

Reconciling Uganda's Land History: The Uganda Land Commission and the Pursuit of Equitable State Land Management and Restitution

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SUMMARY

This paper critically examines the historical and contemporary dimensions of land governance in Uganda, with particular emphasis on the Uganda Land Commission (ULC) and its role in addressing restitution and equitable management of state land. Drawing upon documentary analysis of historical records, constitutional provisions, legislative reforms, and scholarly literature, the study situates Uganda's land question within a political economy framework. Uganda's land system has evolved from pre-colonial communal management to colonial expropriation, through post-independence reforms, and into the legal pluralism of the 1995 Constitution and subsequent Land Acts. While significant progress has been made in securing tenure rights and initiating restitution processes, challenges such as elite capture, institutional weaknesses, corruption, and overlapping tenure systems continue to undermine equitable outcomes. The paper concludes by recommending targeted reforms to strengthen institutional autonomy, operationalize a revolving Land Fund, clarify tenancy laws, and integrate customary tenure into statutory frameworks to ensure sustainable and inclusive land governance.

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