

Child soldiers

Full name

Uganda

Population

30.9 million (UN, 2007)

Capital

Kampala

Area

241,038 sq km (93,072 sq miles)

Major languages

English, Swahili, Luganda, various Bantu languages

Major religions

Christianity, Islam

Life expectancy

52 years (UN)

Main exports

Coffee, fish and fish products, tea; tobacco, cotton, corn, beans, sesame

GNI per capita

US \$280 (World Bank, 2006)

Uganda fact sheet

Although Uganda has now enjoyed more than a decade of relative peace and stability after 20 years of civil war, it remains one of the poorest countries in the world and the people continue to suffer from its position at the centre of an area of violence and ethnic unrest. Health care is poor and malnutrition, malaria and parasites are common. There is a large incidence of HIV/AIDS as well as related illnesses like TB and pneumonia. Less than half the people have access to clean drinking water and life expectancy is low.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has been fighting the government since 1987, which it seeks to overthrow and replace with a regime founded on the Ten Commandments. Based in Southern Sudan, it is led by Joseph Kony and uses Bible references to justify the torture, massacres and violent recruitment methods which have led to nearly two million people being displaced.

The AIDS epidemic peaked in 1991 with prevalence rate of 15% amongst all adults, and 30% amongst pregnant women in urban areas. The dramatic reduction to only 5% in 2001 was partly due to the government's prevention campaign, but also to the high number of AIDS-related deaths. There are still over a million people infected with AIDS and another million AIDS orphans in Uganda.

SOS Children's Villages has three villages in Uganda at Kakiri, Entebbe and Gulu. Their facilities like schools and medical centres are shared with the local community. SOS Children Gulu, originally an emergency refugee camp, is fighting the spread of AIDS with testing and medical support and runs several social and community-outreach schemes, such as family strengthening programmes. It also offers therapy and support to former child soldiers.



Sources:
www.soschildren.org
www.bbc.co.uk/news
www.avert.org
www.fas.org