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Transforming Peace, Governance, and Development in Karamoja, Northern Uganda and the Ateker Region

Institutional Theme

From Policy Dialogue to Transformation Doctrine

Prepared by

Africa Leadership Institute (AFLI)

Institutional Affiliation

***Strategic Policy and Governance Institute supporting
peacebuilding, cross-border cooperation, governance reform,
and development transformation in Uganda and the Ateker region.***

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Abbreviations

AFLI – Africa Leadership Institute

KAPATU – Karamoja Peace and Technology University

KAPA – Karamoja Professionals’ Association

OWC – Operation Wealth Creation

KRSDP – Karamoja Regional Strategic Development Plan

NPA – National Planning Authority

NCHE – National Council for Higher Education

MoU – Memorandum of Understanding

RSA – Resource Sharing Agreement

SALW – Small Arms and Light Weapons

UPDF – Uganda People’s Defence Forces

KDF – Kenya Defence Forces

MEKS – Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Systems

RBM – Results-Based Management

RBBM – Results-Based Budget Matrix

IDP – Internally Displaced Persons

EAC – East African Community

GoU – Government of Uganda

LG – Local Government

CSO – Civil Society Organisation

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

DFI – Development Finance Institution

PPP – Public–Private Partnership

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

ToR – Terms of Reference

FY – Financial Year

NDP III – National Development Plan III

SALW – Small Arms and Light Weapons

1. Executive Summary

The year 2023 marked a defining institutional milestone for Africa Leadership Institute (AFLI). It was a year of consolidation, strategic clarity, and expanded influence across Karamoja, Northern Uganda, and the wider Ateker region. AFLI strengthened its identity as a state-facing policy institute operating at the interface of political authority, community legitimacy, and evidence-based transformation. In doing so, AFLI moved beyond the production of discrete project outputs and advanced a coherent transformation doctrine grounded in peace building, governance discipline, and production-led development.

AFLI's 2023 work unfolded within a national context characterized by three interlocking realities. First, insecurity and governance deficits persisted in Karamoja and cross-border corridors, driven by armed cattle rustling, proliferation of small arms, and weak institutional coordination. Second, post-conflict governance pressures remained unresolved in Northern Uganda, particularly in relation to land disputes, justice deficits, and fragile returnee livelihoods. Third, the national imperative for long-term regional transformation demanded frameworks that could translate political directives into implementable programs. Against this background, AFLI's role matured as a specialized platform for structured policy-cycle delivery—producing Concept Notes, Activity Plans, Logical Frameworks, Results-Based Budgets, Work Plans, and final technical Reports designed to guide implementation rather than simply document dialogue.

In 2023, AFLI's portfolio was anchored in five strategic pillars: (i) peace-building, security stabilization and conflict transformation; (ii) cross-border cooperation and shared resource governance; (iii) pastoral and agro-industrial transformation systems; (iv) governance reform, justice and land policy in post-conflict settings; and (v) institutional development and university statecraft through the establishment of the Karamoja Peace and Technology University (KAPATU). These pillars were not pursued as isolated thematic areas. They were integrated as mutually reinforcing components of a unified peace–governance–development framework.

A major highlight of AFLI's peace and security work in 2023 was technical support to the High-Level Joint Security Mission between the Republic of Kenya and the Republic of Uganda, convened on 20 February 2023 in Moroto. The Mission represented a strategic shift from reactive crisis response to structured bilateral security governance. It reaffirmed commitment to operationalise the 2019 Uganda–Kenya MoU, strengthened coordination

between security agencies, and positioned cross-border insecurity as an intergovernmental governance challenge requiring harmonised enforcement, justice mechanisms, and development dividends. AFLI's structured documentation ensured that this engagement produced institutional continuity through formal reporting and implementation pathways.

In the domain of cross-border governance, AFLI produced a comprehensive Sticky Issues Diagnostic to de-risk the Uganda–Kenya Cross-Border Resource Sharing framework. This diagnostic provided a systematic mapping of legal, institutional, operational, and community-level risks likely to undermine implementation of the emerging Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA). It addressed critical issues including disarmament asymmetry, justice and conflict resolution gaps, environmental sustainability risks, service imbalances, and weak communication systems between formal institutions and customary structures. This work strengthened negotiation readiness and reinforced the principle that resource-sharing agreements must be grounded in operational reality and community legitimacy.

AFLI also made a major contribution to long-term transformation planning through technical support to the Karamoja Regional Strategic Development Plan (KRSDP) Synthesis Report. This assignment consolidated fragmented interventions into a coherent transformation doctrine articulated as a sequence: Peace → Water → Production → Markets → Agro-Industrialization. The KRSDP synthesis repositioned Karamoja from a crisis narrative to an investment-ready frontier, aligned with national planning systems, and integrated lessons learned to correct historical failures of fragmented programming. The delivery of Draft Zero to the National Planning Authority in May 2023 signalled a structured pathway for national uptake.

Under governance reform, AFLI supported one of Uganda's most politically sensitive policy issues in 2023: the Balaalo phenomenon under Executive Order No. 3 of 2023. AFLI's contribution restored legal and institutional clarity, disaggregated lawful livestock investment from unlawful land occupation and criminal activity, and provided structured analysis of security, migration, and transhumance dynamics. By documenting stakeholder grievances and institutional enforcement gaps, AFLI repositioned Balaalo from a polarised identity debate into an evidence-based governance reform agenda requiring coordinated administrative solutions.

In Northern Uganda, AFLI advanced a landmark intervention on post-conflict land governance through the “Yako Ngom” investigation in Atiak, Amuru District. This work examined allegations of coercive land acquisition, dispossession, inadequate compensation, and governance failures affecting returnee communities. AFLI framed land justice as a peace and stability issue, highlighting the risk of investment failure where procedural justice and legitimacy are compromised. The report proposed structured pathways for restitution, compensation at current market rates, grievance redress, and institutional reforms to prevent recurrence.

AFLI’s most innovative intellectual contribution in 2023 was the consolidation of the Erre–Awui Production Systems Model as a culturally grounded and investment-ready pathway for Karamoja agro-industrialisation. AFLI documented Erre and Awui not as cultural practices but as economic institutions capable of anchoring household production, pastoral transformation, cooperative models, and market integration. The development of the Erre–Awui–Elain pathway provided a coherent framework linking indigenous production systems to value addition and agro-industrial hubs. This work reframed Karamoja pastoralism as a strategic economic frontier rather than a development deficit.

The most generational institutional achievement of 2023 was the consolidation of KAPATU and the formal integration of AFLI as its semi-autonomous policy institute. Through governance blueprinting, regulatory engagement, and structured institutional design, AFLI contributed to the establishment of a transformation university positioned as a regional platform for peace, technology, and development. This institutional statecraft ensured that Karamoja’s transformation agenda is anchored not only in programmes but in permanent knowledge and governance institutions capable of sustaining change beyond political cycles.

Across all interventions, AFLI strengthened its institutional credibility through governance discipline, results-based management, and structured budgeting. The consistent application of results-based planning instruments enhanced accountability, improved partner confidence, and positioned AFLI for scale. In 2023, AFLI demonstrated that transformation in fragile regions is achievable when policy is treated as statecraft—disciplined, evidence-based, and institutionally anchored.

Looking forward, AFLI’s Strategic Outlook (2024–2026) builds on 2023 as a foundation year. The next phase is defined by scale: deepening cross-border peace and resource governance,

translating the Erre–Awui model into implementable programmes, institutionalising governance reform in land and migration, and consolidating KAPATU as a transformation university. With strengthened partnerships, embedded monitoring and knowledge systems, and sustained governance discipline, AFLI is positioned to shape the next chapter of peace, governance, and development transformation in Karamoja, Northern Uganda, and the wider Ateker region.

2.0. Institutional Context in 2023

The year 2023 constituted a decisive institutional inflection point for the Africa Leadership Institute (AFLI). It was the year in which AFLI consolidated its identity as a policy and governance institution operating at the interface of state authority, community legitimacy, and evidence-based development transformation. AFLI's institutional context in 2023 was therefore defined not simply by internal organizational growth, but by the convergence of three national realities: (i) escalating insecurity and governance deficits in Karamoja and borderlands; (ii) the urgent demand for structured policy solutions to complex peace–development challenges; and (iii) the formal emergence of the Karamoja Peace and Technology University (KAPATU) as a national institution under establishment.

2.1 National Context: The Peace–Governance–Development Challenge in 2023

In 2023, Uganda's northern and north-eastern regions remained at the epicentre of the country's most complex governance challenges. Karamoja continued to face persistent armed cattle rustling, proliferation of small arms, and cycles of insecurity that undermined service delivery, investment confidence, and local governance authority. These challenges were not confined within national borders. They intersected with cross-border insecurity dynamics involving Kenya (Turkana and West Pokot), and increasingly demanded bilateral security diplomacy, coordinated disarmament, and structured frameworks for cross-border mobility and shared resource governance.

Simultaneously, Northern Uganda continued to experience unresolved post-conflict governance pressures, including land conflicts, investor-community disputes, compensation deficits, and structural injustices that remained embedded in returnee livelihoods. In such contexts, development programming was often at risk of reproducing fragility if not grounded in conflict sensitivity, legal clarity, and community legitimacy.

These realities underscored a core institutional lesson for 2023: peace, governance, and development could not be treated as separate policy silos. Sustainable transformation required integrated approaches—where security stabilization is matched by governance reform, justice and rights safeguards, and practical production-led economic transformation.

2.2 The Policy Vacuum and the Demand for Evidence-Based Decision Support

A defining characteristic of 2023 was the recognition that many of Uganda's regional crises were not caused by the absence of political will, but by the absence of structured policy intelligence and implementation-ready governance frameworks. Government interventions often faced gaps in:

- coherent strategic framing;
- clear institutional roles and coordination modalities;
- results-based planning;
- time-bound execution pathways; and
- budget-output accountability systems.

It is within this vacuum that AFLI's role became more clearly institutionalized. AFLI emerged in 2023 as a specialized platform capable of producing policy-cycle instruments that translate political directives into actionable and measurable frameworks. This institutional contribution was demonstrated through a consistent methodology across the year's portfolio: Concept Notes, Activity Plans, Logical Frameworks, Results-Based Budgets, Work Plans, and Final Technical Reports.

This methodology served two purposes. First, it disciplined policy work into a coherent chain of evidence, logic, outputs, and cost. Second, it provided Government and strategic partners with documents that were not merely analytical, but also operational and implementable.

2.3 AFLI's Institutional Positioning: A State-Facing Policy Institute

In 2023, AFLI operated as a state-facing policy institute with a mandate to support national transformation processes through applied research, governance diagnostics, and strategic program design. AFLI's work was not positioned as academic inquiry detached from policy. Instead, it was designed as a practical mechanism for strengthening the capacity of Government systems to respond to complex challenges in fragile regions.

This positioning required AFLI to operate simultaneously in multiple spaces:

- **Policy design and strategic framing** (developing transformation logic and national alignment);

- **Governance diagnostics** (identifying institutional gaps and systemic risks);
- **Peace and security coordination** (supporting bilateral missions, communiqués, and structured security governance);
- **Justice and land governance reform** (addressing post-conflict land acquisition disputes); and
- **Transformation planning** (developing indigenous production system models and investment-ready frameworks).

In this sense, 2023 represented the consolidation of AFLI’s comparative advantage: the ability to bridge political leadership, technical design, and implementation discipline.

2.4 Institutional Synergy with OWC and the Karamoja Policy Ecosystem

AFLI’s institutional context in 2023 was also shaped by deepening synergy with Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), and by the institutional architecture that OWC convened around Karamoja’s transformation agenda. Through this partnership, AFLI contributed to assignments that required high-level credibility, rapid turnaround, and multi-stakeholder legitimacy.

This relationship positioned AFLI within a wider ecosystem of institutions engaged in Karamoja’s transformation, including the Karamoja Professionals’ Association (KAPA), national security agencies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office of the Prime Minister, the National Planning Authority (NPA), and cross-border counterparts in Kenya. AFLI’s institutional identity therefore matured in 2023 as a convening and synthesis platform—one capable of supporting whole-of-government approaches while retaining analytical independence and policy rigor.

2.5 The Emergence of KAPATU and the Institutionalization of AFLI

The most defining institutional development in 2023 was the transition of KAPATU from a conceptual initiative to a formally established institution under a structured regulatory pathway. KAPATU’s emergence created a new institutional horizon for AFLI: the opportunity to embed policy and governance intelligence within a university architecture of national character.

The institutional blueprint for KAPATU established AFLI as the official semi-autonomous Institute of the University. This arrangement is designed to enable KAPATU to acquire a functional Policy Institute from inception, rather than attempting to build such a capacity after institutional maturity. The blueprint clarifies that AFLI's semi-autonomous status is anchored in the need for:

- governance and policy systems that accelerate institutional readiness;
- ring-fenced financial autonomy and accountability;
- results-based management, monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge systems;
- credible partnerships and donor confidence; and
- strategic positioning of KAPATU as a university engaged in real-world peace, governance, and transformation challenges.

Thus, 2023 was not only a year of program delivery. It was the year in which AFLI's institutional future became formally linked to the national university-building agenda in Karamoja.

2.6 Organizational Identity: From Project Outputs to Institutional Doctrine

By the end of 2023, AFLI's institutional identity had evolved beyond the production of discrete policy outputs. The year's portfolio revealed the emergence of an institutional doctrine characterized by:

- Integrated peace–governance–development thinking
- Cross-border regionalism as a peace strategy
- Indigenous systems as the foundation for transformation
- Justice and rights safeguards as prerequisites for investment stability
- Results-based planning and fiscal discipline as non-negotiable governance standards

This doctrine was not theoretical. It was demonstrated through the structured design and delivery of interventions across security diplomacy, cross-border resource governance, Karamoja transformation planning, pastoral systems modelling, and post-conflict land justice.

2.7 Conclusion: Why 2023 Was a Defining Institutional Year

In conclusion, the institutional context of AFLI in 2023 can be summarized as a convergence of mandate, method, and maturity.

- **Mandate:** The year's crises demanded a policy institute capable of responding to fragile-region governance challenges with credibility and speed.
- **Method:** AFLI consolidated a disciplined policy-cycle methodology that translates political directives into actionable programs.
- **Maturity:** AFLI's role expanded from policy support to institutional statecraft, particularly through its formal positioning within KAPATU.

Therefore, 2023 stands as the year in which AFLI transitioned from being a policy actor among many to becoming an institutional anchor in Uganda's peace, governance, and transformation architecture for Karamoja, Northern Uganda, and the wider Ateker region.

3. Strategic Pillars of Work in 2023

In 2023, AFLI's work was structured around a coherent set of strategic pillars designed to respond to the intertwined challenges of insecurity, fragile governance, cross-border instability, post-conflict justice deficits, and stalled economic transformation in Karamoja, Northern Uganda, and the Ateker region.

Rather than approaching these challenges as isolated sectoral issues, AFLI adopted an integrated peace–governance–development framework. Each pillar addressed a distinct domain, but all were mutually reinforcing and anchored in a consistent policy-cycle methodology: strategic framing, concept development, structured activity planning, logical frameworks, results-based budgeting, time-bound work plans, and evidence-based reporting.

The five strategic pillars that defined AFLI's 2023 portfolio are outlined below.

3.1 Peacebuilding, Security Stabilization and Conflict Transformation

The first pillar focused on strengthening peace architecture and security coordination in fragile and border regions. Karamoja and adjacent borderlands entered 2023 under intense security pressure. Armed cattle rustling, proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), cross-border incursions, and distrust between pastoral communities undermined both livelihoods and state authority. In Northern Uganda, unresolved grievances and land-related conflicts threatened to destabilize post-war recovery gains.

AFLI responded by supporting high-level, structured interventions that linked political authority with technical analysis. This included:

- Technical support to high-level bilateral security diplomacy between Uganda and Kenya;
- Development of structured governance responses to transhumance-related insecurity;
- Integration of security, justice, and community-level peace mechanisms;
- Production of formal reports and communiqués designed to guide implementation rather than merely document dialogue.

Under this pillar, peacebuilding was treated not as a stand-alone activity but as a systems intervention. AFLI emphasized that security stabilization must be accompanied by:

- institutional clarity;
- harmonized cross-border coordination;
- judicial and administrative safeguards;
- and clear operational frameworks for enforcement and accountability.

The outcome was a shift from reactive crisis response to structured security governance.

3.2 Cross-Border Cooperation and Shared Resource Governance

The second pillar addressed the structural governance deficits in cross-border pastoral mobility, shared natural resources, and bilateral institutional coordination between Uganda and Kenya.

Cross-border dynamics between Karamoja (Uganda), Turkana and West Pokot (Kenya), and neighboring Ateker communities have historically oscillated between coexistence and conflict. In 2023, AFLI supported the design and refinement of frameworks that:

- stress-tested the implementation risks of the 2019 Uganda–Kenya MoU;
- identified “sticky issues” likely to undermine resource sharing agreements;
- clarified institutional roles across security, justice, environmental management, and local governance;
- linked customary pastoral systems (e.g., kraal and clan-based governance) with formal state structures.

AFLI’s cross-border work recognized that durable peace in pastoral regions requires:

- harmonized disarmament protocols;
- structured entry and exit systems for transhumant pastoralists;
- joint livestock recovery mechanisms;
- environmental sustainability safeguards;
- communication systems that translate agreements into community-understandable language.

This pillar strengthened the negotiation readiness and implementation discipline of bilateral resource governance arrangements, ensuring that agreements were grounded in operational realities rather than aspirational language.

3.3 Pastoral and Agro-Industrial Transformation Systems

The third pillar focused on repositioning Karamoja from a subsistence and crisis narrative toward a production-driven transformation model grounded in indigenous systems. AFLI consolidated the Erre and Awui production systems as foundational elements of a culturally legitimate and economically scalable transformation framework. Rather than importing externally designed agricultural models, AFLI’s work documented and reinterpreted:

- the Erre (homestead-based production system);
- the Awui (rangeland and cattle camp system);
- and the extended transformation logic linking these systems to markets and agro-industrial hubs (Erre–Awui–Elain model).

This pillar achieved three strategic shifts:

1. It reframed Karamoja’s pastoralism from “backwardness” to institutional intelligence.
2. It translated indigenous governance and production systems into national development planning language.
3. It produced practical enterprise and cooperative models capable of attracting structured investment.

By aligning indigenous systems with Uganda Vision 2040, NDP III, and broader agro-industrialization agendas, AFLI helped reposition Karamoja as an investable frontier rather than a perpetual humanitarian concern.

3.4 Governance Reform, Justice and Land Policy in Post-Conflict Contexts

The fourth pillar addressed governance failures and justice deficits in land administration and post-conflict investment environments. In 2023, land disputes—particularly in post-war districts such as Amuru—exposed the fragility of peace dividends when compensation, consultation, and customary land recognition mechanisms fail. AFLI’s work in this domain:

- documented allegations of forced displacement and irregular land acquisition;
- categorized affected households;
- examined the legal and customary dimensions of land governance;
- proposed compensation and restitution pathways aligned with current market value and rights-based standards;
- recommended psychosocial and structural remedies to prevent recurrence.

This pillar underscored a critical institutional insight: development and investment cannot be sustainable where justice deficits persist. Land governance reform was therefore treated not as a technical land administration issue, but as a peacebuilding and stabilization priority.

3.5 Institutional Development and University Statecraft (KAPATU)

The fifth pillar focused on institutional architecture and university statecraft through the emergence of the Karamoja Peace and Technology University (KAPATU). In 2023, KAPATU transitioned from conceptualization to formal institutional structuring. AFLI played a strategic role in:

- governance design and institutional blueprint development;
- defining semi-autonomous structures to protect policy and research independence;
- embedding results-based management systems;
- positioning the University as a transformation-oriented public institution;
- strengthening credibility with regulators and national planning bodies.

The institutional blueprint establishes AFLI as the official semi-autonomous institute of KAPATU, designed to accelerate readiness, strengthen governance systems, and embed peace–governance–development intelligence within the University’s founding DNA.

This pillar ensured that institutional development was not detached from program work. Instead, the university-building process was directly linked to the region’s peace and transformation agenda.

Cross-Cutting Features Across All Pillars

Across the five pillars, AFLI maintained several consistent cross-cutting commitments:

- **Evidence-Based Policy Design:** Every intervention was structured through concept notes, logical frameworks, and documented outputs.
- **Results-Based Budgeting:** Financial planning was tied directly to measurable outputs.
- **Time-Bound Implementation:** Work plans were sequenced with clear milestones.
- **Institutional Coordination:** Engagement with OWC, NPA, security agencies, local governments, and cross-border counterparts was embedded in all interventions.
- **Conflict Sensitivity:** Justice, inclusion, and community legitimacy were treated as essential components of policy design.

Conclusion

The Strategic Pillars of Work in 2023 demonstrate that AFLI did not operate as a project-driven organization. It operated as a systems actor—connecting peacebuilding, governance reform, cross-border diplomacy, indigenous economic transformation, justice safeguards, and institutional development into a coherent transformation doctrine.

Collectively, these pillars positioned AFLI as a stabilizing, structuring, and future-oriented policy institute committed to transforming Karamoja, Northern Uganda, and the Ateker region through disciplined governance, institutional integrity, and culturally grounded development pathways.

4. High-Level Bilateral Security Diplomacy: Joint Security Mission (Kenya–Uganda)

One of the most consequential interventions undertaken in 2023 under AFLI's Peace and Security Pillar was technical support to the High-Level Joint Security Mission between the Republic of Kenya and the Republic of Uganda. This Mission, convened on **20 February 2023 in Moroto, Uganda**, marked a strategic turning point in bilateral security coordination across the Karamoja–Turkana–West Pokot corridor.

The Mission was not an isolated diplomatic event. It was the culmination of escalating cross-border insecurity, parliamentary petitioning, executive-level engagement, and recognition that unilateral security responses had reached their limits. It represented a deliberate effort to reposition cross-border insecurity from a localized cattle-rustling narrative to a structured intergovernmental governance challenge.

4.1 Strategic Context: From Crisis Response to Structured Security Governance

In the months leading to the Mission, insecurity along the Uganda–Kenya border had intensified. Armed cattle rustling, proliferation of small arms, cross-border pursuit operations, and detention of pastoralists created heightened tension among Turkana, West Pokot, Karamojong, and Sebei communities.

Security operations, including disarmament exercises, had yielded partial gains but exposed coordination gaps. Livestock recovery operations were complicated by jurisdictional boundaries. Prosecution frameworks were inconsistent. Community perceptions of unequal enforcement risked further destabilization.

The Mission emerged against this backdrop as a structured diplomatic and security reset mechanism.

AFLI's role was to ensure that the intervention moved beyond reactive dialogue and into institutionalized security diplomacy. This required transforming political intent into a documented, sequenced, and implementation-ready framework.

4.2 From Parliamentary Petition to Presidential Directive

The Mission's origins lay in formal petitions raised through the Karamoja Parliamentary Group, reflecting widespread concern over cross-border incursions and detentions. The

matter escalated to the Executive level, culminating in high-level authorization for a bilateral security engagement.

This escalation pathway was significant. It signaled that cross-border insecurity was no longer treated as a peripheral or localized problem, but as a national-level governance issue requiring inter-state coordination.

AFLI's contribution at this stage focused on structuring the diplomatic engagement into a coherent policy-cycle instrument—conceptual framing, activity sequencing, results architecture, and formal documentation—to ensure institutional continuity beyond the meeting itself.

4.3 Composition and Scope of the Mission

The High-Level Joint Security Mission brought together senior officials and security leadership from both states, including:

- Ministers and senior government representatives;
- Military and police leadership;
- Regional and local government officials;
- Technical experts and coordinators.

The Mission's agenda was comprehensive and deliberately multi-dimensional. It addressed:

- cross-border disarmament coordination;
- harmonization of security operations;
- operationalization of the 2019 Uganda–Kenya MoU;
- judicial and administrative handling of detained pastoralists;
- livestock recovery protocols;
- institutional coordination structures;
- and peace dividend projects to stabilize border communities.

This breadth reflected AFLI's core institutional principle: security challenges cannot be sustainably resolved through force alone; they require administrative clarity, diplomatic alignment, and development incentives.

4.4 Operationalization of the 2019 MoU

A central outcome of the Mission was the renewed commitment to operationalize the 2019 Memorandum of Understanding on Cross-Border Cooperation.

In prior years, the MoU had remained under-implemented due to limited coordination structures, resource constraints, and evolving security dynamics. The 2023 Mission provided the political impetus to:

- reactivate Joint Technical Steering mechanisms;
- formalize bilateral communication channels;
- align security deployments at strategic border points;
- integrate civil–military coordination frameworks;
- and embed cross-border mobility within rule-bound administrative systems.

By supporting the structuring of these commitments into a formal Joint Communiqué, AFLI helped ensure that the Mission's outcomes were recorded as binding diplomatic understandings rather than informal pledges.

4.5 Security–Development Nexus: Peace Dividends and Stabilization

The Mission also recognized that security stabilization must be matched by tangible development dividends. Border communities experiencing chronic insecurity often operate within environments of weak infrastructure, limited services, and economic marginalization.

The discussions therefore extended beyond military coordination to include:

- health facility development in border areas;
- road connectivity;
- water and pasture infrastructure;
- and improved communication systems.

This integrated approach reflected AFLI's doctrine that peace and development are mutually reinforcing. Stabilization without livelihood support risks relapse; development without security lacks durability.

4.6 Humanitarian and Justice Considerations

The Mission addressed the politically sensitive issue of detained Turkana pastoralists held in Uganda. Rather than allowing the matter to fuel diplomatic friction, the Mission provided a platform for negotiated resolution and appeal for executive-level clemency.

By embedding humanitarian and justice considerations within a high-level security framework, the Mission demonstrated a mature bilateral approach—balancing enforcement with reconciliation. This approach reduced the risk of retaliatory narratives and strengthened inter-state trust.

4.7 Institutionalization through Structured Documentation

A defining feature of AFLI's contribution was ensuring that the Mission was embedded within a complete governance documentation chain:

- Concept Note defining objectives and rationale;
- Activity Plan sequencing engagements;
- Logical Framework articulating impact, outcome, and outputs;
- Results-Based Budget linking resources to deliverables;
- Time-bound Work Plan;
- Final Technical Report and Joint Communiqué.

This disciplined methodology transformed a diplomatic event into a replicable institutional model for bilateral security governance.

4.8 Strategic Outcomes and Institutional Impact

The Joint Security Mission achieved several strategic outcomes:

1. Reaffirmed high-level political commitment to cross-border peace.
2. Strengthened bilateral security coordination between UPDF and KDF.

3. Accelerated implementation of the 2019 MoU.
4. Clarified operational pathways for livestock recovery and cross-border pursuit.
5. Elevated cross-border security from a local administrative matter to a structured diplomatic priority.

Most importantly, it demonstrated that peace diplomacy in pastoral borderlands can be structured, documented, costed, and sequenced.

4.9 Contribution to AFLI's 2023 Strategic Identity

The Joint Security Mission exemplified AFLI's institutional identity in 2023:

- bridging parliamentary petitioning and executive-level diplomacy;
- converting political directives into operational frameworks;
- embedding results-based planning within security governance;
- and linking bilateral diplomacy with community-level stabilization.

It reinforced AFLI's position as a trusted technical partner capable of navigating politically sensitive terrain while maintaining analytical rigor and institutional discipline.

4.10 Conclusion

The 2023 High-Level Joint Security Mission between Kenya and Uganda stands as a cornerstone of AFLI's peace and security work. It signaled a shift from episodic security cooperation toward structured, institutionalized bilateral governance.

By ensuring that the Mission was grounded in formal documentation, logical sequencing, and implementation pathways, AFLI helped transform cross-border security diplomacy into a durable governance instrument.

In doing so, AFLI contributed not only to immediate stabilization in the Karamoja–Turkana–West Pokot corridor, but also to the longer-term architecture of regional peace, institutional trust, and cooperative development in the Ateker region.

5. Karamoja Transformation Doctrine: KRSDP Synthesis Report

In 2023, AFLI made one of its most significant contributions to national transformation planning through technical support to the Karamoja Regional Strategic Development Plan (KRSDP) Synthesis Report. This assignment represented a landmark effort to reposition Karamoja from a crisis-prone region to an investable frontier for Uganda’s long-term development, anchored in peace, governance discipline, and production-led economic transformation.

The KRSDP Synthesis Report was not merely a technical document. It was a strategic doctrine. It consolidated fragmented interventions, sectoral plans, and historical lessons into a coherent transformation framework capable of guiding both Government investment and development partner engagement over a long-term horizon.

5.1 Strategic Context: Why a Synthesis Report Was Required

Karamoja has historically been characterized by overlapping cycles of insecurity, underdevelopment, humanitarian crisis response, and fragmented development programming. For decades, interventions were often reactive—responding to drought, famine, insecurity, or disarmament episodes—without a single integrated framework linking security stabilization to sustainable production systems, infrastructure, markets, and human development.

By early 2023, national leadership recognized that the “Karamoja question” could not be resolved through piecemeal interventions. A comprehensive transformation strategy was required—one that could align political directives, national planning frameworks, and sector investment priorities.

The KRSDP Synthesis Report was therefore commissioned as an instrument to:

- consolidate and integrate existing evidence and sector strategies;
- diagnose why previous interventions had underperformed;
- reframe Karamoja’s transformation logic in a coherent sequence; and
- produce an investment-ready strategy aligned with national planning systems.

5.2 Presidential Guidance and National Planning Imperative

The KRSDP Synthesis Report was anchored in high-level political authority. It emerged from Presidential guidance and strategic direction that emphasized:

- the urgency of stabilizing Karamoja;
- the need to shift from humanitarian response to production;
- the requirement for coordinated institutional action; and
- the imperative to integrate Karamoja's development agenda into Uganda's national planning architecture.

This political anchoring was essential. It ensured that the KRSDP was not a donor-driven plan, but a Government-owned transformation doctrine.

AFLI's role was to provide technical synthesis support, ensuring that political intent was translated into a structured framework with clear logic, measurable outputs, and implementation sequencing.

5.3 Methodological Approach: AFLI's Structured Policy-Cycle Model

A defining feature of the KRSDP assignment was the application of AFLI's policy-cycle methodology. The process was not conducted as a general desk review. It was structured into:

- Conceptual framing and mandate clarification;
- Comprehensive desk review of existing plans, studies, and sectorial reports;
- Diagnostic analysis of historical lessons and implementation failures;
- Sector-by-sector transformation modelling;
- Integration and synthesis into a coherent framework;
- Validation and technical review;
- Production of Draft Zero; and
- Formal handover to the National Planning Authority (NPA).

This disciplined approach ensured that the KRSDP Synthesis Report was not only analytical, but also institutionally adoptable.

5.4 The Transformation Doctrine: Peace → Water → Production → Markets → Industry

The KRSDP Synthesis Report crystallized a clear transformation doctrine for Karamoja, articulated as a sequence:

Peace and Security → Water and Natural Resources → Production Systems → Markets → Agro-Industrialization

This doctrine was critical for three reasons.

First, it recognized that Karamoja's development cannot proceed without security stabilization and rule-of-law governance. Peace is not an abstract ideal; it is a precondition for investment, service delivery, and productive livelihoods.

Second, it identified water as the central strategic constraint and opportunity in Karamoja. Without water infrastructure and sustainable natural resource governance, production systems cannot stabilize.

Third, it positioned production and markets as the engine of transformation. Karamoja's future was framed not in welfare terms, but in economic terms—livestock commercialization, crop production, mining governance, tourism development, and agro-industrial value chains.

5.5 Sectoral Integration: A Whole-of-Region Strategy

The KRSDP Synthesis Report integrated Karamoja's transformation agenda across six interdependent pillars:

1. Peace, Security and Justice
2. Water, Environment and Natural Resource Governance
3. Commercial Livestock and Pastoral Transformation
4. Crop Commercialization and Food Systems
5. Mining, Tourism and Strategic Investment Sectors
6. Human Capital, Infrastructure and Service Delivery

This integration was critical because it prevented the common failure of treating Karamoja as a security-only region or a humanitarian-only region. Instead, the KRSDP presented Karamoja as a complete development system requiring interlocking investments.

5.6 Lessons-Learned and the Correction of Historical Failures

A major strength of the KRSDP Synthesis Report was its explicit attention to lessons learned from decades of intervention. The synthesis process identified systemic failures such as:

- duplication of programs without coordination;
- infrastructure projects that lacked maintenance and ownership;
- agricultural projects designed without cultural legitimacy;
- security operations not linked to livelihood alternatives;
- weak governance accountability and corruption vulnerabilities;
- failure to integrate customary institutions into formal governance.

By explicitly incorporating lessons learned, the KRSDP avoided the trap of “repackaging failure.” Instead, it presented a corrective strategy grounded in evidence and institutional realism.

5.7 Draft Zero and National Planning Uptake

One of the most important milestones of the KRSDP assignment was the production and transmission of Draft Zero to the National Planning Authority (NPA) on 19 May 2023.

This milestone demonstrated that the KRSDP was not intended to remain a standalone report. It was designed for integration into national planning, budgeting, and investment frameworks.

The handover established a formal pathway for:

- inclusion of Karamoja transformation priorities within national planning instruments;
- structured engagement with sector ministries;
- development partner alignment under a unified framework; and
- long-term investment programming.

AFLI's technical support was therefore instrumental in ensuring that the KRSDP moved from analysis to planning uptake.

5.8 Strategic Outcomes and Institutional Impact

The KRSDP Synthesis Report produced several strategic outcomes:

- 1. A Unified Transformation Narrative**

Karamoja was reframed from a problem region to an investable frontier.

- 2. A Coherent Theory of Change**

The transformation doctrine provided a clear logic linking peace, water, production, markets, and industry.

- 3. An Integrated Sector Framework**

The report aligned security, livelihoods, infrastructure, mining, tourism, and human development within one strategy.

- 4. A Planning-Ready Deliverable**

Draft Zero transmission to NPA ensured institutional uptake potential.

- 5. A Strategic Umbrella for Other Interventions**

The KRSDP provided the overarching framework under which other 2023 interventions (Erre-Awui, Balaalo, RSA, Joint Security Mission) could be positioned.

5.9 Contribution to AFLI's 2023 Strategic Identity

The KRSDP Synthesis Report reinforced AFLI's institutional identity as:

- a synthesis and integration platform;
- a bridge between political directives and planning systems;
- a technical actor capable of whole-of-region transformation design;
- a results-based governance institution grounded in implementation discipline.

It also demonstrated AFLI's ability to operate at national planning level while remaining anchored in regional realities and community legitimacy.

5.10 Conclusion

The KRSDP Synthesis Report stands as one of AFLI's most important contributions in 2023. It provided a coherent transformation doctrine for Karamoja, rooted in peace, governance reform, and production-led development. By integrating evidence, sector priorities, and historical lessons into a planning-ready framework, and by ensuring transmission of Draft Zero to NPA, AFLI helped lay the foundation for a long-term, coordinated, and investment-ready strategy for Karamoja. This work strengthened Uganda's capacity to move beyond crisis response and toward sustained regional transformation—positioning Karamoja as a strategic frontier for national growth, stability, and regional cooperation.

6. Uganda–Kenya Cross-Border Resource Sharing: Sticky Issues Diagnostic

In 2023, AFLI undertook one of its most strategically consequential assignments in the domain of cross-border governance: the production of a comprehensive Sticky Issues Diagnostic to inform and de-risk the Uganda–Kenya Cross-Border Resource Sharing framework. This assignment was designed as a stress-test for bilateral cooperation between Uganda (Karamoja and Sebei sub-regions) and Kenya (Turkana and West Pokot Counties). It aimed to identify the structural, legal, institutional, and operational risks that could undermine the implementation of the 2019 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and the emerging Cross-Border Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA). The Sticky Issues Diagnostic did not merely catalogue problems. It provided a systematic governance map of vulnerabilities that, if unaddressed, could transform a well-intentioned agreement into a source of renewed instability.

6.1 Strategic Context: Why a Diagnostic Was Necessary

The Uganda–Kenya borderlands are characterized by deeply interwoven pastoral mobility systems. Seasonal transhumance, clan-based grazing arrangements, water access, and livestock trade have historically functioned across modern state boundaries.

However, in recent decades, these systems have become increasingly vulnerable to:

- proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW);
- asymmetric disarmament processes;
- contested land tenure and grazing rights;
- resource pressure due to drought and climate variability;
- weak institutional coordination;
- and divergent legal and enforcement frameworks between the two states.

Although the 2019 MoU provided a political commitment to cooperation, its implementation required far greater operational clarity. Without a structured diagnostic, there was a risk that bilateral agreements would fail due to unresolved “sticky issues” embedded within institutions and communities. The Sticky Issues Diagnostic therefore functioned as a preventive governance instrument.

6.2 Methodological Approach: Structured Risk Mapping

AFLI applied its disciplined policy-cycle methodology to this assignment. The process included:

- scoping and conceptual framing;
- comprehensive desk review of legal and policy instruments;
- mapping of transhumance corridors and institutional mandates;
- identification of cross-border coordination gaps;
- sectoral risk analysis (security, justice, environment, communication);
- structured synthesis into a negotiation-ready diagnostic report.

The Diagnostic was sequenced within a time-bound work plan (February–March 2023), ensuring that findings were delivered in time to inform ongoing bilateral engagements. This structured approach elevated the assignment beyond narrative analysis. It produced a practical, implementable governance framework.

6.3 Thematic Domains of the Diagnostic

The Sticky Issues Diagnostic was organized into seven critical governance domains.

6.3.1 Policy and Institutional Framework

The Diagnostic revealed significant knowledge gaps among both pastoral communities and local institutions regarding applicable laws and bilateral agreements. It identified ambiguities in institutional mandates—particularly regarding which agencies should engage counterparts across the border. Without clear institutional pathways, even well-drafted agreements risked paralysis at implementation level. The report recommended harmonized administrative structures, formal entry and registration systems for migrating pastoralists, and strengthened inter-agency communication mechanisms.

6.3.2 Resource Mapping and Service Imbalance

The Diagnostic identified asymmetrical pressure on water and pasture resources, particularly on the Ugandan side during dry seasons. It highlighted the risk that resource-sharing frameworks would be undermined if infrastructure development did not keep pace with cross-border mobility. It also noted disparities in veterinary services, health access, and livestock support systems between the two sides of the border. Without equitable service provision, perceptions of unfair burden-sharing could escalate tensions. Recommendations included coordinated infrastructure investment, joint One Health frameworks, and structured pasture and water governance mechanisms.

6.3.3 Conflict Management and Justice Systems

The Diagnostic examined both customary and formal justice systems, recognizing that pastoral communities rely heavily on traditional structures such as ALOMAR and ADAKAR (clan-based governance arrangements). However, it identified a gap between customary resolutions and formal state legal processes. In some cases, locally accepted resolutions lacked formal legal recognition, while formal prosecutions lacked community legitimacy.

The report recommended:

- formal recognition and structured integration of customary governance systems within bilateral frameworks;
- harmonization of cross-border prosecution mechanisms;
- protection clauses for vulnerable groups;
- gender-sensitive safeguards to address risks of gender-based violence in transhumance corridors.

6.3.4 Security and Disarmament

Security emerged as one of the most critical sticky issues.

The Diagnostic highlighted:

- asymmetrical disarmament processes between Uganda and Kenya;
- risk of rearmament through cross-border leakage;

- lack of harmonized protocols for joint patrols;
- absence of designated entry/exit points for migrating pastoralists;
- weak joint intelligence systems.

It recommended:

- harmonized disarmament timelines and transparency mechanisms;
- joint destruction of recovered firearms;
- designated and monitored cross-border mobility corridors;
- strengthened UPDF–KDF and police-to-police coordination;
- joint livestock recovery protocols.

This security dimension ensured that the RSA would be embedded in enforceable operational reality.

6.3.5 Environmental Sustainability

Environmental stress, including degradation of grazing land and invasive species such as *Prosopis juliflora*, posed long-term sustainability risks. The Diagnostic emphasized that resource-sharing agreements must include environmental safeguards. It recommended coordinated rangeland management, cross-border ecosystem restoration, and environmental monitoring frameworks. Without sustainability measures, short-term access arrangements could exacerbate long-term degradation.

6.3.6 Communication and Coordination

A critical but often overlooked dimension was communication. The Diagnostic observed that agreements frequently fail because communities do not understand their terms. It recommended:

- translation of agreements into local languages;
- dissemination through radio and community forums;
- involvement of local government councils in formal adoption;
- recognition of kraal and clan leaders as legitimate interlocutors.

This ensured that the RSA would not remain an elite-level instrument detached from grassroots understanding.

6.4 Integration with the KRSDP and Broader Transformation Agenda

The Sticky Issues Diagnostic was not an isolated exercise. It intersected directly with the Karamoja Regional Strategic Development Plan (KRSDP) and other 2023 interventions. While the KRSDP articulated a long-term transformation doctrine, the Sticky Issues Diagnostic served as a risk filter—identifying governance vulnerabilities that could derail that transformation.

Together, they formed a complementary architecture:

- **KRSDP:** design and scale;
- **Sticky Issues:** de-risk and stabilize.

6.5 Strategic Outcomes and Institutional Impact

The Sticky Issues Diagnostic produced several lasting contributions:

1. **Negotiation Preparedness:** It equipped bilateral actors with clarity on implementation risks before formalising agreements.
2. **Institutional Harmonization:** It clarified mandates and coordination pathways.
3. **Security Realism:** It embedded disarmament and enforcement within the resource-sharing framework.
4. **Community Legitimacy:** It integrated customary systems into formal governance.
5. **Environmental Safeguards:** It linked sustainability to peace architecture.

Most importantly, it shifted the conversation from idealised cooperation to structured governance.

6.6 Contribution to AFLI's Institutional Identity

The Sticky Issues Diagnostic demonstrated AFLI's capacity to operate in politically sensitive and technically complex spaces.

It reinforced AFLI's identity as:

- a preventive governance institution;
- a bridge between customary and formal systems;
- a regional peace architecture designer;
- a results-based policy institute capable of integrating security, justice, environment, and community legitimacy.

6.7 Conclusion

The Uganda–Kenya Cross-Border Resource Sharing Sticky Issues Diagnostic stands as a cornerstone of AFLI’s 2023 portfolio.

By identifying structural vulnerabilities before agreements were finalized, AFLI contributed to a more resilient and implementation-ready bilateral framework. In doing so, AFLI strengthened the foundations of cross-border peace, reduced the risk of future conflict, and advanced a governance model in which shared resources become instruments of cooperation rather than triggers of instability.

7. Governance Reform: Balaalo Policy Work under Executive Order No. 3 of 2023

In 2023, AFLI undertook one of the most politically sensitive and governance-critical assignments in Uganda’s contemporary policy landscape: the production of a structured analytical and policy response to the Balaalo phenomenon under Presidential Executive Order No. 3 of 2023. This intervention represented a major contribution to national governance reform, addressing a complex and polarized issue involving migrant cattle keepers, land tenure disputes, insecurity, environmental degradation, community grievances, and institutional enforcement gaps across Northern and North-Eastern Uganda.

AFLI’s work was not designed to amplify political rhetoric or community anger. It was designed to restore policy clarity, legal discipline, and institutional coherence. By grounding the discourse in law, evidence, security analysis, and conflict sensitivity, AFLI helped reposition the Balaalo challenge from a contested identity debate to a governance problem requiring structured administrative solutions.

7.1 Strategic Context: Why the Balaalo Issue Became a National Governance Priority

The Balaalo phenomenon had evolved over years into a destabilizing governance challenge. While cattle keeping is a lawful economic activity, the expansion of migrant herding into Northern Uganda increasingly intersected with:

- contested land tenure and illegal occupation;
- fencing of communal lands and grazing areas;
- destruction of crops and livelihood assets;
- rising community hostility and retaliatory threats;
- alleged involvement of armed actors and illegal firearms;
- ecological pressure through overgrazing and charcoal burning;
- and weak enforcement by local authorities due to political and administrative constraints.

In a region still recovering from conflict and displacement, the perception of land appropriation—whether lawful or unlawful—posed a high risk of renewed instability. Executive Order No. 3 of 2023 therefore elevated the Balaalo issue into a matter of national

governance and security. It required a structured policy response capable of guiding enforcement, regulation, and long-term governance reform.

7.2 AFLI's Approach: From Polarized Narratives to Evidence-Based Governance

AFLI's central contribution in 2023 was methodological and institutional.

Rather than approaching Balaalo as a political slogan or a community grievance story, AFLI treated it as a multi-dimensional governance system failure requiring:

- legal interpretation;
- security and migration analysis;
- stakeholder mapping;
- institutional mandate clarification;
- and costed implementation pathways.

AFLI's approach applied its policy-cycle discipline: Concept Note, Activity Plan, Logical Framework, Results-Based Budget Matrix, Work Plan, and structured Outputs (1–3). This ensured that the Balaalo intervention was not reactive but institutionalized.

7.3 Output 1: Legal and Policy Baseline for Governance Action

The first output established the normative foundation for the entire assignment. It clarified:

- the legal distinction between livestock owners, herdsmen, and unlawful occupants;
- the lawful requirements for land acquisition, leasing, and compensation;
- the legality of fencing, grazing, charcoal production, and water use;
- the institutional mandates of relevant ministries and agencies;
- the enforcement responsibilities of local government, police, and security forces.

This legal baseline was essential because one of the core weaknesses in the Balaalo discourse was conceptual confusion. Many debates conflated:

- lawful commercial livestock investment;
- indigenous pastoral mobility;

- criminal cattle rustling;
- and unlawful land occupation.

By restoring legal clarity, AFLI's Output 1 enabled the Executive Order to be interpreted and implemented as a governance instrument rather than as a political threat.

7.4 Output 2: Security, Migration and Transhumance Dynamics

The second output examined the security and mobility dimensions of the Balaalo phenomenon.

It analyzed:

- patterns of cattle movement and settlement;
- transhumance typologies and corridor dynamics;
- armed cattle rustling patterns and spillover effects;
- the circulation of illegal firearms;
- cross-border incursions and security pressures;
- rural policing gaps and weak intelligence systems.

A key contribution of this output was disaggregation. AFLI clarified that not all cattle movement is Balaalo, and not all Balaalo are criminal actors. Some movements are legitimate commercial investment. Others are survival-driven transhumance. Others are criminal and armed. This disaggregation was crucial for designing targeted enforcement rather than blanket action that could trigger conflict. Output 2 therefore provided the operational intelligence required to implement Executive Order No. 3 in a way that strengthens security without escalating grievances.

7.5 Output 3: Stakeholder Perspectives and Conflict Drivers

The third output addressed the political economy and legitimacy dimension.

It documented:

- host community grievances regarding land, crops, and water access;
- perceptions of injustice and unequal enforcement;

- investor perspectives and claims of lawful land acquisition;
- the behavioral risks associated with herdsmen and security actors;
- the weaknesses of customary land governance structures;
- historical grievances including war-related compensation deficits.

This output reframed the Balaalo conflict as a systems failure rather than an ethnic conflict. By documenting both sides of the dispute, AFLI provided the foundation for conflict-sensitive governance reform. It emphasized that enforcement without legitimacy would not resolve the issue, and that community grievances must be addressed through lawful and transparent mechanisms.

7.6 Results-Based Budgeting and Implementation Discipline

AFLI ensured that the Balaalo policy work was not confined to analysis. The intervention was supported by:

- a Results-Based Budget Matrix (RBBM);
- a structured work plan;
- and costed implementation sequencing.

The Results-Based Budget Matrix provided an estimated analytical and governance response cost of approximately **UGX 1.49 billion**, structured across multiple outputs and deliverables. The work plan (August–October 2023) demonstrated disciplined sequencing and ensured that outputs were delivered within a defined timeframe. This approach strengthened accountability and ensured that the policy work could translate into implementable action.

7.7 Strategic Outcomes and Policy Contribution

The Balaalo policy work produced several strategic contributions to Uganda’s governance system:

- 1. Legal Discipline and Clarity**
It clarified what is lawful and unlawful, enabling consistent enforcement.
- 2. Security Precision**
It provided intelligence-based disaggregation of mobility dynamics.

3. Conflict Sensitivity

It integrated community grievances and investor perspectives into governance design.

4. Institutional Coordination

It mapped mandates and coordination gaps across agencies.

5. Implementation Readiness

It produced costed pathways and structured sequencing.

Most importantly, it reframed Balaalo from a political controversy into a governance reform agenda.

7.8 Contribution to AFLI's 2023 Institutional Identity

The Balaalo intervention strengthened AFLI's identity as a trusted technical actor capable of operating in high-stakes governance terrain. It demonstrated AFLI's ability to:

- navigate politically polarized issues;
- maintain legal and analytical rigor;
- integrate security, justice, and development perspectives;
- and deliver structured outputs that can guide state action.

This work also reinforced AFLI's broader doctrine: peace and development cannot be achieved without governance discipline, rule of law, and legitimacy.

7.9 Conclusion

The 2023 Balaalo policy work under Executive Order No. 3 stands as one of AFLI's most significant governance reform interventions. By producing a structured evidence base, restoring legal clarity, analyzing security and migration dynamics, and documenting stakeholder perspectives, AFLI contributed to a national policy response capable of balancing enforcement, justice, and conflict sensitivity. This work strengthened Uganda's capacity to manage one of its most complex land, security, and governance challenges, and reaffirmed AFLI's institutional role as a bridge between political directives and implementable governance solutions for Northern and North-Eastern Uganda.

8. Land Acquisition in Post-Conflict Settings: “Yako Ngom” (Atiak, Amuru)

In 2023, AFLI undertook a landmark governance and justice intervention addressing land acquisition disputes in post-conflict Northern Uganda, focusing on Gem Farm Village in Atiak Subcounty, Amuru District. The assignment, framed under the concept of **“Yako Ngom”**, examined the intersection of large-scale agricultural investment, customary land rights, post-war returnee vulnerability, and state enforcement mechanisms.

This intervention represented a critical expansion of AFLI’s peace and governance mandate into the domain of land justice, restitution, and conflict-sensitive investment policy.

8.1 Strategic Context: Land, Returnees, and Post-War Fragility

Northern Uganda’s land governance landscape remains deeply shaped by the legacy of the LRA insurgency and prolonged displacement. Following mass returns from Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, land reoccupation processes were often informal, undocumented, and reliant on customary recognition.

As commercial agriculture and large-scale investment expanded in districts such as Amuru, tensions emerged between:

- customary landholding systems and formal titling processes;
- investor interests and community claims;
- state enforcement actions and perceived community vulnerability;
- and post-conflict trauma and contemporary land negotiations.

In the Atiak case, allegations of violent land dispossession, boundary encroachment, intimidation, property destruction, and inadequate compensation triggered heightened tensions around the Atiak Sugar Factory land. Given the fragility of post-war recovery, such disputes posed risks not only to livelihoods but also to regional stability and investor confidence.

8.2 Conceptual Framing: “Yako Ngom” vs “Mayo Ngom”

AFLI introduced a conceptual distinction to frame the investigation:

- **“Mayo Ngom”** refers to land acquisition through deception or manipulation.

- **“Yako Ngom”** refers to forceful and coercive land seizure characterised by intimidation, destruction, or violent eviction.

This distinction was more than semantic. It enabled clearer legal classification, differentiated types of grievance, and structured policy response options.

By articulating these concepts within a policy framework, AFLI provided both Government and communities with language to interpret land conflicts beyond emotive narratives.

8.3 Methodology: Evidence-Based, Conflict-Sensitive Inquiry

The assignment followed AFLI’s structured policy-cycle methodology, including:

- Concept Note development;
- Activity Plan sequencing;
- Stakeholder mapping and mobilization;
- Group interviews and testimony collection;
- Legal and customary land framework analysis;
- Structured documentation and validation;
- Final report production.

Field engagement (September 2023) included interviews with affected households, local leaders, customary authorities, and other stakeholders. Particular attention was given to vulnerable groups, including widows, returnees, and households with incomplete documentation of land occupation. This disciplined methodology ensured that findings were grounded in verifiable evidence rather than anecdote.

8.4 Core Findings: Patterns of Dispossession and Governance Gaps

The report documented multiple categories of affected households:

1. Families fully displaced from land they believed to be customarily theirs.
2. Households partially encircled by expanded boundaries.
3. Individuals promised compensation but awaiting payment.

4. Residents unaware that their land had been leased or titled.

Allegations included:

- placement of boundary markers without full consultation;
- expansion of land demarcations beyond initially understood boundaries;
- destruction of crops and homes;
- arrests and detention of protesting community members;
- inadequate consultation during acquisition processes.

These findings revealed systemic weaknesses in:

- consultation procedures;
- compensation frameworks;
- documentation of customary land rights;
- grievance redress mechanisms;
- and enforcement oversight.

8.5 Human Rights, Trauma, and Stability Risks

The report underscored the psychological and social impact of forced displacement in a region still healing from war. Many affected families had previously experienced displacement during the LRA conflict and perceived renewed land loss as a continuation of historical injustice.

The consequences extended beyond property loss:

- trauma and anxiety among returnees;
- erosion of trust in state institutions;
- increased hostility toward investors;
- risk of sabotage or retaliatory violence.

The report highlighted repeated burning of sugarcane fields as a symptom of unresolved grievance—demonstrating how justice deficits can undermine economic productivity. By

framing land governance as a peacebuilding issue, AFLI emphasized that unresolved land disputes threaten both social cohesion and investment sustainability.

8.6 Recommendations: Toward Restitution and Governance Reform

The report proposed a structured pathway toward stabilization and justice:

1. Convene a validation meeting with affected households to verify land size and property loss.
2. Compensate affected persons at current market rates once verification is complete.
3. Provide psychosocial support services to trauma-affected individuals.
4. Pay damages for wrongful detention and livelihood loss where established.
5. Establish a land fund or negotiated settlement mechanism to prevent protracted conflict.
6. Strengthen consultation and documentation processes for future acquisitions.

These recommendations balanced investor interests with community rights, emphasizing lawful and transparent mechanisms.

8.7 Strategic Outcomes and Institutional Contribution

The “Yako Ngom” intervention produced several significant outcomes:

- It elevated land acquisition disputes into structured governance analysis rather than political confrontation.
- It documented evidence in a format usable for executive and institutional decision-making.
- It reinforced the principle that post-conflict investment must be conflict-sensitive.
- It demonstrated the feasibility of integrating customary and statutory land frameworks.

Most importantly, it positioned justice and restitution as prerequisites for sustainable development.

8.8 Integration with AFLI’s Broader 2023 Portfolio

The Atiak land intervention complemented other 2023 pillars:

- The Balaalo governance reform work addressed land and migration governance at regional scale.
- The KRSDP positioned Karamoja’s transformation within national planning.
- Cross-border and security interventions addressed stability conditions.

Together, these initiatives formed a coherent doctrine: peace requires governance discipline, and development requires justice.

8.9 Contribution to AFLI’s Institutional Identity

Through the “Yako Ngom” intervention, AFLI reinforced its institutional identity as:

- a conflict-sensitive policy institute;
- a defender of lawful governance and procedural justice;
- a bridge between community testimony and executive-level decision-making;
- a stabilization actor in post-conflict environments.

The assignment demonstrated AFLI’s capacity to operate in politically sensitive environments while maintaining analytical rigor and institutional neutrality.

8.10 Conclusion

The 2023 “Yako Ngom” land acquisition report stands as a critical milestone in AFLI’s governance reform portfolio. It addressed a high-risk dispute in a fragile post-conflict district with discipline, evidence, and structured policy design.

By framing land governance as central to peace, stability, and investor confidence, AFLI contributed to a more just and sustainable approach to development in Northern Uganda.

This intervention affirmed that transformation in fragile regions must rest not only on production and security, but on legitimacy, restitution, and respect for community rights.

9. Indigenous Production Systems and Karamoja Agro-Industrialization: The Erre–Awui Model

In 2023, AFLI advanced one of the most transformative and intellectually significant pillars of its work: the consolidation of the Erre–Awui Production Systems Model as a culturally grounded framework for rural economic transformation and agro-industrialization in Karamoja.

This intervention was not simply a research exercise. It represented a strategic attempt to redefine the development discourse on Karamoja—shifting it away from crisis narratives and externally imposed models, toward an indigenous, institutionally coherent, and investment-ready transformation pathway.

By documenting and translating Karamoja’s indigenous production systems into a modern economic and planning framework, AFLI contributed to a new transformation doctrine that is both culturally legitimate and technically scalable.

9.1 Strategic Context: Why Indigenous Production Systems Matter

Karamoja has long been approached through a deficit lens: poverty, insecurity, food shortage, and humanitarian vulnerability. While these challenges are real, such framing has often produced development strategies that ignore Karamoja’s deep institutional intelligence and historical production systems.

In 2023, AFLI recognised that sustainable transformation in Karamoja requires more than infrastructure and security. It requires development models that:

- align with Karamoja’s cultural logic;
- build on existing production institutions;
- integrate customary governance structures;
- and provide practical pathways to commercialisation and agro-industrial value addition.

The Erre–Awui Model therefore emerged as a corrective response to decades of development failure rooted in imported assumptions.

9.2 Conceptual Foundation: Erre and Awui as Economic Institutions

AFLI's work established that **Erre** and **Awui** are not merely cultural practices—they are economic institutions.

Erre (Homestead Production System)

Erre refers to the structured production system anchored at the homestead. It includes:

- household-based crop production;
- small livestock management;
- food security systems;
- labor organization and household resilience;
- Settlement-based social order.

Erre represents the entry point for household stabilization, food security, and the development of production habits.

Awui (Rangeland and Cattle Camp System)

Awui refers to the rangeland-based livestock production system. It is governed through:

- kraal leadership structures;
- clan-based grazing governance;
- seasonal mobility and pasture management;
- water access rules and enforcement;
- livestock security and herding systems.

Awui is the backbone of Karamoja's pastoral economy and the foundation of commercial livestock potential.

AFLI's key contribution was to reinterpret both systems as structured economic and governance institutions rather than informal or “traditional” lifestyles.

9.3 Methodology and Work Process (August–November 2023)

The Erre–Awui assignment was implemented through a disciplined and sequenced policy-cycle methodology. It began with strategic framing and progressed through five structured outputs:

1. Impact-level strategic framing
2. Outcome-level framework development
3. Documentation of indigenous systems (Output 1)
4. Economic reinterpretation and policy translation (Output 2)
5. Transformation model design (Output 3)
6. Enterprise and cooperative models (Output 4)
7. Policy-aligned strategies and interventions (Output 5)

The work culminated in a final transformation report, supported by a concept note, work plan, log frame, and results-based budget. This methodology ensured that the work produced not only conceptual clarity but also implementable design architecture.

9.4 The Erre–Awui–Elain Transformation Pathway

A major innovation of AFLI’s 2023 work was the development of the **Erre–Awui–Elain transformation model**, which links indigenous systems to modern markets and value addition.

- **Erre** anchors settlement and household production.
- **Awui** anchors rangeland livestock production and pastoral governance.
- **Elain** represents the market and urban interface—value addition, trade hubs, processing, and industrial linkage.

This model is critical because it demonstrates that Karamoja’s transformation cannot occur through agriculture alone, nor through pastoralism alone. It must be a territorial system connecting:

- homestead production,

- livestock systems,
- cooperatives,
- markets,
- and agro-industrial value chains.

The model therefore provides a full pathway from subsistence to commercialisation.

9.5 Enterprise and Cooperative Models: Translating Systems into Investment Vehicles

AFLI's work in 2023 went beyond theory by producing practical enterprise and cooperative models designed for implementation.

These included:

- livestock cooperatives at sub-county level;
- aggregation and marketing systems for livestock and crops;
- savings and production cooperatives aligned to customary governance;
- block farm models anchored in parish and sub-county structures;
- value chain investment nodes linked to urban centres.

This was a critical shift. Many development frameworks remain descriptive. AFLI's Erre–Awui work produced implementable vehicles capable of attracting structured financing.

9.6 Policy Alignment: Linking Indigenous Systems to National Transformation Agendas

AFLI ensured that the Erre–Awui model was aligned with national planning and policy frameworks, including:

- Uganda Vision 2040
- National Development Plan III (NDP III)
- the Ten-Fold Growth Strategy
- the 4 ATMs framework
- Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) transformation logic

- Karamoja Regional Strategic Development Plan (KRSDP)

This alignment ensured that the Erre–Awui model could be adopted not as a cultural proposal, but as a national economic transformation framework.

9.7 Strategic Significance: A New Development Strategy for Karamoja

The Erre–Awui Model contributed a major strategic shift to Karamoja’s development discourse. It established that:

1. Karamoja’s indigenous systems contain institutional intelligence that must be applied and respected.
2. Sustainable transformation requires cultural legitimacy and governance coherence.
3. Production systems must be linked to markets and value addition.
4. Peace and security are necessary but insufficient; production and commercialisation must follow.
5. Development models must be designed as investable frameworks rather than welfare programs.

This development strategy is likely to influence future national policy approaches to Karamoja and other dry land regions.

9.8 Contribution to AFLI’s 2023 Institutional Identity

The Erre–Awui intervention strengthened AFLI’s identity as:

- an institution capable of indigenous knowledge translation;
- a transformation design platform, not merely a policy critique body;
- a bridge between cultural systems and national planning frameworks;
- a producer of investment-ready rural development models.

It also reinforced AFLI’s broader philosophy: sustainable peace requires production, and sustainable production requires legitimacy.

9.9 Conclusion

The 2023 Erre–Awui Production Systems work stands as one of AFLI’s most innovative and strategic contributions to Uganda’s transformation agenda. By researching and documenting indigenous systems, translating them into economic institutions, designing an Erre–Awui–Elain pathway, and proposing cooperative and enterprise models, AFLI produced a culturally grounded and policy-aligned framework for Karamoja agro-industrialization.

This work not only contributes to Karamoja’s transformation. It also offers a replicable model for how African indigenous production systems can be reframed as engines of modern economic development—anchored in legitimacy, governance discipline, and investment logic.

10. Institutional Development: KAPATU Statecraft and AFLI Integration

The year 2023 marked a historic turning point in AFLI's institutional journey through the formal consolidation of the **Karamoja Peace and Technology University (KAPATU)** and the structured integration of AFLI as its semi-autonomous Policy Institute.

This was not merely an organizational expansion. It was an exercise in institutional statecraft—designing a university from inception as an instrument of regional peace, governance reform, technological innovation, and socio-economic transformation.

In 2023, AFLI moved from being an external policy actor supporting regional transformation to becoming an embedded institutional anchor within a national public university project with strategic implications for Karamoja, Northern Uganda, and the wider Ateker region.

10.1 Strategic Context: Why a University as a Transformation Instrument

Karamoja's long-standing development challenges—chronic insecurity, environmental fragility, weak infrastructure, low human capital, and limited institutional presence—have historically been addressed through security operations and short-term development programming.

However, by 2023, it became clear that sustainable transformation required a permanent institutional architecture rooted in:

- knowledge production;
- professional training;
- technology adaptation;
- policy research;
- and regional diplomacy.

The conceptualization of KAPATU was therefore grounded in a strategic insight: peace and development in Karamoja require an indigenous, regionally anchored university capable of generating both human capital and governance intelligence.

KAPATU was designed not as a conventional academic institution, but as a transformation-oriented university integrating peace studies, technology, pastoral systems, environmental sustainability, and cross-border governance.

10.2 Institutional Milestones Achieved in 2023

The year 2023 saw decisive institutional breakthroughs in the formal establishment of KAPATU. Key milestones included:

- Consolidation of foundational research and strategic documentation;
- High-level political consultations across Executive and Parliamentary leadership;
- Formal launch of KAPATU in April 2023;
- Legal incorporation under URSB in May 2023;
- Signing of a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AFLI and KAPATU in May 2023;
- Structured engagement with the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE);
- Establishment of governance and institutional blueprint frameworks.

These milestones demonstrated a transition from conceptual advocacy to formal institutionalization. The 2023 process established KAPATU on a clear regulatory pathway, ensuring compliance with national higher education standards while preserving its transformation-oriented mandate.

10.3 The Institutional Blueprint: Governance Architecture and Design Logic

A defining achievement of 2023 was the development of the **Institutional Blueprint**, which articulated KAPATU's governance, financial, academic, and policy architecture. The Blueprint clarified:

- governance structures (council, management, committees);
- financial autonomy and ring-fencing mechanisms;
- results-based management and MEKS (Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Systems);

- internationalization strategy;
- research and innovation platforms;
- partnership and donor engagement modalities.

Importantly, the blueprint established a structural principle: transformation institutions must be built with governance discipline from inception. This avoided the common institutional failure of retrofitting governance systems after operational weaknesses emerge.

10.4 AFLI as the Official Semi-Autonomous Institute of KAPATU

One of the most strategic elements of the 2023 institutional development process was the formal integration of AFLI into KAPATU as its **official semi-autonomous Institute**. This integration was grounded in a shared transformation mandate. AFLI had already established:

- policy-cycle discipline;
- cross-border governance expertise;
- peace and security analytics;
- results-based budgeting systems;
- institutional credibility with executive and regional actors.

Embedding AFLI within KAPATU ensured that the University would not begin as a purely academic institution disconnected from real-world governance challenges or an ivory tower. The semi-autonomous status of AFLI within KAPATU serves several purposes:

1. **Institutional Continuity:** It preserves AFLI's technical capacity while embedding it within a permanent public institution.
2. **Policy Intelligence:** It ensures that KAPATU's programs are informed by real-time governance analysis.
3. **Financial Ring-Fencing:** It allows structured funding streams for research and policy engagement.
4. **Credibility and Donor Confidence:** It strengthens KAPATU's ability to attract partnerships grounded in accountability and results.

The integration therefore represents institutional consolidation rather than absorption.

10.5 KAPATU as a Regional Peace and Technology Platform

KAPATU's design in 2023 reflected a deliberate positioning as a regional peace and technology university. The institutional mandate includes:

- peacebuilding and conflict transformation studies;
- pastoral and dry land systems research;
- agro-industrial and technological innovation;
- cross-border diplomacy and regional cooperation;
- environmental sustainability;
- governance and public administration.

This positioning aligns KAPATU with the transformation doctrine articulated in the KRSDP, the Erre–Awui model, cross-border resource governance, and security stabilization frameworks. Thus, KAPATU is not an isolated educational project. It is a long-term anchor for the entire regional transformation agenda.

10.6 Institutional Statecraft: Linking Politics, Policy, and Planning

The 2023 institutional work on KAPATU exemplified AFLI's broader statecraft philosophy. Statecraft, in this context, refers to the disciplined construction of institutions capable of sustaining policy beyond political cycles.

Through:

- structured documentation;
- regulatory engagement;
- governance blueprinting;
- formal MoUs;
- compliance planning;
- results-based budgeting;
- and alignment with national development frameworks,

AFLI ensured that KAPATU was established on durable institutional foundations rather than charismatic leadership alone. This approach increases the probability that KAPATU will mature into a stable public university capable of shaping Uganda's northern transformation for decades.

10.7 Strategic Outcomes and Institutional Impact

The institutional development work in 2023 produced several strategic outcomes:

1. Formal legal incorporation and launch of KAPATU.
2. Regulatory engagement and structured pathway toward NCHE approval.
3. Development of a comprehensive institutional blueprint.
4. Formalized AFLI–KAPATU integration framework.
5. National political recognition of KAPATU's strategic importance.

These achievements repositioned Karamoja within Uganda's higher education and governance architecture.

10.8 Contribution to AFLI's Institutional Evolution

For AFLI, 2023 marked an evolution from:

- independent Policy Institute →
- embedded transformation architecture within a university framework.

This transition enhances sustainability, institutional memory, and long-term impact. It also reflects AFLI's maturation from project-driven outputs to institutional legacy-building.

10.9 Conclusion

The 2023 institutional development of KAPATU and the formal integration of AFLI as its semi-autonomous Institute stand among the most consequential achievements of the year. Through disciplined statecraft, governance blueprinting, and regulatory engagement, AFLI contributed to the creation of a university designed not merely to confer degrees, but to anchor peace, governance reform, technological innovation, and agro-industrial transformation in Karamoja and Northern Uganda. In doing so, AFLI strengthened the long-

term institutional foundation for sustainable regional transformation and ensured that knowledge, policy, and practice are structurally integrated within Uganda's development architecture.

11. Financial and Governance Discipline (2023)

In 2023, AFLI strengthened its institutional credibility not only through the quality of its policy outputs, but through disciplined governance and financial accountability practices. This discipline was essential to AFLI's ability to operate in high-stakes environments—supporting executive-level assignments, engaging in cross-border diplomacy, producing government-grade reports, and embedding itself within the emerging institutional architecture of KAPATU. AFLI's financial and governance discipline in 2023 was therefore not treated as an administrative routine, but as a strategic pillar of institutional legitimacy.

11.1 Governance Discipline as an Institutional Strategy

AFLI's governance discipline in 2023 was anchored in the recognition that fragile-region transformation work requires a high level of integrity, professionalism, and procedural clarity. Because AFLI engages with politically sensitive issues—security stabilization, land disputes, cross-border agreements, and institutional statecraft—its credibility depends on consistent internal governance systems. In 2023, AFLI reinforced governance discipline through:

- clear role separation between technical work and oversight functions;
- formal planning and approval processes for all major interventions;
- documentation of program decisions and outputs;
- institutional alignment with national policy and legal frameworks;
- structured coordination mechanisms with government and strategic partners.

This governance posture enabled AFLI to operate as a trusted technical actor in contexts where institutional credibility is often fragile.

11.2 Results-Based Management as the Core Accountability Framework

A defining feature of AFLI's institutional discipline in 2023 was its consistent application of results-based management (RBM). Across all major interventions, AFLI maintained a standard chain of:

- Concept Note
- Activity Plan

- Logical Framework
- Results-Based Budget Matrix (RBBM)
- Work Plan
- Final Report

This was not merely a documentation style. It served as AFLI's internal governance system. By ensuring that each assignment was structured through this chain, AFLI strengthened:

- planning discipline;
- output accountability;
- budget transparency;
- timeline management;
- and monitoring readiness.

This RBM discipline also improved the confidence of government and strategic partners, as outputs were consistently presented in formats aligned with public sector planning standards.

11.3 Financial Discipline: Costing, Rationalization and Budget Integrity

AFLI's financial discipline in 2023 was demonstrated through its consistent use of results-based budgeting. Rather than treating budgets as administrative attachments, AFLI produced structured RBBMs that linked expenditure to outputs and deliverables. This approach was reflected in multiple assignments across the year, including:

- KRSDP Synthesis Report
- Joint Security Mission (Kenya–Uganda)
- Sticky Issues Diagnostic
- Balaalo Governance Reform work
- Yako Ngom Land Acquisition Report
- Erre–Awui Production Systems work
- KAPATU institutional blueprinting

Each intervention included costed planning frameworks designed to enable:

- transparency of resource use;
- justification of costs by output;
- accountability for deliverables;
- and planning predictability.

AFLI's budgets also reflected rationalization discipline, prioritising technical work, stakeholder engagement, logistics, and documentation in proportion to the complexity of assignments.

11.4 Procurement and Operational Controls

Given the nature of AFLI's work—often involving travel, stakeholder convening, and high-level engagements—2023 required strengthened operational controls. AFLI reinforced internal procedures to ensure:

- planned procurement rather than ad hoc expenditure;
- transparent vendor selection and service procurement;
- clear approvals for travel, accommodation, and logistics;
- accountability for meeting-related expenditures;
- verification of deliverables before payment.

This operational discipline supported the credibility of AFLI's engagements with government and development partners.

11.5 Governance Discipline in Institutional Statecraft: KAPATU Integration

AFLI's governance discipline in 2023 was further demonstrated through its role in institutional statecraft for KAPATU. Building a university requires not only vision but legal and governance compliance. AFLI supported KAPATU's institutional readiness through:

- governance blueprinting and role definition;
- formal MoU drafting and institutional agreements;

- incorporation processes and compliance documentation;
- alignment with NCHE regulatory expectations;
- financial and accountability structures within the institutional blueprint.

This work reinforced AFLI's identity as an institution capable of disciplined governance at national institutional scale.

11.6 Partnership Accountability and Donor Confidence

AFLI's financial and governance discipline strengthened partner confidence in 2023. Because AFLI's work intersects with DFIs, government agencies, and strategic institutions, partners require assurance that:

- resources are used transparently;
- outputs are delivered on time;
- and institutional integrity is protected.

AFLI's consistent results-based planning chain served as a trust mechanism. It enabled partners to see:

- what resources were required;
- what outputs would be produced;
- how activities would be sequenced;
- and how results would be measured.

This discipline positioned AFLI as a credible platform for scaling partnerships in 2024 and beyond.

11.7 Internal Organizational Learning and Knowledge Discipline

AFLI also strengthened its knowledge discipline in 2023.

Across assignments, AFLI systematically documented:

- background analyses;
- stakeholder engagement processes;

- communiqués and meeting outcomes;
- policy recommendations;
- implementation pathways.

This documentation practice enhanced institutional memory and reduced the risk of repeated learning cycles. It also strengthened AFLI’s ability to build cumulative strategies across its portfolio—linking KRSDP, Balaalo, cross-border governance, Erre–Awui transformation, and KAPATU institutional development into a coherent strategic identity.

11.8 Risk Management and Institutional Integrity

Operating in politically sensitive environments requires careful risk management. In 2023, AFLI strengthened its internal posture to manage risks such as:

- reputational risk from politicized narratives;
- security risk during field missions and stakeholder engagements;
- operational risk from logistics-heavy assignments;
- conflict risk from community grievances;
- legal risk from land governance and rights-related interventions.

AFLI’s risk management discipline was embedded in:

- stakeholder mapping;
- structured consultation processes;
- documentation of evidence;
- conflict-sensitive framing of findings;
- and reliance on lawful governance principles.

11.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, AFLI’s financial and governance discipline in 2023 was not peripheral to its mission—it was foundational to its legitimacy and impact. Through results-based planning, structured budgeting, operational controls, institutional compliance, and knowledge discipline, AFLI strengthened its credibility as a Policy Institute capable of supporting:

- executive-level governance reform;
- cross-border security diplomacy;
- post-conflict justice interventions;
- indigenous transformation modelling;
- and institutional statecraft through KAPATU.

This discipline ensured that AFLI's work in 2023 was not only impactful in content, but also trusted in process—laying the institutional foundation for expanded engagement, partnerships, and scaling in the years ahead.

12. 2023 Impact Highlights

The year 2023 represented a defining chapter in AFLI's institutional evolution and regional influence. Across Karamoja, Northern Uganda, and the wider Ateker region, AFLI advanced a portfolio of interventions that strengthened peace architecture, improved governance discipline, and repositioned regional transformation from crisis response to structured development strategy.

AFLI's impact in 2023 was not measured solely through activities undertaken, but through the strategic value of outcomes delivered: policy clarity restored, bilateral diplomacy institutionalized, transformation models designed, governance risks diagnosed, and institutional foundations built. The highlights below summarize the most significant impacts achieved during the year.

12.1 Institutionalized Bilateral Security Diplomacy between Uganda and Kenya

AFLI supported one of the most consequential bilateral security engagements of the year: the High-Level Joint Security Mission between the Republic of Uganda and the Republic of Kenya, convened in Moroto on 20 February 2023.

This intervention generated lasting impact by:

- elevating cross-border insecurity from a localized challenge to a structured intergovernmental governance priority;
- strengthening UPDF–KDF and police-to-police coordination;
- reaffirming commitment to operationalize the 2019 MoU;
- formalizing outcomes through a Joint Communiqué and structured reporting.

This impact established a replicable model for cross-border security governance in pastoral borderlands.

12.2 Strengthened Cross-Border Resource Governance through Preventive Diagnostics

AFLI produced the **Sticky Issues Diagnostic** to de-risk the Uganda–Kenya Cross-Border Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA). This work delivered impact by:

- identifying legal and institutional gaps likely to undermine RSA implementation;

- clarifying security vulnerabilities and disarmament risks;
- strengthening community legitimacy through recognition of customary institutions;
- integrating environmental sustainability safeguards.

The diagnostic enhanced negotiation readiness and reduced the risk of agreements becoming triggers of renewed conflict.

12.3 Produced a Long-Term Transformation Strategy for Karamoja (KRSDP Synthesis Report)

AFLI supported the development of the **Karamoja Regional Strategic Development Plan (KRSDP) Synthesis Report**, culminating in the transmission of Draft Zero to the National Planning Authority in May 2023.

This intervention repositioned Karamoja within national planning through:

- a unified transformation narrative;
- an integrated sector strategy;
- a sequenced strategy linking peace, water, production, markets, and agro-industrialization;
- a corrective lessons-learned framework to prevent repetition of historical failures.

The KRSDP Synthesis Report created a foundation for coordinated Government and partner investment in Karamoja.

12.4 Restored Policy and Governance Clarity on Balaalo under Executive Order No. 3 of 2023

AFLI delivered structured governance reform work on the Balaalo phenomenon—one of Uganda’s most politically charged issues of the year.

Impact was achieved through:

- restoring legal clarity and definitional discipline;
- disaggregating lawful livestock investment from unlawful land occupation and criminal activity;

- providing security and transhumance intelligence for targeted enforcement;
- documenting stakeholder grievances and legitimacy risks.

This work enabled Executive Order No. 3 to be approached as a governance reform instrument rather than a polarized political directive.

12.5 Advanced Post-Conflict Land Justice through the “Yako Ngom” Investigation

AFLI produced a major governance and justice report on land acquisition disputes in Atiak, Amuru District—framed under the concept of “Yako Ngom”.

This intervention achieved impact by:

- documenting evidence of dispossession and governance failure in a post-conflict setting;
- reframing land disputes as peace and stability risks;
- proposing restitution, compensation, and grievance redress mechanisms;
- strengthening the principle that investment sustainability requires justice.

The work contributed to stabilizing a high-risk dispute environment and reinforced rights-based development standards.

12.6 Produced an Indigenous, Investment-Ready Model for Karamoja Agro-Industrialization (Erre–Awui)

AFLI’s Erre–Awui work represented a transformative intellectual and policy contribution.

Impact highlights include:

- documentation of indigenous production systems as economic institutions;
- development of the Erre–Awui–Elain transformation model linking households, rangelands, and markets;
- translation of cultural systems into national planning language;
- proposal of practical enterprise and cooperative models.

This work reframed Karamoja pastoralism as an investable transformation frontier.

12.7 Anchored Institutional Statecraft through the Formal Establishment of KAPATU

AFLI played a strategic role in the institutional development of the Karamoja Peace and Technology University (KAPATU). Key impact milestones included:

- KAPATU launch in April 2023;
- legal incorporation under URSB in May 2023;
- signing of the AFLI–KAPATU MoU in May 2023;
- development of the institutional blueprint;
- formal positioning of AFLI as KAPATU’s semi-autonomous policy institute.

This institutional impact created a long-term architecture for peace, governance, and transformation in Karamoja.

12.8 Consolidated a Replicable Policy-Cycle Methodology for Fragile Regions

AFLI’s impact in 2023 was also institutional and methodological.

Across the portfolio, AFLI demonstrated a disciplined policy-cycle approach that consistently produced:

- Concept Notes
- Activity Plans
- Logical Frameworks
- Results-Based Budgets
- Work Plans
- Final Reports

This methodology strengthened government and partner confidence in AFLI as a credible platform for designing and delivering policy-ready interventions.

12.9 Strengthened AFLI’s Strategic Identity as a Regional Governance Actor

The cumulative impact of AFLI’s work in 2023 was the consolidation of AFLI as:

- a state-facing Policy Institute;

- a regional peace architecture designer;
- a cross-border governance platform;
- a transformation strategy builder;
- and a trusted actor in post-conflict justice and land governance.

AFLI's credibility expanded beyond Karamoja to Northern Uganda and the wider Ateker region, positioning it as an institution capable of shaping regional transformation narratives at national and cross-border levels.

Conclusion

In 2023, AFLI's impact was defined by strategic depth rather than volume. Through bilateral security diplomacy, cross-border resource governance diagnostics, long-term transformation doctrine, Balaalo governance reform, post-conflict land justice, indigenous production systems modelling, and KAPATU institutional statecraft, AFLI advanced a coherent transformation agenda grounded in peace, governance discipline, and development realism. Collectively, these achievements laid the foundation for expanded institutional scale and strategic engagement in 2024 and beyond—strengthening AFLI's role as a cornerstone of peace, governance, and development transformation in Karamoja, Northern Uganda, and the Ateker region.

13. Strategic Outlook (2024–2026)

The year 2023 marked consolidation. The period 2024–2026 will mark scale. Building on the institutional, policy, and governance foundations established in 2023, AFLI enters the next three-year phase with a clear strategic ambition: to deepen institutional statecraft, scale transformation models, strengthen cross-border peace architecture, and embed results-based governance within the development trajectory of Karamoja, Northern Uganda, and the wider Ateker region. The Strategic Outlook for 2024–2026 is therefore not a shift in direction. It is an expansion in scope, depth, and institutional maturity.

13.1 From Policy Intervention to Structured Program Architecture

Between 2024 and 2026, AFLI will transition from delivering discrete policy interventions toward consolidating integrated program architectures.

This means:

- aligning cross-border diplomacy, pastoral transformation, land governance reform, and university statecraft under a coherent multi-year transformation framework;
- strengthening coordination between government agencies, local governments, customary institutions, and regional counterparts;
- institutionalizing monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge systems (MEKS) across programs;
- building implementation roadmaps linked to measurable milestones.

The objective is to reduce fragmentation and ensure that policy design translates into sustained execution.

13.2 Deepening Cross-Border Peace and Resource Governance

The Ateker region remains structurally vulnerable to insecurity rooted in mobility, water stress, arms proliferation, and weak institutional coordination.

Over 2024–2026, AFLI will prioritize:

- full operationalization of the Uganda–Kenya Cross-Border Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA);

- harmonized disarmament and security coordination mechanisms;
- structured entry/exit protocols for transhumant pastoralists;
- institutionalization of Joint Technical Committees;
- environmental sustainability safeguards for shared grazing ecosystems;
- community-level dissemination and ownership of cross-border agreements.

The long-term goal is to move from event-based diplomacy to institutionalized peace architecture across the Uganda–Kenya borderlands.

13.3 Scaling the Erre–Awui Transformation Model

The Erre–Awui Production Systems work in 2023 laid the conceptual foundation for indigenous agro-industrial transformation. Between 2024 and 2026, AFLI will focus on scaling this model into practical implementation pathways through:

- pilot cooperative models at parish and sub-county level;
- aggregation and livestock marketing systems;
- block farm models anchored in settlement stabilization;
- water and pasture governance frameworks aligned to Awui systems;
- integration of value addition and agro-processing nodes (Elain interface);
- mobilization of public and private investment.

This scaling effort will be aligned with national planning instruments, including Vision 2040 and successive National Development Plans, ensuring that Karamoja’s transformation becomes embedded in mainstream development financing.

13.4 Institutionalizing Governance Reform in Land and Migration

The Balaalo policy work and Yako Ngom land justice intervention demonstrated that unresolved land governance issues threaten both peace and investment stability. In the 2024–2026 period, AFLI will:

- support structured implementation of Executive Order No. 3 where relevant;
- strengthen land acquisition safeguards in post-conflict settings;

- develop model consultation and compensation frameworks;
- support customary–statutory land governance harmonization;
- integrate conflict-sensitive land administration training into institutional systems.

The objective is to institutionalize preventive governance in land administration, reducing the likelihood of recurrent land-related instability.

13.5 Consolidating KAPATU as a Transformation University

The establishment of KAPATU in 2023 provides a generational opportunity to anchor peace and development through higher education. Between 2024 and 2026, AFLI will prioritize:

- supporting KAPATU’s transition through regulatory milestones toward full accreditation;
- operationalizing AFLI’s semi-autonomous role within the University;
- embedding MEKS and results-based governance systems;
- establishing research clusters focused on pastoral systems, dry land technology, cross-border governance, and peacebuilding;
- building international partnerships with universities and development institutions;
- developing executive training programs for public servants and local leaders.

The long-term ambition is to position KAPATU as a regional center of excellence for dry land transformation, peace architecture, and technology-driven development.

13.6 Strengthening Financial Sustainability and Institutional Scale

To support expanded programming, AFLI will prioritize financial sustainability through:

- structured engagement with Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), Sovereign Wealth Funds, and impact investors;
- program-based fundraising aligned to transformation pillars;
- partnership frameworks with public and private sector actors;
- institutional cost rationalization and financial discipline;

- strengthening grant management and compliance systems.

Institutional scale will be pursued without compromising governance discipline.

13.7 Embedding Monitoring, Evaluation, and Knowledge Systems (MEKS)

AFLI's future scale requires enhanced institutional learning capacity.

Over the next three years, AFLI will:

- formalize impact tracking across interventions;
- develop transformation indicators for peace, governance, and production;
- publish policy briefs and knowledge products;
- institutionalize annual performance reviews;
- integrate data systems within KAPATU's research platforms.

This will ensure that AFLI's doctrine evolves based on evidence rather than assumption.

13.8 Expanding Regional Diplomacy within the Ateker Framework

The Ateker region extends beyond Uganda and Kenya to encompass shared cultural and ecological systems across multiple states.

Between 2024 and 2026, AFLI will explore structured dialogue platforms that:

- strengthen cultural diplomacy;
- integrate pastoral governance into regional integration frameworks;
- support knowledge exchange between border communities;
- position Ateker cooperation as a model for regional peacebuilding.

This approach recognizes that long-term stability in Karamoja depends on regional coherence.

13.9 Institutional Maturity and Risk Management

As AFLI scales, institutional maturity will remain a central priority.

Over the next three years, AFLI will:

- strengthen internal governance controls;
- maintain results-based planning discipline;
- enhance conflict sensitivity protocols;
- invest in staff development and leadership succession planning;
- safeguard institutional neutrality and analytical rigor in politically sensitive assignments.

Institutional resilience will be treated as equally important as program expansion.

Conclusion

The Strategic Outlook for 2024–2026 reflects AFLI’s transition from consolidation to expansion. Building on the achievements of 2023-cross-border diplomacy, governance reform, transformation modelling, land justice interventions, and KAPATU institutional statecraft-AFLI will deepen its role as a regional transformation platform grounded in peace, governance discipline, and development realism.

The coming three years will focus on scaling impact, institutionalizing doctrine, strengthening partnerships, and embedding transformation systems capable of sustaining progress beyond political cycles. Through disciplined statecraft and culturally grounded development frameworks, AFLI is positioned to shape the next phase of peace, governance, and economic transformation in Karamoja, Northern Uganda, and the Ateker region.

14.0 Conclusion

The year 2023 stands as a defining milestone in the institutional evolution and strategic impact of the Africa Leadership Institute (AFLI). It was a year in which AFLI consolidated its identity not merely as a policy support organization, but as a transformation institution operating at the interface of state authority, community legitimacy, and evidence-based development planning.

Across Karamoja, Northern Uganda, and the wider Ateker region, AFLI demonstrated that sustainable peace and development are not achieved through isolated projects or episodic dialogue. They are achieved through disciplined governance, structured policy design, and institutional architectures capable of sustaining transformation beyond political cycles.

14.1 2023 as a Year of Institutional Consolidation

In 2023, AFLI's work matured into a coherent portfolio anchored in five strategic domains including:

- high-level peace and security diplomacy;
- cross-border resource governance and preventive diagnostics;
- long-term transformation doctrine for Karamoja;
- governance reform in land, migration, and post-conflict justice;
- institutional statecraft through the formal establishment of KAPATU.

These domains were not pursued as separate tracks. They were integrated into a unified transformation doctrine that recognizes a central truth: peace, governance, and development are inseparable in fragile and frontier regions.

14.2 Transforming Crisis Narratives into Development Doctrine

A major contribution of AFLI in 2023 was the strategic repositioning of Karamoja and Northern Uganda. Instead of treating these regions as permanent sites of humanitarian vulnerability, AFLI advanced frameworks that:

- reframe insecurity as a governance problem requiring institutional coordination;
- reposition pastoral systems as economic institutions;

- translate indigenous production logic into national planning language;
- and elevate post-conflict justice as a prerequisite for investment sustainability.

Through the KRSDP synthesis, the Erre–Awui transformation model, and governance reform assignments, AFLI helped establish a development doctrine grounded in production, markets, and institutional legitimacy.

14.3 Institutionalizing Peace Architecture across Borders

AFLI’s cross-border work in 2023-through the Joint Security Mission and the Sticky Issues Diagnostic-strengthened regional peace architecture in one of East Africa’s most fragile corridors. By supporting bilateral security diplomacy, operationalization of the 2019 MoU, and risk mapping for resource sharing agreements, AFLI helped lay foundations for a future in which cross-border mobility becomes governed cooperation rather than recurring conflict. This work reinforced the principle that regional peace requires institutionalized diplomacy, not ad hoc crisis response.

14.4 Restoring Governance Discipline in Politically Sensitive Issues

AFLI’s work on Balaalo governance reform and the Yako Ngom land acquisition investigation demonstrated its capacity to operate in high-stakes policy terrain.

In both cases, AFLI’s contribution was not political but institutional.

AFLI restored:

- legal clarity;
- evidence-based analysis;
- conflict-sensitive framing;
- structured recommendations; and
- implementation-ready pathways.

These interventions reinforced a national governance principle: sustainable development cannot be achieved where justice, land rights, and lawful administrative procedures are compromised.

14.5 Building Institutional Legacy through KAPATU

Perhaps the most generational achievement of 2023 was the consolidation of KAPATU and the formal integration of AFLI as its semi-autonomous policy institute. This institutional statecraft ensured that Karamoja's transformation agenda is anchored not only in programs, but in permanent institutions capable of producing knowledge, human capital, and governance intelligence. KAPATU represents the long-term architecture through which peace and development will be sustained in Karamoja and the Ateker region.

14.6 Looking Forward: 2024–2026 as a Period of Scale

As AFLI enters the next phase, the strategic imperative is scale.

The foundations built in 2023 position AFLI to:

- deepen cross-border peace and resource governance;
- scale indigenous transformation models into investable programs;
- strengthen land and migration governance reforms;
- operationalize KAPATU as a transformation university;
- expand partnerships with DFIs, climate funds, and institutional investors.

This future direction will require sustained governance discipline, results-based management, and institutional integrity.

Final Reflection

In conclusion, 2023 was a year in which AFLI demonstrated that transformation in fragile regions is possible when policy is treated as statecraft-disciplined, structured, evidence-based, and anchored in legitimacy. Through its work across peace diplomacy, governance reform, transformation doctrine, and institutional development, AFLI strengthened the architecture of peace and development in Karamoja, Northern Uganda, and the wider Ateker region. The achievements of 2023 therefore represent not an end point, but a foundation-upon which a more peaceful, governable, and economically productive future can be built.