

UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEX INTER-CONNECTIONS OF CIVIL WAR AND COMMUNAL VIOLENCE: THE CASE OF UGANDA

This study explores the interlinkages between civil war and communal violence which conflict literature has endeavoured to categorise as two significantly different types of intra-state warfare typologies. A lot has been written about civil wars, but their connections with other conflict categories have so far been under-researched. This is especially true of the connection between civil war and communal violence, which this study explores in the context of northern and north-eastern Uganda. Much quantitative conflict research uses statistical data as the basis for arriving at conclusions about typologies and categories. However, quantitative approaches in conflict studies are usually based on secondary sources, which sometimes have little regard for the complexities of the changing dynamics of violent conflicts in specific locations like Uganda. This study combines a qualitative and interpretative approach with reflections on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) data sets. Empirical data collected from interviews and focus group discussions with various key actors was combined with reflections on dataset measurements of civil war and communal violence in Uganda, and a range of scholarly documents. This study looked closely at quantitative measures of these two conflicts, in northern and north eastern Uganda, questioning the typologies and quantitative indicators used, as well as the key actors identified in the UCDP and PRIO (Peace Research Institute Oslo) databases. Through two distinct case studies from within Uganda, this research examines the complex interconnections between the civil war in northern Uganda and what is often termed communal violence in north eastern Uganda. The study examines the causes as well as the actors involved and how these conflicts changed course and direction, and what implications this has for the conceptualisation of these conflicts.

Key words

Uganda, civil war, communal violence, UCDP/PRIO datasets, interpretative.