



# EXAMINING UGANDA'S FOREIGN POLICY



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# EXAMINING UGANDA'S FOREIGN POLICY

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# 1 | Hydro-Politics and Regional Security: Assessment of Uganda's Contribution to Peace Stabilisation of the Nile River Basin

**Asiimwe Bosco**



Owen Falls Dam in Jinja, along the Nile River in Uganda  
Source: Photo by Nao Izuka on <https://www.flickr.com>

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## List of Acronyms

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**AU:** African Union

**CFA:** Cooperative Framework Agreement

**CFPE:** Cooperative Framework Panel of Experts

**CSOs:** Civil society organizations

**DRC:** Democratic Republic of Congo

**GERD:** Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

**NBI:** Nile Basin Initiative

**NGOs:** Non-Government Organizations

**TECCONILE:** Technical Cooperation Committee for Socio-Economic Development of the Nile Basin

**UN:** United Nations

**UNDP:** United Nations Development Program

## 1.0 Introduction

River Nile is the longest international river system in the world that crosses eleven countries with the absence of a binding legal framework to guarantee equitable management and usage of its water resources. This situation presents an unabated challenge that causes conflict among the riparian countries.

The paper examines the contribution of Uganda to peace stabilisation processes in the Nile Basin, evaluating new strategies that should be adopted by Uganda in solving the Nile water conundrum, as well as scrutinising the involvement of civil society/NGOs as non-state actors in the national security and foreign policy making processes in Uganda, particularly on matters of the Nile.

Uganda has played a significant role towards peace stabilization in the River Nile Basin through advocacy and mobilisation towards a cooperative framework, mobilising development partners and donors, that play a pivotal role in the establishment of the Nile River related institutional bodies and allowing these bodies to be headquartered in Kampala since 1968 to date.

The findings underscore the need for the Nile riparian states to ratify the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) so that it enters into force as an all-binding legal framework regarding Nile governance and management to replace the obsolete and anachronistic colonial agreements. They also show that Uganda has been a key and strategic player in the region, has continuously headquartered all the Nile Basin-related institutional mechanisms since 1968, and has been the champion of a cooperative framework and locally sourced solutions to Nile Basin problems.

Uganda has done this by actively participating in the formation of all institutions that intended to bring Nile Riparians together in search for a cooperative framework and Uganda has offered herself as a base by providing headquarters of all

these institutions since 1968 to date. Finally, they indicate that civil society and non-state actors in Uganda have played a minimal role in the pursuit of peace and stability in the Nile Basin.

This paper recommends that all the Nile riparian states should agree to a legally binding agreement so as to ensure equality in the usage of the Nile water resources that Uganda should keep up her efforts as a strategic and strong base between the two triangles (Nile west riparian countries and Blue Nile riparian countries). Nile riparian states should embrace democracy, structural violence alleviation, cognitive reintegration efforts and the civil society, non-state actors in Uganda should build capacity and play a more crucial role in security and peace stabilisation processes and mechanisms in the Nile Basin.

The Nile Basin system is not only the largest but also the longest in the world. It is a trans-boundary water body that is home to about 430 million people spread across eleven states, flows 6,700 km from its source in the Equatorial Lake Basinto the Mediterranean Sea, north of Cairo, Egypt. It covers territories and has dependents across Egypt, Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and Burundi or a land area of 3,200,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Throughout the years, the Nile River has caused major impact on "interstate politics of the region" as it is the only reliable renewable water supply in the area. An officer from the African Union (AU) posited that the Nile River supports more than 160 million lives in the region and remains the key ingredient of foreign policy objectives of all riparian states. Despite its extraordinary natural endowment and cultural history, the Nile Basin faces considerable challenges.

These include water scarcity reinforced through the decreasing quantity of Nile water, poverty, environmental degradation and (food) insecurity.

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The recurrent droughts and desertification in the basin, coupled with increasing population pressure, have escalated water scarcity, and thus increasing the possibilities of a conflict.

The population in the basin is expected to double leading to further increases in agricultural and industrial water demand in urban and rural settlements and putting increased pressure on available water and other resources. Simultaneously, satisfactory stocks must be maintained in the environment to ensure the long-term sustainability of ecosystems.

The modern history of hydro-politics in the Nile Basin is very complex and the above-challenges cause large scale security and political implications on the national, regional and global level. The collective ownership of River Nile has caused tensions among the riparian countries. The natural resource is of critical (geo-) strategic importance to all Nile basin members.

These circumstances created an environment full of opposing demands on the rivers resources and caused water-related (inter-)conflicts between upstream riparian and downstream riparian countries. The potential for conflict about the water resources in the Nile Basin is unacceptable if states continue to refuse to cooperate and to share the Nile's resources.

Currently, there is no legal binding framework guaranteeing the equitable management and control of the Nile waters accepted by all the riparian states in the Nile River Basin. In absence of such an institutional framework, binding all riparian countries with the legal jurisdiction to enforce equitable trans-boundary water sharing, the unequal distribution of Nile waters in favour of the basin's hegemony, Egypt, will maintain.

Egypt persists on the legality of two colonial agreements from 1929 and 1959 and continues to threaten the upstream riparian countries if

tampering the flow of the Nile waters. Egypt's main purpose is to maintain and consolidate the status quo characterized by its dominance over the Nile River water.

To resist this hegemonic pressure, the upstream riparian countries, led by Ethiopia and Uganda, should promote the signing of the Cooperate Framework Agreement (CFA). This legally binding agreement would counterbalance any regional hegemonic aspirations regarding the Nile Basin and would replace its superseded and anachronistic colonial predecessors.

Uganda should enforce its critical role in the promotion of regional peace, security and stability. Kampala finds itself in strategic position to influence the security narratives in the Nile Basin and has been acting in consent with other upstream countries to reach an equitable and binding agreement on the use of the Nile waters.

The country is already active at the regional level in a number of activities, which make Uganda a supporter and contributor of peacekeeping and peace building as a mediator and guarantor, an interventionist, provider of humanitarian assistance. It is from this background that a further contribution from Ugandan side to the hydro-politics, peace stabilisation and regional security in the Nile Basin would be of great value.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-state actors should be fully engaged in the search for peace and security in the Nile Basin. They play a central role in preventing the aggravation of the conflict. But the affairs surrounding the Nile Basin and the water conflict in the region have largely remained state-centric and inaccessible for most of the local CSOs in Uganda. Consequently, CSOs that deal with or are interested in the Nile Basin are very few and inactive or non-existent in the search for peace and security in the Nile Basin.



## 2.0 Study Findings

### 2.1 Legally Binding Framework on the Nile Waters

#### 2.1.1 Water ownership among states

There is nothing like ownership of trans-boundary watercourses in international law. Therefore, a natural resource that is shared by many countries like the Nile River should be equitably used and managed by all the riparian states without causing significant harm to downstream riparian states. The property rights of a trans-boundary water resource need to be secured in order to contribute to the level of sustainable and equitable natural resource management among all riparian nations. The absence of such property rights on water ownership easily has an influence on foreign policy objectives among the riparian states.

#### 2.1.2 The 1929 and 1959 colonial agreements on the Nile Basin administration

At the heart of the tensions of the Nile River are the 1929 and 1959 Nile Water Agreements, respectively signed between Britain and Egypt and then Sudan and Egypt, which impose obligations on the upstream riparian states but nothing on the downstream riparian states, especially Egypt. However, such agreements without reciprocal obligations are deemed to be invalid and have been rejected by upstream states. The 1929 agreement expresses the recognition of Egypt's natural and historic rights to the waters of the Nile by Great Britain. Thus, this agreement was one of the basic tools used by Egypt to attain and project its hegemonic influence in the Nile Basin.

Furthermore, the existing Nile River agreements from 1929 and 1959 on the ownership and sharing of the waters are of colonial nature signed before most of the upstream riparian countries gained their independence.

To promote this, interviews were conducted for the study and most of the participants agreed that as an international principle, upstream riparian states cannot be bound by such agreements which they were not party to during their signing and that such agreements cannot grant third-party rights unless countries agree.

Consequently, the colonial foundations do not constitute binding agreements on the ownership and use of water of River Nile. In addition, majority of the respondents noted that some of the upper riparian states upon gaining their independence declared that they were not to be bound by colonial agreements. These countries wanted to start from scratch.

For instance, in 1963 shortly after independence, the Prime Minister of Uganda wrote to the Secretary General of the United Nations rebutting all treaties concluded during colonial era. This was followed by a declaration by Parliament in Sessional Paper No.3 of 1963. The position of upstream states in refuting the colonial agreements is in tandem with Knobel's doctrine of the Clean Slate. This doctrine established that newly independent countries do not inherit the agreements of their colonial predecessors so long as the treaty does not demarcate territorial or other lines.

Likewise, the international laws of succession of colonial treaties following the independence of a nation indicate that this type of agreement (one that concerns resource use and allocation) is not territorial or 'localised treaty' that must remain binding following the birth of a newly independent state.

The 1929 and 1959 colonial agreements were bilateral agreements that were not in permanence, thus susceptible to amendments. This is in agreement with the doctrine of *rebus sic stantibus* which allows a party to rescind a treaty if there is a material change of circumstances that transform the rights and obligation of the

treaty. In addition, Article 34 of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties states as a general rule asserts that “[a]treaty does not create either obligations or rights for a third party without its consent.”

Consequently, Egypt and Sudan should ensure that both equality and equity are observed with other riparian states when it comes to using the Nile River water resources rather than sticking to colonial agreements that became outdated and need to be renegotiated. Remarkably, Egypt has stayed blatantly rigid with regard to the historical clause of the 1929 agreement in order to project its power, capabilities and hegemonic ambitions in the Nile Basin and the Horn of Africa.

Egypt's continued desire to maintain the imbalance of power in the Nile Basin was to consider its own interest without other riparian states as other great actors in the region. Continuously, Egypt threatened the other riparian countries to wage war against them if they dare to tamper with the flow of the Nile waters.

However, two respondents from the legal fraternity and academia argue that those colonial agreements are still binding since there are no new agreements to replace them.

This underlines the importance and urgency for a new equitable agreement by other riparian states that fit into the present governance structure to replace and remove the colonial treaties forever. It is also the best thing the upstream riparian states could do to counterbalance Egypt's hegemonic position in the region.

### 2.1.3 Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA)

Since the 1980s, Nile River upstream riparian states have been involved in numerous bilateral and multilateral initiatives to resolve the long-standing dispute over the usage of the Nile, but Egypt on several occasions has used its military dominance to threaten and coerce war in order to protect its national interests regarding the waters of the Nile.

In April 2011, Ethiopia took a unilateral decision to construct, fill and operate the Grand Ethiopia Renaissance Dam (GERD). The GERD project is a crude indication that Ethiopia, as one of the upstream riparian states, has already made a bold statement that it is not bound by the colonial agreements, by unilaterally constructing the largest hydropower facility along the Blue Nile without prior permission from Egypt, which the 1929 agreement requires. Ethiopia's unilateral decision caused concern among the River Nile downstream riparian states – Egypt and Sudan Ethiopia's continued intransigence and unilateralism regarding.

The Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) which was negotiated by all the riparian states except South Sudan (gained independence in 2011) under the auspices of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) that was a realistic option to ensure the equitable sharing and management of the River Nile water resources. It also addresses all the injustices that were caused by the 1929 and 1959 agreements.

Consultations began as early as 1997 and up to date where four countries (Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Tanzania) have ratified to the agreement. Only two ratifications are pending for it to enter into force, although Egypt and Sudan contested. Article 14b, where they wanted their historical rights to be entrenched in the CFA. In case it gets all the six ratifications and enters into force, it will absolutely replace the so-called colonial agreements.

Modern politics between the riparian states is centered in the creation of the CFA. As worded within the CFA, the present Framework applies to the use, development, protection, conservation and management of the Nile River Basin and its resources and establishes an institutional mechanism for cooperation among the Nile Basin States. In other words, the CFA aims to create a platform for cooperation between the Riparian states and a set of guidelines for the use and development of the river.

However, the main point of contestation with the CFA in its current form is the unresolved Article 14b on water security. The way which the upstream states have Article 14b written is *“not to significantly affect the ‘water security of any other Nile Basin States,”* but Egypt and Sudan have remained steadfast on that they will not sign the agreement unless it reads *“not to adversely affect the water security and current uses and rights of any other Nile Basin State”*.

Every arrangement that has been attempted to govern the use of the Nile, especially the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA), has been jeopardised by Egypt and Sudan by upholding their historic rights claim, a position that has been rejected by other riparian states. Persistent failure to reach a just settlement on the management of the river has bred continuous tension, suspicion, mistrust and an arms race between the riparian states.

Nevertheless, integrated water resources management is the most efficient approach to watershed control and it requires cooperation and the creation of institutions to implement joint actions. To ensure peace and security in the Nile Basin, the river should be a binding factor between states in the basin and should create a collective identity.

## 2.2 Ugandan State Contributions towards Stabilization of Peace and Security in the Nile River Basin

### 2.2.1 Uganda's contribution to peace and security in the Nile Basin

Uganda's national interest that majorly shape its foreign policy objectives is premised on three main pillars: national security (state survival, people, regional peace and security), national prosperity (provision of trade, investment, tourism and regional integration), and provision of protocol and consular services at home and abroad, and protection of the Ugandan diaspora).

However, the formal bodies that are responsible for formulation and advancement of a country's foreign policy, like Parliament and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have either been put aside or assumed a shadow role and a mouth piece of powers. In other words, foreign and security policy making is guided by the perception of the President depending on the situation at hand. This is manifested in the interview conducted with the official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *“The issue of River Nile is a matter to be handled at that level of the Presidents. So that has been the position of our President! It is not an issue that can be solved by technical people or by the minister”*.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs asserts that Uganda has made solid strides as a key player in ensuring peace, stability and security in the region. Uganda's role is illustrated in four strands: Uganda as a peacekeeper and builder, mediator and guarantor, Uganda as an interventionist and Uganda for humanitarian assistance.

Uganda has been an important player in the peace and security arenas of countries in the Nile Basin. Six different strategic ways through which Uganda has played an instrumental role in ensuring peace and stability in the Nile Basin.

Uganda has enjoyed a joint role of monitoring the Nile with Egypt since 1895/7 before the colonial government had established a monitoring system on the rivers and lakes, and this position was later reinforced by the colonial government. This indirectly put Uganda in a strategic neighbourhood with Egypt to influence the security narratives in the region.

Between 1968 and 1982 Uganda implemented the HYDROMET survey project funded by UNDP that was in Entebbe. This project provided technical data on the catchments of Lake Victoria, Lake Kyoga and Lake Albert for the benefit of other countries in the Nile River Basin. This project helped Uganda to build good relations with the other riparian countries, notably Egypt, Sudan, Tanzania and Kenya.

Ethiopia took up an observer status since the data collection was done in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. Ethiopia was suspicious and objected to any move supported by Egypt just as Egypt was suspicious of any move supported by Ethiopia.

Uganda was pivotal in the formation of the 1991-1997 TECCONILE (Technical Cooperation Committee for Socio-Economic Development of the Nile Basin) which was comprised of Egypt, Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. This was later on joined by Rwanda, Burundi and DRC, which participated but did not contribute. Kenya refused to join but was allowed to participate in almost all the activities.

The body was formed as an interim organization following the winding up of the HYDROMET survey project to foster cooperation in the Nile Basin as a stop-gap measure of the riparian countries prepared the long-term framework for the cooperative management and development of the Nile Basin. Uganda took the lead in organizing other upstream countries which were not interested since Egypt never wanted the upstream countries to get organized and concentrate on the Nile. TECCONILE was also headquartered in Entebbe, in the same building where HYDROMET had been headquartered.

In 1995 Uganda, as the Chair of TECCONILE, managed to negotiate and brought the World Bank and UNDP to join and help to mobilize other donors to fund the activities that would lead to tangible outcomes. This stature made Uganda an important actor appealing to all parties that is, Nile River riparian states and development partners, thus contributing to peace stabilisation processes in the Nile River Basin.

Uganda spearheaded the formation of the Cooperative Framework Panel of Experts (CFPE) on the Nile in 1997. The project embarked on thinking through and working out elements that would be acceptable by all that could lead to a new agreement that would ensure equitable sharing of the Nile water resources. The panel of experts was also headquartered in Entebbe.

This endless effort by Uganda to mobilise other riparian states towards a cooperative framework over the usage and management of the waters of the Nile created a forum which kept states in constant dialogue to discuss and collectively address the concerns emerging from individual states so as to prevent interstate conflicts over the Nile waters.

Uganda has played a leading role in the formation of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) in 1999, which is in Entebbe the same offices where HYDROMET, TECCONILE, and CFPE were. The riparian states negotiated a CFA which has since been ratified by four countries out of the six required for it to enter into force.

As efforts to see this agreement get the necessary ratifications continue, Egypt attempts to jeopardize this agreement remain visible where it engages some countries on small bilateral projects to divert them. For instance, Kenya has not yet ratified to the CFA because of Egyptian influence. However, Uganda has remained committed towards mobilizing other upstream counties to ratify the CFA.

In other words, Uganda as an upstream state wants to conserve the Nile and get more voice through the CFA, and it is still maintaining good relations with Egypt to maintain relations with Egypt and protect its interests in hydropower.

The stable relations between Uganda and Egypt are reflected in joint development and water cooperation projects which started in 1949 for instance, Uganda-Egypt Aquatic Weed Control Project (UEAWCP) which is ongoing till now with an Egyptian grant of 24.4 million USD.

### 2.2.2 Strategies that Uganda should adopt to address the Nile question

Uganda is located in a strategic position to influence politics that address the Nile question and to encourage other states to sign and ratify the CFA. As shown, Uganda has played an important role in promoting peace and security among the countries that share the Nile Basin. This includes hosting all the Nile

Basin institutional organisations formed since 1968; mobilising fellow riparian states towards a cooperative framework in the governance and management of the Nile River; and being a peace builder and peacekeeper in the region.

Uganda has actively advocated for regional integration so as to enable addressing regional security threats collectively. The country is based on a strategic baseline that can form a strong base between the two triangles (the triangle of the West Nile riparian countries and the triangle of the Blue Nile countries).

Uganda should encourage more dialogue with all the Nile River riparian states since the Nile question is a sensitive issue which does not need force but rather diplomacy. Dialogue and negotiations will pave way for equitable sharing following the international principles of trans-boundary water management should be provided. These principles call upon riparian states to, as they use the waters pay regard to the interests of the others and to avoid causing significant harm especially to the downstream riparian states.

Uganda should fully democratise at home even when it is to intervene in the affairs of other Nile River riparian states like it has done in DRC, Burundi and South Sudan, can do so by exporting democratic dividends. Respondents from academia and civil society have regarded some of the River Nile riparian states such as Uganda and Rwanda as authoritarian states since their reigning governments have emerged through revolutions.

In other words, the leaders of authoritarian regimes who took over power through revolutions will try hard, to cling to power domestically by whatever means, and will intervene in the affairs of neighbouring countries in friable regions like Nile River Basin in a guerrilla way of doing things. In the famous 'democratic peace thesis' it is well put that democracies are hesitant to go to war with other identified democracies.

More so, Uganda should democratise foreign and security making processes to allow the participation and contributions of non-state actors/NGOs and civil society. The multi-stakeholder approach in foreign policy making would help governments to benefit from vast knowledge from diverse actors and that would make citizens to own formulated policies and the implementation mechanisms.

Governments should understand and appreciate that the concept security has since widened and deepened to include non-military threats. The crisis over the usage and management of the Nile waters in the advent of the climate change crisis and surging populations within the riparian states does not only challenge the survival of the riparian states but an existential threat to citizens as well thus moving from state as the referent object to individuals as referent objects.

Uganda should respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of her neighbours in the region. Uganda under President Yoweri Museveni has over time nurtured the culture of intervening in the affairs of River Nile riparian states through military interventions which is against the UN charter and the principles of international customary law.

These unilateral military interventions have always narrowed space for dialogue between the conflicting parties, jeopardised the systemic conflict resolution mechanisms.

Most importantly, raising divisions, bias, suspicions and mistrust in a security volatile Nile Basin. Uganda's interventions in other Nile states like DRC, South Sudan and Burundi can be easily misinterpreted by other riparians as a pursuit of hegemonic ambitions in the Nile Basin which derail any possible cooperative arrangements in addressing the Nile question. Developments of this nature create an '(In) security dilemma' within the already fragile and fluid Nile Basin, hence jeopardizing peace stabilization processes by creating a more complicated security puzzle in the Nile Basin.

### 2.3 The Role of Civil Society in Uganda in Promoting Peace and Security in the Nile Basin

#### 2.3.1 The extent of civil society engagement in foreign policy objectives

There are not many civil society organisations (CSOs) or NGOs that are dealing with issues regarding the Nile Basin. There is one organisation that deals in the Nile Basin issues; Nile Basin Discourse Initiative (NBD). Much as NBI is composed of the Nile River riparian states, it is a network for civil society established in 2003 with support from World Bank and other development partners to strengthen civil society participation in the Nile Basin development process, projects, programs and policies. However, the work of NBD as a forum for civil society has not been felt in Uganda.

This is evidenced by the fact most respondents from government, civil society and security noted that civil society organisations in Uganda in search for peace and security in the Nile basin do not exist. This dysfunctional stature of NBD could be as a result of limited space and hostile operating environment in Uganda, as this is manifested in cracking down and suspension of CSOs/NGOs activities for instance, the suspension of Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) activities in 2021.

The Government of Uganda has not been keen to engage civil society and other non-state actors in matters of national security and foreign policy because most of them get funding from abroad and thus pursue foreign interests. Lack of funds by government is what drives the need to have the foreign NGOs that have the money but which, however, does research that principally benefits foreign governments and actors.

This makes the government hesitant whether civil society can be of help especially when it comes to matters of statecraft, nation-building and strategic security. The government does

not trust and exercises little transparency in its relations with civil society when it comes to national security and foreign policy issues.

The government has consistently 'cordoned off' this area and, in any case, Uganda's foreign objectives are simply an embodiment of Museveni's views and how it wants things to be done in the Great Lakes Region. Thus, what should have been the country's official foreign policy is actually President Museveni's foreign policy. This is because there is a mismatch between the foreign policy found in the official documents of the Foreign Affairs Ministry and what is actually done by the head of state.

The Nile Basin states have different types of government, for example, in Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda, these governments tend to centralise power and specifically, monopolise the functions of foreign relations and foreign policy because security constitutes a very important component of those functions. They also tend to monopolise the function of security and to have very strong leaders. It becomes hard for civil society to thrive in such an environment where a state is very strong and has a history of revolution and military government, weak civil society and, therefore, any state policy will by and large be the function of the ruling party.

However, a respondent from government noted that when NBI was being established, many civil society and non-state actors were involved and supported it. For instance, they supported the formation of the Nile Basin Discourse they created a forum for Members of Parliament, and also supported academia, the media and the legal fraternity. Furthermore, they created an environment and education forum so as to make Nile River issues be taught in schools.

Thus, there was a broadening of participation and involvement of all actors. However, much as the civil society and non-state actors have been involved in the Nile River case, if one weighs the involvement of the non-state actors versus that of the state actors, the balance becomes unequal and biased in favour of the latter.

### 2.3.2 How civil society can be optimally engaged in peace and security processes in the Nile Basin

The search for peace and security in the Nile Basin has for a long time been more of a political affair and has mostly been undertaken by the state actors in the riparian states. This huge gap in government's efforts to involve civil society and other non-state actors in the national security and foreign policy-making processes need to be addressed and counteracted. It is advisable that each riparian state should give more trust to the CSOs with their expertise in different fields which consequently play significant roles together with state institutions during the negotiations over the Nile Basin issues.

CSOs are important actors in promoting regional peace and security because they offer a biased free environment. Thus, they act as mediators in achieving equitable water use in the Nile Basin. Further, they support in general the interest of the public and are not bounded by election processes and short-term political goals. Civil society also plays a great role in demanding accountability from government for its conduct during and after elections.

Moreover, they would promote a diverse environment of actors engaged in foreign and security policy objectives. Through their work with communities and different categories of

people such as the directed focus on women bring fresh knowledge, perspectives and expertise. Besides, they have large capacities in the research departments.

The urgency that Uganda and other riparian states need to engage civil society and other non-state actors in the search for a lasting solution to the Nile question has been raised. CSOs in Uganda, in collaboration with other riparian states of the Nile Basin, should focus on finding possible means through their research departments to come up with a permanent road map for achieving peace and security in the region.

One respondent from a regional organisation noted that it is through drawing upon the history of the River Nile ownership rights that civil society can come up with ideas for a more effective way for riparian nations of the Nile River to live in harmony with their fellow member states.

CSOs should remain non-biased entities in the process of searching for peace and security; should be committed only to the cause of preaching peace, harmony and tranquillity, should be preoccupied with policy alternatives and promoting dialogue between the Nile riparian states. Governments should not view them as traitors and conduits of foreign influence but as partners as they build a multifaceted approach in the search for permanent peace and security in the Nile Basin.

A section of the River Nile, Murchison Falls Uganda in Uganda  
Source: Photo by K3N on <https://unsplash.com>



## 3.0 Conclusion and Policy Implications

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### 3.1 Conclusion

The absence of a binding legal framework for the management of the Nile water resources is a recipe for conflicts in the light of the development challenges faced by states in the Nile Basin. The increasing population and climate change, with its effect of rising temperatures, the ambitious economic development goals of individual riparian states, the increasing frequency of droughts and the general fragility and fluidity of the entire region with unique security dynamics.

The establishment of an acceptable legal framework that is binding on all the riparian states is a prerequisite for amicable conflict resolution as well as ensuring peace, stability and security in the region.

The paper set out to explore the influence of water ownership rights on the foreign policy objectives of the state in Uganda. The results indicate that water ownership on River Nile is linked to imperial and colonial foundations based on agreements signed between the former colonial masters and some states before they gained their independence. Thus, after attaining their independence, especially the majority upstream riparian states repudiated the colonial agreements regarding them as superseded and outdated since they had not been a party to them.

To solve this problem, the CFA must be ratified, and increased cooperation among all riparian states is needed. Uganda provides a useful framework for this, as it has already been involved in a number of multilateral attempts to jointly manage the Nile such as HYDROMET survey, TECCONILE and CFPE. Strong participation by civil society organizations can help break down the rigidity and stiffness of riparian states' approaches to resolving tensions.

### 3.2 Policy Implications

#### 3.2.1 States

a. River Nile riparian states should ratify the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA)

of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI). It needs six ratifications to enter into force but so far four have ratified (Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia and Tanzania). In other words, countries that have ratified to the CFA should mobilize other riparian states to ratify the agreement for equitable utilization of the Nile waters in the context of internationally acceptable principles and obligations.

- b. Nile River being a common interest of all the riparian states, a cooperative security framework should be put in place through regional initiatives and other agreed mechanisms to reduce tensions and suspicions, build confidence among riparian states.
- c. Nile riparian countries should enhance trade relations that will lessen likelihoods of conflicts. Riparian states should conduct economic activities around the river but should allow water flow and movement not to cause significant harm to downstream riparian states.
- d. All riparian states should endeavor to sensitize their publics to heighten awareness about the River Nile and the associated complex dynamics and implications for regional security and peace. For instance, in Uganda majority do not know about the River Nile hydro-politics and its implications towards national security which is not the case with Egypt.
- e. States should support their civil society and engage them through stakeholder engagements to keep them active in any developments in the Nile Basin.

#### 3.2.2 Uganda

a. Uganda as an upstream riparian and an ally of downstream riparian states should assume an important role in addressing the Nile question. Uganda should mobilize riparian states to ratify the CFA, revise its strategies



of intervening in the affairs of other riparian states in violation of international law, peace keeping and building in the pursuit of her strategic interests in fellow riparian states DRC, Burundi and South Sudan which create mistrust and suspicion that tend to threaten peace stabilization processes and efforts in Nile Basin.

- b. Uganda should strengthen regional integration and boost status of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) to that of a supranational body with legal jurisdiction to enforce the equitable sharing of water resources so that the Nile River can be managed and governed in the context of internationally acceptable principles and obligations to reduce friction between the riparian states.
- c. Uganda is a strategic baseline that can form a strong base between the two triangles (the triangle of the West Nile riparian countries and the triangle of the Blue Nile countries). The logic should be on how to create a boundary of these two and remain strong. If you link the apex of the two triangles, that linkage is very weak but if you use the base, it will form a strong bond.
- d. In other words, that base of two triangles is the role of Uganda. Thus, Uganda has to play the role of a base.

### 3.2.1 Civil Society Organisations

- a. Civil society and other non-state actors should take on the mantle of promoting dialogue on sustainable and equitable development, peace and mutual understanding on the development issues in the Nile Basin.
- b. Civil society organizations in Uganda should advise and guide the country on better steps and alternatives needed in promoting peace and security in the Nile Basin.
- c. Civil society organizations should continuously build their capacity to provide policy options on the entire public life, including foreign policy and the national security arena.

- d. Civil society and non-state actors should interest themselves in trans-boundary natural resources like River Nile as potential causes of conflict instead of being only preoccupied with internal politics and democracy. In other words, shared natural resources are strategic existential threats not only to human beings as individuals but to states as well.

The overall conclusion of this work is that the peace process has taken significant steps over time. All Nile riparian states and the international donors demonstrate a commitment to peace stabilization efforts and development. Despite certain local outbreaks of violence in more than one of the countries, there has been no major war between the riparian states over the Nile waters.

Thus, Uganda should endeavour to mobilise and convince the international donors to promote a development strategy which is based on the immediate need to direct all efforts to reduce the structural violence in the region. This is about dealing with people's basic needs satisfaction. Without this, enormous amounts of people, not least young people, in the region will continue to be vulnerable and receptive to any kind of mobilisation to renewed direct violence.

Cognitive reintegration. This has to do with all the long-term images and perceptions of group relations in the region. The elites and the leadership in the different countries are obviously not free from existing stereotypes in perception of the others. But at much deeper levels of these societies' identity questions have interplayed with material and immaterial basic conditions for a sustainable livelihood.

Thus, the question of structural violence reduction and cognitive reintegration should be dealt with simultaneously. There is a need to highlight the necessity to integrate local and regional elite groups in the future economic and security set-up within the Nile River riparian states.

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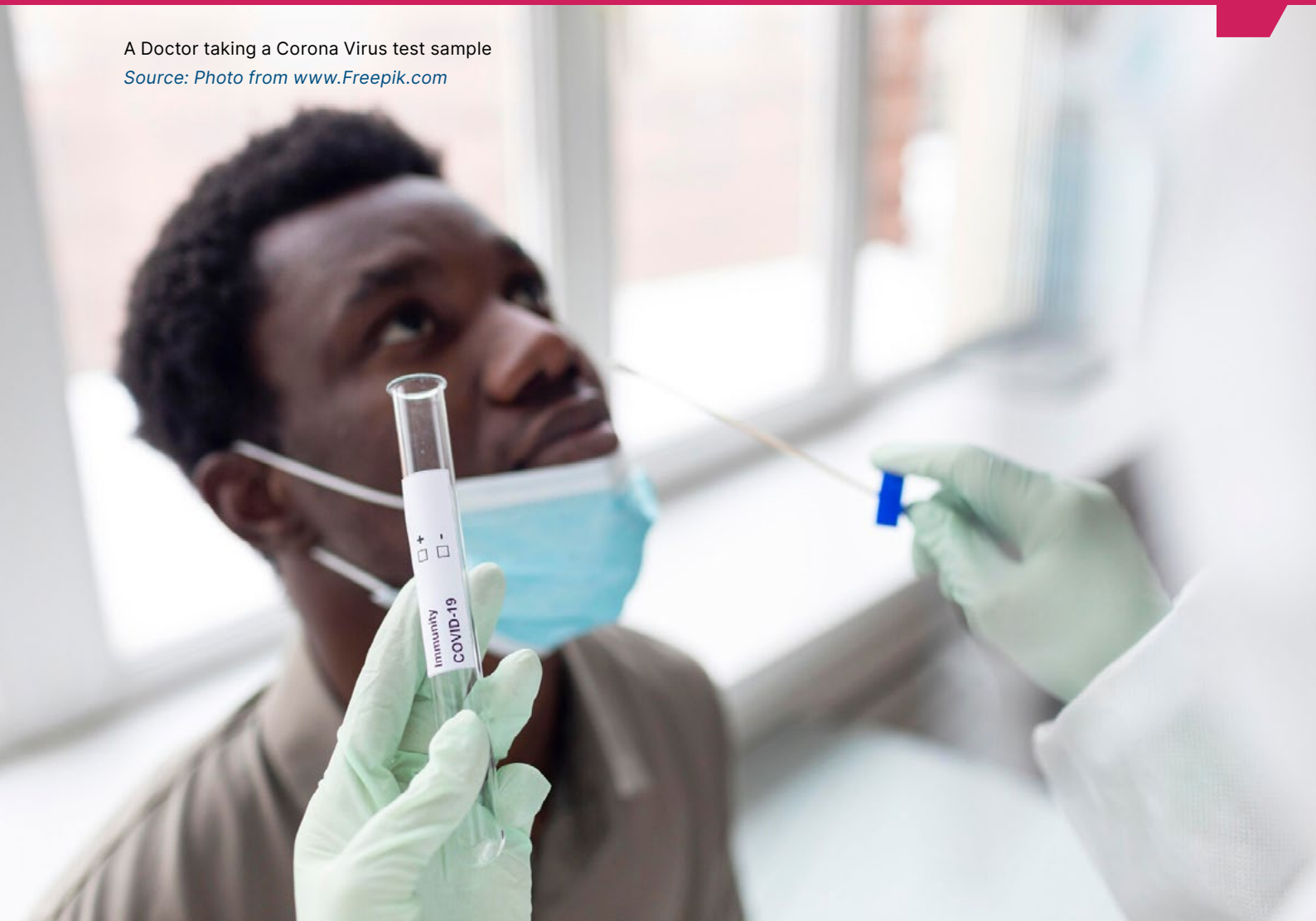
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# 2

## The Impact of Covid-19 on Uganda's Bilateral and Multilateral Relations

Israel Sheila

A Doctor taking a Corona Virus test sample  
Source: Photo from [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)



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## List of acronyms

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- AU:** African Union
- ACCU:** Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda
- AfCFTA:** African Continental Free Trade Area
- AFENET:** African Field Epidemiology Network
- BOU:** Bank of Uganda
- CBS:** Community-Based Surveillance
- CBDS:** Community-based Disease Surveillance
- CSOs:** Civil Society Organizations
- DR:** Doctor
- EACS:** East African Community Secretariat
- FDI:** Foreign Direct Investment
- GOU:** Government of Uganda
- I.C.T:** Information Communication Technology
- I.C.U:** Intensive Care Unit
- I.D.I:** Infectious Diseases Institute
- IMF:** International Monetary Fund
- M.O.H:** Ministry of Health
- PPE:** Personal Protective Equipment
- RCCE:** Risk Communication and Community Engagement
- RCF:** Rapid Credit Facility
- R.D.Cs:** Residence District Commissioners
- SDGs:** Sustainable Development Goals
- SEZ:** State Economic Zones
- UAE:** United Arab Emirates
- US-CDC:** United States Center for Diseases Control
- UDN:** Uganda Debt Network
- VHTs:** Village Health Teams
- WHO:** World Health Organization
- WTO:** World Trade Organization

## 1.0 Introduction

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Countries around the globe have forged relations to sustain a collective fight against the Covid-19 virus. It's a global crisis that has affected the political, social, economic and cultural aspects of life around the world. Like other states, Uganda finds itself intensifying both the need to treat and contain the virus by regulating transboundary movement of persons and goods.

This calls for an ultimate need to maintain international cooperation and good relations with its neighbors to continuously fight the devastating virus. Uganda has tried to stop the spread of the virus but has acceded to issues of cross-border politics, accountability and vaccine diplomacy that have manifesting questions on corruption and unrealistic policies within the state. The findings illustrate how health diplomacy which is mirrored through bilateral and multilateral relations has been at the center of ensuing that the pandemic is fought.

It has been two and a half years since the outbreak of Covid-19 that affected countries all over the world including Uganda. From 2020 to 2022 we have examined bilateral and multilateral relations form or fall due to the reaction, focus, implementation and forward movement in the fight against Covid-19.

Nicholas Leiper (2019) argues that bilateralism features two parties and at an international scene, this consists of the political, economic, or cultural relations between two sovereign states. For instance, free trade agreements signed between two states are examples of bilateral treaties. While Multilateralism is the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states, through ad hoc arrangements or by means of institutions.

Covid-19 is an imperceptible, borderless enemy that touched every part of the world, where the demand for greater global cooperation was significantly needed beyond politics. From this unfolding disaster, the crisis prompted moves to reduce global connectedness, including travels and trade as well as financial flows.

The pandemic is a powerful reminder that bilateral and multilateral relations is critical where international cooperation must subsist amidst the coronavirus pandemic. Although Uganda in particular took drastic steps to mitigate the pandemic, it was challenged by a sphere of regional politics, loopholes in institutional cooperation, mismanagement of Covid-19 health funds and equipment, and a decline in import and export revenue. This mirrored financial shock, and the unending politics in vaccine diplomacy while cross-border politics threatened peace and integrity of the East African region.

### **This paper looks at four objectives:**

- i. Examining whether bilateralism and multilateralism are being used in the fight against Covid-19 in the region
- ii. Evaluating Uganda's contribution to the collective fight against the spread of COVID
- iii. Examining the impact of Covid-19 on Uganda's bilateral and multilateral relations; and
- iv. How Uganda has strengthened its relations with bilateral and multilateral actors during this global crisis.

## 2.0 Findings and Discussions

### 2.1 Use of Bilateral and Multilateral Relations in the Face of Covid-19 Pandemic

It is evident that without a collective response to the transmissible crisis, the world would pay a higher cost. This nature of correspondence has formed a number of alliances with the aim of providing information, resources and equipment to treat and cure the disease and to produce a vaccine. Bilateralism and multilateralism have been portrayed through health diplomacy of which, Novotny and Adams (2007) describe as a political change activity that meets the dual goals of improving global health while maintaining and strengthening international relations and yet Fauci's (2007) mainstream thought indicates that medical care and expertise are exported to poor countries to fight a general world problem. This is true in Fauci's interpretation with regard to Covid-19 in as far as vaccine diplomacy is concerned.

Vaccine diplomacy played a critical role in ensuring diplomatic relations. Covid-19 vaccines have played an integral role in nation branding as a technique for projecting soft power. A case in point is China's bilateral vaccine diplomacy efforts that can be traced not only to efforts at image restoration but also to reinforcing and leveraging the existing soft power programs and capitalizing on new economic and geopolitical opportunities. This has been done through the provision of vaccines as an international public good and through giving aid and gifts to countries left behind by the vaccine inequity, the COVAX initiative.

The COVAX initiative coordinated international resources to enable developing states, especially those registered under the facility, to access Covid-19 test kits and vaccines. As of 6 July 2021, one hundred million (100M) doses had been delivered to different states. However, the facility intended to give approximately 10 per cent of

doses produced to be available as a buffer for acute outbreaks and humanitarian use.

Uganda is one of the progressive states that signed to the COVAX initiative. From this initiative, the country received the first round of the initial batch of 864,000 AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccines for priority groups in March 2021. The second batch was of 100,000 doses from the Indian government totaling 964,000 in March 2021.

By 13 June 2021, over 800,000 people, including health workers, teachers, security personnel, airport staff, the elderly and people with diabetes, hypertension and other underlying conditions, had been vaccinated.

Uganda also received an additional 175,200 doses of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine donated by the French government through the COVAX initiative. However, the Health Minister, Dr Ruth Aceng, revealed that 14,460 Covid-19 vaccine doses went to waste due to delayed usage.

Through its bilateral relations, Uganda received health support from other states and blocs, including China, Israel, Germany, European Union and United Arab Emirates, among others. And it is pertinent to note that without the support of its neighbors and networks in the entire world, Uganda alone would not have managed this fight given its low health capacity to produce the necessary vaccine at the time it needed it.

Supporting developing states such as Uganda to access vaccines led to improved health outcomes for the rest of the world and helped to ensure a stable economic recovery and long-term resilience.

Equally, Uganda's membership with WHO enabled it to access information and guidance on the possible preventive actions to adopt in curbing the spread of the virus. WHO, through its Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, communicated to all member states including Uganda, regarding the Covid-19 crisis and management plans.

WHO sent messages to the local ministries of health and health institutions on the need to sensitize masses on the global pandemic. Consequently, Government of Uganda mobilized means to handle the situation. WHO abetted the country in accessing test kits and the country representative backstopped national teams and also participated in press releases about the virus. It is this kind of solidarity and interaction between states through multilateral cooperation that has been so crucial in the fight against Covid-19.

Although states have collectively used health diplomacy as a facet of dealing with this virus, it should be put into account that the format of collectiveness has changed breeding a new type of multilateralism with reforms in order to meet the daunting challenges. We have seen states, Uganda inclusive executing measures, including closing borders in order to combat the devastating effects of the virus.

In this situation, reactions to the outbreak have employed multilateral diplomacy caged under virtual and health diplomacy to help save the world because the nature of the pandemic is that movements, crowds and contacts with an infected person only increase the spread of the virus. To combat this, states resorted to closing borders and imposing strict lockdowns on their citizens in a collective way.

It should be put into consideration that, Uganda took advantage of multilateral efforts to access financial support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as an allocation of vaccines from the COVAX facility, protective gears and other assorted equipment through bilateral relations. It is evident that international institutions have played a big role in ensuring that economic support is offered to signatory states during the crisis. To address her urgent balance-of-payments and fiscal needs, Uganda borrowed US\$491.5 million from the IMF under the Rapid Credit Facility (RCF).

Additionally, the government acquired loans, grants and donations from citizens, well-wishers

and institutions like IMF and World Bank to address the effects of the pandemic. Some of the loans and grants to government for Covid-19 response between March-June 2020, totaled to \$888million (about Shs3.2 trillion).

However, Utilization of Covid-19 funds was marred with gross irregularities, poor planning and dubious contract signings. The Prudent Public Finance Management for Greater Accountable Governance 2020 report, assessed expenditure and deployment of Covid-19 resources. It was made by the Uganda Debt Network (UDN), Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda, Action Aid, and Transparency International Uganda. The anticorruption agencies noted that several decisions taken before deployment of the Covid-19 resources were not well thought out and justified, items ordered were not delivered on time, and prices of many items were inflated.

For instance, this report explains how the procurement of spray pumps was not straight forward although the contract was awarded to N2M Company Limited at Shs530m in June. The pumps were meant to aid disinfection of places, materials of Covid-19 confined places, treatment centers, homes, ambulances, among others. However, by September 2020, none of the treatment centers had received the spray pumps except Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital.

### 2.1.1 What happened to the East African Community Response Plan?

In conformity with Article 118 of the EAC Treaty, the EAC Secretariat formulated an East African Community Covid-19 Response Plan in April 2020. The plan focused on accurate information dissemination in the health care system, as well as supporting and maintaining quality health care.

The response plan took into account the facilitation of movement of goods and services in the region to minimize the number of people who became infected or sick with Covid-19 as well as the need to minimize morbidity and mortality rates from the Covid-19 pandemic in the region. However, rather than following this plan, the





The United States delivers 5,233,410 COVID-19 vaccine doses to Uganda, on November 7, 2021.

Source: Photo from [U.S. government photo/ Public Domain] on <https://www.flickr.com>

individual East African countries adopted national strategies to combat the pandemic.

In Uganda and Rwanda, total lockdowns were imposed, Kenya and South Sudan imposed partial lockdowns, while Tanzania only acknowledged the virus and put-up measures to deal with the increasing cases but did not put a lockdown. In fact, business continued booming as usual in Tanzania.

Additionally, Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda held general elections at the height of the pandemic. Truck drivers continued to access different boarder points and entering countries to make deliveries of merchandise despite some countries like Uganda being in strict lockdowns. Regardless of how the EAC member states have reacted to the pandemic, the foundational cause of the EAC Treaty rendered multilateralism impractical at the moment it was most needed.

## 2.2 Uganda's Contribution to the Fight Against Covid-19 Pandemic

On 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020 the WHO declared COVID-19 outbreak that culminated into a public health emergency. Following this, in Uganda; on 3<sup>rd</sup> February the Ministry of Health officials held a conference with the Chinese Ambassador Zheng Zhu Qiang to discuss the virus outbreak. On 5<sup>th</sup> February the Minister of Health Hon. Ruth Aceng updated the public on preparedness and

a detailed guideline on how to prevent the virus was availed to the public on 19<sup>th</sup> February.

Screening began on 21<sup>st</sup> February at Malaba and Busia border points. On 2<sup>nd</sup> March ICT Minister Hon. Nabakooba released a ministerial statement on Covid-19. March 11 – MOH restricted traveling and put quarantine on arrivals from 16 high risk countries including US & UK. On 18<sup>th</sup> March President Museveni held a national press conference where a strict lockdown was instituted in attempt to curb the spread of the virus.

### 1. Strict lockdown measures

On 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020, through a presidential directive, all borders and the international airport were closed marking the first lockdown. Strict measures guiding citizens throughout the lockdown were announced which included the prohibition of all public gatherings such as church services, concerts and sports activities, schools, bars and night clubs were closed.

However, in June 2020, these measures were eased with opening up of public transport and allowing public gatherings but under strict guidelines. Schools were re-opened in September 2020 and the airport resumed operations. This situation continued up to May 2021 when a second 42-day-long lockdown was announced by the President of Uganda to avert the further spread of Covid-19 cases.

## 2. Covid-19 testing

Uganda used vigilant efforts to test all essential workers, mandatory testing of people returning, entering or leaving the state, contact tracing and testing of those individuals who had been in contact with infected persons. The enhanced screening at Entebbe International Airport facilitated the detection of the first case of Covid-19, of a Ugandan businessman who arrived at the airport from Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) by air.

However, as of 11th June 2021, all people arriving from countries namely; India, USA, UK, UAE, Turkey, South Africa, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Kenya and Tanzania to Uganda were subjected to PCR Covid-19 testing on arrival, regardless of their vaccination status. The MOH emphasized that these tests cost not more than 65 USD and allowed travelers to either wait at the testing location or to check into a designated hotel at their own cost until they received their test results. Any traveler who tested positive for Covid-19 would be evacuated by the MOH to a designated Covid-19 rescue area.

Uganda accredited several laboratories to test migrant workers for Covid-19, that included MBN Laboratory, MAIA Group Labs, Makerere University Hospital, Test and Fly, City Medicals Laboratory, Same Day Lab and Safari Laboratory (at Entebbe Airport). The purpose was to test migrants entering and leaving the country. However, these test laboratories became costly with time which made many Ugandans forge test results to avoid costs. This not only put a high risk of infections for states where these citizens were going to, but some countries ended up restricting Ugandan citizens from entering their territory to avoid risk and spread of the virus.

Notably, Uganda's scientists had started to locally produce test kits which were cheaper and more affordable for the Ugandan population. However, the country faced a crisis as fake test kits were used in private laboratories that were seeking to earn from SARS-CoV-2 serology tests.

## 3. Risk communication strategy

Uganda adopted WHO risk communication strategy which anchors the role of risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) and was useful in breaking the chains of transmission while mitigating the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic within communities. People's behaviors and willingness to adhere to public health and Standard Operating Procedures remained the most powerful tools to combat the spread the virus until vaccines were widely available for all citizens. The Covid-19 Global Risk Communication and Community Engagement Strategy, underpins socio-behavioral trends and approaches proven by WHO to help control and lessen the negative impacts of Covid-19.

Following this, Uganda adopted mainstream, social and print media for public health message dissemination. The president held periodical press briefings to manage public perceptions, and to deliver situation reports and directives to address the pandemic.

Ministry of Health (MOH) invested enormously in communicating guidelines and utilized both print and electronic media to educate the public on the SOPs as well as Covid-19 vaccine guidelines. It also focused more on providing guidance on the pandemic-related issues, such as travel and proper communication to Uganda's multilateral and bilateral friends to acquire more vaccines, protective gears and masks.

However, rumors on the adverse impacts of the vaccine via social media platforms impaired the effectiveness of the government risk communication plan as this misinformation petrified citizens and created confusion on whether they should or not get vaccinated. Unrelatedly, WHO had declared the spread of inappropriate information as a risk to global health. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, this could lead to adverse health effects and reactions across the globe.

#### 4. Community-based disease surveillance

The WHO-African region report defines community-based surveillance (CBS) as an active process of community participation in detecting, reporting, responding to and monitoring health events in the community. CBS' main functions included providing early warning or alerts, actively detecting and responding to cases and death and monitoring progress with disease control activities.

Following protocol of WHO CBS strategies, the Ugandan government established a community-based disease surveillance (CBDS) and contact tracing model launching the third edition on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021. This was implemented within an existing national integrated disease surveillance and response framework, supported by partners such as WHO, the United States Center for Diseases Control (US-CDC), the Infectious Diseases Institute of Makerere University (IDI) and the African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET).

The CBDS team comprised of community leaders and village health teams. The government found this approach more effective and less costly in contact tracing at the local level. Specifically, in Rakai district, the first four community cases were detected through the vigilance of village health teams (VHTs) and local councils by using CBDS guidelines.

This model was used by other countries like Tanzanian, where its Ministry of health launched community-based disease surveillance training for volunteers and community health workers to investigate and report outbreaks at the community and district levels. This was to help in the fast identification of the signs and symptoms of the virus within the communities and help improve the health security of Tanzanians and other populations around the world. The challenge with CBDS was that some untrained health workers part of the contact listing process produced inaccurate and misleading residence data.

Although the government decentralized the district task forces in all the 134 districts of Uganda chaired by the Residence District Commissioners (RDCs), there work was still unclear in terms of keeping communities safe from the virus. In many districts, the task forces had taken several initiatives to drive their Covid-19 response strategies, including updating risk communication strategies, increasing awareness through mainstream and social media, conducting social mobilization activities, educating and informing communities through local languages on the updates of Covid-19 pandemic.

There may be difficulties in addressing rural communities due to the high costs spent on transcribing and translating to the local languages, low turn upgrade failure of the communities to abide to rules and regulations. However, having a trusted local constituent act as a conduit amplifies the messages of those who might be afraid to abide to SOPs and helps the local government provide needed services.

### 2.3 The Impact of Covid-19 on Uganda's Bilateral and Multilateral Relations

From the above analysis, the effects of Covid-19 typically relate to trade relations. The chain of disruption includes the demand and supply tabulations, imbalances in the production of goods and services at both local and international levels, increased transport costs, limited quantities of raw materials and an increase or fall in market prices. All these were affected by local/regional lockdowns and forced production stoppages that led to a decrease in aggregate demand. The fact that the state is involved in multilateral and bilateral trade relations means that it had to carry its own burden.

However, owing to the high level of informality in Uganda's economy, it is not yet possible to assess the full magnitude of Covid-19 impact on her foreign relations as consequences of the total/border lockdowns, financial shocks and food insecurities are likely to be severe.

### 1. Commercialization of health services

While other states were socially donating health care equipment to mitigate infections, in Uganda dubious businessmen and a few private hospitals were taking advantage of the situation by increasing health service costs, funeral services and Covid-19-related medications and testing leaving citizens disoriented.

Uganda's vaccination process has been extremely slow, laden by insufficient deliveries of shots from the UN-run vaccine-sharing COVAX program which is designed for underprivileged countries. The slow process had caused massive lines at vaccination centers, creating fertile ground for scammers to prey on those wishing to get vaccinated faster. At least 812 Ugandans were vaccinated with phony coronavirus shots sold by a group of scammers.

Several companies fell victim as their employees were vaccinated and charged between \$28 and \$56 per shot. The seized vials remotely resembled AstraZeneca vaccines manufactured by India's Serum Institute but consisted more of water than anything else.

There is need for increased transparency and accountability on service delivery through initiatives like bringing previously opaque information or processes into the public domain and having citizen-led actions for demanding accountability from providers. This is because the donated funds and health equipment have been misused, leading to limited availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), ambulances and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds in health care centers.

Additionally, faking of testing and vaccination certificates for travelers to other countries became rampant. Some Ugandans checked upon reaching their destinations and found to be positive. This put profound damaged to the country's image, with the result that other states had placed it among high-risk countries and deported some of her citizens over Covid-19.

### 2. Loopholes in institutional cooperation

Beyond the change of policy, the crisis of multilateralism is embodied in challenges faced by some of the most established international organizations. Comparing this to the EAC, which formulated the EAC Response Plan in addressing the crisis, member states ended up violating the major rationale of the agenda. Philip Kasaija (2021) addresses the major loopholes in the EAC Response Plan stating that member states resorted to individual measures.

Equally, the COVAX facility was faced with shortage in vaccines and supply was scarce. This was attributed to India's suspension of vaccine exports as its second wave began to surge in March 2021. The COVAX facility predicted that vaccine exports would resume as soon as India's health care crisis stabilized.

The effects of this shortfall are evident as most developing states that had been relying on vaccine donations had to halt the vaccination process due to lack of vaccines. The situation could have been different in many First World states that had the resources to acquire vaccines faster than the Third World states. In Uganda, for instance, the ban affected her other donations of 2.3 million vaccines from COVAX.

In June 2021, the Ministry of Health began withdrawing vaccines from districts that had low uptake with the hope of supplying them in Kampala and Wakiso districts, which had a high uptake. The country was looking at different benefactors and countries that might had excess vaccines. In addition, at the height of the pandemic, USA and Europe, booked most of the PPEs, therefore, Third World states like Uganda could not get enough equipment even if they had the money.

### 3. Financial shock

Uganda has experienced financial shock waves during this crisis. Most traders were highly indebted to financial institutions like banks and

moneylenders with no hope of paying their debts and faced the risk of losing their security to financial institutions. To support this sector, Bank of Uganda (BoU) tried to reduce interest rates and provided liquidity to safeguard financial stability, while maintaining exchange rate flexibility.

However, the weakening economic conditions emanating from the pandemic put significant pressures on revenue collection, expenditure, reserves and the exchange rate, creating urgent large external and fiscal financing needs.

Therefore, to finance the health, social protection and macroeconomic stabilization measures, additional support from donors like IMF, WB and countries like Germany, China, Norway and others came in to finance fiscal needs that arose from the Covid-19 outbreak.

Critically, there was a significant decrease in foreign direct investment (FDI) in Uganda as flows declined by 35 percent to \$823 million (Shs 2.9 trillion), compared to \$1.3 billion (Shs 4.6 trillion) received in 2019. The slow FDI flow was attributed to the Albertine oil project that decelerated due to the pandemic as well as disagreements between the Government and oil companies on the development strategy. Recovery is pegged on the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which is expected to significantly shape foreign investment into African special economic zones (SEZs).

#### 4. Cross-border trade in EAC region

Following the outbreak of Covid-19, there had been supply chain disruptions in the EAC region. China remained the major exporter of goods and services to the EAC with a market share of 31.2 percent against Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC's) 11.5 per cent. When China closed its major manufacturing centers due to corona virus, the demand for the region's raw materials in the Chinese industry reduced. The supply of Chinese products in the region reduced as well.

The region had an informal cross-border type of trade which represents goods and services that

were directly or indirectly taxed from all partner states. Cross-border trade also estimated to account for the livelihood of about 60 percent of EAC residents hence its significance. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, rules and regulations on the cross-border movements of goods and people threatened the livelihoods of traders and their families and reduced the revenue for partner states.

#### 5. Decline in import and export revenue

Imports and exports have been negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. For instance, EABC reports that, before Covid-19, Kenya was exporting 30,000 MT of flowers per week. Currently, the floriculture industry is exporting 12,000MT per week. In Uganda, between April and March 2020, several export commodities registered sharp declines for instance, cotton exports declined by 81.7%, fish and its products (41.5%), beans (70.1%), Tobacco (24.1%), Maize (20.8%), Simsim (54.7%) among others.

Additionally, at the beginning of the pandemic, Uganda's imports declined from USD 711.99 m in January 2020 to USD 701.34 m in February 2020 to USD 593.79 m in March 2020. The IMF continues to monitor Uganda's situation closely and stands ready to provide policy advice and further support as needed.

Following the discussion on Uganda by the World Bank's Executive Board, Mr. Tao Zhang, Deputy Managing Director and Acting Chair, he asserted that *"the global Covid-19 pandemic was expected to severely hit the Ugandan economy through several channels, with detrimental effects on economic activity and social indicators."*

The external and fiscal accounts expected to deteriorate, creating substantial, urgent external and fiscal financing needs. Most revenue decline attributed to the closure of borders given the fact that Uganda is a landlocked country which needs unlimited access to its neighbors at all times. Although, the country is landlocked and facing

challenges related to access and availability of goods and services, it continues to tax all trade exchanges, including imports and exports.

## 6. Food insecurity

Figures released by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, indicated that a range of export products continue to suffer from the effects of COVID-19. For example, export earnings hit to \$207.15m in April, down from \$315.52m in March 2020. Coffee, one of Uganda's leading exports declined by 19.5%, fetching the country only \$36.9m in April from \$45.8m in March.

Furthermore, Fowler (2020) adds that it was expected that agricultural exports would decline further if transit routes continued to be dysfunctional or blocked by Kenya and Tanzania. The closing of Uganda's borders and international airports due to Covid-19 greatly affected the import and export of agricultural products.

This level of disruption impacted the performance of domestic agricultural food value chains to the parish level. For instance, sugarcane farmers experienced drastic loss in revenue due to the poor performance of sugar manufacturing companies in the country. From the analysis, it becomes clear that the closing of borders affected the supply chain of sugar export to markets in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania.

## 2.4 Measures Taken by Uganda to Strengthen its Bilateral and Multilateral Relations

Uganda has been diplomatically involved by states and international institutions in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. Relations may not have been lost during the pandemic, but projects and cooperation have been affected adversely. For instance, there have been aid cuts which have affected social development projects, some of them targeted refugees, people with disabilities (PWDs) and minority groups.

Basing on the objectives, recognizing centrality of the state's foreign relations during this ad hoc moment is paramount in ensuring that Uganda is in good books of both her bilateral and multilateral partners. Uganda has used various strategies to strengthen her foreign relations image and to ensure that the image is conventional through;

**(a) Adhering to the WHO protocol on COVID-19 management:** In this perspective, international relations are strengthened when all acting member states adhere to protocols and rules that bind them, especially in tragic moments. This form of collective response instills trust and ensures order and quick resolution to pertinent issues.

It may perhaps be agreed upon that Uganda has been widely lauded by the WHO and the Africa Centre for Disease Control for its decisive reaction against the pandemic.

The country imposed two stringent lockdowns since the outbreak, adhered to testing citizens those leaving and entering the country, and worked towards combating the spread of Covid-19 through CBS strategies.

While this proactive response helped prevent the spread of the virus, there were serious matters overlooked during Uganda's corona virus fight. Citizens complained that measures to avert Covid-19 led to a surge in violations of human rights and knock-on effects on other health services. Some citizens were tortured and others killed by local defense units for breaking curfews.

Restrictions on movement also meant people were unable to access health services. For instance, several people living with HIV were unable to access life-saving drugs because they could not travel to clinics. The life of expectant mothers was put in jeopardy as some died while attempting to access health facilities. Therefore, it was important to consider and protect the rights of Ugandan citizens while controlling the spread of Covid-19.

**(b) Strengthening home-based care:** Uganda adopted the Home-based care designed by WHO that was expected to demonstrate positive outcomes in the management of the Covid-19 pandemic. With many hospitals overwhelmed by the numbers of Covid-19 patients, home-based care for mild and asymptomatic Covid-19 cases was adopted as a more sustainable strategy for combating the spread of the virus.

However, many rural districts lacked the technical expertise and resources to cope with these new responsibilities thus creating challenges as many communities had to fully understand their role in preventing the spread of the virus. As a result, adherence to preventative measures such as wearing masks, social distancing and isolation was generally low, hence the need for government to resort to tough lockdown measures.

**(c) Strengthening practical cooperation:** Uganda's approach to mitigating the pandemic based much on utilitarian-influenced decisions. Looking through the categories which received the vaccine first, one can understand that the state's intentions were for the greater common good. Uganda received vaccines from different states, and the first batch obtained in March 2021, was administered to essential workers like doctors and nurses, the elderly and people with health vulnerabilities.

**(d) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Uganda conformed to the vision of a desirable world order with interests in SDGs. During the first lockdown, the state invested in distributing food items like maize flour and beans, to the most vulnerable communities. Equally, in the second wave of the pandemic, the Prime Minister, promised to distribute One hundred thousand Uganda Shillings (UGX 100,000) each to the vulnerable. However, sources claim that this money was not received by the intended beneficiaries.

**(e) Conflict resolution using the GeneXpert machine:** Uganda's relations with her neighboring states almost deteriorated into uncontrolled chaos and uncalled-for strikes during the pandemic over Covid-19 testing. Through the presidential directives, persons crossing any Ugandan border were instructed to either carry their Covid-19 test results for a period not exceeding the last 72 hours or get tested at the border before entry.

However, owing to test delays caused by malfunctions and the overwhelming number of swaps to be tested, the truck drivers and driving assistants got frustrated, resorting to mild riots and strikes where angered traders and truck drivers threatened to cut off trading ties with Uganda. However, a quick resolution was made in connection with the GeneXpert machines which were installed at the Malaba and Mutukula borders. These helped to carry out on-the-spot testing thus reducing the time spent at the border.

The truck drivers' negligence, fear and impatience while at the borders contributed to the proliferation of the virus. The uproar over this could have threatened political, economic and social relations between the converging states had this not been resolved faster.

A team from the Kenya Ministry of East African Community, the East African Business Council (EABC), Trade-Mark East Africa, the EU and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) assessed the situation at Busia and Malaba border points. These identified challenges associated with surveillance, testing and issuance of Covid-19-free certificates faced by small-scale cross-border traders due to the shortage of reagents.

The Kenyan government obtained adequate supplies which were installed at the border points, thus helping to resolve the crisis. In addition to Uganda's placement of the GeneXpert machine at the borders, another testing laboratory was established at a trailer parking yard in Eldoret to handle truck drivers.



Medical workers ensuring safety in the city during the COVID-19 pandemic

Source:  
Photo from [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)

### 3.0 Recommendations

Uganda's health system is quite fragile and was never built for large scale or prolonged critical care. There have been a series of success and resilience of the health system, but efforts are generally fragmented and rarely consolidated.

Despite following the WHO risk communication strategy and having a community-based disease surveillance strategy, the largely top-down approach of the national response hasn't effectively used structures at the local/parish level which would help the government to cope up with critical clinical cases. The enforcement approach in some cases, was less than ideal and even counterproductive.

There was great need to activate the community engagement strategy and multi-level COVID-19 taskforces and decentralize some aspects of the response by making the community partners, building capacity for surveillance while managing cases at all levels.

Covid-19 has mostly impacted Uganda's trade relations. The closing of Uganda's borders and international airports due to COVID-19 affected the import and export industry, leading to a demand and supply chain imbalance, besides affecting market prices.

Equally, the performance of domestic agricultural food value chains down to the parish level. The



slow clearance procedure, delays in Covid-19 test results and long queues at the border points created frustration among traders and truck drivers, which led to an economic crisis on the borders of the East African countries.

Therefore, there is need to strengthen the EAC as member states should adhere to the economic policies and plans agreed upon to mitigate the pandemic.

Moving forward, preparing for biological and pandemic threats ahead of time should be a must for all states. From a health point of view, there is need to reform existing public health institutions across the globe. This calls for need to protect and strengthen globalization through economic stimulation while protecting vulnerable economies.

Transparent governance is a necessity in the future for strengthening democratic bilateral and multilateral relations among states.

The pandemic and its multiple, devastating consequences for the lives of people around the world loudly warn and remind us of the importance of international cooperation and solidarity. It is also an opportunity to come up with good lessons and practices to respond more effectively to possible challenges in the future.

### 3.1 International Level

The WTO ought to subsequently implement inclusive policies related to investment, intellectual property rights, e-commerce, as well as a productive transformation agenda, particularly through regional integration, in order to deal with global trade shocks. These measures will be key to reducing vulnerability to external shocks in trade and commodity prices, advancing the productive transformation of the world, and reinforcing societal and economic resilience for future global crises.

Whereas states may seek validation for continued operation in trade and movement by spreading wrong and improper information on Covid-19 cases and management levels, this only puts the entire world at risk. WHO must come up with protocols that restrain states from disseminating wrong information on the pandemic. One of the best ways of dealing with Covid-19 is being transparent and providing non-biased data from health ministries, departments and agencies. The media, regional and civil society organizations (CSOs) and individual bloggers should assume their duties and help states address this infodemic era.

### 3.2 Regional Level

Strengthening regional organizations like the EAC should be top priority during such crises. According to how each state reacted during the pandemic, one may doubt the existence of the EAC Covid-19 Response Plan. However, collective response and action in decision-making and implementation are what are helping to contain the spread of the virus. The EAC Secretariat and member states must revise the EAC Covid-19 Response Plan to bridge gaps and make reforms on how to mitigate the underlying Covid-19 problems.

There is need to revise and reform the EAC trade policy. During such crises, lack and scarcity of resources, heavy tariffs and taxation policies of imports and exports should be revised and even removed as free trade rationalizes local production. Removing tariffs and border controls would help to ease the exportation and importation of goods and could improve relations between involved states.

The EAC region should adopt and increase the use of shuttle diplomacy just as it has been the case in past crises like Ebola. Shuttle diplomacy involves states treating or vaccinating non-nationals currently infected or affected by an ongoing health crisis.



Medical Workers Conducting Rapid COVID-19 testing for truck drivers at Uganda's borders amidst the pandemic.

Source: Photo generated from [www.Midjourney.com](http://www.Midjourney.com)

Equally, the region should continue using shuttle diplomacy in regard to testing, vaccinating and helping to treat patients who are non-nationals, where necessary, instead of deporting them to their counties of origin, which only creates more danger.

In order to alleviate the immediate healthcare crisis in the African region, regional entities like the OECD and other major producers of medical products should refrain from imposing export bans and other trade policies that fragment production and increase the costs of essential supplies for import-dependent countries. With this, the OECD regional entity encourage states to boost trust and transparency through tackling misinformation, as well as enhancing representation and participation and stronger governance in responses to the pandemic.

### 3.3 State Level

The Ugandan government ought to strengthen the health care system by revamping health centers by providing them with necessary equipment.

However, the country should abide by the requirement to provide transparent dissemination of Covid-19-related information.

Equally, the decentralization of health care systems through the district task forces should be made a priority if the virus is to be contained at the micro level.

In order to promote domestic innovation, there is need to revise tax policies. High taxation levels make it difficult for business owners to cope with the tough economic times. Therefore, the state ought to address taxation policies in order to improve trade and economic relations among states, especially in the EAC region.

In addition, the Ugandan government should restore and reform cooperative societies which would constitute a backbone for most traders and business people during such crises.

Uganda must address the issue of corruption by evaluating and monitoring funds given to persons or organizations and companies responsible for purchasing Covid-19 related treating equipment.

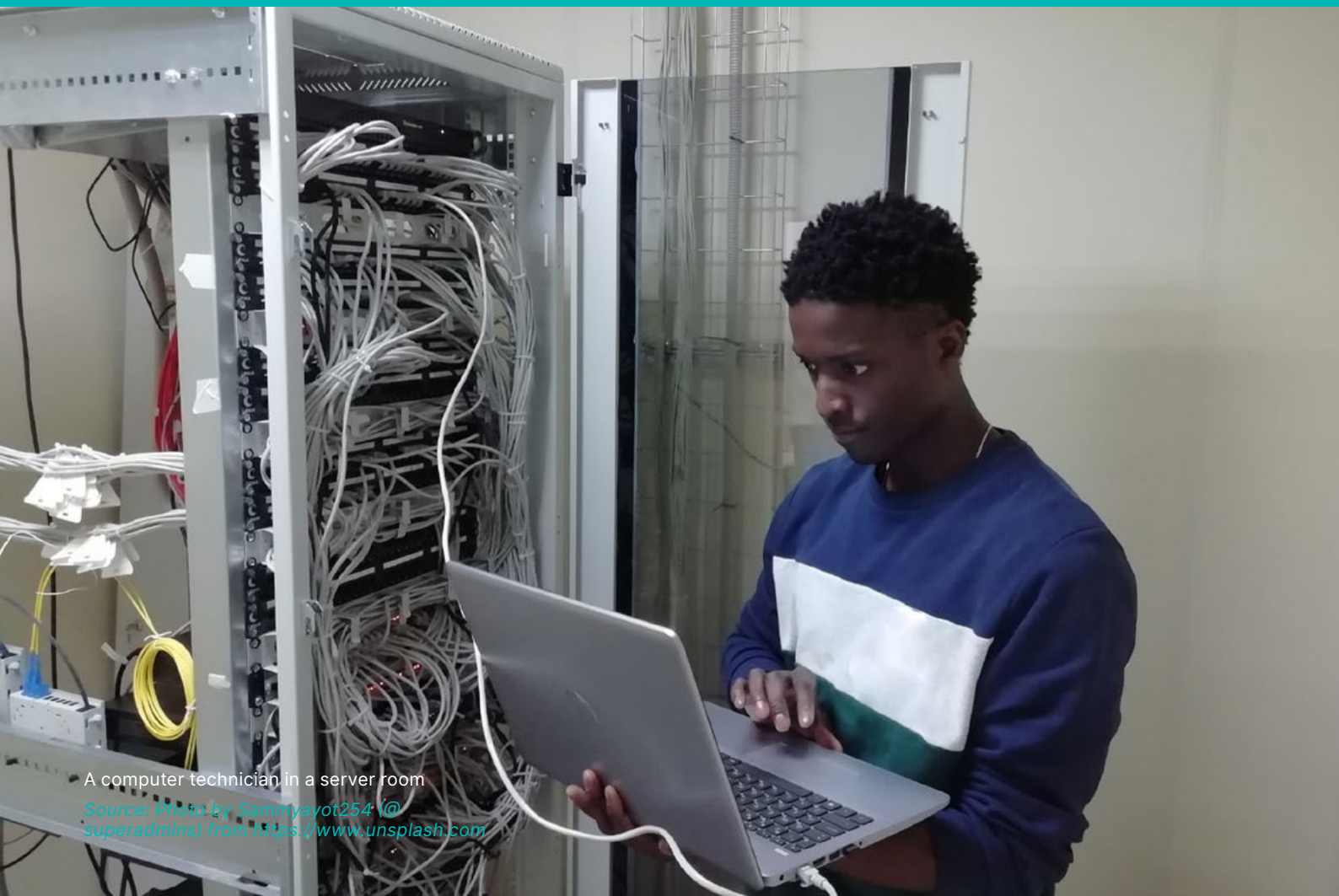
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# 3

## The Influence of Cyber Norms in Fostering Uganda's Bilateral and Multilateral Relations for Responsible State Behavior in Cyberspace

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A computer technician in a server room

Source: Photo by Sammyayot254 (@superadmins) from <https://www.unsplash.com>

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## List of Acronyms

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**AU:** African Union

**AISG:** African Internet Security guidelines

**GCSC:** Global Commission on the Stability of the Cyberspace's

**4IR:** Fourth Industrial Revolution

**ICT:** Information Communication Technology

**IGF:** Internet Governance Forum

**MOICT&NG:** Ministry of Information Communication Technology and National Guidance

**NITA-U:** National Information Technology Authority-Uganda

**NGGE:** Nations Group of Governmental Experts

**UCC:** Uganda Communications Commission

## 1.0 Introduction

The development of normative frameworks to reign over state and non-state activities in cyberspace has become a very critical issue at the moment. Currently, the global cyberspace operates without basic consensus on norms, principles and rules both by state and non-state actors<sup>1</sup> yet cyberspace should constitute a process in which both state and non-state actors, including the private sector, work towards achieving common norms, abide by rules applied in cyberspace, coordinate the core interests of one another, promoting responsible state behaviors and managing cyber threats effectively.<sup>2</sup>

There is no doubt that norms can contribute and be an essential mechanism for averting inter-state conflict in the cyberspace. This is because, conflicts in the cyberspace are increasing as time and advancement in technology unfolds and its effects are damaging to both politics and the economics of the parties involved. Cyber-induced conflict has caused both diplomatic and economic problems between Uganda and Rwanda in recent past.

In fact, in 2019 the allegations where MTN Uganda Telecom was involved in aiding large-scale cyber espionage on the Ugandan government via its telecommunication networks and transferring it to Rwanda led to the deportation of the top MTN management workers in Uganda by Ugandan authorities. This strained diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Incidents of state-inspired cyberattacks and cyber espionage have caused conflicts in both the online and physical spaces. Cyber threats undermine international peace and stability which is hinged on the efficacy of multilateral co-operation. Therefore, the need to institute co-operative measures such as norm development

and implementation is more than necessary. This study validates the relevance of norms as an indispensable mechanism for building cyberstability.

Nevertheless, effective engagement of all stakeholder groups in the process of normative development and implementation is a prerequisite for acceptance, adherence to the norms and shaping cyberstability. Policy makers should ensure there is sustained multi-stakeholder engagement and consultations of all actors, including civil society, private sector, academia and technical communities.

All these causes need to strengthen capacity-building of state institutions, notably those with cyber security-related mandates. But also strengthen organizational management, human resources and administrative competences of these state institutions that are critical for catalyzing the professionalization of the state bureaucracy. Moreover, respect for human rights both offline and online by government should be prioritized and then, sensitization and awareness should continue to top government priorities in the digital age.

Uganda, like many other African countries, still grapples with cybersecurity challenges that has persisted even though the country has invested immensely in enacting cybersecurity laws, strategies and frameworks. Cybercrimes continue to intensify internally, ranging from incidents such as fraudulent SIM card registrations, swapping, online impersonation, unauthorized access, remote access vulnerabilities, malware, data manipulation and social engineering. In 2019, Cybercrime led to loss of UGX 11.4 billion, which is approximately \$3.09 million dollars.

The recent hacking of the Parliament of Uganda

<sup>1</sup> GCSC (2018) Briefings from the research advisory group. Briefings to the global commission on the stability of cyberspace for the full commission meeting, Bratislava 2018. GCSC Issue Brief No.2 GCSC GSCS (2018) GCSC Issue Brief No.2 (2018). Available at <https://cyberstability.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/GCSC-Research-Advisory-Group-Issue-Brief-2-Bratislava.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



A cyber criminal using virtual reality headset to hack computer firewall.

Source: Photo by Image by DCStudio on [www.freepik.com](http://www.freepik.com)

website and that of the Civil Service College in Uganda affiliated to the Ministry of Public Service illustrates core examples of threats that the country is dealing with. Until recently when cooperation between Uganda and Rwanda was restored, bi-lateral relations and diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict had proven difficult and futile. Diplomatic maneuvers and restoration of bi-lateral cooperation only succeeded when the President's son and then Commander Land Forces of the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF), Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba intervened directly with the Rwandan President, Paul Kagame.

It's important to note that bilateral and multilateral efforts in the implementation of norms as a framework for resolving conflict in the cyberspace in Uganda is barely available. Equally to say, confidence-building measures and other cooperative approaches that could potentially lead to norm development is also unavailable. Norm acceptance and implementation don't exist at bilateral level most especially between Uganda and its immediate neighbors. There is no empirical evidence regarding the extent to which confidence-building measures with regard to cyberspace in Uganda have been enhanced or undertaken and how the measures at both bilateral and multilateral level have led to sustained norm development with the possibility for widespread acceptance.

Therefore, the research underlying this paper was designed to address the above knowledge gap by deliberately examining the relevance of cyber norms in fostering cyber peace and stability between Uganda and its neighbors. This study adopted the Global Commission on the Stability of the Cyberspace's (GCSC) definition of cyber norms, as social behaviors that are expected and appropriate that govern the behavior and actions of individuals, organizations and states in cyberspace.

Cyberspace is the term used to describe the electronic medium of digital networks used to store, modify and communicate information and it includes the internet but also other information systems that support businesses, infrastructure and services.

#### The research assessed the following issues:

1. Relevance of norms in strengthening Uganda's bilateral and multilateral relations
2. Uganda's stakeholder perceptions with regard to cyber normative frameworks for international peace and security
3. Institutional frameworks put in place to promote norms for responsible state behavior
4. Role and contributions of non-state actors in enhancing cyberstability.



## 2.0 Cyberspace, Peace and Stability in Uganda

It is now common that governments are also behind cyberattacks as they use technology as a weapon against adversaries even in times of peace. Because of this, the potential for interstate conflicts and the risks associated with it is very high. As pointed above, in 2019 the allegation that the South African-based telecom company MTN Uganda was involved in supporting large-scale cyber espionage on the Ugandan government via its telecommunication networks to Rwanda threatened the country's national security and strained diplomatic relations between the two countries.

A statement released by the then deputy police spokesperson, Polly Namaye confirming these allegations asserts that "security agencies were in close coordination with immigration officials investigating two foreign nationals working with a leading mobile telecom company over their engagements in acts which compromised national security".

The cyber-espionage allegedly involved eavesdropping on communications from Government of Uganda officials, providing financial intelligence on the finances of government officials and diverting such information to Rwanda – a country that accused Uganda of harboring dissident groups with the intention to overthrow the Kigali establishment. This alleged action strained diplomatic relations of the two countries which later led to the closure of Kabale-Katuna border that connects Uganda to Rwanda.

To support further use of cyberspace maliciously by state actors and mercenaries to incite cyber tension, a story reported by the *Daily Monitor* – one of Uganda's leading dailies exposes how Rwanda allegedly used Israeli-made spyware called Pegasus, wiretapped communications of the then Prime Minister, the then Foreign Affairs Minister and the then Chief of Defense Forces of

Uganda. This incident alone had the potential to stir tension if not diplomatically and peacefully resolved.

Despite the above incident, it should be noted that Uganda established institutional and legal framework that earmarks ICT skills development as a key pillar for transforming the country into a knowledge-based income and globally competitive country. Recently, the National Task Force on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) developed a strategy which is geared towards seeing Uganda as a continental 4IR hub that enables a smart and connected Ugandan society. However, from the analysis it's not clear how these frameworks can contribute or are even relevant towards resolving tensions that may arise in the cyberspace at bi-lateral level. Clearly, the frameworks are insufficient to addressing matters of inter-state cooperation in the cyberspace as it was intended to spur the growth of the ICT sector domestically.

The institutions spearheading these frameworks are coordinated and supervised by the Ministry of Information Communication Technology and National Guidance (MoICT&NG) and its agencies, such as the National Information Technology Authority-Uganda (NITA-U) and the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC). These agencies, unlike the Ministry of Foreign Affairs do not have mandate to deal with complex bi-lateral matters arising in the cyberspace. But even then, the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in managing tensions that escalate bi-laterally is not seen or felt at all. The Uganda Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) Office in New York, has some responsibilities but there is limited knowledge to the level of participation in cyber related processes bi-laterally but also at the UN such as on the Open-Ended Working Group on ICTs in the context of international security, or on the Adhoc Committee on Cybercrime to just mention but a few.

The legal and regulatory frameworks for cybersecurity primarily include the Computer Misuse Act 2011, the Electronic Transactions and Signature Act 2011, the Regulations on Interception of Communication Act 2009 and the Data Protection and Privacy Act 2019. Other relevant Acts governing Uganda's cyberspace include the E-government Framework and the National Information Security Framework, the NITA-U Act and the UCC Act, to mention just a few. But most of these regulatory frameworks were intended to resolve cybersecurity challenges domestically. Even though these agencies do have departments such as Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTS), their level of coordination with other countries are not clearly documented. Perhaps, they are also constrained by financial, technical and human resource

capacity of individuals to effectively coordinate and make their contributions meaningful and impactful.

The Regulations on Interception of Communications Act 2009 provides a basis for authorities to intercept communications on a telecommunication network through warrant but in certain cases, authorities may require persons to decrypt information which also raises the issue of safeguarding human rights in the digital space including limiting freedom of expression online. Again, these laws were intended to address the internal challenges of security and threats to network infrastructures, but they are inadequate in addressing bi-lateral matters that escalates in the cyberspace.

### 3.0 Discussions of Findings

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This section presents and discusses findings from the study based on the research objectives of the study.

#### 3.1 The Relevance of Norms in Strengthening Uganda's Relations

Norms and their implementation are good for enhancing Uganda's bilateral and multilateral relations. However, the challenge is always in norm implementation which undermines the effectiveness of these norms in maintaining cyber peace and stability. Even though there seems to be inadequate level of awareness of the relevance of cybersecurity normative frameworks for Uganda, the country's ability to domesticate other norms especially those negotiated at the United Nation's processes is still non-existent.

Ugandan government through its permanent mission in New York should actively engage in UN led cyber norm processes such as the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on ICTs in the context of international security and devise strategies at country level to advance

discussions, developments and implementation of these frameworks with other states which could help in forming a basis of understanding and the resolution of cyberspace tensions. For instance, there are already 11 non-binding voluntary norms that have already been adopted by the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) that are relevant for Uganda and other countries to domesticate.

Uganda must be able to build alliances with other states, strengthen partnerships with multi-stakeholder groups to ensure that conflicts in the cyberspace can be resolved peacefully without escalation. Norm development and implementation could play a critical role in this regard. It's important for Uganda to carry out regular confidence building measures and institutional dialogues with broad participation of stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society and academia in the processes of setting and implementing the norms and principles of cyberspace stability.

This approach if undertaken by the government of Uganda would be consistent with the African Internet Security guidelines that emphasize the importance of the multi-stakeholder model and collaborative security approaches in protecting the internet infrastructures. Uganda and other countries must establish mechanisms in which it adheres to standards that are set at bi-lateral and multilateral levels and translate them into local context and effectively implement the norms.

Additionally, findings reveal that norms are better enforced if they are written, backed by law and their application done within a framework of strong institutions. The cyber espionage on Uganda which catalyzed the conflict between Uganda and Rwanda, leading to the closure of border could have been resolved immediately and peacefully if cyber norms and other confidence building mechanisms had been applied to solve bilateral and multilateral conflict of such nature.

On the other hand, findings reveal that the Ugandan government sees the cyberspace domain as a space that 'allows opposition to mobilize against it'. Hence the legal frameworks that the government sets are pitched at stifling the activities of the perceived enemies of the state – the opposition, activists, human rights defenders and journalists because most of these state 'institutions are viewed as mere appendages of [the] military state'.

Nevertheless, there is a clear understanding of the concept of norms and its relevance in promoting bilateral and multilateral relations in cyberspace in Uganda and this demonstrates the critical importance of normative frameworks in building consensus and maintaining international cyberstability. There is still limited knowledge and scarcity of norms at state level. This highlights the need for a concerted effort to raise awareness, to domesticate the norms and engage policymakers at national level. This would popularize voluntary non-binding norms and also increase people's levels of knowledge and awareness of the norms.

Key informants expressed uncertainty as to whether Uganda adheres to international legal instruments and laws, drawing examples from cases of the internet shutdowns during the election period.

### 3.2 Uganda's Stakeholder Perceptions in Regard to Norms in Cyberspace

It's very important for government to fully understand their own cyberspace domain and the necessary mechanisms required to effectively secure them. Norms and norm implementation is one way of contributing towards prevention of conflicts arising from misunderstandings in the cyberspace. Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies such as the National Information Technology Authority Uganda (NITA-U) coordinates the proper functioning of the cyberspace and internet infrastructures across government bureaucracy together with other nation states. However, there is a general perception that the cyber infrastructure and capacity of government is generally weak and inefficient.

This reason could be attributed to increased cybercrimes in the country notwithstanding the legal and technical infrastructural investments that have been accorded to the ICT sector and agencies in the country. Uganda's cybersecurity infrastructures are generally perceived to be very weak because adapting to efficient technological innovation and practices including capacity to manage them is limited.

This view is backed by evidence of increased hacking of government websites and platforms as well as the reported trailing of the communications of Uganda's high-ranking officials by a neighboring state as clear signs of weakness. The Uganda's institutional and legal frameworks is believed to operate within the context of military temperature to imply that its sole intention is to serve the interest and security of the regime.

Regarding whether Uganda adheres or is capable of adhering to international law as it applies in the digital space, it is believed that the country's adherence is contingent on appeasement of international actors and that there is no commitment to practically respect and adhere to international law both offline and online.

The incidents where authorities have blocked access to the internet, especially during the 2016 and 2021 general elections, the introduction of OTT taxes and the government levy of 12% taxes on the internet were deemed as a tactic by the state to violate human rights in the digital space and to limit people's access to the internet service as well as freedom of speech and expression online which is an infringement of international law. It should be noted that Uganda is a signatory to international law, and must respect, preserve and promote international human rights in accordance to their obligations.

For instance, states are barred from shutting down the internet and in this regard, internet shutdown in Uganda is a manifestation of the deliberate violation of the principle of restraint as advanced by the cyber stability framework. Blocking internet access and social media shows that the authorities are failing to uphold their international human rights obligations, including those relating to the right to free expression, which is provided for under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, where Uganda is a signatory.

Lack of respect for human rights in the digital space in Uganda is a major challenge that its government must address. Uganda follows examples of other African countries that have invested in surveillance technologies to spy on citizens, human rights activists, journalists and opposition politicians. This is a deliberate violation of rights to privacy in the digital space especially where it's used without due repute to law and human rights safeguards.

Robust cyber infrastructure and systems are vital for securing the country's cyberspace and data protection and for ensuring privacy online. The associated regulatory frameworks are also key to promoting rights and freedoms. However, the weak cyber infrastructure, as well as the fact that state institutions operate on the notions of an increasingly militarized regime to exploit the regulatory frameworks, have placed serious strains on internet rights and freedoms in Uganda.

In regard to capacity building, a recent finding from the ICT Skills and Training Needs Analysis 2021 conducted by Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, notes that cybersecurity capacity-building is still lacking in government Ministries, Departments and Agencies. Government needs to prioritize the cyberspace and effectively build capacity at all levels.

There is a view that Uganda just like other African economies in general take cybersecurity as a luxury and not a necessity because its importance is not yet satisfactorily appreciated. However, this should not be the case and the Ugandan government must invest in this critical resource and domain if it's to remain vibrant and resilient to the ever-changing face of technological innovation.

### 3.3 Institutional Frameworks in Uganda for Promotion of Norms

There are several institutions and legal frameworks established in Uganda to deal with cybersecurity. These include: Ministry of ICT and National Guidance (MoICT&NG), the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), National Information Technology Authority Uganda (NITA-U) and the Police Cybercrime Department. The key legal frameworks include the Computer Misuse Act 2011, the Electronic Transactions Act 2011, the Electronic Signatures Act 2012, the UCC Act, 2009 the NITA-U Act 2009 and the Data Protection and Privacy Act 2019. However, with such institutional and legal

frameworks their effectiveness is limited towards protecting cyberspace domain and the security of individuals and communities.

This is evident by increased incidents of cybercrime such as hacking of government websites and other platforms which is an issue most institutions of government are currently dealing with.

The institutions of government also have a weak capacity to secure the cyber space domain. These include the inability to protect critical network infrastructures and software systems. There is lack of serious human resource capacity in government bureaucracy hence hindering its ability to detect and thwart cybercrime. The increase in cybercrime internally is attributed to 'incompetence of duty bearers', especially within the Uganda Police but also limited skills in forensic investigation and advanced knowledge of cybersecurity. The capacity of lawyers and state prosecutors and judges to investigate and prosecute and pronounce their opinion on cases of cybercrime is too low.

Government of Uganda should build capacity of police in cybercrime intelligence but also capacity building across all government agencies must be prioritized at all times. Delays in introducing pupils and students to digital literacy and paucity of courses focusing on cybersecurity at the tertiary level were cited as key shortcomings in the country's education system yet, this could potentially help to address the cybersecurity challenges that the country grapples with.

The awareness of the institutional capacity in Uganda to deal with the cybersecurity issue is a good step and speaks to how critical they are in fostering cooperation and norm development, implementation in cyberspace. However, concerns about the ineffectiveness of the institutions points to the need for wider stakeholder consultations and input on cyber-related matters.

The fact that key informants noted that the cyberspace domain is just emerging and key informants from government agencies state otherwise is a contradiction. Policymakers and state actors should prioritize widespread consultations among various stakeholder groups such as civil society, academia, the technical community and the private sector coupled with communication services to heighten awareness.

The government needs to widely sensitize the public on the relevance of the legal and regulatory frameworks such as the Computer Misuse Act 2011 and demystify and prove otherwise the fact that it is intended to crack down on dissent. Likewise, the government should re-evaluate the circumstances that have led to many Ugandans being arrested and charged under the Computer Misuse Act 2011. The case of Dr Stella Nyanzi – the former Makerere University academician – was cited. However, this trend of using the Computer Misuse Act 2011 was reported to have protracted and come to affect politicians, activists and journalists as well.

### 3.4 Role Non-State Actors Play in the Cyber Norm Debate and Stability

Non state actors such as civil society, the private sector and academia play important roles in shaping norm development and its implementation. Some of these roles include ensuring checks and balances on activities of the state, conducting research and advocacy, sensitization and awareness creation, capacity-building, integrating gender perspectives into policy and monitoring and documentation.

The role of non-state actors in regard to transparency and accountability was noted as contributing factor towards ensuring the safety, security and privacy of citizens and advocating against harmful technology and practices such as surveillance on citizens. Civil society's role is also very critical in the monitoring and

evaluation of government programmes. The participation of civil society in spaces that they create by themselves is important even though civil society engagement in government-led multi-stakeholder consultation processes is very limited.

The role that non-state actors play and their engagement and effectiveness in cyber spaces is strongly regarded as critical in shaping the developments in the field of ICT and cyberspace. Non-state actors, notably civil society, participate and contribute meaningfully to platforms and spaces where they are invited or those that they create.

Civil society play pivotal roles such as ensuring checks and balances, conducting research and advocacy, sensitization and awareness creation, capacity-building, and integrating and amplifying the voices of minority groups. For instance, through integrating gender perspectives into policy and implementation. Non-state actors were also cited to play critical roles in monitoring and evaluation.

## 4.0 Key Recommendations for Policy Actions

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1. There is need for more engagement of all stakeholder groups in shaping cyber norm debate, its development and implementation in Uganda collectively.
2. Government should establish effective institutions that are not corrupt, efficient, meritocratic and respect rule of law.
3. Policy making by government requires broad participation of stakeholders such as civil society, the private sector, academia and technical communities.
4. Government should build the capacity of state institutions with regard to their organizational, human resources and administrative aspects. This will catalyze the professionalization of a state bureaucracy that is strong, effective and unbiased.
5. Government and civil society groups and private sector should sensitize the population and raise awareness as this is a big challenge in the context of ICTs, cybersecurity and network infrastructure protection.
6. Government should respect human rights in the digital age just as they would in the offline world and must adhere to the principles of international law. For instance, the report of the UN Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation clearly states that human rights apply fully in the digital space, too.

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# 4

## Assessment of Uganda's Peace Support Operations and its Impact on Regional Peace and Security

Patricia Namakula

A parade of Ugandan soldiers serving with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

Source: AMISOM Public Information on <https://www.flickr.com>



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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

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- APSA:** African Peace and Security Architecture
- APSC:** African Union Peace and Security Council
- AMISOM:** African Union Mission in Somalia
- AU:** African Union
- BRICS:** Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
- CAR:** Central African Republic
- COMESA:** Common Markets for Eastern and Southern Africa
- DRC:** Democratic Republic of Congo
- EAC:** East African Community
- EU:** European Union
- G7:** The Group of Seven
- G20:** The Group of Twenty
- IGAD:** Intergovernmental Authority on Development
- LRA:** Lord's Resistance Army
- NATO:** North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- PSOs:** Peace Support Operations
- RECs:** Regional Economic Communities
- R2P:** Responsibility to Protect
- RTF:** Regional Task Force
- US:** United States
- UN:** United Nations
- UNGA:** United Nations General Assembly
- UNSC:** United Nations Security Council

## 1.0 Introduction

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The term peace support operations (PSOs) mean organized international assistance initiatives to support the maintenance, monitoring, building of peace and the prevention of resurgent violent conflict. There are two categories of PSOs: peacekeeping and peace enforcement.

Peacekeeping is a tool in international conflict management, resolution and has been in existence since 1948 when the Security Council authorized the deployment of United Nations (UN) military observers to the Middle East. Since then, peacekeeping has gone through three distinct phases to match the challenges to peace and security presented by the changes in global politics. First generation of peacekeeping started at the end of World War II and lasted till the end of the Cold War. The main functions of the first-generation missions were to “monitor borders and establish buffer zones after ceasefires had been negotiated.”

The post-Cold War period ushered in the second generation of peacekeeping which authorized missions to coercive measures where necessary under chapter VII of the UN Charter, and lasted until the late 1990s. The third-generation peacekeeping started around the millennium shift and the priority of human security was one of the defining features. Peacekeeping under the UN is guided by three principles: (1) consent of the warring parties; (2) impartiality; and (3) non-use of force except in self-defense and in defense of the mandate.

Peace enforcement, on the other hand, involves the application of a range of coercive measures, including the use of military force. It requires the explicit authorization of the Security Council. It is used to restore international peace and security in situations where the Security Council has decided to act in the face of a threat to the peace,

breach of the peace or act of aggression. The Council may utilize, where appropriate, regional organizations and agencies for enforcement action under its authority and in accordance with the UN Charter.

At the time of its inception, peacekeeping was primarily limited to maintaining ceasefires and stabilizing situations on the ground. The post-Cold War environment was characterized by a change in the nature of conflict and this necessitated a dramatic change in peacekeeping due to an increase in intra-state conflicts in the Global South.

This explains why Africa has been home to the majority of the UN peacekeeping missions, currently accounting for six out of the twelve active UN peacekeeping missions.

Uganda has been able to play an active role in promoting regional peace and security through the hybrid peace support operations (PSOs) between the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN), the AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) or the UN and RECs. However, the country has also acted under bilateral arrangements through its foreign policy.

This paper draws from available literature that seeks to examine whether Uganda's foreign policy goals are consistent with its PSOs, impact of Uganda's troop deployment in regional peace and security. Since much of Uganda's peacekeeping is funded by external sources, this study analyzes the critical role of multilateral actors in supporting the country's peacekeeping efforts.

## 2.0 Background

Uganda got its independence in 1962 but owing to internal political upheavals that astounded the country between the 1960s through the 1980s, the country's ability to participate in international PSOs was truncated not until the 2000s after defeating the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), that the country started to engage in regional and international PSOs as part of the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), East African Community (EAC) and Inter-government Authority on Development (IGAD). The Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) has expanded its military footprint on the continent and the country has deployed soldiers in Liberia, Somalia and South Sudan among others.

Its contribution to PSOs stems from a pan-Africanist ideology in which the country continues to help other African countries in their quest for peace, prosperity and stability. Uganda's continued contribution to peace support operations has also been driven by its growing interest to strategically position itself as a strong advocate of African solutions to African problems as a powerful state in the region. President Museveni has been quoted on several occasions advocating for African solutions to African problems but this ideology remains abstract without clear roadmap to drive results.

In 2014, Uganda's then Foreign Minister Sam Kuteesa was unanimously elected as the President of the UN General Assembly and he attributed his victory to Uganda's positive role and contribution to the work of the UN. This international recognition was preceded by Uganda sending troops to South Sudan after fighting broke out between factions loyal to President Salva Kiir and those loyal to former Vice President Riek Machar in 2013.

This military intervention was attributed to many factors, including an invitation by the legitimate government to ensure order, need to evacuate Ugandans in the war ton area upon being requested by the UN Secretary General and IGAD to intervene.

Nonetheless, the legality of the intervention in South Sudan was questioned when Ugandan troops fought on the side of Salva Kiir. Critics noted that Uganda's actions violated the principle of impartiality in peacekeeping and this partly explains why Uganda has been accused of being both an arsonist and firefighter. This is due to inconsistencies in Uganda's adherence to international norms and standards when conducting peacekeeping or deploying troops.

## 3.0 Findings and Discussion

To what extent is Uganda's foreign policy goals consistent with its peace support operations?

Uganda's foreign policy vision is Africa-centric: (i) The Ring States (immediate neighbors, EAC, IGAD, the Nile Basin); (ii) The region (the rest of Africa, the AU, COMESA, the Middle East); and (iii) The rest of the world. These include the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), development partners (for example, bilateral / multilateral donors), international organizations and agencies and blocs (for example, the Group

of Seven (G7), the Group of Twenty (G20), Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

One of Uganda's foreign policy objectives as outlined on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website is to contribute to the building of a peaceful and secure world through its involvement in peacekeeping operations. The promotion of regional and international peace and security is one of the thematic areas through which the Ministry implements the country's foreign policy to help achieve its national

interests. Uganda prefers to work through the AU, regional mechanisms such as the EAC, IGAD, and coalitions of likeminded regional states.

Uganda is an active participant in PSOs in Africa and this has boosted its national prestige in the judgments of the international community and increased its leverage with regard to donors. Troop-contributing states to peace support operations appear to be upright international citizens offering a critical public good. This has given Uganda a grander voice on different regional security taskforces than it would otherwise not have in multilateral institutions like the AU and the UN. However, it remains important and an appropriate call for Uganda to first fix its domestic security problems before it embarks on providing solutions to its neighbors.

Deploying the UPDF to Somalia has been cast-off as part of Uganda's diplomatic and foreign policy strategy with donors and regional states. Uganda contributed a UPDF contingent to AMISOM in 2007, a year after President Museveni was elected for the second time, having obliterated presidential term limits.

This deployment came with growing international criticism over the closing of domestic political space and Ugandan military involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in which the government was being criticized for destabilizing the region by supporting the M23 rebel group in North Kivu. Since Uganda first deployed troops under AMISOM, some international actors have been more hesitant to criticize its domestic politics.

President Museveni, threatened to withdraw Ugandan troops out of Somalia in 2010 and 2012 when he got pressure from international donors. Hence, the Government of Uganda continues to use its peace-supporting role for strategic purposes in its foreign policy.

The criticism from the international community, especially donors regarding the state of

democracy and human rights back home continues to erode the positive image portrayed through peacekeeping. Country's foreign and domestic policies are interdependent and feed into each other.

The government's increased crackdown on political dissent has cast it in a bad light. The use of excessive force by the UPDF and the Uganda Police on the citizens undermines the claims of maintaining peace and building institutions for good governance as the case is in Somalia under AMISOM. This explains why many critics still question the agenda behind the country's peacekeeping operations.

Contributing to PSOs continues to reflect Uganda's broader international relations in dealing with the UN and other bodies based on a pragmatic strategy driven by national interests underscored by Pan-Africanism. Although Uganda has consistently contributed peacekeepers to UN missions, the numbers are lower than those from neighboring states and other countries with similar defense capabilities and budgets. For instance, 2022 UN statistics explain that Uganda contributes 646 troops while its neighbors Rwanda and Tanzania contribute 5,254 and 1,485 troops to the UN, respectively.

On the other hand, Uganda has been at the forefront of developing AU peacekeeping capabilities and contributes large numbers of troops to AMISOM and the Regional Task Force (RTF), reflecting a commitment on the part of the leadership to implement African-led initiatives. For example, Uganda was first the country to deploy troops under AMISOM in Somalia and the largest contingent in AMISOM with 6,223 troops. This trend is likely to continue with Uganda seeing mainly African Union PSOs serving its regional priorities and security concerns, but also as an invaluable bargaining chip with international donors.

## 4.0 The Impact of Uganda's Deployment of Troops on Regional Peace and Security

Uganda's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a department of Regional Peace and Security and one of its functions is to pursue the doctrine of regional solutions to regional problems supported by the international community in the management and resolution of regional conflicts. Uganda advocates for a regional-led peace process using examples of the African Mission in Burundi and AMISOM in Somalia, where the African Union leads with the rest of the international community to support peace efforts.

The other role of the department is to support the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Important APSA components like the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and the African Standby Force (ASF) rely on institutional pillars in the different regions of the continent. Yet the degree of regional integration below the AU varies widely. While Western and Southern Africa have RECs with established security mechanisms, Northern and Eastern Africa lack such adequate mechanisms.

Such imbalances have affected the performance of African Union institutions like the African Union Peace and Security Council (APSC) since the continental body relies more on regional organizations for the provision of troops and security mechanisms. This, then, comes down to how effective Uganda's efforts under the leadership of President Museveni have been in building a strong community under the EAC.

Uganda's contribution of troops in Somalia can be viewed through the post 9/11 (September 11<sup>th</sup> attack) world and the war on terrorism. The UPDF deployment in Somalia is legitimized as part of the "Global War on Terrorism", with Uganda positioning itself as a frontline state against Islamic fundamentalism (Boko Haram) in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. It is important to note that

Uganda just like the United States (US), suffered double terror attacks on its soil in July 2010, which resulted in the death of 74 people. Although the problems of instability are still prevalent, one should not undermine the role played by Uganda in building stability in some parts of Somalia.

While Uganda and its neighbor Rwanda are often cited as stable regimes by countries such as the United States, both countries have been criticized for destabilizing the DRC over the last 30 years, as successive incidents of Rwandan and Ugandan interference in the DRC's internal matters show.

The Rwandan and Ugandan armies' pretext regarding security concerns have acted as a cover for large-scale looting which is a form of "military commercialism", with "entrepreneurial profit" as a key consideration in the deployment of the national armies. Even after their withdraw from the DRC, both armies continue profiting through their proxies.

Despite its destabilizing role in the DRC over the last decades, Uganda has successfully built an image as a constructive, stable and cooperative partner in a conflict-prone region which includes South Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR), the DRC, Burundi and Somalia. Its contribution to the AU-led PSO in Somalia – the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) – is an important factor in this image, as is the role Uganda has played in pre-and-post-independent South Sudan. The country gave moral and material support to the people of South Sudan against the lordship from the Arab North.

## 5.0 The Role of Multilateral Actors in Reinforcing Uganda's Peacekeeping Operations

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The fears of Western countries such as the United States over rising Islamic radicalism and global terrorism has shaped renewed international engagements in Africa, particularly in Somalia and Mali. The prospects of success for interventions overseen by the AU, Africa's sub-regional bodies and the UN depend on developing effective divisions of labour for these operations and on mobilizing appropriate logistical and financial resources.

Chapter VIII of the UN Charter provides for cooperation between the UN Security Council and Africa's regional organizations to maintain international peace and security. The 22,000-strong AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) represents a promising peacekeeping framework established by a regional organization of the UN. The principle of burden-sharing between the UN and Africa's regional organizations has also facilitated support of Uganda in its peace-support endeavors. In some peace support operations that Uganda has participated in, for instance AMISOM, the UN has strengthened the mission by providing logistical and financial support, while AU countries like Uganda have provided troops.

Partnership peacekeeping has become the norm, and this entails collaboration of active military operations between two or more multilateral institutions or innumerable bilateral actors.

Several factors have driven this trend including widespread recognition that no single actor can handle Africa's security challenges and different actors bring comparative advantages. In Africa, the central partnerships involve relations among the UN, the AU, the RECs, the EU and important bilateral actors principally France, the United States and Britain. Partnership peacekeeping needs to be guided by the security needs and challenges of the countries experiencing conflict rather than the interests of the partners if it is to lead to sustainable peace and stability which remains a myth in many conflict zones.

For the United States, Uganda has been an important player in the fight against the spread of terrorism in the sub-Saharan region. This is a key reason why despite increasing concern over deteriorating political conditions in Uganda, countries like the US continue to relate with Uganda as a constructive player in the region.

This reputation as a stabilizing player has to a great extent, allowed Uganda to dodge criticism and sanctions for its three-decade-long history of interference in the DRC and the wider Great Lakes region and the stifling of opposition at home. It is such shortcomings that make one question the altruism of Uganda's peace support efforts and if they are not driven by the selfish interests of individuals.

## 6.0 Conclusion and Areas for Further Research

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### 6.1. Conclusion

The study findings confirm a general observation by the AU, UN and other peace and security promoting institutions that Uganda has played a significant role in promoting peace and security across the African continent. This has been through contributing troops in AU's and UN's PSOs such as AMISOM, offering support and continuously advocating for African solutions to African problems.

On the effectiveness of the latter, as far as promoting peace and stability on the continent is concerned that is an area that needs further study. Uganda's role in promoting regional peace and security through its PSOs has not been without blemish. The pursuit of national and personal interests has had a destabilizing impact on the peace in the region. Uganda's deployment in the DRC has been judged to be destabilizing to the region with Uganda accused of supplying weapons to M23 rebels in North Kivu.





AU peacekeeping mission in action, with soldiers from various African nations, including Uganda, working together in a diverse and cooperative environment.

Source: AMISOM Public Information on <https://www.flickr.com>

As Uganda continues to get involved in increasingly complex PSOs, there is need for key players to address challenges related to the transition strategies for missions where a degree of stability has been attained. To be regarded effective, Uganda needs a withdrawal plan from Somalia. While it benefits politically and economically, Ugandan troops won't have permanent presence in Somalia. This is due to the fact that AMISOM is funded by the EU, despite being an African Union mission. Funding to the AU's PSOs becomes sustainable and predictable, failure to leave Somalia, will in the long run have financial and political implications to Uganda, especially when the funding is discontinued.

While conflicts between and within states are predicted to increase across Africa and the world as a result of COVID-19, Uganda continues to be a key player in regional PSOs, there is need to enhance the quality and success of the PSOs it participates in.

The involvement of multilateral actors such as the UN and the EU and donors like the US remains essential because Uganda can only provide troops but not the resources required. In addition, leading the implementation of complex and multi-dimensional mandates like AMISOM, Ugandan troops are required to carry out tasks that go far beyond traditional peacekeeping, such as counterinsurgency, counter-terrorism, state-building and other duties. In order to achieve this high standard of performance, the country needs more support in form of military training, logistics and funding from multilateral actors.

## 6.2. Areas for Further Research

Uganda claims to be providing leadership and solutions by participating in peace support operations in the region and its role has been guided by the notions of Pan-Africanism and "African solutions to African problems". Nevertheless, based on available literature, it's difficult to track the impact of Uganda's peace-supporting role towards regional security from troop deployment to withdrawal.

More research needs to be conducted to establish how effective Uganda has been in promoting peace and security on the continent. This can be done by undertaking a case-by-case study of the PSOs that Uganda has participated in under the UN, AU or RECs through key informant interviews as the available literature does not provide enough evidence backed by examples.

There has been paradigm shifts in Uganda's foreign policy in relation to promoting regional peace and security from being a passive player to an active player. Nonetheless, no recent research has been undertaken to establish a clear understanding and analysis of the strategic relationship between Uganda and the different stakeholders, their interests, either Uganda-AU, or Uganda-UN, or Uganda-RECs. There is an information gap on how multilateral actors have supported Uganda's contribution to PSOs and how that relates to Uganda's written and unwritten foreign policy.

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