in Uganda is estimated as UGShs394.1 billion (USD\$110 million). It consists of the cost of animals lost, costs associated with displacement, and costs of the public restocking programme.

4. CONCLUSION

Nowadays, due to the disarmament process and increased security check points within Karamoja sub-region, the number of incidents of cattle rustling has decreased significantly. Furthermore, the impacts of current activities—in terms of the number of animals lost or destruction of property is also significantly lower compared to the situation at the start of the disarmament. With the end of the large-scale cattle rustling activities, there has been a switch to alternative livelihoods. For instance, a substantial proportion of communities is now engaged in cattle trade spurred by the proliferation of cattle markets in all sub-counties as well as thriving cross border cattle markets. Indeed, livestock sales are now very common as opposed to previous cases where animals were kept for pride and could not be sold even when the owner was sick. The youth have also turned to mining and quarrying, charcoal burning and firewood trade. However, there has been extensive environmental destruction as communities seek alternative livelihoods.

Some costs were found difficult to estimate although they are related to the cost of cattle rustling. Such costs include loss of life, loss of property other than livestock, loss of crops; cost incurred by the Government on disarmament, and the cost of maintaining security personnel whose continued presence is necessary due to the threat of cattle rustling.

5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this assessment on the social and economic costs of cattle rustling and raiding provide evidence for implementing the following recommendations;

- There should be continued support for disarmed youths to establish alternative sources of livelihood. The support could be provided through entrepreneurship training where the disarmed young men are assisted in developing businesses and engage in trade. Furthermore, the Government should use the available youth venture funds to support the youth to engage in the thriving cattle market trade. Alternative livelihoods can greatly change the mindset of the youth.
- Although Government has invested in the cattle-restocking programme, the current level of funding is low given the population of deserving beneficiaries. Only one animal is provided whereas numbers lost during the raids were much higher. Given the huge loss suffered by households during raids, the government needs to substantially boost the budget for the re-stocking programme so that communities do not feel left out.
- Given that cattle rustling activities are partly driven by the quest for survival especially during the hunger gap, Government and international organisations should also increase relief services during times of hunger.
- Given the importance of migration and the prevalence of cross-border cattle raids, there is need for more regional efforts to address cattle rustling. For example, Kenya can also implement forceful disarmament to reduce the availability of guns in the sub-region.

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SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC COSTS OF CATTLE RUSTLING IN UGANDA



I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past 40 years, threats of insecurity have been a major challenge to Uganda's development. Although the main civil conflict witnessed during 1986—2006 was between rebel groups and the national army in Acholi and West Nile sub-region, the country also witnessed more geographically restricted conflicts especially in the pastoral areas; mainly in Karamoja which is located in the north eastern part of Uganda.

The people of Karamoja - the Karamojong, are predominantly pastoralists and have historically engaged in cultural cattle raiding both within the sub-region and against their neighbours. Previously, cattle raiding was undertaken using traditional instruments such as spears, bows, and arrows; as a consequence, cattle rustling activities were less violent or destructive. However, the introduction of the gun into the Karamojong culture changed the way the Karamojong relate with one another and with their neighbours.

Political upheavals in Uganda coupled with the famine of 1980 that decimated cattle herds in Karamoja led to increased frequency of cattle raids to neighbouring districts as a means of restocking herds. In the 1990s, conflicts in neighbouring countries particularly in South Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia, led to the proliferation of small arms trade within Karamoja. Since then guns have acquired both social and cultural status or values—they could be exchanged for cows, and even used as bride price. Despite the Government of Uganda (GoU) successfully implementing a forceful disarmament process during 2001—2013, the economic impacts of cattle rustling remain. The Government is yet to fully restock the livestock lost during insurgency. Although the Government as part of its disaster response has realized the need to devote more attention to rebuilding communities affected by cattle rustling, there is nevertheless very little information on the social and economic costs of this kind of livestock theft. Understanding these costs is important for appropriate designing of interventions and



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FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT DIRECTOR,
P.O. Box 47824-00100 Nairobi, Kenya, Email: icpald@igad.int

strategies for preventing re-occurrence of the vice. The main objective of this policy brief is to bring out evidence for understanding the drivers of cattle rustling in Uganda and its socio-economic impact on the livestock economy and society.

2. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The methodology adopted to assess the social and economic costs of cattle rustling in Uganda consisted of qualitative and quantitative methods including structured in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, interviews with key informants, use of secondary sources of information and comprehensive analysis of the previous studies.

The study selected Karamoja region as the case study because of the long-standing conflict dated back to the colonial era. Cattle rustling in Uganda is mainly practised in this region however, other sub-regions such as Teso, Acholi, and Lango have historically suffered the effects of cattle rustling arising from raids by Karamajong. Karamoja is located in the North Eastern part of Uganda. Within Uganda, it borders Acholi sub-region in the west and Teso sub-region in the south. It shares an international border with Kenya in the east as well as South Sudan in the north (see map above).



3. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

A. Factors Influencing Cattle Rustling in Uganda

According to the previous studies reviewed and respondents interviewed, the factors influencing cattle rustling and raiding in Uganda include extreme poverty, culture and political isolation, guns and the collapse of traditional authorities, extreme climate shocks, and commercialisation of cattle rustling.

B. Efforts to Curb Cattle Rustling in Uganda

The Government responded to curb cattle rustling and responses are cited in this study. In order to reduce violence and improve security within the sub-region, the Government launched a disarmament programme in December 2001. In the first phase, the disarmament

process was voluntary and warriors who surrendered weapons, notably guns, were compensated by items such as ox-ploughs, seeds, money, and iron sheets. At least 10,000 guns were surrendered during the voluntary period after which the national army initiated a “cordon and search” operation to forcefully remove weapons. Communities that were forcefully disarmed were never compensated and the operation netted about 30,000 guns. This process was concluded in 2013. It is worth noting that although the Karamojong were disarmed, the neighbouring tribes across the border were not. This has led to unintended consequences including making the Karamojong vulnerable to attack by neighbouring tribes. Furthermore, not all guns were surrendered; some Karamajong communities hid the guns within their homesteads. Communities feared to hand over their guns because their neighbours were still armed.

In 2012, the peace committee in Nabilatuk came up with a resolution to punish cattle rustlers. According to the resolution, perpetrators would be required to pay back double the number of animals stolen plus one additional animal (to be allocated to the peace committee) as a deterrent. Later, the army leadership helped spread the resolution to other areas of Karamoja by instituting the policy in July 2013. The resolution remains as one of the most important home-grown initiatives and is widely respected across the region. The initiative helped to reassert the role of elders. Other initiatives include; building infrastructure, basic service delivery, water harvesting techniques, and implementation of other programmes to bring change such as youth and women livelihood supportive programmes. This is in addition to the roles of non-state actors in the region.

C. Cattle rustling in Karamoja region

Previous studies in the region had shown that inter-clan and ethnic-based cattle theft activities continued even after the disarmament process. Due to this process, attacks were carried out by large armed groups targeting large herds of animals. The major cases currently happen through cross border raids from Kenya and South Sudan. During the field survey, respondents reported that in October 2017, 31 cattle were taken in a raid to Moroto. Cases of cattle raids were reported between Turkana and Karamojong and between them and the Pokot.

In November 2017, the Karamojong raided about 18 head of cattle from the Pokot. On average, about 200 head of cattle were raided in comparison to only about 30 per incident in recent times. Traditionally, the

Karamojong believed that all the cows available on the planet belong to them. According to the interviews with key informants, they moved to distant places to raid and acquire cows that unfortunately were lost due the harsh climatic conditions in the region. One interviewee said “during the cattle raids, if a man killed a person he would be considered strong; girls would praise him and sing for him songs”. Cultural beliefs in bride wealth also fueled cattle raids as cattle theft was undertaken for marriage purposes (dowry). It was mentioned that in the 1980s, “If you had no cows, you could not marry a woman and a person who had no cows was disrespected”. Furthermore, the expected amount of dowry is prohibitive. For instance, the Karamojong ask for over 100 cows in marriage.

Droughts and mobility to look for water and pasture can increase incidents of cattle rustling for re-stocking.

Instances of raiding are also frequent during rainy seasons.

Based on hospital data in 2008, annual deaths as a result of cattle rustling were estimated as 60 deaths per population of 100,000. According to the National Household Survey, more than one out of every ten adults in Karamoja are either widows or widowers (10.6 percent) compared to only 6.8 percent for the national average. Furthermore, across Uganda, at least 11.3 percent of all women aged at least 18 are widows; the corresponding rate in Karamoja is 16.1 percent. As a consequence, the sub-region has the highest rates of female household heads. On the other hand, polygamy is more wide spread in Karamoja than in the rest of the country.

Specifically, four out of every ten household heads in the sub-region are in a polygamous relationship—a rate that is more than double the national average of 14 percent.

The threats of cattle rustling and car ambushes greatly affected schooling in Karamoja sub-region. For more than 20 years, children did not access sufficient formal schooling. More than half (59 percent) of the Karamoja population does not have formal education compared to about 12 percent for Uganda. The low level of education is partly to blame for the persistence of cattle rustling. Cattle rustling also resulted in massive displacement of households. For example, at the peak of cattle rustling, communities in Moroto abandoned two sub-counties (Lotirir and Lotisan) and settled in towns especially around the barracks for purposes of security. Due to forced displacement, animals ended up in overcrowded environments leading to the spread of animal diseases.

D. Social and Economic Costs of Cattle Rustling at National Level

The estimated number of animals lost during 2016/17 was 62,858. Based on an average price of UGShs 850,000 per animal, the value of animals lost was estimated as UGShs 53.4 billion. The study estimated that during the period 2005 - 2015 a population of 246,000 was displaced due to cattle rustling activities in Uganda. At least 62 percent of the persons displaced were in Karamoja sub-region followed by Teso sub-region (21 percent) due to its relatively large population. The estimated cost of re-settlement of the displaced population was UGShs308.7 billion (US\$86 million). As part of the pacification and development of the conflict affected Northern Uganda, the government instituted a cattle-restocking programme in 2013/14.

During the period 2013-2017, about UGShs32 billion were spent on this programme. Another lingering impact of cattle rustling has been hunger. During the raids, communities found it hard to settle and grow food. Due to cattle rustling activities which heightened insecurity, limited agriculture was practised in Karamoja between 1992 - 2012. The Karamojong depended on relief to meet food needs. The objective of the re-stocking programme was to provide at least 37,000 new livestock (heifers and other cattle) to the sub-regions of Northern Uganda that had been affected by cattle rustling activities of the Karamojong, i.e., Teso, Acholi, Lango and West Nile.

On the social front, cattle rustling has demographic, educational, psychological, and insecurity effects. Some of the most profound impacts of cattle rustling have been demographic. For instance, there are many widows as well as orphans among the Karamojong—the men and youth who were killed were household heads. In addition to the widespread polygamy in Karamoja, there are high numbers of widows and orphans and a substantial proportion of old men aged 55 years and above, with no one to take care of them because stronger people died in the raids. High illiteracy levels still drive cattle raiding in Karamoja. Idle youth who are uneducated consider cattle rustling as an alternative livelihood. Psychologically, formerly displaced people still fear to go back to their original settlements, which they abandoned due to cattle rustling. Partly, due to the displacement, they experienced loss of property such as land. At the peak of cattle rustling, insecurity manifested itself in the form of cattle raids, road banditry, looting of villages/properties, and killing of people.