



AFRICA/UGANDA - A mysterious disease continues to claim victims among the children in the north of the country

Kitgum (Agenzia Fides) - A mysterious form of epilepsy that affects children in particular, continues to spread in Uganda. So far 300 have been killed in the north of the country and in some areas of southern Sudan. The disease stunts the growth, destroys cognitive abilities and makes children unable to do even the simplest things, or recognize their own parents. According to the Ugandan authorities about 3,000 children in the country suffer from this disease. To try to understand a little more about this mysterious syndrome, the health authorities have organized an international conference to be attended by 120 scientists from different parts of the world. The objective of the researchers is to try to discover the cause of the disease, which primarily affects children between 5 and 15 years of age, to understand whether it is contagious and why it occurs only in some communities. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), at the request of the Ugandan government, have been studying the syndrome since 2009. The researchers are focusing on the relationship between the syndrome and the parasite that causes blindness. The inhabitants of the border areas of Uganda believe that the disease has its roots in violence and prevails in the areas most affected by the legacy left by the brutal war of Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army, which recruits boys and girls to kill or use them as sex slaves. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 30/07/2012)