Uganda

Country Overview

Politics

The current president, Yoweri Museveni, has been in power since 1986. The most recent presidential elections were held in 2016, and international observers claimed that they fell short of the standards used to determine “free and fair” elections. The Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) has waged an insurgency in the north for about 20 years, although violence has fallen off in recent years.¹

Economy

Uganda is classified as a low-income economy by the World Bank, although the economy has expanded by 6 percent each year over the past ten years. This growth can be attributed to growth in the energy, construction, infrastructure, telecommunications, and financial services sectors.² Uganda’s main exports include coffee, transportation apparatus, petroleum, cement, and cane sugar.³ In 2013, 71.9 percent of employed Ugandan people worked in agriculture, and the industry contributed 24.7 percent to the GDP.⁴

Social/Human Development

As of 2012, the World Bank reported that 19.5 percent of the population was living in poverty. Since 1995, the Ugandan life expectancy has steadily increased from 43.7 to 58.4 years in 2012. Uganda’s HDI for 2014 was 0.483, placing Uganda 163 of 188 countries. When adjusted for inequality, Uganda’s fell to 0.337.⁵

The largest ethnic groups are the Bantu-speaking tribes like the Baganda, Ankole, and Kiga, as well as the Nilotic Lango, Acholi, Iteso, and Karamojong.⁶

Uganda hosts a large number of refugees, primarily from South Sudan.

U.S. Department of State TIP Ranking: Tier 2

The U.S. Department of State’s *Trafficking in Persons* report notes trafficking or trafficking risk in potentially exported supply chains including agriculture, fishing, forestry, cattle herding, mining, stone quarrying, brick making, carpentry, and steel manufacturing. Girls and women are vulnerable to sex trafficking near construction projects. There are reports that children from Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Tanzania are involved in forced labor in Uganda’s agriculture sectors.

Read the full TIP Report at: [https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271305.htm](https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/countries/2017/271305.htm)

Migrant and Other Vulnerable Populations

The World Bank reports Uganda’s net migration to be negative 150,000 people as of 2012, and in 2015 there were an estimated 749,471 international migrants in the country. The U.N. reports that 1.4 percent of the Ugandan population are migrants. There were 694,159 “persons of concern” in Uganda in 2015. Of those, approximately 477,187 were refugees. In 2016 more refugees entered Uganda than crossed the Mediterranean. These refugees are primarily from the conflict in South Sudan.
Migrants to Uganda

- Democratic Republic of the Congo: 303,580
- Sudan: 164,136
- Rwanda: 76,861
- Burundi: 45,345
- Kenya: 45,312

Legend:
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Sudan
- Rwanda
- Burundi
- Kenya
Migrants from Uganda

- Kenya: 333,789
- South Sudan: 140,607
- Rwanda: 92,195
- United Kingdom: 65,447
- United States of America: 41,203

Legend:
- Kenya
- South Sudan
- Rwanda
- United Kingdom
- United States of America
Exports and Trade

The top exports from Uganda include coffee, tea, gold, maize, mineral fuel and fish.\textsuperscript{11}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Top Commodity Exports (USD/Thousands) & \\
\hline
Vegetables & Fish \\
48,169 & 137,531 \\
\hline
Trees and Plants & \\
59,002 & \\
\hline
Coffee, Tea, Mate, and Spices & \\
354,738 & \\
\hline
Cocoa & \\
76,321 & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

The top importing countries of goods from Uganda include Rwanda, Italy, Netherlands, Germany and India.\textsuperscript{12}
Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors Analysis

Legal/Policy Risk Factors

Level of Legal Protection for Civil Liberties and Workers’ Rights

Freedom of Association

Ugandan law allows workers to form and join independent unions, bargain collectively, and take industrial action against their employers. Members of the armed forces are exempt from such legal protections. While the law in Uganda protects workers’ right to bargain collectively, in practice the
government reportedly does not adequately ensure that these rights are protected. The ITUC Survey of Annual Violations reports that arrests are common among trade unionists. Collective agreement is ignored, the right to organize is denied, and a lack of collective bargaining in the public sector is common. The ITUC rated Uganda a “3” in their 2015 report. A “3” rating states that a country “regularly violated rights” of workers.

Working Conditions
The 2016 minimum wage in Uganda is UGX 6,000 shillings (USD 1.7). This has not changed since January 1, 1984. The maximum workweek is 48 hours and the minimum workweek is 10 hours. The workweek may be 56 hours a week with the worker’s consent. Occupational Health and Safety is responsible for enforcing safety regulations. Workers in the informal sector are not fully covered by labor law. There are 49 district labor officers for the 112 districts.

Discrimination
The U.S. Department of State reports that discrimination (often in the form of violent acts) is common among marginalized groups such as women, disabled people, the LGBTQ+, and children. Women have reported discrimination when trying to access employment, credit, and income.

Forced Labor
Ugandan laws prohibit forced labor by all, including children. However, the law does not protect the labor rights of prisoners.

Child Labor
Under Ugandan law, children who are 15 years of age and older who have completed their education may work seven hours a day and are not to exceed 35 hours a week. Children 13 years of age may partake in “light work” as long as it does not interfere with their education. Children cannot work between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.. Violating child labor laws results in a UGX 685,055 shilling (USD 188) fine. A conviction under child labor law has not occurred since 2006.
Civil Society Organizations

In 2016, Amnesty International reported that Uganda experienced large levels of police brutality as well as attacks against activists, journalists, and media workers. Hostility between civil society organizations and authorities continued throughout the year and to the present.  

Ratification of ILO Conventions Related to Human Trafficking or Rights of Workers and Migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILO 29 Forced Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 87 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 98 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 100 Equal Remuneration</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 105 Abolition of Forced Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 111 Discrimination</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 138 Minimum Age</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 181 Private Employment Agencies</td>
<td>Not ratified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 182 Worst Forms of Child Labor</td>
<td>In force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO 97 Migration for Employment</td>
<td>Not ratified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Political Risk Factors

Political Instability or Conflict

In 2016, the Fund for Peace (FFP) reports that Uganda is 97.7 out of 120 (being the most unstable). Placing the nation in the “alert” category for fragility and instability. Uganda is also ranked by the FFP as the twenty-third most unstable nation out of 178 countries assessed. Violence from the Lord’s Resistance Army has continued but at a decreased pace.
Level of Crime and Violence

Organized crime is not common in Uganda. The risk for political, economic, religious and ethnic violence is rated as “medium” by the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC).\textsuperscript{23} The Allied Democratic Forces are active near the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.\textsuperscript{24}

State Persecution

State forces have used force with impunity against anti-government protestors, including arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings.\textsuperscript{25} The police have also been documented systematically targeting LGBTQI groups with violence and intimidation throughout the year.\textsuperscript{26}

Level of Corruption

The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index scores Uganda as a 25 out of 100. A 100 signifies “Very Clean” while a 0 signifies “Highly Corrupt.” Internationally, Uganda is ranked at 139 of 167 countries assessed in 2015.\textsuperscript{27}

Socio-Economic Risk Factors

Level of National Economic Development

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) reports a 27.3 percent inequality in income. As of 2014, Uganda’s HDI was valued at .483.\textsuperscript{28} The African Development Bank Group reports that they expect Uganda’s GDP to reach 5.8 percent in 2017 and that corruption is one of the biggest constraints on growth.\textsuperscript{29}

Level and Extent of Poverty

As of 2011 Uganda was ranked 163 with a poverty index of .359 by the UNDP Human Development Reports.\textsuperscript{30} 20.6 percent of the Ugandan population lives near poverty, 33.33 percent of the population lives in poverty, and 37.8 percent of the population lives below the income poverty line.\textsuperscript{31}
Degree of Gender Inequality

Ugandan law provides for equal rights for men and women, but discrimination against women reportedly remains widespread. Some forms of local customary law prohibit women from owning property, and there is discrimination against women in divorce, employment, and education. Sexual harassment reportedly remains widespread. Domestic violence also remains a widespread problem and is reportedly not adequately punished by legal authorities.

Landlessness and Dispossession

Land conflicts are common in Uganda and often result in violence. Land conflicts often arise in Hoima and Amuru District tied to tension arising from oil discoveries. Large-scale land acquisition has also been documented around palm oil plantation development.

Environmental Factors

The main environmental issues in Uganda are widespread poaching, the draining of wetlands for agricultural irrigation projects, and invasive species in Lake Victoria.

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Key Commodity Supply Chains

Coffee

Coffee Overview

Uganda had a record year for coffee production in 2015 - 2016, with 4.5 million bags produced during the marketing year. There are currently 353,000 hectares of land dedicated to coffee production in Uganda. There are more than thirty companies engaged in exporting Ugandan coffee, but ten companies control over 80 percent of the market. Germany and Italy are the main destination countries for Ugandan coffee. Over 98 percent of coffee in Uganda is grown on smallholder farms. Smallholder farms often intercrop coffee with other crops such as grains, fruits, or vegetables.

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Coffee
The Ugandan coffee sector uses vulnerable workers including children, migrants and casual hired workers. The U.S. Department of Labor’s 2016 List of Goods Made with Forced Labor and Child Labor indicates that coffee is produced with child labor in Uganda. One study found that the average age at which children begin working in coffee in Uganda is eleven, and that 48 percent of children working in the sector reported physical injuries. A 2014 study on workers in Uganda and Ethiopia noted the presence of seasonal migrants, but did not specify their origins. Casual hired labor was also noted as widespread in a 2014 study of coffee production in Ethiopia and Uganda.

Tea

Tea Overview

Tea production takes place on roughly 40,000 hectares of land. Tea production dropped sharply between 2015 and 2016, largely due to drought and lack of industry regulation. Most tea production in Uganda takes place on large estates, although smallholders are also present.

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Tea

Like coffee, vulnerable workers are present in tea production. According to the U.S. Department of Labor 2016 List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor, tea is produced using child labor in Uganda. A recent BBC investigation found hazardous child labor on a tea plantation in Uganda, where children carried seedlings up a steep hill and weeded rows.

Among a sampled population in a small-holder tea-producing region in Uganda, over 50 percent of respondents had participated in waged labor on small tea farms in the past year. Commercial estates utilize hired labor, but among these workers there is likely to be heterogeneity in status: some may be permanent, some may be temporary and some may be casual or hired by a third-party labor provider.

A recent news report in Uganda reported Rwandans being “trafficked” into the country for work on tea plantations, although it is unclear whether the Rwandans were trafficked or participating in smuggling for voluntary migration. That said, it does point to the presence of migrant workers in the sector. A UN report supports this finding, noting that “work on tea estates [in Uganda] is shunned by the local indigenous people of tea growing areas—they regard it as below their status. For this reason, workers come from other districts and even as far as Rwanda.” That report anecdotally estimates that migrants are 40-60 percent of the tea workforce.
Gold

Gold Overview

Gold is Uganda’s second largest export product, largely due to the recent introduction of gold refining operations, thereby increasing the product’s export value. Uganda, which has refining capability, is thought to be a major regional receiver of gold smuggled from Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.  

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Gold

Global Witness has reported that unlicensed mines lack any government oversight or necessary safety provisions, exposing workers, including children, to potential mine shaft collapse and hazardous chemicals. According to the 2016 U.S. Department of Labor’s List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor, gold is produced with child labor in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. There are an estimated 50,000 migrants in mining camps.

Mineral Fuels

Mineral Fuels Overview

The Ugandan oil and gas industry is still very young, and oil production is not slated to begin until after 2018. As of January 2016 the vast majority of the work in the oil sector has been focused on the development and construction of infrastructure, in addition to the drilling of exploratory wells. These wells are being drilled on Lake Albert and Lake Edward, in addition to some land based sites.

Documented Trafficking in Persons Risk Factors in Mineral Fuels

Land speculators in Uganda buy land from farmers in anticipation that they can resell the land to oil developers. The speculators work with District Land Boards to obtain titles to land and work to aggregate small properties into larger, more valuable parcels. There have been reports of violence and intimidation against local people who are not cooperative.
This report was funded by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.

Endnotes

11 International Trade Centre. Trade Map. www.trademap.org