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## **UGANDA CULTURAL FIELD GUIDE**

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# FOREWARD

The Uganda Cultural Field Guide is designed to provide deploying military personnel an overview of Uganda's cultural terrain. In this field guide, Uganda's cultural history has been synopsized to capture the more significant aspects of the country's cultural environment, with emphasis on factors having the greatest potential to impact operations.

The field guide presents background information to show the Uganda mind-set through its history, language, and religion. It also contains practical sections on lifestyle, customs and habits. For those seeking more extensive information, MCIA produces a series of cultural intelligence studies on Uganda that explore the dynamics of Uganda culture at a deeper level.



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# UGANDA CULTURAL FIELD GUIDE

As in most African countries, the pre-recorded history of Uganda is difficult to establish. With no written records, the origin and classification of the modern people is often the subject of academic debate.

The first people in the area defined today as Uganda are believed to have arrived 3,000 years ago from the region of modern day



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Mother and Child

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Democratic Republic of Congo (DRoC). These inhabitants were hunter-gatherers, known as Bambuti or Batwa. They were slightly built and similar in appearance to the Khoisan of southern Africa and the pygmoid people, who lived in the rainforests near the Congolese border.

The second migration of humans into the region reached the shores of Lake Victoria in approximately 200 B.C.



Uganda

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## PRE-COLONIAL HISTORY

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The first kingdom established in Uganda was the Bunyoro-Kitara. The exact date of origin is unknown, but it was established before 1500 A.D. The Betembuzi was the first dynasty. Oral traditions vary on the number, 10 to 22, of Betembuzi kings. The Betembuzi are described as demi-gods with supernatural powers. They are credited with the knowledge of iron smelting, introducing long-horned cattle, coffee cultivation, and the concept of kingdoms and kingships. The Bacwezi dynasty came next. This was only a two-generation dynasty with Ndahura, “the up-rooter,” followed by his son Wamala as the kings. The Bacwezi, however, are still the focus of several religious cults in Uganda.

During the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Nilotic-speaking Luo left southeast Sudan and migrated southward into Uganda. They separated into three groups. The first group settled in Pubungu, the second colonized west of the Nile, and the third continued southward into the Bunyoro-Kitara area.

The Luo arrived as several other kingdoms emerged to the south and east: the Buganda and Ankole, in Uganda; as well as Rwanda, Burundi, and the Karagwe (in Tanzania) Kingdoms.

All of these kingdoms claim a Bacwezi heritage. The Buganda Kingdom was located in the most fertile region and as such was primarily agricultural. The Ankole Kingdom had two classes, cattle-owning and agriculturalists. Around 1650, the Basoga Kingdom emerged; it was bordered by Lake Kyoga to the north and Lake Victoria to the south. The Basoga appeared to be linguistically and culturally affiliated with the Baganda (Buganda refers to the kingdom and Baganda the people), but they claim through oral tradition to be from the Mount Elgon region and have no Bacwezi links.

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## COLONIAL INFLUENCES

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Until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Uganda remained relatively isolated from outside influences. Arab traders from Zanzibar and the East Africa coast reached the Buganda Kingdom in the 1840s. The Arab traders brought firearms, cloth, and beads to trade for ivory and slaves. They also brought their faith, Islam. The *kabaka* (king) was more interested in the firearms than the religion.

Trade increased between Buganda and the coastal region. In the northern reaches of Uganda, Arab traders were moving south from Egypt; however, these traders were met with significant resistance. The Khedive of Egypt sent a British explorer, Samuel Baker, to raise Egypt's flag over the Bunyoro Kingdom in western Uganda. Baker found himself in a desperate battle with the Banyoro (people of Bunyoro) to secure his retreat to Foweira, 60 miles north, and eventually to Egypt; he later described his dealings with the *Banyoro* (people of Bunyoro) in the book, *Islaimia*. Baker's portrayal of the Banyoro prejudiced the British government and public against this tribe, and the British later awarded half their land to other tribes.

John Hanning Speke, an explorer searching for the source of the Nile River, arrived in Buganda 1862 representing the British crown. Henry Morton Stanley, a fellow Brit, arrived in 1875 and tried to convert *Kabaka* Mutesa I to Christianity. Stanley also wrote to the Church Missionary Society in London and convinced them to send other missionaries to Uganda, who arrived in 1877. These initial missionaries were followed by the French White Fathers Catholic Missionaries in 1879. At the same time, the Arab traders were converting the Baganda to Islam.

*Kabaka* Mutesa I did not interfere with the missionaries or Islamist teachers. He died in 1884, and was succeeded by his son *Kabaka* Mwanga, who was 18 years old. This young king did not

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### **Artwork Commemorating the Massacre at Namugongo**

like foreign religions in his kingdom, particularly the Christians. He saw his court being divided in loyalty to a new “king” and “kingdom” when he heard the words of the Lord’s Prayer, “thy kingdom come.” This prayer worried him, as he believed his kingdom was in danger of being taken.

Mwanga asked his court pages and members to renounce their Christian faith, and when they refused, he sentenced them to death. On 3 June 1886, he had 26 Christians burned alive at Namugongo, 12 kilometers (7.5 miles) from present-day central Kampala. The third of June became a national holiday, Martyrs’ Day. These martyrs were raised to sainthood in the Roman Catholic Church by Pope Paul VI in 1964.

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## CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY

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Uganda's geography helped create the cultural boundaries that exist today. Lake Kyoga serves an effective split between the northern and southern regions of Uganda. Lake Kyoga is a rough boundary between the Nilotes, Nilo-Hamites, and Sudanic speakers in the north and the Bantu-speaking south.

The north is primarily savanna grasslands and is inhabited by cattle-herding tribes that supplement herding with small agriculture production. These tribes are descendants of Nilotes-, Nilo-Hamites, and Sudanic-speaking people. South of Lake Kyoga and west of the Nile River is predominately Bantu-speaking descendants. This region has a higher rainfall than the northern area and contains tropical forests. The soil in the south is rich in nutrients and is a primary agricultural region. These agricultural patterns in the north and south are influenced by culture and geography. The savannas are better suited for herding and tribes that valued herding settled in those areas. The southern area has been inhabited by tribes that were more sedentary and inclined to farming.



**Sheep and Goat Herder**

# ETHNIC GROUPS

There a total of 61 tribes registered with the government, of which 19 are major tribes. It has been estimated that 30 percent of Uganda's tribes could become extinct by 2015. Six tribes have declined at a rate of more than 95 percent in the past 6 years. These are the Ik (Teuso), Dodoth, Ethur, Jie, Nyangia, and Napore. The native tribes are divided into four categories. These categories are based on language — Bantu, Nilotic, Central Sudanic, and Kuliak. These



Ethnic Groups of Uganda

language categories are assigned to current tribes whose languages are derived from those languages. (It would be similar to grouping Europe by Germanic, Celtic, and Romantic languages.)

Uganda's ethnic groups, in order of size from the largest percentage of the population to the smallest include the following:

- Bantu comprise 61 percent of the population as follows:
  - Baganda: 17 percent
  - Banyankole: 8 percent
  - Basoga: 8 percent
  - Bakiga: 7 percent
  - Banyarwanda: 6 percent
  - Bagisu: 5 percent
  - Batoro: 3 percent
  - Banyoro: 3 percent
  - Bagwere: 2 percent
  - Bakonjo: 2 percent
- Nilotic comprise 24 percent of the population.
  - Iteso: 8 percent
  - Lango: 6 percent
  - Acholi: 4 percent
  - Alur: 2 percent
  - Jopadhola: 2 percent
  - Karamojong: 2 percent
  - Kakwa: less than 1 percent
- Central Sudanic comprise slightly more than 4 percent of the population.
  - Lugbara: 4 percent
  - Madi



- Kuliak is the smallest group, with a population numbering only in the thousands.
  - Ik
  - Soo

The non-native population, Europeans, Asian, and Arabs make up one percent of the population. Others (smaller ethnic groups) make up approximately 10 percent of the population.

## **Baganda**

The Baganda (singular, Muganda) are the largest ethnic group in Uganda. The country's name, Uganda, is from the Swahili word for Buganda. The term Uganda was adopted by the British in 1894 when the British established the Uganda Protectorate with the *kabaka* of Buganda.

The traditional Buganda territory is marked by Lake Victoria on the south, the Victoria Nile River on the east, and Lake Kyoga to the north. The western border is the Kikinga River and the Mbarara District of Uganda. Colonial armies never conquered Buganda; they considered the *kabaka* and British an alliance between equals.

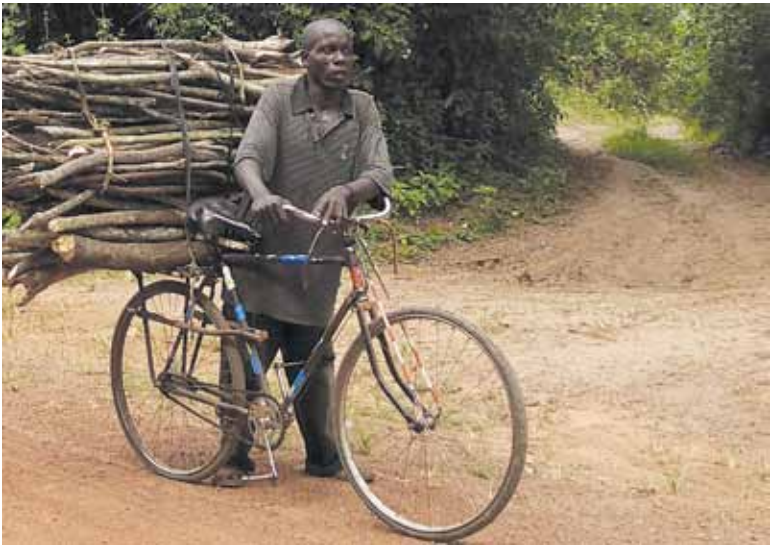
Authoritative control is significant to Baganda culture, as is individual achievement. Baganda believe that a person's future is not determined by status at birth, but that hard work and choosing friends, allies, and patrons carefully can result in good fortune.

Traditional Baganda economy relied on farming, and as such villages were fairly permanent unlike pastoral tribes that migrated with their herds.

## ***Family***

The Baganda family can be described as a microcosm of the kingdom. The father is the head of household. He is revered, obeyed, and his decisions are not questioned. The father is served his meals first. Children respect their fathers, however, many children fear their fathers because of limited interaction with them. Children do have warm affectionate relationships with their mothers.

Social status for men is determined by his patron-client relationships. The best means of securing these relationships is through children. Baganda children are sent to live with their social superiors to cement relationships among parents and provide the children with social mobility. This practice occurs with children as young as 3, but generally older. Children are often sent to a patron or relative in an area where there is a good school.



**Man Hauling Sticks**

## ***Customs and Behaviors***

Baganda society follows rules of behavior. A man is required to share his wealth by offering hospitality, but this rule applies more to those with higher status. Social superiors are expected to behave with dignity, self-discipline, and self-confidence. Most people adopt these mannerisms because it is believed to enhance the opportunities for success.

Children are taught *mpisa* (manners). They are expected to be obedient to adults, greet visitors properly, and girls must sit correctly (with their legs together).

## ***Greetings***

Greetings are significant to Baganda. Lengthy greetings are required in rural areas when meeting a neighbor on the road. Women traditionally were required to kneel when greeting men or social superiors. Although this is now less likely to occur, particularly in urban areas, it still occurs in some rural areas. A son-in-law should sit when addressing his mother-in-law, or if it is impossible to do so, he may bow slightly.

## ***Clans***

Baganda are divided into a clan structure of 52 clans. Clans use patrilineal lineage to trace clan identity to the founding member. Clan names, however, are not tied to the founding member but rather to the clan totem. (The totem is similar to the coat of arms in Europe.) Traditionally, the plant or animals represented by the totem of one's mother and father are not eaten. Members of the same clan are considered brothers and sisters, no matter how far apart they are related to their common ancestor. Intermarriage in a clan is forbidden, as is marriage into one's mother's clan.



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### Villagers in Uganda

Clan membership in the past was used as a tool in social management. An individual's success or failure reflected on the entire clan. If a clan member fell out of favor with the *kabaka* the entire clan would suffer. Clan leaders would give young boys to the *kabaka* to serve as pages in his court. Each clan also had certain responsibilities to the *kabaka*, such as making bark cloth, pottery, building structures, etc. Originally there were 20 clans. New clans resulted from conquered people or people choosing to join the Buganda Kingdom. A new clan would have to agree to follow Baganda customs and pledge allegiance to the *kabaka*. The practice of exogamy (marrying outside the clan) helped these new clans integrate more quickly into Baganda culture.

The male members of the royal clan are called *abalangira* and females are called *abambejja*. The royal clan has no assigned to-

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tem. The totem of the *kabaka's* mother serves as his totem. When the children of the *kabaka* marry, they assume the clan of their mother, and must also choose a mate outside their mother's clan. This system means that any of the 52 clans could produce a *kabaka*. The *kabaka* traditionally rewards his mother's clan because that clan has his total allegiance, while the royal clan contains members who may aspire to be the *kabaka*.

### **Clans of Baganda**

The following Clan (totem) information is from *The Legendary Kingdom* by Nicholas Ssewanyana and the Buganda home page at internet address [www.buganda.com](http://www.buganda.com).

Abalangira (Royal Clan)	Babiito-Kooki (translation unknown)
Babiito-Kiziba (unknown)	Babiito-Kibulala (unknown)
Butiko (mushroom)	Ffumbe (civet cat)
Kasimba (genet cat)	Kayozi (kangaroo rat)
Kibe (jackal)	Kinyomo (red ant)
Kiwere (type of grass)	Kkobe (type of yam)
Lugave (small anteater)	Mazzi ga Kisasi (rainwater)
Mbogo (buffalo)	Mbwa (dog)
Mmamba (lungfish)	Mpeewo (ortbi)
Mpindi (bean)	Mpologoma (lion)
Musu (edible rat)	Mutima (heart)
Nakinsige (bird)	Ndiga (sheep)
Ndiisa (bird)	Ngabi (bush buck)
Ng'aali (crested crane)	Ngeye (Colobus monkey)
Ngo (leopard)	Ngonge (otter)
Njaza (red buck)	Njobe (marsh antelope)

Njovu (elephant)	Nkejje (small fish)
Nkerebwe (squirrel)	Nkima (monkey)
Nkula (rhinoceros)	Nnamung’oona (crow)
Nnyonyi Nnyange (egret)	Nsenene (grasshopper)
Nsuma (fish)	Nswaswa (lizard)
Ntalaganya (small antelope)	Nte (cow)
Nvubu (hippo)	Nvuma (seed of a plant)

The following clans were not on the 1996 official government roster, possibly because the clans died out or did not complete the forms.

Kasanke	Kibuba	Lukato
Mbuzi	Nkebuka	Nsunu

## **Royalty**

The Kasubi Tombs, which are part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Kampala, were destroyed by fire in March 2010. The thatch roof structure had little chance of surviving the fire.

The past four *kabakas* were buried at Kasubi Tombs. There are plans to rebuild the Kasubi Tombs because of their cultural significance.

The deceased *kabaka* is placed inside the tomb behind the swords and shields. This area is symbolically “the forest” where the *kabakas* are laid to rest. Wives and sisters of the deceased *kabakas* and other female relatives attend to the tombs and rituals. These women may remain at Kasubi year round or only at times when rituals need to be performed. Many of the women are descendants of the wives and sisters of the previous *kabakas*.



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### **Kasubi Tombs Prior to Fire in March 2010**

The Buganda Kingdom remained fairly autonomous and self-governing under indirect British rule. When Uganda attained its independence in 1962, the *kabaka* was promised a ceremonial position as head of state of Uganda, and some internal autonomy. However, in 1966 Prime Minister Obote removed *Kabaka* Mutesa II from the presidency. The constitution was amended to abolish the kingdoms in Uganda. The palace in Menga Hills was destroyed and *Kabaka* Mutesa II escaped to England. He died in exile in 1969. The monarchy was restored in 1995 by a constitutional amendment and Mutesa II's successor was his son, *Kabaka* Mutebi II.

### **Banyankole**

The Banyankole (people of Ankole) live in southwestern Uganda, southwest of Lake Victoria. The area consists of rolling plains and was once covered with an abundance of grass suitable for grazing. The Banyankole were divided into social castes. The highest-ranking caste were the Bahima (cattle herders), and the lower-ranked

caste the Bairu (farmers), who also owned goats and sheep. The *Mugabe* (king) was an absolute ruler. In 1993, President Museveni restored some autonomy to the traditional kingdoms of Uganda, except to the Banyankole, the only kingdom that fought the restoration of autonomy. Museveni is from this tribe. He stated that the people must want the restoration. Many of the Banyankole did not want to restore the caste system that put most people below the ruling class. The Banyankole Kingdom still has not been restored much to the frustration of the current Crown Prince John Patrick Barigye.

The Banyankole speak Runyankole, a Bantu language.

The population increase in Ankole has decreased the available grazing land and threatens the traditional pastoral way of life. Refugees from prior conflicts in neighboring Rwanda have contributed to the population increase.

## **Iteso**

The Iteso are 8 percent of the population. The Northern Iteso occupy the Soroti District and the adjacent areas north and east. The Northern Iteso environment extends to the low, wet area near Lake Kyoga and neighboring swamps to the high and arid north. The Iteso in the Tororo District, which is farther east and south of Soroti, are known as the Southern Iteso. This area lies in the foothills of Mount Elgon and the surrounding savanna. There are also Iteso in neighboring Kenya. The Iteso speak Ateso, a language classified as Eastern Nilotic. Their clan names reveal an association with Bantu-speaking people as well. The Iteso were conquered by colonial agents of the British. The Iteso in Uganda were more prosperous than their counterparts in Kenya because of Uganda's protectorate status. The Iteso are traditionally cattle farmers. There are enough cattle that at major markets, market



days rotate with cattle-trading days. Households regularly assist neighbors with harvests; thus, ensuring that labor is distributed in peak periods. After the work is done a beer party will take place. Those who do not participate in working together or attending the beer party are seen as proud and thoughtless of others' needs. This is insulting to the Iteso.

## Lango

The Lango live in central Uganda on a savanna with open water and swampy areas. The Acholi live to the west, the Iteso to the east, and the Karamojong to the north, with Lake Kyoga to the south. The Lango speak Luo, a Nilotic language. They practice a mixed subsistence system of agriculture and pastoral life. In the south, the Lango have even adapted to fishing in Lake Kyoga, where there is an abundance of Nile perch.

The Lango practice usufruct rights, which means anyone in the tribe may use the land, but they usually ask for permission. Anyone denied land use by the elders must leave the area. This denial



**Boats on Lake Victoria**

is usually extended only to troublemakers. This system worked well for the Lango until population growth and soil erosion made conflicts over land more common.

The Lango were marginalized by the British under colonial rule because they were considered stateless. The Lango were effectively left out of colonial development because the British perceived the lack of a well-organized state as a predisposition to a poor and less developed society. The social structure of the Lango was less egalitarian than a kingdom and their communal land practices were dismissed by the British.

Milton Obote, a Lango, was Uganda's first Prime Minister. He abolished the kingdoms of Uganda in 1966, when he seized the presidency from the *Kabaka* of Buganda. Obote was overthrown by Idi Amin in 1971, was again made head of state in 1980, and was overthrown again in 1985.

## **Acholi**

The Acholi live in northern Uganda in the Kitgum and Gulu Districts and across the border in southern Sudan. The landscape there is typical east African game country with rolling grasses, scattered trees, and rock outcroppings. Most Acholi are farmers. The primary crops are millet, sorghum, sesame, various peas, beans, and leafy green vegetables. They raise domesticated chickens, goats, and some cattle. The Acholi speak Luo, a western Nilotic language, and many also speak English and Swahili.

## ***Millennial Movements***

Christianity was introduced to the Acholi in the 1920s; today, there are many Protestant and Catholic Acholi. There have also been millennial movements that blend traditional beliefs and Christian-



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### **Bwola, the Royal Dance of the Acholi People**

ity. The Holy Spirit Movement of Alice Lakwena started in 1985, after Alice Lakwena approached General Tito Okello, the first Acholi head of state, to be his spiritual advisor. It is not known whether they ever met again.

Okello, who had ousted President Obote from power in June 1985, used a broad military coalition to run the country. In an attempt to end the ongoing civil war, he invited Yoweri Museveni, the head of the National Resistance Army (NRA), to join the governing board. In January of 1986 Museveni overturned Okello and seized control of the presidency. The Acholi were very upset and identify Museveni as a traitor and liar, even today. In the 1996 election Museveni received only 20 percent of the Acholi vote but carried 75 percent of the national vote.

Alice Lakwena and her Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF) hoped to oust Museveni, but in 1988 she fled to Kenya. Joseph Kony, a member of HSMF who at times claims to be related to Alice Lak-

wena, started the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in 1987. Kony's doctrine was initially based on the Christian HSMF, but by the 1990s he had incorporated some Muslim rituals. He also lost track of the political objective of ousting Museveni and began attacking rival liberation movements and finally his own Acholi people.

Kony began attacking villages that he thought were disloyal to him and taking children. The Sudanese government gave Kony a safe haven, logistics, and ammunition. He crossed into southern Sudan to escape the Ugandan People's Defense Force. Sudan aided the LRA in retaliation for the aid Museveni's government gave the Sudanese People's Liberation Army in the ongoing civil war in Sudan.

Kony has been indicted by the International Criminal Court on 21 counts of war crimes and 27 counts of crimes against humanity. He was last known to be in hiding in Garamba National Park DRoC. The LRA and Kony terrorized northern Uganda for nearly 20 years. This assault on the Acholi resulted in many Acholi moving south and resettling. Since 2007, with several years of peace and Kony operating outside the country, Acholi are returning to Kitgum and Gulu.

## **Karamojong**

The Karamojong are a smaller cattle-herding tribe. They represent 2 percent of the population and occupy 10 percent of the land. They are divided into six groups that speak different dialects of the Karamoja-Eastern Nilotic language. They reside in the north-eastern districts of Kaabong, Kotido, Abim, Moroto, and Nakai-riprit. This area is grassy and thorny and is relatively green following rainfall, which begins in April. The rainy season ends by November, the dry season is windy and no surface water is present until the rains come again. The area is also subject to drought.

The average elevation is 1,200 meters (3,937 feet). The Karamojong are nomadic in response to grazing conditions for their cattle. There are established homesteads in areas where there is a fixed water supply. This allows cultivation of some grains, and for storage. Women carry out most of the labor at permanent settlements. The women farm and tend to any small animals left with them.

The Karamojong believe that all cattle in the world belong to them, and because of this belief they are notorious cattle-raiders. They do not view it as stealing, but rather reacquiring their cattle. When the Karamojong raided with spears and knives few people were killed; however, with the introduction of firearms the deaths and injuries from these raids have escalated.

The Karamojong are well-known throughout Uganda. An effort to disarm the Karamojong has been met with little success because without firearms they are unable to defend their cattle from others. Most Ugandans see the Karamojong as uncivilized because they wear traditional clothing that does not cover the entire body; however, most do wear Western-style clothing if visiting an urban area. The environments in which they live and work make tradi-



**Ekyoto Surrounded by Huts**

tional clothes more comfortable and practical. In the 1970s under Idi Amin's rule the Karamojong were ordered to wear Western-style clothing, though it was not a successful venture.

They have a special relationship with their cattle. The Karamojong count their herds and every animal has a name. The Karamojong do not eat cattle unless it is a public ceremony or when an animal dies, but they do consume the milk, milk products, and the blood of their cattle. Cattle are wealth in their society. All parts of the animal are used from urine to hides, hooves, intestines, and droppings. Resources are too scarce to let any portion go to waste.

## Lugbara

The Lugbara live in northwestern Uganda and northeastern DRoC on the plateau of the Nile-Zaire watershed. The Lugbara were under colonial rule of the Congo Free State and were transferred to the British Administration of Uganda in 1914. The Lugbara speak a Sudanic dialect. Lugbara divide the tribe by descent, the *Urule'ba* (high people) and *Andrale'ba* (low people).

This distinction is between descendants of Jaki, the father of the high people and Dribidu, the father of the low people. Jaki is associated with the Liru Mountain and Dribidu with the Eti Mountain. The high and low people refer to geographic points not to social status. When a Lugbara person dies, they are buried with their head pointing to the Liru or Eti Mountain depending on their respective affiliation.

The Lugbara are agriculturalists. The plateau is extremely fertile, and they are efficient farmers. Cash crops were encouraged under colonial rule; however, it was a long distance to market. As a result, there was little economic success with the venture. The main

export from the region is male labor to the sugar plantations in southern Uganda; therefore 25 percent of the men are absent.

The Lugbara have no central authority figure in their tribe. The “rainmaker” was the only political authority holder until colonial rule and today the “rainmaker” is the only political authority who is freely accepted. The “rainmaker” is traditionally the senior male.

Lugbara believe in witches and sorcerers. Witches are older men, who pervert their legitimate lineage authority for their own needs. Sorcerers are women and men, who lack legitimate authority and are thought to use poisons and “medicine.” Witches and sorcerers are both feared. Witchcraft is linked to the lineage system and as that system has weakened belief in sorcery has grown. Christian missionaries entered the area after 1914. There were few converts until the latter half of the century. Most Lugbara are Catholic; however, indigenous beliefs are integrated into Christian beliefs.

## **Batwa and Basua**

A renown smaller ethnic group are the Batwa and Basua (or Bambuti), more commonly known as pygmies. They were called pygmies by Western explorers because of their diminutive stature: the average adult male height is 150 centimeters (4 feet 11 inches). They number less than 3,700, or 0.02 percent of the population. They were a popular tourist attraction through from the 1960s to 1980s.

During civil unrest in the 1980s the entire tourism industry in Uganda declined and the income of the Batwa and Basua was no exception. In 1993, the Batwa were removed from their rainforest homes in Uganda. They were initially removed because of fighting between the Ugandan People’s Defense Force and a rebel group; however, they remained ousted when the government established national parks in the Mgahinga rainforest. The Batwa live on borrowed land

outside the forest. The Basua are smaller in number than the Batwa; there were only 72 in 2009. They lived in the Semliki Forest until 1993, when it became a national park. They currently live in the Semliki Valley, in the Bundibugyo District in western Uganda.

## **Nubian**

Nubians are recent arrivals in Uganda. They are descendants of Sudanese Army personnel that the colonial British brought into Uganda in the late 1800s. They were from the Nuba Mountain region of Sudan. Nubians were recognized as legitimate citizens of Uganda by the British in 1948. They numbered 15,000 in the 2002 census. In addition to their native language, many Nubians speak Swahili, Arabic, and English. They are the only tribe in Uganda that is completely Muslim, maintaining strong Islamic cultural ties. Inter-marriage is allowed but conversion to Islam is essential. A woman who marries a Nubian will adopt the dress-style as well: a *buyi buyi* (sari).

Nubians live in areas of the Acholi and in some parts of the northern Buganda Kingdom. Nubians are associated with Idi Amin, as he recruited heavily from their ranks to fill his army. However, Nubians have had a connection to the military since coming to Uganda and serving in the King's African Rifles. Idi Amin rewarded many Nubians for serving with gifts of confiscated land and shops that once belonged to Asians that Idi Amin forced out of the country. These confiscated properties helped lift a substantial number of Nubians into a higher economic position.

## **Asians**

The British colonialists brought Asians from India to help build the Ugandan Railroad at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The railroad from Lake Victoria to Mombasa Kenya was completed in 1901. Of the 32,000 contracted workers brought into Uganda, 6,700 stayed behind and settled in Uganda. They became shopkeepers, tailors,



clerks, doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc. Asians owned and operated 90 percent of the businesses in the country by 1971.

Idi Amin, a despotic ruler known as the butcher of Uganda, said he had a dream that he should expel the Asians and nationalize all of their properties. When Amin came to power, he ordered all the Asians to leave Uganda. Initially the order applied to those who did not have Ugandan citizenship; it was changed to all Asians. They were given 90 days to get out of the country. Two days after the announcement, it was amended saying that all teachers, doctors, and lawyers could not leave and that it would be treasonous to leave. More than 75,000 Ugandans of Asian descent left the country with only a suitcase. In 1985, President Museveni invited Asians back to Uganda. There are now about 15,000 Asians in Uganda. Some are returnees and others are new to Uganda.

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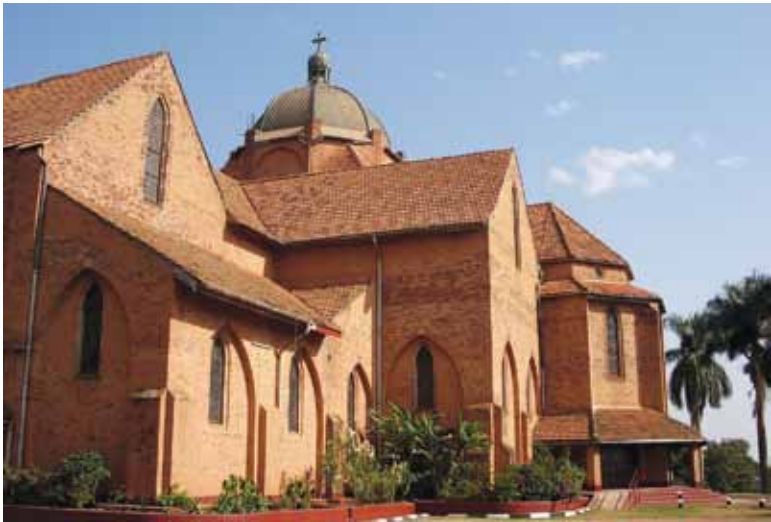
## RELIGION

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Ugandans are predominately Christian. Christianity is said to have been introduced by Henry Morton Stanley, a Brit who arrived in Buganda in 1875 and tried to convert *Kabaka* Mutesa I to Christianity. Stanley's was the first in a wave of missionary visits to the region. Today, the tension between Catholics and Protestants is higher than between Christians and Muslims. The tension between Catholics and Protestants started before British colonial rule. The French Catholics and the British Protestants were vying to control Uganda. Prior to independence from the British in 1960, the Catholics formed their own political party, the Democratic Party, and the Baganda Protestants formed the *Kabaka Yekka* party. These parties continue to divide the Christians of Uganda. Uganda also had Arab traders present since the 1840s, who had been sharing their Muslim faith. In Uganda, as in much of Africa where Christianity

and Islam have been adopted, the population has blended their native beliefs with the new religion. Most Ugandans are Christian, 84 percent. The religious makeup of the population is the following:

- 42 percent are Roman Catholic
- 42 percent Protestant
  - 35.9 percent Anglican
  - 4.6 percent Pentecostal
  - 1.5 percent Seventh Day Adventist
- 12 percent Muslim
- 4 percent African traditional religions, other, and non believers



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**St. Paul's Cathedral at Namirembe Hill**

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## African Traditional Religions

The following are common characteristics of African traditional religions (ATRs):

- Belief in a remote all-powerful creator, who can only be approached through an intermediary (fetish priest, diviners, fortune tellers, dead ancestors, etc.)
- Core teachings are in the oral tradition and more easily evolve over time than written beliefs
- No hierarchy beyond the local priest
- Appease God through prayer, libations, animal sacrifices
- Will of God is sought for all major decisions through fortune tellers, diviners, priests, etc.
- Firm sense of good and evil



**Cave Used by African Traditional Religious Followers**

- No clear concept of heaven or hell, but the spirit may live on as good or evil
- Witchcraft and sorcery are widespread
  - Trinkets and charms are used for protection
  - Christians and Muslims with an ATR background will often cling to this aspect

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## **SOCIAL STRUCTURE**

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Tribes in Uganda are patrilineal with the father as the head of the household. Tribes are typically subdivided into a clan structure. Each clan has various totems and rules that apply to their totem. Most significantly in Uganda, marriages occur outside of your clan. The children adopt the clan of their father.

### **Customs and Behaviors**

Western influences are evident in Uganda culture. These influences are more pronounced in urban areas, such as Kampala; rural Uganda is more traditional. Urban areas have more access to foreign media, and the urban population generally has a higher education than rural populations. Ugandans in Kampala may dress and act differently than they would when visiting relatives in a rural setting. This double standard is kept out of respect. Do not be surprised to see a friend dress or behave differently in these different situations.

### **AIDS/HIV**

Uganda's population has experienced acquired immune deficiency syndrome/human immunodeficiency virus (AIDS/HIV) at a high rate of infection. The disease was first recognized in Uganda in 1982, since then more than a million people have died and more

than 2 million children have been orphaned. It had been known previously as “slimming disease.” The infection rate reached 15 percent in the 1990s; today it is 5.4 percent. The reduction in infection rate is attributed to deaths from AIDS as well as prevention of new infections. The government embraced an education program based on abstinence, being faithful, and using condoms; it was called the ABCs of AIDS prevention. The presence of AIDS/HIV has changed Ugandan society. There are fewer polygamous marriages, and the custom of wife inheritance is no longer practiced. Wife inheritance occurred when a man died; his wife would be inherited by his brother. The prospect of inheriting a wife with AIDS was not seen as advantageous.

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## **LANGUAGE**

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Each tribe has its own language or dialect. A person’s first language is usually their tribal language. All schools teach in English. English is the official language and used in government and business, as well as schools. Idi Amin declared Swahili a national language, but nothing was ever done to implement usage. Subsequent governments have not repealed the act, so Swahili is also an official language. Swahili is being introduced in elementary school as Swahili is the official language in neighboring Kenya and Tanzania. It is used in commerce with these countries.

### **Greetings**

Standard greetings vary from “How are you sir/madam?” “How are the home people?” “How did you sleep?” The appropriate answer is “Fine and you?” These first greetings are routinely followed by questions about family and work.



### **Newly Constructed School in Uganda**

Ugandans stand to greet elders and high status individuals who enter a room. Bantu girls kneel to greet elders. Bantu women may also kneel to greet men, traditionally their husbands. However, educated urban women may only bend at the knees rather than kneel.

Handshakes are appropriate in most social and business situations. Handshakes are usually energetic and may linger. Many times it will result in hand holding between men, which is a sign of friendship. It is a sign of respect to grip your right forearm with your left hand while shaking hands with your right hand. When men are greeting women it is best to wait and see if she extends her hand first for a handshake, otherwise a nod or bow of acknowledgement is sufficient.

Titles are used to address individuals in offices and formal settings. In casual situations, friends call each other by their given

names, or nicknames. Younger people address older people as auntie or uncle, even when there is no family relationship.

## **Gestures**

People eat, greet, and pass items with the right hand. One should use both hands to receive an item to show appreciation. People do not use the left hand alone. Pointing is usually done with the entire right hand. It is rude to point at people. Pointing and snapping your fingers is reserved for dogs.

It is a sign of respect to not look a person in the eye. To look someone in the eye is a challenge to authority. This can be frustrating

### ***Unacceptable Behavior***

*It is rude to step over, versus going around, pots or bowls, particularly if they contain food.*

*Couples that hold hands or kiss in public are considered obscene.*

*Remaining silent when you could be in conversation is interpreted as rude behavior.*

*It is rude to send visitors away from your house, even when they were unexpected and stay a long time. Friends assume they can visit anytime.*

*Men wear long pants even when it is hot. Young boys wear shorts. Men are seen as childish when not wearing long pants.*

*Never compliment the beauty of another man's wife, it will be concluded that you are in love with her.*

*Do not hang undergarments to dry where other people can see them.*

*It is not culturally acceptable to ask someone else to wash your undergarments. If you have household help, you should not ask them to wash these garments. They may say yes and wash them out of fear of losing their job, but they will suffer ridicule and lose self-respect and self-esteem.*

for Westerners, who believe it shows lack of interest or dishonesty. It is also significant to remember that a Ugandan may misinterpret a Westerner's direct eye contact as a challenge to their authority and not as the intended interest or sincerity.

There are special gestures to hail a taxi or *boda boda* (motorcycle taxi). Pointing the hand straight up and motioning up repeatedly means, "I'm going far." Pointing down means, "I'm going a short way." This is rarely used because no one will pick you up. Hand flat open toward the ground about waist height means that you are traveling a medium distance.

## Personal Space

Personal space in Uganda is minimal. People stand much closer to each other than in the United States. Less than an arm's length is common. Personal space on public transportation is non-existent. When two people of the same gender are talking to each other it is common to touch arms, hands, and shoulders; however for two people of the opposite gender there is very little touching; a handshake or taking a women's hand to assist her exiting a vehicle is considered appropriate.

## Dining and Food

There is no national dish in Uganda, but *matooke* (mashed bananas) steamed in banana leaves maybe the most widespread dish in the country. Fruits available are citrus, mangoes, watermelon, cantaloupe, papaya, bananas, avocados, and tomatoes. Breads available are *kwon kaal* (millet bread) and *chapati* (flat bread). Other starches available are rice, cassava, and yams (sweet potato). Pork, goat, beef, and chicken are all common, as well as fish in areas near lakes and rivers. Eggs, beans, cowpeas, and groundnuts (peanuts) are other sources of protein. Fried white ants and



grasshoppers are a delicacy, when in season. If served grasshoppers (*ensenene*) it means you are held in high esteem. Vegetables are plentiful, and include cabbage, carrots, onions, a variety of greens, and mushrooms. Drinks include tea, fruit juice, locally fermented beverages (which use *mwenge* [bananas], *munanansi* [pineapple], and *musoli* [maize]), bottled beers, and internationally recognized soft-drinks.

Tea is usually served with sugar and milk. Black tea is only served for health reasons.

## ***Meals***

Most Ugandans eat three eat meals a day. Breakfast occurs between sunrise and 0900. A typical breakfast is corn porridge with bananas and milk. Lunch is generally served at 1200. Lunch may be comprised of matooke, sweet potato, and beans, with groundnut or meat sauce. Dinner can be served from sunset to 2200. It is basically a repeat of lunch to which rice or a meat stew could be added.

## ***Dining in a Private Home***

If invited into a home for dinner it is essential to understand Ugandan homes. The kitchen is considered a private room and as such it is out of bounds to visitors; some women do not even allow their husbands to enter the kitchen. In rural homes someone, usually a child, will bring out a pitcher of water and a basin to assist you in washing your hands. Let the child assist you, it is impolite to insist on doing it yourself. Everyone will wash their hands before and after the meal as most Ugandans eat with their hands. If you are having difficulty, explain that this is new for you and perhaps you can ask your host to help you learn or watch carefully how it is done.

A prayer of thanksgiving is usually said before eating.

If chicken is served, the gizzard is considered a prized delicacy and usually reserved for the chief guest. If you prefer not to eat the gizzard, say you are honored but would prefer to have someone else eat it. If there is no guest, the head of the household consumes the gizzard.

To indicate you are through eating, leave some food on your plate. If you continue to empty your plate your hosts will assume you are still hungry. When the meal is completed, everyone gives a compliment to the cook.

## Clothing

Ugandan dress is conservative by U.S. standards. Ugandans see appropriate dress as a sign of respect for others. It is significant to be neat, clean, and conservative. Professionals wear jackets and ties; women wear dresses and skirts. Blue jeans, t-shirts, sandals, short skirts, low-cut tops, or sleeveless tops are found in casual workplaces, and seen throughout Kampala. Men should wear their hair short and neat. One's thighs should be covered when sitting, particularly females. Women should also sit with their knees together.

Imported secondhand clothes are very popular. T-shirts from North America and Europe are seen throughout the country. The wearer generally



**Buganda Woman in Traditional Dress**

has no knowledge of the location, activity, or business that the T-shirt displays.

## **Gender Roles**

Uganda like many countries around the world is making transitions in gender roles; however, it is a male-dominated society.

Women are primarily responsible for child care and subsistence agriculture, while also contributing to cash crop agriculture. Women have fewer economic opportunities than men. Men have authority in the family and are responsible for clothing, school fees, farming, and financial support. Household tasks are divided among women and older girls who also weed gardens, help with the harvest, and sell produce in the market. Women are economically dependent on male relatives (husband, father, or brother) and have little influence in family and community matters.

The Museveni administration has encouraged women to participate in politics. Each of Uganda's districts has a female Member of Parliament, and one-third of all local council seats are reserved for women. As a result, women make up 24 percent of the legislature. Emancipation and suffrage occur at 18 years of age regardless of gender.

Treatment of men and women under the law is uneven. However, Uganda's law regarding men and women committing adulterous acts was challenged in 2007. The former law allowed married men to carry on relationships with single women, but considered it illegal for married women to have a relationship with single men. The law was changed, and extra-marital affairs are now legal for men and women. Women are considered subordinate to men despite their substantial economic and social responsibilities.

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## MILITARY HISTORY

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Uganda's military history predates colonial rule. Kabarega, *omukama* (king) of Bunyoro Kingdom from 1870 to 1889, transformed his personal guards into a standing army. The army was equipped with Remington rifles, percussion muskets, and breech and muzzle loaders. Earlier the *Kabaka* Mutesa (1852-1884) had an army with several thousand men and more than 1,500 rifles.

The British founded the Uganda Battalion of the King's African Rifles in 1902. The British recruited heavily from northern Uganda (the Acholi). At one time 30 percent of the army was Acholi, though the Acholi are only 4 percent of the population. Soldiers were routinely placed in areas away from their homes to ensure loyalty to the military and where they would have little sympathy for the local population. The British segregated the forces by race creating an African Battalion and an Indian Battalion. The King's African Rifles numbered 77,000 in World War II and served outside of Uganda. They were deployed to Burma, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Madagascar. By 1948, the King's African Rifles had demobilized 55,595 soldiers. In 1957 the British placed Uganda, Kenya, and Somalia forces all under the East Africa Land Forces.

When Uganda attained its independence in 1962, the King's African Rifles became the Uganda Rifles. The force strength increased from 700 to 1,500. Most high-level military commands were held by British Officers even after independence. Ugandans in the rank and file protested and claimed that promotions were blocked for Ugandans. These complaints led to a mutiny in 1964, Ugandans demanded a pay raise and an officer corps. The British sent in 450 soldiers to help restore order. Several hundred soldiers were dismissed from the Uganda Rifles, though many were later reinstated. Within weeks of the incident the army re-

ceived a pay raise more than doubling their salary and the number of Ugandan officers increased from 18 to 55.

After independence there were seven different governments in 20 years and each successive regime would expand the army by heavily recruiting in one region or from one ethnic group (the area or tribe of the president) and would use the army to stop any political unrest from other areas. The exception to this was Idi Amin, who was from the Kakwa, a very small tribe. He recruited heavily from Sudan, Zaire, and Rwanda. The army was 75 percent foreign under his regime. The Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) led the fight that resulted in Amin falling from power. The Ugandan Rifles had grown to 21,000 and most experienced officers were gone, imprisoned, murdered, or had fled the country under Amin.

Yusuf Lule formed a new government following Amin. The UNLA became the military of Uganda. Lule wanted to improve the military's reputation. He set standards for literacy and education for the military. He wanted recruiting to be done throughout Uganda with the ethnic groups serving in proportion to their population. These ideas were short-lived. The Military Commission opposed the ideas and the new legislature (National Consultative Council) voted him out of office in 68 days. Lule was replaced by Godfrey Binaisa in late 1979. National Elections were held in 1980 and Milton Obote was elected president. Obote was opposed by the National Resistance Army, the Former Uganda National Army, portions of the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA), and the Uganda National Rescue Front. Tito Okello and a small cadre of officers from the UNLA overthrew Obote.

General Okello decided to rule through a military council and invited all political parties and guerrilla forces to cooperate with the new regime. This alliance of former enemies proved incapable of

ruling Uganda. The NRA and Museveni used this time to establish control of southwestern Uganda.

The NRA finally agreed to join the coalition government in December 1985. In January 1986, the NRA abandoned the agreement and seized the government. From 1986 to 1990, Museveni and the NRA worked to end various insurgencies and establish control over the army. The NRA absorbed many guerrilla fighters from other movements and the UNLA. By 1990, Museveni had established control over the military. The NRA became the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) in 1992.

The NRA had *kadogos* (child soldiers) as young as 4 years old. The Museveni government started removing all child soldiers from its ranks within days of seizing power. In 1988, the NRA established schools for the *kadogos*. The first school was Mbarara Kadogo with 800 pupils from age 5 to 18. The aim of the schools was to deter the pupils from joining other rebel groups and to provide them with an education. The children in most cases were orphans, or had no known home to return to after the civil war.

## **Military Doctrine**

The lightly armed guerrilla tactics of the NRA would dominate tactical thinking until combat with Angolan and Zimbabwean units in the late 1990s. In 2001, the UPDF began to reform into a more conventional defense force structure that included an air force and artillery formations. The first class of paratroopers in more than 30 years graduated in August 2009.

The constitution defines the role of the UPDF as follows:

- To preserve and defend the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Uganda

- To cooperate with the civilian authority in emergency situations and in cases of natural disaster
- To foster harmony and understanding between the defense force and civilians
- To engage in productive activities for the development of Uganda

The constitution also states that the UPDF shall have a national character, which means with members from all regions and tribes.

## **Training**

Recruits must be Ugandan citizens, be between the ages of 18 and 26 and have a basic education. There are also physical fitness and medical tests required. Basic training lasts 9 months and graduates are privates. To graduate as an officer a 12- to 14-month training course must be completed and graduates are commissioned as second lieutenant for non-professionals and lieutenant, or captain, for professionals.

Uganda's first Military Aviation Academy was launched in January 2009 to train and equip pilots.

Kimaka Senior Command and Staff College located near Jinja was created to train and instill UPDF doctrine.

Some Ugandan officers have received training in Britain, China, Greece, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and the United States.

## **Military Politics**

The officer corps is predominately Banyankole, the tribe of President Museveni. There is a law suit challenging the promotion policy of the UPDF. The suit claims discrimination against non Ban-

yankoles. The army in the past has argued that this is just a historical anomaly because the current army was formed from the NRA that was predominately Banyankole and that over time as those officers retire the imbalance will naturally correct itself. The petitioners want the government to provide information on the nature of recruiting, training, recommendations, and promotions to ensure that it is done in a way to compel the UPDF to develop a national character with members from all regions in top leadership positions.

## Military Compensation

This table shows the military pay as of August 2009. This does not include additional pay; officers and men with high school diplomas receive an allowance of US\$50 and university graduates US\$100. A general is entitled to a fuel allowance of US\$200 per month, as well as an official car, chauffeur, armed escorts, medical insurance, and education for children in army-run schools. There are also allowances for research funds and operation funds.

Rank	Salary per month US\$ (Uganda Shilling)	Rank	Salary per month US\$ (Uganda Shilling)
Gen	\$780 (1,608,830)	2dLt	\$159 (329,513)
LtGen	\$712 (1,469,047)	WO1	\$144 (298,013)
MajGen	\$644 (1,329,269)	WO2	\$133 (275,295)
Brigadier	\$594 (1,226,021)	SSgt	\$112 (231,000)
Colonel	\$463 (955,074)	Sgt	\$109 (225,750)
LtCol	\$382 (788,659)	Cpl	\$106 (220,500)
Major	\$382 (788,659)	LCpl	\$104 (215,250)
Captain	\$239 (493,007)	PTE	\$101 (210,000)
Lt	\$215 (444,593)	O/CADET	\$109 (225,750)



Former military members and private sector guards are recruited to work in Iraq as security contractors, where the pay is US\$600 per month. This is much higher than average teachers' salary of US\$165 a month or the average Ugandan earning US\$30 per month. The recruitment of private sector guards has caused problems for local companies maintaining enough personnel to man guard posts.



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## APPENDIX: HOLIDAYS

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The Islamic holidays are based on the Islamic calendar, which is a lunar calendar; the Islamic dates change on the Gregorian calendar every year.

<b>Holiday</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Traditional Date(s)</b>
New Year's Day		1 January
Liberation Day	Celebrating the overthrow of Idi Amin in 1979	26 January
International Women's Day	Equivalent to Mother's Day; celebration of women	8 March
Good Friday		2 April 2010 22 April 2011 6 April 2012 29 March 2013
Easter		4 April 2010 24 April 2011 8 April 2012 31 March 2013
Easter Monday	Monday after Easter	varies
Labor Day	Commemoration of workers	1 May
Martyrs' Day	Christian holiday remembering the first Christian martyrs in Uganda	3 June
National Heroes' Day	Honors the lives and contributions of those who fought in the guerrilla war from 1981 to 1986 that brought President Museveni to power	9 June
Independence Day	Commemorates the first proclamation of Independence	9 October
Christmas Day		25 December
Boxing Day	Day after Christmas	26 December

Eid al-Adha	Islamic Feast of the Sacrifice, which lasts for 3 days at the end of the Hajj; commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael; a Muslim offers a Quarbani (sacrifice) and divides it into three portions: for the poor; friends and family; and his own household	12 November 2010 6 November 2011 26 October 2012 15 October 2013)
First Day of Ramadan	Begins 29- to 30-day fast from food and water during daylight hours; Muslims believe that during this month, the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed	11 August 2010 1 August 2011 21 July 2012 10 July 2013
Eid al fitr (Ramadan)	Marks the end of the Ramadan fast	10 September 2010 31 August 2011 19 August 2012 8 August 2013

















