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**CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES – USCCB -UGANDA**

**FIELD SECURITY PLAN - AUGUST 2020**



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1. **INTRODUCTIOIN: PURPOSE OF PLAN**

CRS provides this Field Security Plan (FSP) to all staff and agency guests (including dependent family members of international staff) residing, working in, or visiting the CRS Uganda office. The aim of this security plan is to inform all staff/guests about security rules and procedures applying to or are in effect for CRS Uganda.

Every member of the CRS country program team, staff, and non-staff guests residing, working, or visiting CRS office has a responsibility to promote safety and security, and is required to follow all rules and procedures in this security plan. Safety and security are the responsibilityof each staff member and visitors; all security incidents must be promptly reported to CRS’ Country Representative, Uganda Security Focal Persons and relevant authorities. Failure to do so could endanger life and is a disciplinary offense. This FSP is designed to keep you and your co-workers safe, and to enable CRS’ progress.

Any staff residing, working in, or visiting CRS Uganda offices is required to read this as part of their orientation and sign the **Employee/Visitor Signatory Sheet (annexure)** of this FSP and retain a copy (with its critical information). If you have any questions/suggestions, please inform your Manager or the Security Focal Person as soon as possible.

The FSP must be updated regularly as dictated by changes in operating environment, annually at a minimum.

In general, CRS will exercise a preference for a strategy of acceptance. CRS works with local, national, and international institutions, as well as other organizations to assist people on a needs-basis, not creed, race, or nationality. CRS’ image and actions in operating environments have important influences on staff Safety and security.

All staff should also have a copy of the updated **Safe and Sound Guidelines** and be familiar with all agency policies related to security matters – see the Security Focal Point person (SFP) for further information. Agency security manuals, policies, and field security plans may be accessed on the *CRS Safety and Security Portal*; please take some time to visit this resource. Visitors and newly recruited staff will be sent the shorter **Visitor Security and Safety Briefing**, which is also available on the *CRS Safety and Security Portal* through the agency’s intranet. They will also receive face to face security briefings, given hard copy of the briefing notes.

It is the responsibility of the Country Representative to maintain adequate procedures ensuring the safety of CRS staff and assets at the office and in private residences. Such procedures may need to be modified and augmented as situations develop. The CRS Uganda SFPs is currently the Supply Chain Manager for Kampala, Head of Offices for Yumbe, Moroto, and Kyangwali. Every staff member is encouraged to contribute updates as needed, **to the SFP.**

The SFP will provide advisory guidance and recommendations related to security situations.

1. **OPERATING ENVIRONMENT**
2. **Geography**

Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa, with South Sudan in the North, Kenya in the East, Tanzania and Rwanda in the South and Democratic Republic of Congo – DRC in the West. Uganda is 1,100 metres (3,609 ft) above sea level; while much of its border is lakeshore, Uganda is landlocked. The country is mostly plateau, with rolling hills and low mountains. Grasslands and tropical forests dominate the central region, volcanic foothills in the east. The Ruwenzori Mountains form much of the southwestern border between Uganda and the DRC; the highest peaks are snow-capped. In eastern Uganda, the border with Kenya is marked by volcanic hills. Uganda is replete with water and contains many large lakes. In fact, almost one-fifth of its total area is open water or swampland. Four of East Africa's Great Lakes: Lake Victoria, Lake Kyoga, Lake Albert, and Lake Edward, lie within Uganda or on its borders.

1. **Demography**

Uganda’s population is about 44 million, 25% of which is urban. The largest cities (by population) are: Kampala, Gulu, Lira, Mbarara, and Jinja. Uganda is made up of the following ethnic groups:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Baganda 16.9%, | Central region |  |
| Banyankole 9.5%, | Western Region |  |
| Basoga 8.4%; | Eastern Region |  |
| Bakiga 6.9%, | Western Region |  |
| Iteso 6.4%, | Eastern Region |  |
| Langi 6.1%; | Northern Region |  |
| Acholi 4.7%, | Northern Region |  |
| Bagisu 4.6%, | Eastern Region |  |
| Lugbara 4.2%; | Northern Region |  |
| Bunyoro 2.7%, | Western Region |  |

 The country is predominantly Christian: Roman Catholic 41.9%, Protestant 42% (Anglican 35.9%, Pentecostal 4.6%, Seventh-Day Adventist 1.5%), Muslim 12.1%; other 3.1%, no affiliation 0.9%. English is the official national language, taught in grade schools, used in courts of law, and by most newspapers and some radio stations. Luganda is the most widely used of the Niger-Congo languages, preferred for native language publications in the capital and taught in some schools.

1. **Political Environment**

The Country has just gone through a general election which ended in February 2021, the new office bearers will be sown in in May 2021 right from the President, Members of Parliament to the local council leaders across the country.

The general elections brought in the usual challenges such as social instability, increase crime, higher cost of living and disruption in the economy especially after the elections. The ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) is led by President Yoweri Museveni, who took power in 1986 won the majority seats across the different positions. After coming to power through a guerrilla warfare in 1986, President Museveni was elected to a first term in 1996. He was re-elected in a contested election in 2001. The constitutional amendments, approved by a referendum in July 2005, introduced multi-party politics and Parliament lifted the two, five-year presidential term limits; this allowed President Museveni to seek a third term in office during the 2006 elections. In February 2016, elections were held and the ruling party (NRM), led by incumbent Museveni, won most votes at 60.62%, allowing for another five-year term (his fourth term). In December 2018 the NRM-dominated parliament amended the constitution and removed the 75 years age limit for one to be eligible to stand as a presidential candidate, again paving the way for the ruling 73 years old president to stand for another term.

1. **Local Laws and Customs**

In February 2014, the Anti-Homosexuality Bill was signed into law, increasing previous penalties and creating new criminal offences, including the ‘promotion of homosexuality.’ On 1 August 2014, the Constitutional Court overturned the law. This however did not change the attitude of some law enforcement officers including the police who continue to hold it as illegal and not tolerated. Penalties for drug trafficking are severe also. Photos of military and official or diplomatic sites (including Owen Falls Dam at the source of the Nile near Jinja) are strictly forbidden. If taking photographs of people, ask permission first. Individuals may be stopped and asked for ID documents by officials. The police and the military enforce local laws with a level of high-handedness especially during election periods, and demonstrations sometimes lead to many days of detention without trial.

1. **Economy**

Uganda has substantial natural resources, including fertile soils, regular rainfall, substantial reserves of recoverable oil, and small deposits of copper, gold, and other minerals. Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of the economy, employing 72% of the workforce. The country’s export market suffered a major slump following the outbreak of conflict in South Sudan but has recovered lately, largely due to record coffee harvests (accounting for 16% of exports) and increasing gold exports (10% of exports). Uganda has a small industrial sector that is dependent on imported inputs such as refined oil and heavy equipment. Overall, productivity is hampered by several supply-side constraints, including insufficient infrastructure, lack of modern technology in agriculture, and corruption.

Uganda’s economic growth has slowed since 2016 as government spending and public debt has grown. Uganda’s budget is dominated by energy- and road infrastructure-spending. Uganda relies on donor support for long-term drivers of growth: agriculture, health, and education. The largest infrastructure projects are externally financed through concessional loans, but at inflated costs. As a result, debt-servicing for these loans is expected to rise.

Oil revenues and taxes are expected to become a larger source of government funding as oil production expected to start in 2022 noting this deadline has been extended a few times. Over the next three to five years, foreign investors are planning to invest $9 billion USD in production facilities’ projects, $4 billion USD in an export pipeline, as well as a $2-3 billion USD refinery to produce petroleum products for the domestic and East African Community markets. Furthermore, the government is looking to build several hundred million dollars’ worth of highway projects from the oil revenue.

Uganda faces many economic challenges. Instability in South Sudan has led to a sharp increase in Sudanese refugees and is disrupting Uganda's main export market. Additional economic risks include: poor economic management, endemic corruption, and the government’s failure to invest adequately in the health, education, and economic opportunities for a burgeoning young population. Uganda has one of the lowest electrification rates in Africa; only 22% of Ugandans have access to electricity, 10% in rural areas.

Lastly, COVID19 will have a significant impact on the Uganda economy, which will most likely contract in 2020. While trade mostly continues, the border closure has brought tourism all but to a standstill, which is a significant loss of income for the country as well as a source of foreign currency. The IMF granted two emergency loans in 2020 thus far.

1. **Public Health**

Health System in Uganda lags many other countries in the region and Africa but is at par with the countries in the WHO AFRO region. Recent statistics show that life expectancy at birth is 58 years. Child mortality (death before the age of five years) occurs in 90 of every 1000 live births. In the early 1990s, Uganda was hit very hard by the outbreak of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in East Africa. In the early 1990s, 13% of Ugandan residents had HIV; this fell to 4.1% by the end of 2003, the most effective national response to AIDS of any African country. In the 2013 *Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic*, the UNAIDS/WHO Working Group estimated that approximately 1,400,000 adults aged 15 or over in Uganda were living with HIV; the prevalence was estimated at 6.5% of the adult population. A 2016 study, The Uganda Population HIV Impact Assessment (UPHIA), conducted by the government of Uganda put the national prevalence at 6%, and estimated total of 1.3 million persons (Adults and Children) living with HIV. The country has made some progress in the 90-90-90 target standing at 84%-87%-88% as of August 2019 as per the AVERT report.

Major infectious diseases with a very high degree of risk:

* Food/waterborne: bacterial diarrhoea, hepatitis A and E, and typhoid fever.
* Vector born: malaria, dengue fever, and Trypanosoma brucei gambiense (TbG), also known as the African sleeping sickness
* Water contact: schistosomiasis (2016)
* Animal contact: rabies (2016)
1. **Development Challenges**

Uganda has surpassed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target, halving poverty by 2015 and making significant progress in the reduction of hunger and promoting gender equality and empowering women. However, risks to Uganda’s economic prospects are significant and mainly relate to fiscal mis-management in the face of election-related pressures, poor performance in domestic revenue mobilization, and an uncertain date of oil production commencement with its subsequent flow of revenue. Beyond these risks, Uganda’s growth and development are constrained by the low levels of agricultural production, value addition and limited non-agricultural productivity, inappropriate urban development, slow infrastructure development, and limited credit at high lending rate. This type of growth can neither shield the economy from shocks, nor accelerate its rate of economic growth to higher levels of prosperity.

1. **Crime & Safety Situation ([[1]](#footnote-1))**

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) has assessed Kampala as being a CRITICAL-threat location for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests. While the level of crime is at an acceptable level, the occasional spike makes it unpredictable to control and often left the police searching for solution. The Uganda Police Force has continued to improve on the scale of response and fairly decentralised their operations but still lack the required number, skills and equipment to respond in a timely manner especially in the rural areas.

h.1 *Crime Threats*

Most violent robberies in Kampala target individuals or small groups walking alone in isolated areas after dark. The Country Program generally recommends traveling in groups and using a private vehicle or a privately contracted driver to move around the city, especially after dark.

Outside of Kampala, in addition to the threat of property crime, organized gangs (sometimes known as “iron bar gangs”) periodically rob and extort businesses, residents, and visitors. Occasionally, these gangs have blocked major roads late at night to attack passing vehicles. These gangs are also known to commit sexual violence against their victims.

Crime may occur anywhere and anytime; for the last couple of months, Uganda been in the spotlight for an upsurge in criminal activities. In the police’s first Annual Crime Report in three years, there is a 3.3% increase in the crime rate nationwide. The report further revealed that over 25,000 cases were reported in 2017, compared to over 24,000 the previous year. There was an increase in violent crimes (e.g., homicides), as well as domestic and gender-based violence. More than 200 kidnappings were recorded by the police in 2017. Though comprehensive figures for 2018 have not been officially released, there have been more than 40 similar cases reported this year. Of concern is also a trend of transnational human trafficking with 123 cases recorded in 2017, compared to 84 the year before; particularly to the Middle East regions on the promise of domestic work. No new official reports have released to date.

h.2 *Drug-related Crimes*

Uganda is strategically located along a major narcotics transit route between Middle Eastern, Asian, and West African heroin markets, and drugs regularly transit through Uganda headed for markets in Europe, the U.S., and other African countries. Cannabis is grown throughout Uganda and is rarely policed, allowing for large cannabis crops to flourish in remote rural areas. The Uganda Police Force’s (UPF) Anti-Narcotics Unit is underequipped, undermanned, and undertrained, but they still occasionally seize and interrupt drug shipments. In 2017, the UPF worked with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to break up a laboratory producing methamphetamines. The UPF maintains a drug interdiction team at Entebbe International Airport. There has been on-going debate in parliament to legalise the growing and export of cannabis crop.

h.3 *Counterfeiting of U.S. Dollars*

The counterfeiting of U.S. dollars is common. The rate of this type of crime has increased in recent years. Specifically, authorities discovered counterfeit $100 USD bills in many areas of Uganda in 2016. The bills were expertly counterfeited and passed in large quantities in Kampala and around tourist destinations. Uganda border is also often used for cross border smuggling of counterfeit currency especially to/from South Sudan and Kenya. In 2018, large amount of materials used in forging US dollars was discovered in a house in Wakiso district and the culprits included foreign nationals.

h.4 *Cybersecurity Issues*

Cybersecurity continues to be a problem in Uganda. The government does not prioritize funding for cybersecurity infrastructure and does not allocate adequate funding for solutions, even after it identifies security breaches in sensitive government and financial systems. Some government agencies report that the security frameworks protecting their systems are at least 5-10 years behind security standards, and there is not a sense of urgency to update them. The problem is compounded by the fact that many Ugandan government officials view cybersecurity measures as optional, and the average Ugandan does not understand the importance of simple measures (using passwords for secure or sensitive systems). While there are a few officials in both the public and private sector who proactively try to address Uganda’s cybersecurity shortfalls, they face an uphill battle.

h.5 *Other Areas of Concern*

Uganda’s extensive, porous borders are inadequately policed, allowing for illicit trade and unregulated immigration. Rebel groups operate freely in eastern DRC, posing a potential risk along Uganda’s western border. The northern border with South Sudan has a limited security presence, and the crisis there has driven over one million refugees into Uganda, exacerbating an already challenging security situation. The remoteness of the border with Kenya makes it difficult to police, although main roads and border crossings generally have a consistent police presence. Since mid- 2019, Uganda and Rwanda have had disagreements that have led to the border being closed and repeated negotiations between the two countries have not improved the relationship much.

In November 2015, the U.S. Embassy lifted its travel restrictions to the Karamoja region. Travel throughout Karamoja remains somewhat hazardous due to poor road conditions, lengthy response times by police, and the lack of emergency medical services. In addition, Karamoja continues to see sporadic incidents of local violence due to cattle rustling and intertribal conflict and mob justice.

1. **Road Safety and Road Conditions**

Road traffic accident remains the biggest risk to humanitarian workers globally, in CRS Uganda we have had our share of road traffic accidents because of bad road conditions. According to the most recent information from WHO, Uganda is 24th in the world for road fatalities at 27.4 deaths per 100,000 people. The WHO estimated an annual 10,280 road deaths. The WHO judged the greatest risk of road death was for pedestrians (40%) and riders on motorized 2- and 3-wheelers (30%).

1. **Terrorism Threat**

In 2016, the U.S. DOS lowered the overall terrorism threat for Uganda to *Medium* for terrorist activity directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests. There has never been a terrorist attack or threat directed against U.S. interests in Uganda since 2014.

1. **Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence**

In 2016, the U.S. DOS elevated the rating for political violence in Uganda to *High*. Political tensions and the threat of violence were high before, during, and after the February 2016 national elections; the UPF responded quickly to shut down political rallies/protests they believed could lead to clashes/violence. In some instances, police used excessive force to break up public events; and on several occasions, police and non-uniformed civilian auxiliary forces assaulted opposition party members and members of the local media within and on the peripheries of these events. With the up coming election due in February 2020 and political mobilization starting mid-2020, this might lead to more demonstration, arrest and use of force to bring order.

1. **Medical Emergencies**

Health facilities are very limited and are generally inadequate; even the best hospitals in Kampala suffer from inadequate facilities, antiquated equipment, and shortages of supplies (particularly medicines). There is a shortage of qualified physicians] emergency assistance is limited. Quality outpatient psychiatric services have long response times leading to loss of life because victims are not attended to in time. The outbreak of COVID19 Pandemic has further put more strain on the health system in Uganda though it has been managed well so far. The Ministry of health has decentralised the collection of samples as well as managing cases to the regional hospitals, this has helped reduce the response time; inpatient psychiatric services are virtually non-existent. International SOS evacuations are all but impossible during the COVID19 lockdown and border closure, and all medical care needs to be provided in Uganda for the moment.

1. **Environmental Hazards**

Rapid-onset disasters may range from short-term food security crises to flash floods or earthquakes, infectious disease outbreaks, and political crisis/conflict situations. Slow-onset disasters stem primarily from food insecurity due to drought, with several other factors contributing to root causes. Uganda is in an earthquake zone and experiences repeated small tremors and earthquakes in up to 5.7 on the Richter scale, that don’t typically cause damage or loss of life. Climate change and especially changing rain patterns lead to extreme weather events outside of seasonal patterns: in recent years Uganda has seen frequent and dramatic flash flooding and landsliding as a result.

1. **Police Response**

The UPF maintains heavy deployments in metropolitan areas, especially Kampala, helping to thwart criminal and terrorist activities. While the UPF has made strides toward professionalization and modernization over the past decade, a lack of resources, corruption, and persistent reports of human rights violations still plague the UPF. There was increased crime in 2019 and the UPF have installed a number of security cameras around Kampala central district, even though these are not closely monitored/watched.

Persons violating Uganda's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Ugandan law strictly prohibits photographing police/military personnel/installations, industrial facilities, government buildings, and infrastructure (roads, bridges, dams, airfields). These sites are rarely marked clearly; guides, police, and officials can advise if a particular site may be photographed. Photographing prohibited sites may result in authorities confiscating the film/camera and questioning the photographer. The importation and use of drone style camera and surveillance equipment may result in this action as well.

1. **History of CRS Operations in Uganda**

CRS activities in Uganda began in 1965 as an outreach of the CRS Kenya program, in response to the desperate situation of Sudanese refugees living mainly in Northern Uganda. In the 1990s, CRS assistance shifted to HIV/AIDS program support, which had reached alarming proportions in the country. In October 1996, CRS opened an office in Uganda to respond to the emergency in the north caused by a conflict between the Ugandan government and a guerrilla insurgency, the Lord’s Resistance Army, that was aiming to establish a state based on the 10 commandants in Uganda.

CRS’ current interventions focus on HIV/AIDS, microfinance, agro-enterprise, water/sanitation, and shelter, which form part of our emergency response project. CRS programs have enhanced food security, increased household income, strengthened the capacity of local diocesan partners, and contributed to increased options for the poor.

The main office is in Kampala, the capital; CRS has sub-offices in:

* Yumbe, northern Uganda;
* Moroto, eastern region of Karamoja;
* Hoima- Kyangwali, Eastern region of Hoima.
1. **SUMMARY OF THE RISK ASSESSMENT**

CRS works under strict safety & security guidelines. The following is a summary of the major threats faced by CRS staff per the *2016 Risk Assessment*. These include: street crime, road traffic accidents, terrorism; demonstrations & riots, armed robberies & theft, fires; abductions & kidnapping, and illegal checkpoints/highway robberies. Reference *SOP* & *Risk Assessment Matrix* in annexes 1 & 5 respectively

1. **Road Traffic Accidents: (Risk Level – High/High)**

Roads in many areas of Uganda are generally in poor condition, causing damage to vehicles and contributing to hazardous traffic conditions. Travelling on the roads can be hazardous, due to heavy traffic, poor road conditions, non-enforcement of traffic rules and regulations. Driving requires extreme caution and fulltime attention. Under normal driving conditions, drivers employ excessive speed and unpredictable driving habits. Pedestrians and livestock commonly share the roadway, and commuter bus drivers ignore traffic laws. Drivers should exercise caution at bends, as it is common for vehicles coming from the other direction to overtake or otherwise drive in the middle of the road, even around blind turns. Many vehicles on the road are in poor mechanical condition.

While general vehicle travel during daylight hours is preferred because it is relatively safer, varying conditions of the roadways (including numerous potholes) combined with excessive speed can lead to serious accidents. Driving hazards at night include broken-down vehicles, pedestrians, drunk drivers, stray animals, and overall poor roadway conditions.

In rural areas, drivers should expect a lack of guard rails and few traffic signs/road markings. The Jinja - Kampala and the Kampala - Masaka roads are particularly accident-prone spots. There have been several serious accidents involving Ugandan long-distance bus services, linking Kampala with other towns in Uganda and internationally with Nairobi, Kigali, and Dar es Salaam. Travel throughout Karamoja also remains hazardous due to poor road conditions in the region, lengthy response times by the police, and the lack of emergency medical services.

Visitors traveling outside of Kampala should do so during daylight hours, due to both the security situation and road conditions (except on the road between Kampala and Entebbe International Airport). Travelers to Karamoja should use a four-wheel drive vehicle with a well-stocked emergency kit, food, extra gasoline, and water.

Speed limits in built-up areas are generally 50km/h and out of town 80km/h for single carriage way, and 100Km/h for express/dual carriage ways. Drivers should expect police to enforce traffic laws at a higher level than previously; breaking speed limits may result in a fine, imprisonment, or both. Travelers should educate drivers and other staff to maintain safe driving speeds and never encourage or condone risky driving habits on Uganda’s roadways.

Common forms of public transport are *matatus* (minibus taxis following a designated route) and *boda-bodas* (motorbike taxis). Though affordable to the average Ugandan, *matatus* and *boda-bodas* are usually in poor condition, badly driven, and often without proper insurance coverage, no safety wears such as seatbelts, helmets. Accidents are common; CRS does not recommend their use by visitors.

Finally, accidents can attract angry, potentially **violent** crowds in a very short period. It is recommended that anyone involved in an accident immediately report to the police and notify the CR and the Security Focal Point.

1. **Street Crime/Armed Robberies & Theft: (Risk Level – Medium/High)**

In Kampala, criminals regularly target the residences of expatriates and wealthy Ugandans. Often, domestic staff or hired security guards are involved in these crimes. The Country Program recommends persons staying in private residences to use multiple methods of redundant security (security guards, CCTV camera, alarms, locks, etc.) to secure their residences against burglary.

Criminals in Kampala also target personal possessions often, employing three main tactics: surreptitious pickpocketing, snatch-and-grab, and violent robbery.

b.1 *Surreptitious*

Individuals in public venues (restaurants, hotels, shopping malls, etc.) regularly report leaving their bags unattended for a short period and returning to discover that valuable items had been stolen. Travelers on public transportation have reported placing their bags under their seat and discovering that items had been stolen.

b.2 *Snatch-and-grab*

Criminals on foot and on motorcycles regularly target high traffic areas frequented by expatriates and on busy routes, late night travels/waking to steal handbags and backpacks. Persons visiting or living in Kampala should be extra cautious while walking along the road or stopping at tourist attractions.

b.3 *Violent Robbery*

Most violent robberies in Kampala are perpetrated against individuals or small groups walking alone in isolated areas after dark. While violent robberies are reported, other crimes are much more commonplace.

Outside of Kampala, in addition to the threat of property crime, organized gangs (sometimes known as “iron bar gangs”) periodically rob and extort businesses, residents, and visitors. Occasionally, these gangs have blocked major roads late at night to attack passing vehicles. These gangs are also known to engage in sexual violence.

There are also reports of property stolen from hotel rooms throughout the country. Although all hotels are at risk, it appears the risk is greater at the smaller hotels outside of Kampala.

In the nexus of crime and cybersecurity, ATM and credit card skimming continues to be a regular issue. Most restaurants that accept credit cards may bring the machine to your table, helping to deter unauthorized charges.

1. **Political, Economic & Civil Violence/Unrests: (Risk Level – Medium)**

Political or economically-motivated demonstrations can occur with little/no warning. Past protests mainly revolve around students disputing school fees, taxi drivers and street merchants opposing taxation, and those fighting over land-rights issues. Demonstrations are more frequent as the country get closer to elections. At least three people were injured on January 6, 2016, when security forces reportedly used tear gas, rubber bullets, and live ammunition to disperse supporters of the opposition, Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) presidential candidate, Kizza Besigye, in Bukwo district (Eastern region). In 2018, the parliamentary election revealed a changing face of political opposition. The rise in popularity of a musician-turned-lawmaker, Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, stage named Bobi Wine, triggered tense and elevated election violence throughout the country, witnessed during by a number of parliamentary elections in Arua, Iganga which led to arrests and detention of several opposition members of parliament .

When civil unrest, public protests, strikes; demonstrations, and violence occurs, the police are quick to resort to the use of batons, rubber bullets, tear gas, and occasional gunshots into the air to disperse crowds. On Election Day, February 2016, Kampala security forces deployed heavily throughout the metropolitan area; while the polls were open, they used tear gas and rubber bullets to clear the streets in response to isolated instances of unrest. In the days and weeks following the election, security forces used the same tactics to disperse supporters of opposition political parties, resulting in injuries and several deaths.

Through out the past by election between 2017 to 2019 there have been violent protests, arrests, and detention especially those that involve the opposition members. Member of Parliaments have been beaten, arrested and some had to seek for medical attention outside the country.

Staff should make every effort to avoid large gatherings or demonstration. If you get caught in one, leave the area as soon as possible. Staying current of events through local media and continually evaluating one's surroundings usually will mitigate these risks.

1. **COVID19 Pandemic outbreak (Risks Level Medium-/Medium)**

The global outbreak of the Coronavirus 2019 has not spared Uganda. As of 26th August 2020, there has been a total of 2679 cases and 28 deaths, with new positive cases being reported on a daily basis. The government of Uganda put in early measures to control the spread which was effective during the early months as the Ministry of Health organised themselves and prepared for future increases. However, as the lockdown eased and free movement of the population resumed, there is now a low adherence to the WHO and Ministry of Health guidelines, putting the country at risk of an increase of cases. The main stadium in Kampala is currently being prepared to support the management of non-critical cases – a sign that the government expects the number to keep increasing.

CRS Uganda has developed a SOP for business continuity during this COVID19 pandemic based on the WHO and Ministry of health guidelines. Staff are required to wear a face mask in the office, social distancing is compulsory, meetings of more than 5 staff are not allowed and no inessential visitors are allowed into the office. Furthermore, office cleaning and disinfection has been ramped up and frequent hand sanitizing is being promoted. Similar SOPs around self-quarantine and -testing are also in place.

Violent crackdowns have occurred occasionally during the enforcement of COVID19 restrictions in the county. It is important that CRS staff follow government guidelines whenever announced such as curfew hours, wearing of facemasks and number of staff in the vehicles etc.

1. **Terrorism/IED Attacks: (Risk Level – Medium)**

The government has demonstrated an increased capability to combat terrorist and criminal threats.

The largest international terrorist threat in Uganda comes from *al-Shabaab* in Somalia. The threat stems from Uganda’s support for the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). The twin suicide bombings in July 2010, in Kampala, in which 76 people were killed (including one U.S. citizen), was *al-Shabaab’s* first successful operation outside of Somalia and showed that *al-Shabaab* was ready, willing, and able to launch attacks in the region. *Al-Shabaab* has vowed to continue to attack the interests and citizens of countries supporting AMISOM. The 2013 terrorist attacks at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, and an *al-Shabaab* cell that was disrupted during an imminent attack in Kampala on September 13, 2014, are stark reminders that *al-Shabaab* remains a persistent threat.

Regional terror organizations consist of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), originally a Uganda-based Muslim rebel group that formed in 1996 and engaged in battles with the Ugandan military in 2007-2008. The ADF operates in eastern DRC and staged attacks against Congolese forces and civilians in 2015 and 2016. In 2013, it was reported that the ADF was conducting a recruitment campaign in Uganda to build up its depleted numbers and possibly target the Ugandan government, which believes the ADF has links to Muslim extremists (*al-Shabaab*) and continues to monitor the group closely.

Visitors must be vigilant always, especially in crowded areas and public places and during major gatherings like sporting or religious events. Previous terrorist attacks in the region have targeted football venues.

The Ugandan authorities continue to work to reduce the risk of further attacks. There may be additional security checks, including baggage and car searches in public places, including hotels.

1. **Fire - Office Building: (Risk Level – Low)**

In the Risk Assessment Exercise, building fire is identified as a low risk threat for the CRS Uganda office. Its impact can be severe, but probability is low. Weakness and exposure factors are identified as bad city planning, uneven electric supply, use of low quality electrical materials, electrical work being done by un qualified person and proximity to the U.S. Embassy. There is also minimal risk when driving up country during the dry season especially Karamoja region due to the cultural habit of bush burning.

Strength and mitigating factors include the staff and guards are trained and fire equipment is available in the building. With further improvement and staff preparation, the risk level of this threat can be mitigated.

1. **Abduction/Kidnapping: (Risk Level – Low)**

Foreigners have not been targeted specifically for kidnapping. However, in September 2008, a group of NGO workers was taken just south of Arua (in West Nile) into the DRC and held for six hours before being released. In 2013, the U.S. Embassy received one report of a U.S. citizen being the victim of a kidnapping; after being held for ransom for less than one day, the individual was rescued by the Uganda Police Force. In April 2019 a female tourist with her guide were abducted and held for almost 5 days from Queen Elizabeth National Park before they were released.

1. **Illegal Roadblocks/Highway Robberies: (Risk Level – Low)**

Drivers should be prepared for police checkpoints; likely, police will perform vehicle inspections and check for drunk drivers. There is a risk that some police may use these stops to try and extract bribes.

It is important to distinguish between the different types of checkpoints. Normally. checkpoints are designed to observe and control vehicle circulation, examine the roadworthiness of vehicles, ensure compliance with driver/vehicle documentation; check for stolen cars or unauthorized drivers, and transportation of contraband. In insecure areas, legitimate checkpoints also serve to identify vehicle occupants and to ascertain the reason for transiting the area. They are also to check for the transport of guns, explosives, or combatants.

In many cases, police also block the road in rural areas to insist on bribes. It is important for staff and drivers to know how to behave while crossing these checkpoints in case of harassment. Please also see the *SoP* and attached *Risk Assessment Matrix* for details.

Road travel outside of Kampala is dangerous during the day and treacherous at night. It is CRS policy that no staff members are authorized to travel on roads outside of the Kampala/Entebbe metropolitan area after dark between 7PM and 6AM. The road lighting in larger cities is inadequate at best and virtually non-existent in smaller towns. There have been occasional reports of highway robbery, including carjacking, by armed bandits outside urban areas; incidents have been accompanied by violence. Some overnight buses have been robbed after being forced to stop by roadblocks or by criminals posing as passengers. Visitors are cautioned to limit road travel outside towns or cities to daylight hours and travel in convoys, if possible.

Personnel at authorized checkpoints, therefore, have a job to do. It may not be pleasant; hence the checkpoint personnel may feel more at risk than you. If you are cooperative, patient, polite; all your papers are in order, and you have a legitimate job to do, then it is in the interest of all concerned to allow you to be on your way as swiftly as possible.

1. **Health & Disease: (Risk Level – Low)**

Outbreaks of infectious diseases occur with some frequency in Uganda. Recent outbreaks include Ebola at the DRC boarder in the Hoima region (summer 2018), meningitis in central Uganda (2017), yellow fever (2015 2016 and recently in 2019/ Jan 2020 leading to 3 deaths in Moyo and Bulisa); Rift Valley fever (2016), cholera outbreaks (past three years), Ebola and Marburg haemorrhagic fever outbreaks have occurred sporadically over the past decade. The global COVID 19 pandemic has been managed well by Uganda putting in place strict early restrictions which supressed the spread, but as the lock down is being eased, there is now increased infection including in the community, registering 28 deaths.

The government of Uganda’s management of these outbreaks has been effective; however, staff should be aware of the heightened threat posed by infectious diseases, especially given the local population’s current low adherence to MOH and WHO guidelines of wearing facemasks and social-distancing.

Malaria is prevalent, especially in rural areas. Staff who develop a fever or flu-like illness while traveling in a high malaria-risk area or after returning home (up to one year) should seek prompt medical attention. Travel history and anti-malarial medicine information should be shared with the health care provider. It is highly recommended that all visitors take precautions to prevent mosquito bites and follow instructions on anti-malarial prophylactics as well as sleeping under insecticide treated mosquito nets.

Visitors are advised to carry their own supplies of prescription drugs and preventive medicines, as well as a doctor's note describing the medication and its generic name.

Visitors should also avoid swimming in any bodies of water. All have been found to contain disease-causing parasites, including schistosomiasis.

Visitors are advised to only drink bottled water; avoid ice in drinks. Do not eat food prepared by unlicensed vendors or where you have concerns about kitchen hygiene. Fresh fruits and vegetables also pose risk especially if not well washed, cleaned before eating, in the last five years, there is increased use of pesticide in farming.

**Document Updates**

*Updates to this document are made by the Country Program designated SFP and reviewed by the Staff Safety and Security Advisor – EARO. This document must be signed off by the CR and Regional Director.*

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1. OSAC Uganda 2018 Crime & Safety Report [↑](#footnote-ref-1)