

United Nations Human Rights Council
Universal Periodic Review of Member- The Republic of Uganda

A. Freedom of Religion

1. Uganda has no official state religion, and the constitution promotes freedom of religion by stating that every person has the right to practice and manifest any religion, which includes participation in any religious organization. It also states that no person may be discriminated against on the grounds of religion.
2. Of Uganda's 36 million population, 85 percent of the population is Christian, 12 percent is Muslim, and 3 percent is either Hindu, Jewish, Bahai or of an indigenous faith.
3. Non-governmental organizations must register with the government, including religious groups. Large organizations register according to the Trustees Incorporation Act (TIA), and have the ability to operate anywhere in Uganda, while small local organizations register with the Ministry of Internal Affairs' board for NGOs (NGO board) and must operate in the area for which they registered. Once groups register, they may receive donor funding. Any group that does not register may be shut down by the government.
4. The Ugandan government is strict in regard to any group it considers a cult. Cult activity is not allowed in Uganda, and there have been many reports of arrests of persons involved in cult activity. The government defines a cult as "a system of religious worship, often with a charismatic leader, which indoctrinated members with 'unorthodox or extremist' views, practices, or beliefs."
5. The Ugandan government has a good record of respecting religious freedom, and also in the last few years there have been some religious groups that have made efforts to advocate for widespread religious tolerance. For example, on September 24, 2012, the Joint Christian Council, with representatives from a variety of denominations of churches, signed a memorandum of understanding to partner with Uganda's parliament in the promotion of peace among religious groups.
6. Despite the tradition of religious freedom that the Ugandan government has set and the efforts of certain religious groups for peace, Uganda has still experienced many significant incidents of religious freedom violations by extremists in the country. The growing incident report has led some to fear that Uganda is becoming more intolerant.
7. On January 27, in Numuseru village of Eastern Uganda, Imam Kamulali Hussein killed Laurence Maiso, a Christian who had converted from Islam. Maiso's wife reported that Hussein threatened her husband four days prior to his death when he met the couple on

the street and told Maiso that Allah did not want the community to have a “kafir” (infidel) neighbor, so Maiso would soon meet the “Angel of Death.” Authorities launched an investigation and arrested Hussein the day after the murder. Maiso’s encounter with Hussein and then resultant death followed multiple other encounters Maiso had with Muslims in the community who demanded he renounce his Christian faith, but Maiso refused.

8. Last year, Uganda landed #2 on Morning Star News’ report of the “Top Ten Persecution Stories of 2015” due to the numerous attacks on Christians by Islamist extremists. Morning Star News reported ten different attacks on Christians performed by extremists who were either angry at a person’s conversion from Islam to Christianity, or simply at their practice of the Christian faith.
9. Of these attacks, Morning Star News gives the account of a pastor who was killed with a sword by a Muslim from the local community in Nansololo on December 23, 2015. Muslims from a mosque that neighbored the pastor’s church tried to set up a new boundary restricting land from the church. When Pastor Martin approached the Muslims who were changing the boundary to ask them why they were encroaching on the church’s property, the imam replied that they had warned the pastor many times that they did not want the church next to their mosque. Then a man from the group, named Abdulhakha Mugen, struck Pastor Martin with a sword, decapitating him.
10. Another incident that contributed to Uganda’s ranking took place on December 9, 2015, when a group of Muslim men kidnapped three children from their father, Madengho Badir, a Christian who recently converted from Islam. The kidnapping occurred in Kabuna in eastern Uganda. When Badir arrived at his home, he discovered that his three children, aged five, seven, and ten, were missing. He found out from a fourteen-year-old boy who was with the children at the time of their abduction that it was a group of Muslims from Palissa who took the children. Badir believes they were taken as an effort to force Badir to convert back to Islam. The police are investigating, but there have been no reports made on the status of the children.
11. In 2012, Hassan Sharif Lubenga, former member of an Islamist extremist group, remained in hiding in Kenya from Islamist extremists who sought to kill him after he converted to Christianity. Lubenga had previously been part of the extremist group Buk Haram, but converted to Christianity after experiencing numerous dreams of Jesus Christ. He then was forced to flee to Kenya when he heard the extremists wanted to kill him. This followed an incident in which one of his four wives poisoned him in reaction to his conversion. At the time of World Watch Monitor’s report, Lubenga was still in hiding, and his current location is unknown.

B. Freedom of Assembly and Expression

1. Article 29 of Uganda's constitution gives every person the freedoms of speech and expression as well as the freedom to publicly assemble and demonstrate in a peaceful manner.
2. A controversial bill was passed in 2013 that threatens the guaranteed rights of article 29. This act, named the Public Order Management Act, has been publically criticized by various religious organizations, concerned Ugandan citizens, and human rights NGOs, including Amnesty International.
3. The Public Order Management Act requires that any organizer of a public meeting notify the police at least three days before the public meeting is to be held, giving information about the organization, the purpose of the meeting, and the time and place the meeting will be held. Organizers are restricted to holding meetings within the times of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.
4. The act defines a public meeting as "a gathering, assembly, procession or demonstration in a public place or premises held for the purposes of discussing, acting upon, petitioning or expressing views on a matter of public interest."
5. If an organizer fails to notify the police, or holds the public meeting after receiving orders from the police not to do so, he or she will be "liable on conviction to the penalty for that offence under section 116 of the Penal Code Act."
6. This Act is not up to standards with Uganda's own constitution nor international law requiring the freedoms of assembly and expression. The regulations that this act places on Ugandans is concerning in that it greatly hinders their access to such freedoms.

C. Child Sacrifice

1. Child sacrifice has emerged in Uganda's recent history. It is not part of Uganda's cultural history, but has recently afflicted regions all across the country. Its origin is unclear; however, child sacrifice is the work of witchdoctors who have a significant role in society, attracting Uganda's large superstitious population. Witchdoctors impersonate traditional healers and make claims to their clients that child sacrifice will benefit their healing or prosperity. Witchdoctors use this opportunity to exploit their clients' religious beliefs for their own financial gain.
2. Culprits of child sacrifice defend the claim that child sacrifice has been part of Uganda's cultural tradition in order to legitimize their crimes, while the government tends to also

hide behind this claim as an excuse for their inaction. Politicians stray away from addressing the issue as it could jeopardize their elections since witchdoctors hold considerable influence within society. However, the only sacrifices that have been part of Ugandan history are animal sacrifices, and therefore, the excuse that child sacrifice is excusable due to tradition is invalid.

3. There are many issues that contribute to the phenomena of child sacrifice in Uganda. Firstly, there is an issue with the current law and its enforcement. The Witchcraft Act was established in 1957, and says that anyone operating as a witch or who practices witchcraft may be subject to criminal prosecution. However, this law is rarely used by Ugandan courts, is not enforced by authorities, and is not well-known by the Ugandan population. Furthermore, it does not specifically mention child sacrifice as a punishable offense within the realm of witchcraft. Child sacrifice is also not mentioned specifically in other laws that focus on child protection.
4. Another issue is the overall lack of education for Uganda's people regarding the threat of child sacrifice. Poor, vulnerable communities who have little knowledge of the potential risks from witchdoctors are often the ones targeted for child sacrifice. Those from these uneducated communities who go to witchdoctors are very susceptible to take the advice given to them by the witchdoctors, which is proving to increasingly involve child sacrifice.
5. These communities who are prone to exploitation by witchdoctors also suffer from a lack of prosecution due to their inability to report the incidents. Most are unable to pay the fee necessary to take a case of child sacrifice to the courts. Also, people living in rural areas, where many of these incidents occur, do not have access to lawyers. Therefore, many cases are left unreported.
6. Even when cases are reported, there is still a tendency for inaction as police often do not investigate the reports because there are no vehicles available for them to do so. The enormous amount of cases that go unreported coupled with the lack of response by authorities has greatly exacerbated the issue of child sacrifice.
7. In 2012, Humane Africa launched a research mission on child sacrifice in Uganda based solely on the accounts of firsthand eyewitnesses. Researchers held 140 interviews in the central, western, and eastern districts of Uganda with people who were able to report firsthand accounts of either bodies missing body parts, tissue or blood, or body parts, tissue or blood that had been removed from a body for child sacrifice. These 140 interviews addressed 77 different cases of child sacrifice. 20 incidents of child mutilation or sacrifice occurred during the four months, June through September 2012, that they did their research. Both the widespread firsthand accounts and the occurring incidents of child sacrifice during the research show the prevalence of child sacrifice in Uganda.

D. Recommendations

1. Regarding religious freedom violations, Jubilee Campaign recommends that the Ugandan government continue to adhere to its constitution, which encourages a diverse religious population and the exercise of various faiths. In order to promote a more religiously tolerant environment, the government must crack down on cases of discrimination and persecution. If Uganda would like to keep its reputation of high religious freedom standards, it can leave no room for impunity. Violators of religious freedom must be properly tried in court and punished to the full extent of the law for their actions, especially for cases of murder and kidnapping.
2. Though Christianity makes up the majority population, people belonging to this group are still particularly vulnerable to Islamist extremists who carry out unlawful attacks. The government must offer special protection to those targeted by extremist attacks, such as converts from Islam. This protection could include centers of asylum for those who feel threatened by extremists as well as increased police surveillance in areas where Islamist extremists are known to reside or operate.
3. Regarding violations of freedoms of assembly and expression, Jubilee Campaign urges the Ugandan government to repeal the Public Order Management Act, which is in violation of Uganda's constitution and international law, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
4. Regarding child sacrifice, Uganda should immediately implement new legislation that specifically restricts child sacrifice or mutilation for any reason. The Ugandan government should also create a well-funded department that closely monitors the rising issue of child sacrifice, enforces the prosecution of offenders, and provides care for victims and their families. The government must respond to the prevalent issue of child sacrifice through supplying adequate funding so that authorities can take appropriate action. Without funding, there will continue to be an incredible lack of response to the issue of child sacrifice, which would allow the problem to escalate further.
5. As a preventative measure, the government of Uganda should also make efforts to better educate its population on the threat that witchdoctors have on their society, especially in regards to child sacrifice. This could be done through the distribution of resources such as pamphlets that describe both the threat and the options that people have for protection. It could also be accomplished by educating children in school about the issue. Parents could then be educated in workshops that are specifically made to raise awareness on social issues and threats such as child sacrifice. Families must be made aware of their vulnerabilities to child sacrifice and be educated on how to protect themselves in order to better combat this vicious phenomena.