



“HELP HAS NOT REACHED ME HERE”

DONORS MUST STEP UP SUPPORT FOR SOUTH SUDANESE
REFUGEES IN UGANDA



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Joyce is a 37 year old refugee from Kajo Keji in South Sudan. She arrived in Uganda on 9 December 2016 with nine children, five of whom are her own and four who are her husband's children by another wife. Her husband was killed in South Sudan, leaving her responsible for all the children. The oldest is 15 and the youngest is eleven months old.

Amnesty International researchers met Joyce at Palorinya settlement in Moyo district in Uganda, where she was sitting on the ground with her children. She described the brutal killing of her husband. He was stabbed to death in September 2016 by uniformed men whom she believes were government soldiers.

She said:

"After seeing the soldiers had reached home my husband wanted to run. They caught him. After arresting him they didn't even use a single bullet. They used knives and just stabbed him until he died... They took ropes and started tying my husband and took me inside. They tied his hands together behind his back. Even after they killed him, they kept stabbing his body with a bamboo stick...My husband also was a business man with a shop and a bar...I think the soldiers knew he sold a cow and maybe they wanted the money."

She described how the soldiers also beat her and looted their home.

"The soldiers beat me on the back and stepped on my stomach. One was holding me and brought me back to the compound and started kicking me. He told me he wants to get the money off my husband, if I don't get the money they are going to kill my husband. I managed to escape through the window. Some children were inside and not beaten. The one year old and 11 month old and the four year old child [were not beaten]," Joyce added.

Joyce saw another woman and man killed in the same incident and recounted how she saw the woman being killed.

"They used a panga (machete) from behind her neck. I saw her face fall forward... After the incident and before I left there was a woman who was raped and killed. They burned her with grass in her vagina."

Joyce is considered a 'Person with Special Needs' by the United Nations (UN) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in the humanitarian response because she is caring for a large number of children on her own. She is therefore entitled to additional support, including support to build a proper shelter. However, she has not received this support and currently lives in a makeshift structure. She also told Amnesty International that she and her children did not have enough food and that she was not getting the psychological support she needed for the horrors she and her children witnessed.

The reason Joyce – and tens of thousands of other refugees from South Sudan – have not received more support is because the government of Uganda, as well as the UN agencies and NGOs, face a massive shortfall in funding, despite international appeals for help.

Like Joyce, the majority of South Sudanese refugees interviewed by Amnesty International in Uganda, shared horrific accounts of torture, killings, rape, and other violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law carried out by South Sudan's government and opposition forces in the southern Equatoria region of the country. People carry on fleeing to neighbouring countries in the region at a rapid rate; thousands of people arrive in Uganda every day.

South Sudan's conflict continues unabated, with no indication that the fighting will end soon. Though a peace agreement was signed in August 2015, violence reignited in July 2016 and implementation of the agreement stalled. At the time of writing, there is no new political process for parties to the conflict to

negotiate a new ceasefire or resolution. The international community is looking to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional political bloc made up of eight member states, for leadership in addressing the conflict in South Sudan. Uganda, as an influential member of IGAD has an important role to play.

Uganda currently hosts over 900,000 refugees from South Sudan. The majority – over 64% - are children under the age of 18. Together with women, they make up 86% of the refugee population in Uganda.

Most refugees are in the West Nile region and are hosted in designated areas known as ‘settlements’. Within the settlement areas, refugees are provided with pieces of land which, in the West Nile region usually measures 30 square meters in size. These plots of land are provided by the government (through host communities who own the land) and are where refugees can build their shelters and a latrine. In accordance with Uganda’s refugee policy, refugees are also supposed to be provided with land of around 50 square meters in size, in order to farm and grow crops and to become self-sufficient within five years of arriving. However, due to the high numbers of South Sudanese refugees coming into Uganda, this has not been possible.

Uganda’s refugee hosting model is considered one of the most progressive in the world. Its legal and policy framework provides refugees with relative freedom of movement, access to basic services such as healthcare and education on par with nationals, and the right to work and own a business. Its policy on self-reliance aims to ensure that refugees are able to support themselves beyond receiving aid handouts. These policy commitments have been integrated into Uganda’s five year National Development Plan II for 2016-2020 through the Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA), which in turn is supported by the Refugee and Host Populations Empowerment Strategy (known as ReHOPE). Both initiatives are considered a core part of the UN-led Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) for Uganda.

Yet despite Uganda’s laudable efforts to host and support refugees, and despite the fact that refugees from South Sudan continue to arrive in large numbers, the international community has failed to support Uganda and its refugees. The UN appeal for South Sudanese refugees in Uganda was only 18% funded as of May 2017.

In line with international human rights and refugee law, States’ have obligations to provide support to each other to host refugees. This is known as the principle of responsibility sharing. It is a principle that has been undermined by repeated failures of the international community in recent years to support countries hosting large numbers of refugees. Uganda, and the refugees of South Sudan, have become the latest victims of a collective and shameful failure of international cooperation.

This briefing documents some of the impacts of the funding shortfall in Uganda. It includes testimonies from refugees about the abuses they witnessed and endured in the Equatoria region in South Sudan, which have left many deeply traumatised. The dismal response from the international community has put a severe strain on Uganda, the UN and non-governmental organizations’ ability to meet the needs of the refugees. Basic needs including access to adequate amounts of food, water and shelter, are not being met, let alone longer-term needs such as access to psychosocial support and mobility aids for persons with disabilities. This is having a detrimental impact on the lives of refugees in the settlements, and on Uganda’s ability to carry out its progressive policy.

In an effort to garner more support from donors, the government of Uganda and the UN are hosting the Uganda Solidarity Summit on Refugees on 22 and 23 June. The summit aims to mobilize international support to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of refugees, in addition to the longer-term needs of refugees and host communities. It also aims to provide significant funding for the STA and ReHOPE.

METHODOLOGY

This briefing is based on desk and field research in Uganda carried out by Amnesty International from February to May 2017. Researchers visited refugee settlements¹ in the northern districts of Adjumani, Moyo, Yumbe and Arua, in the West Nile region of Uganda from 6-15 March 2017 and interviewed over 80 refugees. Delegates also met with NGOs, UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) desk officers who work directly on the South Sudan refugee response. Some interviews were carried out directly in English with refugees who spoke English; in other instances, interviews were carried out using interpreters who spoke local languages including Juba Arabic, Kakwa and Kuku. Interviews were arranged through NGOs working in settlements, as well as community leaders in the settlements. The names of all refugees

¹ Settlements are designated pieces of land set aside by the government of Uganda where refugees live and can access services.

interviewed have been changed in order to protect their identities. Names of people who were killed in South Sudan have also been changed or omitted in order to protect the identities of their families and friends.

Amnesty International researchers had meetings in Kampala with NGOs and other civil society groups working on issues related to refugee rights in Uganda, in addition to meetings with those providing humanitarian assistance to refugees in northern Uganda. Some of the organizations that work with the refugee population in Uganda did not wish to have their names disclosed. They have therefore been described using generic terms such as “agency” or “non-governmental source”. Researchers also met with the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, and the World Food Programme (WFP). These meetings were carried out in person between 28 February and 4 March 2017; on 16 and 17 March 2017; and from 24-26 May 2017. Correspondence with the above actors was also carried out via email, Skype and telephone between 20 March and 26 May 2017.

Amnesty International researchers also met with Ugandan government officials from OPM who are responsible for refugee affairs. These included refugee affairs officers in Adjumani, Moyo, Yumbe and Arua districts between 6 and 15 March 2017. On 24 May 2017, Amnesty International met with the Commissioner for Refugees, David Apollo Kazungu, in Kampala to share findings and gather further information for the purposes of this briefing.

Information provided by individual refugees about systemic issues, such as food shortages, was cross checked with governmental and non-governmental sources working in Uganda. Researchers also reviewed the main body of existing quantitative and qualitative research on the situation faced by South Sudanese refugees in Uganda, as well the relevant national laws and policy documents including Uganda’s 2006 Refugee Act and 2010 Refugee Regulations, the Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA) and Refugee and Host Populations Empowerment Strategy (known as ReHOPE).

1. SOUTH SUDAN'S CONFLICT AND REASONS FOR FLEEING TO UGANDA

South Sudan's ongoing internal armed conflict broke out in mid-December 2013 in the capital Juba and rapidly spread across the country. Longstanding tensions within the country's ruling party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) – between President Salva Kiir and the former Vice President Riek Machar – led to a split in the country's national army, commonly referred to as the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The fighting rapidly took on an ethnic dimension where government forces engaged in targeted killings, primarily of Nuer men in Juba. Security forces across the country split—with some maintaining allegiance to the government and others defecting to support the armed opposition under Riek Machar, which came to be known as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO). By the end of 2013, the conflict had engulfed parts of Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states.² Both government and opposition forces have committed serious violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law with impunity - including targeted killings of civilians, abduction, rape and sexual violence, recruitment of children into their armed forces, obstruction of humanitarian assistance and the looting and destruction of civilian property.

In August 2015, after intense pressure from the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN), a peace deal was signed between Kiir and Machar. The agreement called for truth and reconciliation, the establishment of a hybrid court, and the establishment of a transitional government of national unity (TGONU).³ However, implementation of the deal was slow. It was not until April 2016 when Riek Machar arrived in Juba to take up the position of First Vice President that the Transitional Government of National Unity was formed. During those eight months between the signing of the peace agreement and the establishment of the TGONU, the conflict spread to other parts of the country, including the Equatoria region - the states along South Sudan's southern border (bordering Uganda, Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo).

In July 2016, a series of clashes between government and opposition forces in Juba led to a shootout at the presidential palace between the bodyguards of Kiir and Machar, signalling a new wave of conflict. Riek Machar and his forces fled southwards while being pursued by government forces and eventually fled the country into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).⁴ Thereafter, President Kiir replaced Riek Machar's

² Amnesty International, *Nowhere Safe: Civilians under Attack in South Sudan*, May 2014, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR65/003/2014/en/>; UNMISS, *Conflict in South Sudan: A Human Rights Report*, 8 May 2014, available at: https://unmiss.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unmiss_conflict_in_south_sudan_-_a_human_rights_report.pdf (accessed 1 May 2017).

³ IGAD, *Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan*, 17 August 2015, available at: https://unmiss.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/final_proposed_compromise_agreement_for_south_sudan_conflict.pdf (accessed 29 April 2017).

⁴ Small Arms Survey, *Spreading Fall Out*, 28 May 2017, available at: <http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/issue-briefs/HSBA-IB28-Spreading-Fallout.pdf> (accessed 5 June 2017).

with another SPLA-IO figure, Taban Deng Gai. The legitimacy of the TGONU and the peace agreement have been undermined in the process.⁵

While relative calm returned to Juba by the end of July 2016, fighting between the government opposition forces spread to the Equatoria region, as well as other parts of South Sudan including Western Bahr el Ghazal, Jonglei and Upper Nile. Despite the escalation of violence, as of June 2017, no new political process for parties to the conflict to negotiate a new ceasefire or resolution to the conflict had been initiated. Uganda is an influential member of IGAD, which facilitated the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (known as ARCSS) and the international community looks to it for leadership in addressing the conflict in South Sudan. IGAD has called for the ARCSS to be implemented, but without presenting a strategy to address the fracturing of one of the key parties to it and the resulting legitimacy gap of the current TGONU. IGAD has also called for elections to be held in South Sudan. However, in the current political climate, elections could risk further inflaming violence.⁶ Given the political stalemate, there is little hope that the conflict and its associated hostilities will end anytime soon.

The ongoing conflict⁷ has had a devastating impact on civilians, with warnings of ethnic cleansing in several parts of the country⁸ and even potential genocide.⁹ Further, there has been an emergence of various new armed groups, exacerbating an already fragile political and security situation. It has also resulted in Africa's biggest refugee crisis and the third largest such crisis in the world, following Syria and Afghanistan. Close to 1.6 million South Sudanese have fled to neighbouring countries.⁹

Uganda hosts the majority of South Sudan's refugees, with over 900,000 now living primarily in the West Nile region which borders Equatoria in South Sudan.¹⁰ In total, Uganda hosts over one million refugees and asylum seekers from the region.¹¹

Between December 2013 and July 2016, over 230,000 refugees from South Sudan arrived in Uganda. But the renewed violence in mid-2016 led to a rapid increase in the numbers of people fleeing South Sudan.¹² Thousands of refugees continue to cross the border into Uganda each day – in March 2017, the average number of new arrivals was 2,800 per day.¹³ As settlements hosting South Sudanese refugees reached capacity, Uganda rapidly opened up new ones, and continues to do so.¹⁴ These include several refugee settlements in Adjumani district including Nyumanzi and Pagrinya; Palorinya in Moyo; Bidi Bidi in Yumbe; and a number of settlements in Arua including Imvepi and Rhino camp,¹⁵ with the most recent settlements opening in Lamwo district.¹⁶

Refugees fleeing areas affected by fighting in the Equatoria region all described to Amnesty International grave violations carried out by both government soldiers and armed groups, including killings, looting, sexual violence and arbitrary detention of civilians.¹⁷ Some of the attacks were conducted with alarming brutality

⁵ See UN Panel of Experts on South Sudan Letter to the UN Security Council, 12 April 2017, para 13-14, available at: <http://www.undocs.org/S/2017/326> (accessed 5 June 2017).

⁶ Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), "Communique of the 30th Extra-Ordinary Summit of IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government on South Sudan," 25 March 2017. <https://igad.int/communique/1520-communique-of-the-30th-extra-ordinary-summit-of-igad-assembly-of-heads-of-state-and-government-on-south-sudan>

⁷ See Statement by Yasmin Sooka, Chair of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan at the 26th Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21028&LangID=E> accessed 10 February 2017

⁸ See Statement by Adama Dieng UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, accessed 26 May 2017

⁹ UNHCR, *Information Sharing Portal, South Sudan*, available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/regional.php> (accessed 29 April 2017).

¹⁰ This is followed by Sudan which hosts around 417,489 refugees, and Ethiopia which hosts over 377,055 refugees, the Democratic Republic of Congo which hosts 78,946 people and Kenya which hosts 98,103. For more information see: UNHCR, *South Sudan Situation: Regional Update, 1-15 May 2017*, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/57153.pdf> (accessed 2 June 2017).

¹¹ UNHCR, *Uganda, Refugees and asylum-seekers*, 1 February 2017, available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/53647> (accessed 9 June 2017).

¹² UNHCR, *South Sudan Situation, Regional Emergency Update #1*, 11-17 July 2016, available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/regional.php> (accessed 29 April 2017).

¹³ UNHCR, *'Breaking Point' imminent: Government of Uganda, UNHCR say help for South Sudan refugee inflow urgently needed. Joint statement on behalf of the Government of Uganda and UNHCR*, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/press/2017/3/58d3abab4/breaking-point-imminent-government-uganda-unhcr-say-help-south-sudan-refugee.html> (accessed 30 April 2017).

¹⁴ Settlements are areas allocated by the government of Uganda for refugees to live in – they are divided into 'villages' and each family unit are provided with a piece of land to live on.

¹⁵ For more information see: UNHCR, *South Sudan situation, information sharing portal, Uganda*, available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/country.php?id=229> (accessed 26 May 2017).

¹⁶ Daily Monitor, *Govt to open three refugee settlement camps in Lamwo*, 28 February 2017, available at: <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Govt-to-open-three-refugee-settlement-camps-in-Lamwo-/688334-3829984-fu0uoiz/index.html> (accessed 30 April 2017).

¹⁷ Amnesty International interviewed people from the following areas in the Equatorias: Yei, Lainya, Kajo Keji and Morobo. Interviews were carried out in settlements in Uganda between 5-15 March 2017.

and appeared to have an ethnic dimension. They said that many of the towns and villages in those areas are entirely deserted now.¹⁸

CONFLICT IN THE EQUATORIAS

“Worryingly an area of the country that was relatively unaffected by the conflict, like the Equatorias, have [sic] now become the epicentre of the conflict.”¹⁹

The Equatoria region which includes Central, Eastern and Western Equatoria was relatively peaceful and the breadbasket of South Sudan. It was largely unaffected by conflict until mid-2015, when security incidents between government forces in the Equatoria region aligned with the SPLA-IO or other militia occurred.²⁰ A lack of agreement by parties to the conflict on cantonment sites for the SPLA-IO in the Equatoria region and long standing disputes between Dinka cattle keepers supported by government forces and Equatorian farmers have all contributed to a fragile security context. Increased and widespread violence was reported in May and June 2016.²¹ In several counties in Western Equatoria, government forces carried out shooting, killings, burning of homes, and looting of shops.²²

After fighting erupted in South Sudan’s capital Juba, in Central Equatoria, in July 2016, there was an upsurge in violence in towns and villages including in and around Yei (in Central Equatoria/Yei River State).²³ This was primarily because the operations of government forces in pursuit of the SPLM/A-IO in Central and Western Equatoria were inadvertently carried out in civilian areas and also targeted civilians. The SPLA-IO also conducted attacks targeting government forces, government property and key routes.²⁴ Deadly attacks, sexual violence and looting by government and armed opposition forces led to tens of thousands of people fleeing to Uganda.²⁵

As a result of the fighting, food production in the Equatoria region has also been significantly affected. Forty percent of South Sudan’s population is estimated to be food insecure, and in February 2017 the UN declared famine in parts of South Sudan.²⁶ Food insecurity has even hit the Equatoria’s rich farmlands, because government and opposition forces have reportedly looted crops and insecurity has hindered new planting.²⁷ With the approach of the rainy season and scores of people displaced by insecurity from their homes, it is unlikely that any farming activities will take place the rest of this year.

¹⁸ UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 16 December 2016 to 1 March 2017)*, S/2017/224, available at: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_2017_224.pdf (accessed 29 April 2017).

¹⁹ UN OHCHR, *UN human rights experts says international community has an obligation to prevent ethnic cleansing in South Sudan*, 1 December 2016, available at:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20970&LangID=E#sthash.QCGITfql.dpuf> (accessed 30 April 2017).

²⁰ Tensions also increased in Lainya and Juba counties in Central Equatoria. For more information see: UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 20 August to 19 November 2015)*, S/2015/655, available at: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/902 (accessed 30 April 2017).

²¹ See South Sudan sanctions committee mid-term report, 15 November 2016, available at:

http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2016_963.pdf; Report of the

Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 6 March 2017, available at:

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session34/Documents/A_HRC_34_63_AEV%20-final.docx; Human Rights Watch, *South Sudan: New Abuse of Civilians by both sides*, 22 November 2016, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/11/22/south-sudan-new-abuse-civilians-both-sides> (all accessed 6 June 2017).

²² See: UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 14 April to 19 August 2015)*,

S/2015/655, available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/655; OCHA, *Humanitarian Bulletin, Bi-weekly update*, 15 July 2015, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-humanitarian-bulletin-biweekly-update-15-july-2015>;

Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 6 March 2017,

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session34/Documents/A_HRC_34_63_AEV%20-final.docx, (all accessed 6 June 2017).

²³ For more information see on incidents and abuses in Juba: Amnesty International, *South Sudan: “We Did Not Believe We Would Survive”: Killings, Rape and Lootings in Juba*, 24 October 2016, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/5028/2016/en/> ;

²⁴ UNMISS and OHCHR, *Human rights violations and abuses in Yei in July 2016-January 2017*, Para 26, available at:

https://unmiss.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/report_human_rights_violations_and_abuses_in_yei_july_2016_to_january_2017.pdf (accessed 25 May 2017).

²⁵ Attacks included killings of civilians with machetes and guns, in addition to abductions and forced recruitment by armed actors. For more information see: OCHA, *Humanitarian Bulletin, South Sudan*, 22 September 2016, available at:

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SS_160922_OCHA_SouthSudan_humanitarian_bulletin14.pdf (accessed 30 April 2017).

²⁶ UN Food and Agriculture Organization, *Famine hits parts of South Sudan*, 20 February 2017, available at:

http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/471251/icode/?_sm_au_=_iHVVFTF0V7NMH4j (accessed 30 April 2017).

²⁷ . CTSAMM Report 034, 28 March 2017, available at <http://jmecsouthsudan.org/wp-content/uploads/ctsamm/0027%20-%20CTSAMM%20REPORT%20034%20-%20MONITORING%20REPORT%20FEBRUARY%202017.pdf>;

CTSAMM Report 032, 7 February 2017, available at <http://jmecsouthsudan.org/wp-content/uploads/ctsamm/0025%20-%20CTSAMM%20REPORT%2077%20-%20MONITORING%20REPORT%20JANUARY%202017.pdf> (accessed 7 June 2017).

At the time of Amnesty International's visit to the refugee settlements in northern Uganda in March 2017, people from the Equatoria region were still fleeing to Uganda due to ongoing violence, lack of food, and the lack of basic services. Many of those who had recently arrived in Uganda at the time of Amnesty International's visit had fled from Kajo Keji in Central Equatoria.

Amnesty International spoke to over 80 South Sudanese refugees who had fled from various towns and cities, who told the organization of the horrors they witnessed and endured. Although many of those whom Amnesty International spoke to described violations by government forces and allied militia, there were also incidents where the SPLM/A-IO or allied militia committed abuses against civilians.

Joyce, aged 37, described how her husband, who was a business man in Kajo Keji, was stabbed to death in September 2016 by four uniformed men whom she believes were government soldiers.²⁸

She told Amnesty International:

"After seeing the soldiers had reached home my husband wanted to run. They caught him. After arresting him they didn't even use a single bullet. They used knives and just stabbed him until he died... They took ropes and started tying my husband and took me inside. They tied his hands together behind his back. Even after they killed him, they kept stabbing his body with a bamboo stick...My husband also was a business man with a shop and a bar...I think the soldiers knew he had sold a cow and maybe they wanted the money."

She described how the soldiers also beat her and looted their home.

"The soldiers beat me on the back and stepped on my stomach. One was holding me and brought me back to the compound and started kicking me. He told me he wanted to get the money of my husband, and that if I didn't get the money they would kill my husband. I managed to escape through the window. Some children were inside and not beaten. The one year old and 11 month old and the four year old child [were not beaten]," Joyce added.

She also said that another woman and man were killed in the same incident and recounted how she saw the woman being killed. *"They used a panga (machete) from behind her neck. I saw her face fall forward."*

Asio from Mondikolo, Kajo Keji recalled an incident in October 2016 where her neighbours' house was set on fire by government soldiers.

*"The soldiers...knocked at the door shouting for those inside to open. They refused to open. [His wife]...brewed local alcohol and was seven months pregnant. The soldiers had been drinking there during the day. They said that they had come to collect their money. They shot three bullets into the house and then lit the house on fire with a match stick and they left. [His] mother who lived in the same compound started shouting and crying for help. We and others came from our homes. We broke the door down and we tried to save items from the tukul. Nobody was injured or died from this incident. But we all became afraid."*²⁹

Sukeji, from Liwolo in Kajo Keji, described how two of her brothers-in-law were killed by men in uniforms in August 2016.³⁰ She told Amnesty International that, in August 2016, one was killed in their home compound and the other was shot while he ran to the bush. She also described how the men in uniform *"...were burning houses and beating women. I saw one woman who was raped. I don't know if they killed her."*

Her neighbours were also killed, including one male neighbour who was *"slaughtered with a knife,"* and another neighbour who *"they wanted to rape... She refused and they killed her with a knife."*

Sukeji left with her three children to a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) near her home in December 2016, where she stayed until 25 February when she decided to leave for Uganda. Sukeji said she felt insecure in the IDP camp and that there were no food or medical services being provided.

Roselyn described to Amnesty International how she saw a male police officer who she knew being killed, in Gulumbi, Morobo in June 2016.³¹ She believes that he was killed by the SPLA-IO who were in her village killing people suspected of supporting the government.

²⁸ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 11 March 2017 in Palorinya settlement, Uganda.

²⁹ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 10 March 2017 in Palorinya settlement, Uganda.

³⁰ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 13 March 2017 in Imvepi settlement, Uganda.

³¹ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 14 March in Bidibidi settlement, Uganda.

She said:

“The 10 fighters (SPLA-IO) picked him [the police officer] up from Kendila market in the morning...they were not in uniform. I used to sell mandazis’ (fried bread similar to doughnuts) around the police station and the market area. This is how I knew him. They kept him detained for some hours in a place that I did not know. In the evening, they brought him to Gulumbi primary school. They tied him against a tree with ropes used for tying goats. They stabbed his chest and sliced his neck. They left him dead against the tree. I felt very bad when I saw his body there.”

Liyong, a 30 year old woman from Kenyi in Lainya, described how government soldiers killed her sister, a pregnant neighbour and her husband in July 2016.³²

“The government soldiers attacked my village in the morning hours. A man whose home had already been attacked came running warning everyone in my area to run and hide. We could already hear gunshots. They burnt our tukuls (huts) and also killed civilians. They burnt four of my tukuls and they [shot] my younger sister who was about 20 years old. My neighbour who used to be a farmer was also shot at, she was seven months pregnant. They killed her husband too.”

Achiro, aged 56 recounted how her 17 year old son and sister were killed in Sopiri, Yei, by people she believed to be government soldiers.³³

She said:

“We went to sleep at around 10pm. Some people came to my house at night and killed my 17 year old son. They chopped his head and body into pieces with a machete...my small boy. My older sister, was beaten to death with a pounding stick³⁴ [on the same night]. Government soldiers had been seen in the area. I believe that it is them. We slept in different huts. I woke up in the morning to find them dead.”

Amnesty International also spoke with refugees who described unlawful arrests and detention of civilians by soldiers, often on the basis of their ethnicity, and on suspicion of being members or supporters of the SPLM/A-IO or other opposition groups. Witnesses and victims indicated that detainees were also subjected to torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, and that some were executed.

Lico³⁵ described how her son in law and other young men were killed by government soldiers in August 2016 in Katigiri.

She told Amnesty International:

“Government soldiers regularly come to the villages and surrounding areas. They would say that they are looking for or chasing after the SPLA-IO but they would attack and steal from civilians. In early August, they came to collect young men and boys... My son in law who was in his 20s was killed...he was slaughtered with a knife in-front of my eyes.”

Dura³⁶ from Mitika, Yei, also witnessed the killing of young man who was arrested by government soldiers in July.

“They killed him. I saw... Five young men were taken [by government soldiers]. They killed that one...The four struggled and managed to run away.”

Patrick,³⁷ aged 19 described to Amnesty International how he was tortured and detained in a military barrack in Nyepo between June and July 2016.

“Me and my brother were arrested and taken to the soldier’s garrison in Nyepo. We were locked inside a container. We found two others in the container. All four of us were handcuffed and blindfolded in the container. Every night, [on the first week] we were taken out one by one blindfolded, interrogated and beaten. After that I used to be interrogated twice a week. They had pliers. They would pinch and twist your fingers...It would take four days before I was given food to eat, we ate beans and posho.”³⁸

Patrick managed to escape. However, he does not know the fate and whereabouts of his brother and the two other men who were detained with him in the container.

³² Interviewed by Amnesty International on 14 March in Bidibidi settlement, Uganda.

³³ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 14 March in Bidibidi settlement, Uganda.

³⁴ A pounding stick is a large wooden pestle used for crushing and grinding grains into flour.

³⁵ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 14 March in Bidibidi settlement, Uganda.

³⁶ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 14 March in Bidibidi settlement, Uganda.

³⁷ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 12 March in Bidibidi Settlement, Uganda

³⁸ A dish made of maize flour, millet flour, or sorghum flour cooked in boiling water to a dough-like consistency.

TORTURE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Twenty of the refugees Amnesty International interviewed reported either being a survivor or witness to sexual assault. Sexual violence by government and armed opposition forces, including rape and gang-rape, has been a consistent feature of the South Sudan conflict.³⁹

Jane, aged 28, from Juba recounted how 13 men in uniform broke into her home in January 2017 and beat and kicked her husband before shooting him dead.⁴⁰ She was raped by three men. After burying her husband in Nimule, a town bordering Uganda's West Nile district, she crossed the border and sought refuge in one of the settlements with her three young children aged seven, four and one year old.

She said:

"The reason I left is because the rebels were disturbing us. My husband was killed. They got us at the house and shot him and started raping me. This happened in January this year."

Kaku, a 30 year old woman, was raped by a government soldier in late January 2017 when government soldiers attacked her home in Loka boma, Lainya county.⁴¹ Her father and mother, both in their late 50s, were killed in the same incident.

Kaku told Amnesty International:

"It was around 11am...The soldiers came and surrounded our home. I heard gunshots, I ran out towards where the children were and I saw my father and mother had been shot and were dead. The children were running. I panicked, I tried to run after them but one soldier caught me and pinned me down. I only had [a cloth] across my body and I was naked underneath. He was hitting my face and telling me to not move. He raped me."

Poni, a 45 year old woman from Bereka in Lainya, said she was raped behind a Pentecostal church by two of three government soldiers who attacked her in July 2016.⁴² Her Pentecostal church pastor and her husband were also killed in the incident.

She said:

"I was with my husband, and the pastor from our local Pentecostal church. We were going to church to collect some plastic chairs and other items. When we neared the church compound, three Dinka soldiers saw the pastor as he was approaching. The soldiers shot the pastor on the leg, he tried to run until he fell down crying in pain. One soldier came and shot down on the pastor from the back with many bullets. He was wearing his pastoral robes and a collar. The other two were beating me and my husband. They then took hold of my husband and tied him against a tree. After that they took off his shirt and blindfolded him. They shot him in the chest and heart and he died. They left him against the tree and came to me. They were asking me questions and kicking me. One was saying 'Let us kill her' and I said 'I have five children, if you kill me who will take care of them now that my husband is gone?' The other said, 'I will show her something.' He grabbed me by the arms and dragged me around the church... He forced himself on me. He spread my legs and raped me. He said 'I will make it worse if you struggle.' I was crying and begging but he did not stop. When he was done, the other soldier came and found me lying there. I begged him and he just kicked my private parts. He told me to turn around, saying that he did not want my diseases. He raped me in my anus. After he was finished, the two soldiers told me to go. And so I walked and it was painful and I was bleeding. They told me 'Run or we will catch you again.'"

Kakule⁴³, a 20 year old woman from Morobo, witnessed the sexual assault and killing of two young men in September 2016 by government soldiers.

³⁹ According to the UN Commission on Human Rights following a 10 day visit to South Sudan in December 2016, "The scale of rape of women and girls perpetrated by all armed groups in South Sudan is utterly unacceptable and is frankly mind boggling," said the Commission chairperson. "Aid workers describe gang rape as so prevalent that it's become 'normal' in this warped environment but what does that say about us that we accept this and thereby condemn these women to this unspeakable fate?" For more information see: UN OHCHR, *UN human rights experts says international community has an obligation to prevent ethnic cleansing in South Sudan*, 1 December 2016, available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20970&LangID=E#sthash.QCGITfql.dpuf> (accessed 30 April 2017). See also: Amnesty International's research which also documents sexual violence in the context of the conflict. "We did not believe we would survive": Killings, Rape and Lootings in Juba <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/5028/2016/en/>; "We are still running": War crimes in Leer, South Sudan <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/4486/2016/en/>; "Our hearts have gone dark": The Mental Health Impact of South Sudan's conflict <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/3203/2016/en/>; Nowhere safe: Civilians under attack in South Sudan <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/003/2014/en/>

⁴⁰ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 13 March 2017 in Imvepi settlement, Uganda.

⁴¹ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 13 March 2017 at Imvepi settlement, Uganda.

⁴² Interviewed by Amnesty International on 14 March 2017 at Bidibidi settlement, Uganda.

⁴³ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 14 March 2017 in Bidibidi settlement, Uganda.

She said:

“The boys had left the settlement [camp for internally displaced people] to go back to their home in Morobo I think to get some items. I was leaving Morobo to come to the settlement for the first time. At a place called ‘36 miles’ I saw four government soldiers attack the boys. The boys seemed in their 20s. They pulled two of them into the bushes. They shot one boy on the spot. The other boy was stripped naked. The soldiers inserted dry grass in his anus and set it on fire with a lighter. They watched the boy burn until he died.”

Mary⁴⁴, aged 17 from Oudu in Kajo Keji, told Amnesty International how in January 2017 soldiers entered the house she shared with her two sisters aged 16 and brother aged 5. Her father had died in 2012 and her mother had remarried, leaving the children on their own. Mary was five months pregnant at the time of the interview and had fled South Sudan with her siblings.

She said:

“I left because of fighting, shooting guns and killing. People go into houses and kill. The government soldiers came to our house and took everything. We came without clothes. We were sleeping inside the house when they came. They asked where our father was. They were looking for a man to take then go and fight. We went outside and ran. In the morning we came back and saw they had taken everything. There was no food, that’s why we came here [to Uganda]. They wanted to rape us that’s why we were running. They touched one of my younger sisters and tried to remove her clothes. They beat us. We ran and it took four days to reach here by foot.”

Mary and her siblings stayed hiding in the bush in South Sudan between January and February with hardly any food, until they came to Uganda in March 2017.

Amnesty International documented several other accounts of killings, looting, torture and sexual violence experienced or witnessed by refugees from South Sudan who are now in Uganda.

Many of those who reported abuses in South Sudan, also stated that they were struggling to cope in Uganda due to trauma or lack of material assistance in the refugee settlements, an issue which will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

Based on the current numbers of South Sudanese refugees arriving to Uganda, the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR is planning for 400,000 new arrivals by the end of 2017.⁴⁵ This would raise the population of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda to around 890,000. As of May 2017 there were already 916,784 South Sudanese refugees in Uganda.⁴⁶ Some analysts believe the number is still likely to be significantly higher and that a better understanding of South Sudan’s conflict and displacement dynamics is needed in order for humanitarian actors to ensure the response is comprehensive and appropriate.⁴⁷

It is with this population in mind, many of whom have been displaced multiple times and have witnessed and endured horrific violence in South Sudan that Amnesty International examines the refugee response in Uganda and makes its recommendations.

⁴⁴ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 13 March 2017 in Imvepi settlement, Uganda.

⁴⁵ UNHCR, *South Sudan Situation, Regional Update*, 15-31 March 2017, available at <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/country.php?id=229> (accessed 30 April 2017).

⁴⁶ Inter-agency Update, *Uganda – Emergency Update on the South Sudan Refugee Situation*, 8-14 May 2017, available at: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/109_Uganda%20Operational%20Update%20on%20the%20South%20Sudan%20Emergency%20Response%208-14%20May%20202017%20%281%29.pdf (accessed 18 May 2017).

⁴⁷ Amnesty International interview in Kampala, Uganda with a non-governmental source, 15 March 2017.

2. UGANDA'S REFUGEE HOSTING POLICY

Uganda's approach to hosting refugees has been lauded by the international community as one of the most generous and progressive in the region, if not the world.⁴⁸ The country has a long history of welcoming refugees fleeing conflict in neighbouring countries including South Sudan and Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi.⁴⁹ The West Nile region of Uganda, which currently hosts the majority of South Sudanese refugees, previously hosted refugees from the same area (in what was formerly Sudan) in the 1960s and again from the 1980s up to 2011 when the majority of refugees opted to repatriate to newly independent South Sudan.⁵⁰

Uganda is party to international and regional conventions including the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1976 Protocol and the 1969 Organisation of African Union Convention on Refugees (known as the AU Convention). The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) Refugee Department is primarily responsible for the refugee response in Uganda. It is in charge of coordinating with the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, as the principal international agency in charge of planning and delivery of refugee operations.⁵¹

Uganda's 2006 Refugee Act and 2010 Refugee Regulations provide a legal framework whereby refugees are given relative freedom of movement, equal access to primary education, healthcare and other basic social services, and the right to work and own a business.⁵² The majority of refugees in Uganda are hosted in settlements which are designated pieces of land set aside by the government of Uganda where refugees live and access services.⁵³ The settlements have their own administrative system overseen by the OPM, which, in accordance with Uganda's 2006 Refugee Act, is responsible for issuing identity cards, providing travel documents to refugees, and ensuring law and order in the settlements, among other things.⁵⁴ The government representative at the settlement is known as the settlement commandant.⁵⁵ Refugees living in settlements are typically provided with a piece of land on which to build a house and latrine, as well as a

⁴⁸ UNHCR, *Uganda Solidarity Summit on Refugees: Translating New York Declaration Commitments into Action, Concept Note*, May 2015, shared with Amnesty International.

⁴⁹ Other countries include Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea. For more information see: UNHCR, *Global Focus: Uganda*, available at: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/5129> (accessed 15 May 2017).

⁵⁰ Until 2011 South Sudan was part of Sudan, and often referred to as southern Sudan. The country endured decades of insecurity and internal armed conflict. South Sudan gained independence in July 2011 following a referendum where an overwhelming majority voted in favour of succession. For more information on Uganda's history of hosting refugees from the region see: Kaiser, Tania, *Between a camp and a hard place: rights, livelihood and experiences of the local settlement system for long-term refugees in Uganda*, 2006, p. 599-600, available at: <https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/3693/1/BetweenACampAndAHardPlace.pdf> (accessed 15 May 2017).

⁵¹ IDMC, ODI, HPG et al, *Protracted displacement: Uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile, Annex 8, Case study: Protracted refugees and self-reliance in Uganda*, September 2015, available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/2015/protracted-displacement-uncertain-paths-to-self-reliance-in-exile> (accessed 28 April 2017).

⁵² For more information see: The Refugee Act 2006, Part V, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4b7baba52.html>; and The Refugees Regulations, 2010, available at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/544e4f154.html?_sm_au_=iHVPkRJsHLJrWDMH (accessed 15 May 2017).

⁵³ In most districts, apart from West Nile, the land is owned by the government. In West Nile the land is owned by the community and the government negotiates with the community to provide land for refugee settlements. Information obtained by Amnesty International in meetings with representatives from OPM, UNHCR and non-governmental actors in Uganda, 28 February – 17 March.

⁵⁴ Uganda: The Refugee Act 2006, section 8, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4b7baba52.html> (accessed 15 May 2017).

⁵⁵ Information obtained by Amnesty International in meetings with representatives from OPM, UNHCR and non-governmental actors in Uganda, 28 February – 17 March.

piece of land for agricultural use, from which they are encouraged to be self-sufficient.⁵⁶ They are also provided with food and non-food items by UNHCR and NGOs and registered with UNHCR as refugees. In accordance with Uganda's refugee policy, 70% of the support provided by the UN and NGOs in refugee hosting areas is for refugees, while 30% is for the surrounding Ugandan community.⁵⁷

The notion of refugees living and being self-sufficient in Uganda's settlements is longstanding, dating back to the 1960s, and it was adopted as formal policy in 1998 when OPM and UNHCR developed the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS).⁵⁸ The SRS targeted Sudanese refugees in settlements in the West Nile region of Uganda, and aimed at empowering them to be self-reliant. It also focused on strengthening services available in refugee hosting areas and improving integration with host communities.⁵⁹

Uganda's commitment to self-reliance for refugees is included in its five year National Development Plan II for 2016-2020.⁶⁰ The Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA), which is part of five year Plan, aims to provide "self-reliance and local settlement for refugees, and to support social development in refugee-hosting areas as a durable solution to refugees' problems while protecting national and local interests."⁶¹ The STA is supported by the Refugee and Host Populations Empowerment Strategy (known as ReHOPE) which operates in ten refugee hosting districts and brings together UN agencies, the World Bank, donors, development actors and the private sector to "develop new and innovative approaches to protracted forced displacement by addressing the humanitarian-development nexus."⁶² This goal is expected to be achieved through the integrated delivery of services to refugees and host communities and through joint analysis and advocacy, among other strategies.⁶³ Both STA and ReHOPE are considered a core part of the UN-led Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) for Uganda.⁶⁴

The ReHOPE initiative is expected to cost up to USD 350 million over five years. The Government of Uganda has requested a USD 50 million loan from the UN-World Bank Trust Fund in order to support the objectives of ReHOPE. The government was given the go-ahead from parliament to proceed with the loan at the end of May 2017.⁶⁵

The country's progressive legal and policy framework for refugees is commendable. However some assumptions about Uganda's refugee policy do not hold true and have implications on their self-reliance strategy. For example, Uganda's refugee policy assumes that refugees have agricultural skills, and that they are given fertile land which, if cultivated, would meet their food needs.⁶⁶ Studies have shown that this is not always the case - some refugees from South Sudan are pastoralists, or have lived in urban areas and do not

⁵⁶ Information obtained by Amnesty International in meetings with representatives from OPM, UNHCR and non-governmental actors in Uganda, 28 February – 17 March.

⁵⁷ Information obtained by Amnesty International in meetings with representatives from OPM, UNHCR and non-governmental actors in Uganda, 28 February – 17 March.

⁵⁸ For more information see: IDMC, ODI, HPG et al, *Protracted displacement: Uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile, Annex 8, Case study: Protracted refugees and self-reliance in Uganda*, September 2015, available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/2015/protracted-displacement-uncertain-paths-to-self-reliance-in-exile>

⁵⁹ The SRS was incorporated into UNHCR's global strategy for Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) developed in 2005.⁵⁹ The DAR aimed to transition refugees from humanitarian to development assistance in five years, however it was reportedly underfunded and unable to meet its objectives. For more information see: Kaiser, Tania, *Between a camp and a hard place: rights, livelihood and experiences of the local settlement system for long-term refugees in Uganda*, 2006, available at: <https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/3693/1/BetweenACampAndAHardPlace.pdf>; and IDMC, ODI, HPG et al, *Protracted displacement: Uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile, Annex 8, Case study: Protracted refugees and self-reliance in Uganda*, September 2015, available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/2015/protracted-displacement-uncertain-paths-to-self-reliance-in-exile> (both accessed 15 May 2017).

⁶⁰ Office of the Prime Minister, *A concept paper for the Settlement Transformation Project*, April 2015, available at: <http://www.solutionsalliance.org/system/files/resources/STP%20draft%201.2.pdf> (accessed 15 May 2017).

⁶¹ Office of the Prime Minister, *A concept paper for the Settlement Transformation Project*, April 2015, available at: <http://www.solutionsalliance.org/system/files/resources/STP%20draft%201.2.pdf> (accessed 15 May 2017).

⁶² UNHCR, *UNHCR Uganda Factsheet*, March 2017, available at: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR%20Uganda%20Factsheet_March%202017.pdf (accessed 31 May 2017).

⁶³ Solutions Alliance, *Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHOPE) Strategic Framework, 2nd Draft*, 15 September 2016, available at: <http://www.solutionsalliance.org/resource/refugee-and-host-population-empowerment-rehope-strategic-framework-2nd-draft> (accessed 15 May 2017).

⁶⁴ The CRRF is born out of the New York Declaration from the UN Summit on Migration in September 2016. Uganda is already seen to meet the "principles and objectives set out in Annex I of the New York Declaration". For more information see: UN Uganda, *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework for Uganda launched*, 24 April 2017, available at: <http://un-ug.org/events/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-uganda-launched> For more information the CRRF, see: UNHCR, *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework: from the New York Declaration to a global compact on refugees*, 5 December 2016, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/584687b57.pdf> (both accessed 29 April 2017).

⁶⁵ The Monitor, East Africa: Government Needs Shs28.8 Trillion for Refugees - PM Rugunda, 1 June 2017, available at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201706020050.html> (accessed 2 June 2017).

⁶⁶ IDMC, ODI, HPG et al, *Protracted displacement: Uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile, Annex 8, Case study: Protracted refugees and self-reliance in Uganda*, September 2015, available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/2015/protracted-displacement-uncertain-paths-to-self-reliance-in-exile> (accessed 28 April 2017).

have farming skills.⁶⁷ In addition the size of plots provided by Uganda in the West Nile region are smaller, compared to other parts of Uganda; and less than half of the refugee population in settlements in West Nile has access to land for farming.⁶⁸ Even if refugees in settlements are able to farm and produce surplus crops to sell, many of the settlements in Uganda, including those in the West Nile region, are in remote and isolated areas away from main roads and transport networks which would allow access to markets.⁶⁹ The International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), a refugee rights organization based in Uganda, has argued that refugees who live outside settlements have been more successful at integrating with host communities and becoming self-sufficient. They argue that in addition to the option of settlements, UNHCR, NGOs and the government of Uganda should provide opportunities for refugees outside of the settlement structure to allow for integration and job opportunities beyond agriculture.⁷⁰

Another assumption made in Uganda's refugee policy is that refugees (with exception of the most vulnerable) are able to be self-sufficient within five years and that after that time they will no longer receive food aid and other humanitarian support.⁷¹ However studies have shown that it is unlikely that refugees will be able to fully support themselves after the five year period, considering the opportunities available to most are limited to farming in and around settlements. For example, a joint OPM, UNHCR and World Bank study in 2016 recognizes that: "The underlying poverty and vulnerability of refugees and their limited resilience to shocks contributes to higher levels of poverty in refugee-hosting areas" and that refugee hosting areas experience "lower agricultural productivity and greater environmental degradation due to poor climatic and soil conditions and/or overuse."⁷² The study also shows that stunting, which is defined by the World Health Organization as "impaired growth and development that children experience from poor nutrition, repeated infection, and inadequate psychosocial stimulation"⁷³ is high at 24% amongst the refugee population in Uganda. This is mainly due to lack of diversity in diet, and "unacceptably" high anaemia rates for children and pregnant women.⁷⁴

While there are some weaknesses in Uganda's refugee law and policy which affect the protection of refugees, by far the most significant challenge that Uganda's refugee response faces is the major shortfall in funding support from the international community. It is primarily this factor that has prevented Uganda from carrying out its ambitious policy and vision of self-reliance. Donors have failed to adequately support Uganda's initiatives including STA and ReHOPE. They have also repeatedly failed to provide sufficient funding to the UN humanitarian appeals for refugees in Uganda. These issues will be examined further in the next chapter.

⁶⁷ For example see IRRI, *South Sudanese refugees in Adjumani District, Uganda: Telling a new story?*, available at: <http://www.refugee-rights.org/Publications/Papers/2015/TellingADifferentStory.pdf> (accessed 29 April 2017).

⁶⁸ Draft report by an inter-governmental organization, February 2017, on file with Amnesty International.

⁶⁹ Kaiser, Tania, *Between a camp and a hard place: rights, livelihood and experiences of the local settlement system for long-term refugees in Uganda*, 2006, available at: <https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/3693/1/BetweenACampAndAHardPlace.pdf> (accessed 15 May 2017).

⁷⁰ IRRI, *South Sudanese refugees in Adjumani District, Uganda: Telling a new story?*, available at: <http://www.refugee-rights.org/Publications/Papers/2015/TellingADifferentStory.pdf> (accessed 29 April 2017).

⁷¹ OPM, UNHCR and World Bank Group, *An Assessment of Uganda's Progressive Approach to Refugee Management*, May 2016, pp.66, available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/24736> (accessed 28 April 2017).

⁷² OPM, UNHCR and World Bank Group, *An Assessment of Uganda's Progressive Approach to Refugee Management*, May 2016, pp. 2-3, available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/24736> (accessed 28 April 2017).

⁷³ WHO, *Stunting in a nutshell*, available at: http://www.who.int/nutrition/healthygrowthproj_stunted_videos/en/ (accessed 16 May 2017).

⁷⁴ OPM, UNHCR and World Bank Group, *An Assessment of Uganda's Progressive Approach to Refugee Management*, May 2016, pp. 2-3, available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/24736> (accessed 28 April 2017).

3. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S FAILURE: LACK OF SUFFICIENT SUPPORT FOR SOUTH SUDAN'S REFUGEES

“We continue to welcome our neighbours in their time of need but we urgently need the international community to assist as the situation is becoming increasingly critical”

Rt. Hon. Ruhakana Rugunda, Prime Minister of Uganda, 23 March 2017

EXCERPTS FROM A JOINT STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA AND UNHCR, 23 MARCH 2017⁷⁵

Chronic and severe underfunding has reached a point where critical life-saving help risks becoming dangerously compromised. Transit and reception facilities are rapidly becoming overwhelmed. Significant challenges are being faced in providing refugees with adequate food rations, health and educational services, and sufficient clean water; a dire situation further compounded by the onset of heavy rains...in the face of severe underfunding and the fastest-growing refugee emergency in the world, Uganda's ability to realise a model that allows refugees to thrive now risks being jeopardized – and the future of the new comprehensive refugee response framework thrown into question.

UN agencies, NGOs and the government of Uganda have made several appeals globally for more funding and support for South Sudan's refugee crisis. This is in line with international human rights and refugee law,

⁷⁵ Government of Uganda and UNHCR, *'Breaking Point' imminent: Government of Uganda, UNHCR say help for South Sudan refugee inflow urgently needed, Joint statement on behalf of the Government of Uganda and UNHCR, 23 March 2017*, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/press/2017/3/58d3abab4/breaking-point-imminent-government-uganda-unhcr-say-help-south-sudan-refugee.html> (accessed 23 May 2017).

under which States have obligations “to support each other to host refugees, and obligations to seek, and provide, international cooperation and assistance to ensure refugees can reach a place of safety and have access to the support they need” and is known as the principle of responsibility sharing.⁷⁶

However, despite the appeals by Uganda and the UN, donors have consistently failed to respond to the calls for additional support. In 2016, the total amount of funding requested for the Uganda segment of the inter-agency South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan was USD 193,723,395.⁷⁷ However, by the end of the year only 51.4% of the funding requirements (or USD 99.6 million) had been met.⁷⁸

Funding is a core part of states’ obligations under the principle of responsibility sharing.⁷⁹ The second core element of responsibility sharing is resettlement which is the relocation of vulnerable refugees to countries where they can restart their lives in dignity.⁸⁰ More than one million refugees globally are considered vulnerable⁸¹ and in need of resettlement according to UNHCR. However, only some 30 countries globally offer resettlement places and the number of such places offered annually falls far short of what is needed: in 2015 only 107,100 or around 1% of refugees in need of resettlement were actually resettled.⁸² Moreover, funding and capacity shortfalls also effect the ability of UNHCR to identify and process vulnerable refugee cases for resettlement. In 2016 the agency only put forward 17 South Sudanese refugees from Uganda for resettlement – and of this number only 11 were resettled in 2016.⁸³ Attempts to increase the number of refugees resettled from Uganda in 2017 have met with another obstacle.

The United States (US) which previously resettled the largest number of refugees worldwide (over 66,000 in 2015), cut the number of resettlement places it offers to just 50,000 per year.⁸⁴ As over 90% of all resettlement from Uganda is to the US this has meant that UNHCR had to reduce the number of refugees it puts forward for resettlement in 2017 by over half - from 4,770 to 2,000 persons.⁸⁵

In terms of funding, UNHCR and partners in Uganda require USD 960 million to meet the needs of refugees from South Sudan, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.⁸⁶ The South Sudan Refugee Response requires the largest amount of funds - over USD 673 million, yet as of 11 May 2017, this was only 15% funded.⁸⁷ Under this plan, UNHCR had only received 18% of their required funding as of 30 May. UNHCR’s funding for all its refugee operations in Uganda also falls short at 18%.⁸⁸

⁷⁶ Amnesty International, *Genuine Responsibility-Sharing: Amnesty International’s Five Proposals, The Global Refugee Crisis*, July 2016, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/4380/2016/en/>

⁷⁷ *Revised South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan, January – December 2016*, available at: www.unhcr.org/578f2da07.pdf (accessed 5 June 2017)

⁷⁸ Data as of January 2017, available at: <https://fts.unocha.org/content/south-sudan-regional-refugee-response-plan-2016> (accessed 5 June 2017)

⁷⁹ The preamble to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees states: “Considering that the grant of asylum may place unduly heavy burdens on certain countries, and that a satisfactory solution of a problem of which the United Nations has recognized the international scope and nature cannot therefore be achieved without international co-operation”. The importance of resettlement, a key aspect of burden and responsibility sharing, has been repeatedly emphasized by the Executive Committee of High Commissioner’s Programme (ExCom), the governing body of UNHCR; see UNHCR, *A Thematic Compilation of Executive Committee Conclusions*, pp. 471–478, available at: www.unhcr.org/53b26db69.html (accessed 23 May 2017).

⁸⁰ Resettlement is the relocation of vulnerable refugees to countries where they can restart their lives in dignity. It provides refugees who are facing particular hardship because of personal circumstances, health, or security risks, an opportunity to restart their lives in dignity. It also relieves some of the pressure on countries hosting large numbers of refugees. For more information on resettlement, see UNHCR, *Resettlement Handbook*, December 2016, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/protection/resettlement/4a2ccf4c6/unhcr-resettlement-handbook-country-chapters.html> (accessed 23 May 2017).

⁸¹ Vulnerable refugees include survivors of violence or torture, women and girls at risk, older persons at risk, unaccompanied or separated children, children at risk, people with legal and physical protection needs, single parents, people who have experience sexual and gender-based violence and people with family reunification needs. For more information see: UNHCR, *Frequently Asked Questions about Resettlement*, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/4ac0873d6.pdf> (accessed 23 May 2017).

⁸² UNHCR, *Global Trends, Forced Displacement in 2015*, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/statistics/unhcrstats/576408cd7/unhcr-global-trends-2015.html> (accessed 23 May 2017); and Amnesty International, *Genuine Responsibility-Sharing: Amnesty International’s Five Proposals, The Global Refugee Crisis*, July 2016, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ior40/4380/2016/en/> (accessed 23 May 2017).

⁸³ Information obtained by Amnesty International from UNHCR, 23 May 2017.

⁸⁴ The White House, *Executive Order Protection the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States*, section 6 (b), 6 March 2017, available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/03/06/executive-order-protecting-nation-foreign-terrorist-entry-united-states> (accessed 2 June 2017).

⁸⁵ Information obtained by Amnesty International from UNHCR via email, 23 May 2017.

⁸⁶ Government of Uganda, UNHCR, *Uganda: 2017 Refugee Humanitarian Needs Overview: South Sudan, Burundi and DRC Refugee Response*, 17 May 2017, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/uganda-2017-refugee-humanitarian-needs-overview-south-sudan-burundi-and-drc-refugee> (accessed 23 May 2017).

⁸⁷ 2017 South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan, Funding snapshot as of 11 May 2017, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SouthSudan2017RRPFundingSnapshot-11May2017.pdf> (accessed 5 June 2017)

⁸⁸ UNHCR, *Uganda 2017 Funding Update* as of 30 May 2017, available at: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Uganda%20Funding%20Update%2030%20May%202017.pdf> (accessed 5 June 2017)

Such major short falls in funding have meant that humanitarian organizations have had to prioritize immediate needs such as water, sanitation, food, primary healthcare, primary education and materials for building shelters over other needs such as mobility aids for people with disabilities, and secondary education.⁸⁹ However even some of the immediate needs are not being met due to lack of sufficient funds.⁹⁰

STRUGGLING TO COPE: SOUTH SUDANESE REFUGEES IN UGANDA

Most South Sudanese refugees live in settlements in the West Nile region of Uganda, in Adjumani, Moyo, Yumbe, Koboko, and Arua districts. South Sudanese refugees who arrive at Uganda's borders are received at a number of transit centres where they are registered by OPM before being taken to a reception centre where they get a hot meal and also receive food ration cards and other items to help them settle. In addition, refugees' needs and vulnerabilities are assessed, after which they are allocated a plot of land, , around 30 square meters on which to build a house and latrine.⁹¹ In accordance with Uganda's refugee model, each household in West Nile is also supposed to get a piece of land of around 50 square meters in size, for agricultural use. Refugees also should have access to primary health care facilities, primary schools and other basic services in or near their settlement.

However due to the large and rapid influx of refugees from South Sudan to Uganda in 2016/7 and the lack of sufficient funds, refugees are struggling to cope and the government of Uganda, UN agencies, and NGOs are struggling to respond to their needs.

The majority (64%) of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda are children under 18 years of age. Children and women together make up 86% of all refugees from South Sudan.⁹² This means that in Uganda's refugee settlements there is a large number of women headed households, but also a large number of unaccompanied or separated children, who are either living with foster families or on their own in a group.⁹³ UNHCR and NGOs providing services for refugees in Uganda consider women headed households, and unaccompanied and separated children, as well as refugees' over the age of 60, those with chronic health conditions, and persons with disabilities as 'Persons with Special Needs' (PSNs).⁹⁴

Those identified as PSNs at reception centres and in the settlements are supposed to be provided with additional support, such as tents to use as shelter when they arrive and support with the construction of their semi-permanent shelters, and they are often housed in the same zone in a settlement.⁹⁵ However, thousands of PSNs who require further assistance are currently not receiving it.⁹⁶

This is partly because needs are not systematically being identified during the initial registration process due to the large number of arrivals. OPM, which carries out the registration process, has focused on fast track (manual) registration with the intention of carrying out more detailed biometric registration at a later date.⁹⁷ Previously OPM would provide a breakdown of the number of PSNs in terms of their needs and location in the settlements to NGOs working there. However, since mid-2016 when the numbers of South Sudanese refugees started to rise, it has not been able to do this consistently.

Another challenge is that OPM and UNHCR (which also identifies PSNs) do not have synchronised data systems and UNHCR does not have access to data collected by OPM through its Refugee Information Management System (known as RIMS).⁹⁸ Efforts are currently underway to synchronise the systems but in

⁸⁹ Amnesty International interviews with UNHCR, OPM and non-governmental organizations in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017.

⁹⁰ UNHCR, 'Breaking Point' imminent: Government of Uganda, UNHCR say help for South Sudan refugees inflow urgently needed, 23 March 2017, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/press/2017/3/58d3abab4/breaking-point-imminent-government-uganda-unhcr-say-help-south-sudan-refugee.html> (accessed 2 June 2017).

⁹¹ Information obtained by Amnesty International from meetings with OPM in Adjumani, in addition to information provided by NGOs and UNHCR, 5-15 March 2017.

⁹² According to UNHCR, 58% of the population are children under 18 years old. For more information see: UNHCR, *Uganda: South Sudan Refugee Situation (Info-Graphic)*, 27 February 2017, available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/country.php?id=229> (accessed 2 February 2017).

⁹³ Amnesty International interviews with UNHCR, OPM, non-governmental organizations and refugees in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017.

⁹⁴ UNHCR, *South Sudan Regional Response Plan 2017*, December 2017, pp. 72, available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/country.php?id=229> (accessed 2 May 2017)

⁹⁵ UNHCR, *South Sudan Regional Response Plan 2017*, December 2017, pp. 75, available at: <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/country.php?id=229> (accessed 2 May 2017)

⁹⁶ Amnesty International interviews with UNHCR, OPM, non-governmental organizations and refugees in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017.

⁹⁷ Amnesty International interviews with UNHCR, OPM, non-governmental organizations and refugees in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017.

⁹⁸ RIMS was established under Uganda's Registration of Persons Act, 2015. The Act is available at: <http://www.ulii.org/ug/legislation/act/2015/4-6> (accessed 24 May 2017).

the meantime parallel systems mean work is duplicated and individual needs are not being identified in a timely manner. At the time of writing, NGOs were carrying out a survey to identify PSNs in the settlements.⁹⁹

However, the other major problem is that even if individual needs are identified, funding shortfalls mean they are difficult to meet.¹⁰⁰ Research by Amnesty International in Uganda in March 2017 identified a range of serious gaps in service provision to refugees due to lack of funding.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF TRAUMA

As documented in the first chapter of this report, people are fleeing fighting, sexual and gender based violence including rape, torture, and indiscriminate killings, in addition to looting and destruction of property. Nearly every person Amnesty International interviewed had directly witnessed violence and killings in South Sudan, including of family members and neighbours, in addition to other abuses by government and opposition forces or armed groups. Many, if not most, refugees arriving from South Sudan exhibit symptoms of serious trauma.¹⁰¹ One NGO working in Palorinya settlement in Moyo told Amnesty International they knew of three refugees who had committed suicide shortly after arriving at the settlements.¹⁰² NGOs working in the settlements have reported observing manifestations of trauma such as drug and alcohol abuse, anxiety, and other indicators of depression amongst refugees in the settlements.¹⁰³ NGOs said they were concerned that these manifestations would likely increase over time as the abuses and incidents refugees endured and witnessed in South Sudan started to sink in.¹⁰⁴

However, psychosocial and other necessary support to respond to the trauma faced by refugees fleeing South Sudan is currently limited with donors not providing support for critical interventions.¹⁰⁵ According to one NGO providing psychosocial support in some of the settlements in northern Uganda, it is not an issue which donors have prioritized or considered life-saving in the refugee response, and funding for such activities is limited.¹⁰⁶

Titus Jogo, the government Refugee Desk Officer in Adjumani district, told Amnesty International researchers that *"a number of refugees have broken down. More psychosocial counselling is needed. Boreholes and schools are short term interventions which donors want to support. Donors don't want to invest in long-term solutions with no immediate results."*¹⁰⁷

SHELTER FOR VULNERABLE REFUGEES INCLUDING WOMEN HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

Among the many basic needs not being met due to funding shortfalls is shelter. Refugees identified as PSNs are supposed to be provided with basic materials including eight wooden poles, rope and nails and plastic sheeting, with which they are expected to build semi-permanent shelters.¹⁰⁸ They should also receive tents as emergency shelter for use in the short-term and support in the form of assistance from a group of people to construct their semi-permanent shelters in the longer-term. The shelters for PSNs are based on a design by UNHCR and OPM, and cost approximately USD 800-900 each.¹⁰⁹ Due to insufficient funds, very few have been built. In Rhino Camp, for example, which has a population of over 50,000 refugees, only 50

⁹⁹ Amnesty International interview with a non-governmental source via Skype, 24 May 2017.

¹⁰⁰ Amnesty International interviews with UNHCR, OPM, non-governmental organizations and refugees in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017.

¹⁰¹ UNHCR, *As South Sudan crisis deepens, more funds needed for refugees*, 15 May 2017, available at:

<http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2017/5/5919a18f4/south-sudan-crisis-deepens-funds-needed-refugees.html> (accessed 1 June 2017).

¹⁰² Amnesty International interview with a non-governmental source in Palorinya settlement, Moyo, 8 March 2017.

¹⁰³ Amnesty International interviews with non-governmental organizations in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017. See also: Conflict and Health, *Mental health and psychosocial support for South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda: a needs and resource assessment*, 2016, available at: <https://conflictandhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13031-016-0085-6> (accessed 2 June 2017).

¹⁰⁴ Amnesty International interviews with non-governmental organizations in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017.

¹⁰⁵ Also see: Refugees International, *Getting it Right: Protection of South Sudanese Refugees in Uganda*, 9 March 2017, pp. 14, available at: <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2017/3/10/uganda> (accessed 3 May 2017).

¹⁰⁶ Amnesty International interview with a non-governmental source via Skype, 3 May 2017. This is also stated in Refugee International's report which states that organizations face difficulties in "securing funds and gaining implementing partner status with UNHCR and/or receiving authorization from OPM to operate in sites." For more information see: Refugees International, *Getting it Right: Protection of South Sudanese Refugees in Uganda*, 9 March 2017, pp. 14, available at: <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2017/3/10/uganda> (accessed 3 May 2017).

¹⁰⁷ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 6 March 2017 in Adjumani, Uganda.

¹⁰⁸ Amnesty International interview with a non-governmental source via Skype, 24 April 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Amnesty International interview with a non-governmental source via Skype, 18 May 2017.

shelters have been constructed for PSNs.¹¹⁰ This is despite the fact that a large majority of refugees arriving from South Sudan meet the definition of PSN. Where possible, NGOs are providing refugees with materials for temporary shelters, which are flimsy and have a lifespan of around six months.¹¹¹ Other refugees are sleeping out in the open, or are living in shelters they constructed themselves, in tents set-up for registration purposes.¹¹²

In general, the 'shelter kits' which are provided to refugees are basic and still require refugees to collect additional materials from the surrounding areas, including wood and materials to make bricks.¹¹³ The large numbers of refugees having to source materials from the surrounding environment to construct their homes, as well as for firewood and other needs, has resulted in environmental degradation, which is of concern to the local government.¹¹⁴

Households headed by women face significant challenges in constructing shelters, primarily because the women are often looking after children. Amnesty International interviewed 12 women who were responsible for looking after households with several young children and in some cases elderly relatives, who were struggling to construct shelters. These included women who were running households without any help, who stated that they were struggling to build a house and carry out other essential tasks, such as collecting water and cooking meals because they had to care for large numbers of people daily leaving little time to engage in construction. Some women also pointed to the sheer physical nature of construction as a challenge and also mentioned other challenges they faced including lack of sufficient amounts of food, water and access to health care.

Sara, an elderly woman, came to Uganda with her four year old granddaughter. She is from Kansuk in Kajo Keji and arrived in Palorinya settlement on 1 February 2017.¹¹⁵ Sara is the full-time carer to her granddaughter, whose mother is ill (and came to Uganda separately), but she was not registered as such by OPM upon arrival.

Sara showed Amnesty International the flimsy shelter she had put up herself. It consisted of plastic sheeting and poles which were given to her upon arrival. Sara was also concerned about the lack of sufficient food for her and her granddaughter. She told Amnesty International:

*"We are struggling for food. We are eating coconuts and if they finish, what are we going to do? OPM refused to register me with my granddaughter because they think I picked her up along the way. I am alone with my granddaughter. It is a problem. How will I erect my house? I tried to erect the house myself but it might be blown down with the wind. I am worried I will not get much food as a single household. The harvest is all in the fields [in South Sudan] and we didn't even get anything."*¹¹⁶

Rose, aged 75, is from Kaya in South Sudan and came to Uganda via the DRC on 9 March 2017. She had initially gone to the DRC for medical treatment but left because of lack of food. She came to Uganda with her six grandchildren, the oldest of whom is 11. Her own children (the grandchildren's parents) were still in South Sudan working in the capital Juba and elsewhere. She was given a plot of land, as well as plastic sheeting and poles to build her shelter in the newly opened Imvepi settlement. When Amnesty International met her on 13 March she had not yet constructed her shelter largely because she had no help and had to take care of her young grandchildren. She and the children were sleeping out in the open.¹¹⁷

Amaka, aged 63, is from Kansouk in Kajo Keji, South Sudan. She was in Bidibidi settlement in Uganda with her two sons, Morris who is aged 23 and John aged 15, Maria, one of her daughters and her granddaughter when Amnesty International met her.¹¹⁸ She said they fled South Sudan shortly after her brother-in-law was shot dead and arrived in Uganda on 8 August 2016. She was separated from her husband when they were fleeing and has been unable to locate him since.

Both her sons have disabilities and are unable to walk. Morris has both mobility and learning difficulties. Amaka carried Morris on her back and was briefly separated from her other son John when they were fleeing South Sudan. John told Amnesty International that he rolled himself along the ground in order to flee. He

¹¹⁰ Amnesty International interview with a non-governmental source via Skype, 18 May 2017.

¹¹¹ Amnesty International interview with a non-governmental source via Skype, 18 May 2017.

¹¹² Amnesty International interviews with UNHCR, OPM, non-governmental organizations and refugees in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017.

¹¹³ Amnesty International interview with a non-governmental source via Skype, 24 April 2017.

¹¹⁴ The Guardian, 'Switched on' Uganda welcomes refugees – but at an environmental cost, 2 March

¹¹⁵ Amnesty International interview with the family on 10 March 2017 in Palorinya settlement, zone 3.

¹¹⁶ Amnesty International interview with the family on 10 March 2017 in Palorinya settlement, zone 3.

¹¹⁷ Interviewed by Amnesty International on 13 March 2017 in Imvepi, Uganda.

¹¹⁸ Interview in Bidibidi settlement on 12 March 2017.

was found on the side of the road by a pastor who had a motorbike and who helped him get to Uganda where he was reunited with his family.

Amaka told Amnesty International that she had received no additional support in Bidibidi settlement to construct her shelter and that she built it on her own. Her son John helped her to construct the part of the house that he could reach. They had to sell some of their kitchen utensils in order to pay someone to construct the roof. Her sons have also not received any mobility aids despite being unable to walk. They were using a borrowed wheelchair from another family but had to return it.

Amaka said:

“My two boys’ situation is not normal. No one has supported me in putting up the plastic sheeting [for the roof of the house] and they [the plastic sheets] have been in the sun so have gone soft and are almost damaged. I am having difficulties providing for these two children. In South Sudan I could get a job and work, here I have no money for support. I can’t borrow from the neighbours. I am selling the kitchen utensils to survive.”¹¹⁹

Amaka said no humanitarian worker had come to assess their situation. She said she went once to one of the NGO information desks in her zone and twice to another NGO information desk in another zone, but she had not received a response from either. Amnesty International spoke to representatives of an NGO running some of the information desks in the settlements who said that they are inundated with requests, and have to prioritise who they follow-up with, depending on what support they can provide.¹²⁰ Due to the lack of funding, they have not been able to provide mobility aids and therefore may not have followed up with refugees requesting them.¹²¹

Nunu, aged 24 from Yambio in South Sudan, also lives in Bidibidi settlement with her husband and one year old boy.¹²² Due to a disability she has had since childhood, she is unable to walk. In January 2017, shortly after arriving in Uganda, her husband was accidentally burned with petrol while working as a mechanic. He sustained burns on his legs and abdomen and was in hospital in Arua for one month. He was still recovering when Amnesty International met the family on 12 March 2017.

When Amnesty International met them their shelter had a roof but no walls. They were struggling to build it. Nunu also spoke about the lack of food and water in the settlement.

She told Amnesty International:

“Water is very difficult. Now there is no water around here and to get water is a problem. There are also issues of food. The food ration was completed two days ago. We haven’t eaten real food in this home. We got three quarters of a sack of maize and a tin of oil and half a basin of beans.

We have got no support in building the house. My husband started the foundation and putting up things and requested help from boys in the neighbourhood to provide the basic structure. They were not able to help more. I want an NGO to help with the house. If it starts to rain I don’t know what to do... We were given one plot which we are sharing as two families. During our arrival we were told this is an emergency response place and they would later allocated us plots to live on. Up to this time they haven’t been allocated.”¹²³

Refugees who are considered PSNs - including women headed households, persons with disabilities and unaccompanied minors – need shelters which are appropriate for them and which allow them to feel safe and access other services.¹²⁴ They need support to construct their shelters in a timely manner to ensure they are not exposed to the elements or to ill-health as a result of living in very poor conditions. This basic need is not being met due to the funding shortfalls that NGOs, UNHCR and the government of Uganda are experiencing. As noted earlier, the government and the humanitarian community have appealed for aid, but, at the time of writing there has been no significant change in the overall funding gap faced by Uganda’s refugee response.

¹¹⁹ Interview in Bidibidi settlement on 12 March 2017.

¹²⁰ Interview with a non-governmental source via Skype, 25 April 2017.

¹²¹ Interview with a non-governmental source via Skype, 25 April 2017.

¹²² Interview in Bidibidi settlement on 12 March 2017.

¹²³ Interview in Bidibidi settlement on 12 March 2017.

¹²⁴ UNHCR, *Emergency Handbook, Shelter Solutions*, available at: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/> (accessed 25 May 2017).

ACCESS TO FOOD

Newly arrived refugees in Uganda living in settlements are meant to receive food rations from the World Food Programme (WFP) for three years, after which they receive half rations for a further two years.¹²⁵ In some settlements, refugees have a choice of either receiving food rations or getting the cash equivalent of what their ration is worth (known as cash-based assistance) in order to buy their own choice of food.¹²⁶ However, WFP has faced significant funding shortfalls which have impacted directly on South Sudanese refugees who have fled conflict and famine.¹²⁷ In May 2017, WFP announced a shortfall of USD 60 million in relation to its Uganda operations and that it would struggle to meet the full food needs of South Sudanese and other refugees in Uganda from May through October.¹²⁸ Due to funding shortfalls, refugees who arrived prior to July 2015 had their food rations of 2,100 calories per day reduced by 50% in August 2016.¹²⁹ Those who arrived after July 2015 still get the full ration for now but without additional funding, food rations are likely to be further reduced.¹³⁰

Refugees whose food rations have been reduced are not provided with alternative means to support themselves: the majority of South Sudanese refugees have not been allocated land for cultivation due to the large numbers that have arrived, and other livelihood support remains limited.¹³¹ WFP has previously recognized that refugees who have their food rations cut are not necessarily able to cope by growing their own food and have acknowledged refugees can experience “stress” as their food stocks run low.¹³²

Amnesty International spoke to 15 refugees in Nyumanzi settlement in Adjumani, where food rations were cut in mid-2016. They told researchers that they had to sell a portion of their food rations to pay millers to grind the grain provided, in addition to selling rations which include sorghum, beans and oil, to supplement their dietary requirements with fresh vegetables, salt, milk and other needs. They also sold food rations to buy non-food items such as soap and sanitary pads which are not provided to them on a regular basis by humanitarian organizations. While cash-based assistance is also available for refugees in Nyumanzi, many of those Amnesty International spoke to had opted for food rations as they are easier to access. With cash-based assistance they would have to travel to the market and such travel is difficult for PSNs.

Marcus, a refugee community worker in Nyumanzi settlement, told Amnesty International about some of the issues faced in the settlement.¹³³ He was previously a refugee in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya until 2012 when he went back to South Sudan. He arrived in Uganda in 2014. Marcus said that he didn't want to be a refugee again but had no choice because he had to care for his family members.

He told Amnesty International about how they struggled to cope with the limited assistance provided:

“I don't want to be a refugee again but I had to because my family members are weak and I have to take care of them. To be a refugee is not a good option. I had to because we had no other way. We are given grain without oil and beans. We have to sell things to buy other things. We also don't have money to grind [sorghum]. They [NGOs] should help widows and orphans who sell part of their food to grind it.”¹³⁴

Marcus and several others in the settlement also said that the red sorghum they are given is difficult to digest especially for older persons.

He said: *“This food is not eaten by local communities. It is used to make local brews. In Kakuma we got a balanced diet of wheat flour and maize.”*

¹²⁵ Amnesty International meeting with WFP in Kampala on 16 March 2017 and a follow-up Skype call on 30 March 2017.

¹²⁶ For more on cash-based assistance see, WFP, *Food assistance, cash-based and in-kind*, available at: <http://www1.wfp.org/food-assistance> (accessed 1 June 2017).

¹²⁷ BBC, *Appeal to feed South Sudanese refugees in Uganda*, 24 May 2017, available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p053tdcp> (accessed 25 May 2017).

¹²⁸ World Food Programme, *WFP Forced to Cut Food Rations For South Sudanese Refugees Fleeing Famine and Conflict in Uganda*, 23 May 2017, available at: <http://www.wfp.org/videos/wfp-forced-cut-food-rations-south-sudanese-fleeing-famine-and-conflict-uganda-media>

¹²⁹ World Food Programme, *Government of Uganda, UNHCR And WFP Forced to Revise Food Rations For Refugees Amid Funding Crisis*, 17 August 2016, available at: <https://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/uganda-govt-unhcr-wfp-forced-revise-food-rations-refugees-amid-funding-crisis>

¹³⁰ Amnesty International meeting with WFP in Kampala on 16 March 2017 and a follow-up Skype call on 30 March 2017.

¹³¹ Information obtained by Amnesty International from meetings with OPM in Adjumani, in addition to information provided by NGOs and UNHCR, 5-15 March 2017.

¹³² While this was in reference to food cuts in early 2015, the situation has not improved with the increased influx of South Sudanese refugees and lack of funding. See: World Food Programme, *World Food Programme Forced to Cut Rations to Some 150,000 Refugees in Uganda*, 27 January 2015, available at: <https://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/world-food-programme-forced-cut-rations-some-150000-refugees-uganda> (accessed 25 May 2017). While this was in reference to food cuts in early 2015, the situation has not improved with the increased influx of South Sudanese refugees and lack of funding.

¹³³ Amnesty International interview in Nyumanzi settlement, Adjumani, 6 March 2017.

¹³⁴ Amnesty International interview in Nyumanzi settlement, Adjumani, 6 March 2017.

Simon, another refugee living in Nyumanzi settlement, added that “*There is not enough food. We understand UNHCR cut the food amount to solve issues with other refugees but now it is hard. We have little food to buy firewood, charcoal and milk. All the food can finish in 10 days.*”¹³⁵

Amnesty International raised the issue of lack of variety of food and related concerns in particular about red sorghum with WFP. They said that they have to buy what exists in the Ugandan market. According to WFP, while they are looking to phase out red sorghum, there is drought in the region and they are competing with other countries to buy food.¹³⁶

In line with the SPHERE standards, which are internationally recognized standards used in a humanitarian response, there should be “adequate access to a range of foods, including a staple (cereal or tuber), pulses (or animal products) and fat sources, that together meet nutritional requirements.”¹³⁷ However lack of reliable funds to WFP mean these standards are not being met. According to WFP, cuts in food rations have not led to increased rates of malnutrition;¹³⁸ but as previously mentioned in Chapter 2, there are high levels of stunting and high anaemia rates in Uganda which are a result of poor nutrition.¹³⁹

Refugees also said that there were delays in receiving food rations. Amnesty International raised these delays with WFP in Kampala. The organization acknowledged that food is not necessarily provided every 30 days due to set-backs in purchasing and transporting food to settlements.¹⁴⁰

Amnesty International spoke to Paula in Pagyrina settlement in Adjumani. Paula is 23 years old and from Magwi County in Eastern Equatoria. She came to Uganda with her four children aged 10, 7, 6 and 5. Her husband was shot dead in 2015 in South Sudan’s capital Juba. She arrived in Uganda in mid-2016.

She told Amnesty International: “*We get 12kg per person of food. Food is also sold for transport, grinding and soap. It is very difficult because we use food up before the end of the month and before the new distribution.*”¹⁴¹

Amira, came from Kajo Keji in South Sudan along with her husband and children aged between 15 and 2 years old in October 2016. They left Kajo Keji after their neighbours were killed in the fighting. She said that they are struggling most with water and food in the settlement.

Amira told Amnesty International: “*When we arrived we were given blankets, mats and food to eat. We were given two sacks of maize, 5 litres of oil and one basin of beans. The main thing here is the water and food shortage. Food was given earlier and now the ration is finished. Water is a major problem, it is brought in trucks. The population is big but they bring it just once a day. Today from this morning till 1pm still no water had arrived.*”¹⁴²

ACCESS TO WATER

Issues around water were raised with Amnesty International by both refugees and NGOs in the West Nile region. Water trucking, which is when water is pumped from a nearby river or water source into large tankers and supplied to refugee settlements by sub-contractors working with NGOs, is widely carried out in settlements in Uganda. According to UNHCR, water trucking represents 35% of the total water supplied generally but in the West Nile region this is much higher, averaging at 61%.¹⁴³ Providing water through this method is extremely costly and unsustainable in the medium-to-long-term.¹⁴⁴

According to NGOs working in the settlements, funding is only available for short-term and costly interventions such as water trucking with major gaps in the water supply continuing to exist.¹⁴⁵ OPM told Amnesty International that they discussed the need for more sustainable and permanent infrastructure with partners (which includes UN, NGOs and donors) for the provision of water in the settlements.¹⁴⁶ However

¹³⁵ Amnesty International interview in Nyumanzi settlement, Adjumani, 6 March 2017.

¹³⁶ Amnesty International meeting with WFP in Kampala on 16 March 2017 and a follow-up Skype call on 30 March 2017.

¹³⁷ The Sphere Project, *Minimum Standards in food security and nutrition, Appendix 1: Food security and livelihoods assessment checklists*, available at: <http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/appendix-1/> (accessed 25 May 2017).

¹³⁸ Amnesty International meeting with WFP in Kampala on 16 March 2017 and a follow-up Skype call on 30 March 2017.

¹³⁹ OPM, UNHCR and World Bank Group, *An Assessment of Uganda’s Progressive Approach to Refugee Management*, May 2016, pp. 2-3, available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/24736> (accessed 28 April 2017).

¹⁴⁰ Amnesty International meeting with WFP in Kampala on 16 March 2017 and a follow-up Skype call on 30 March 2017.

¹⁴¹ Amnesty International interview in Pagyrina settlement, Adjumani on 7 March 2017.

¹⁴² Interview in Bidibidi settlement on 12 March 2017.

¹⁴³ Information shared with Amnesty International by UNHCR via email, 16 May 2017.

¹⁴⁴ Amnesty International interviews with NGOs and refugees in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017.

¹⁴⁵ Amnesty International interviews with NGOs and refugees in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017.

¹⁴⁶ Amnesty International meeting with David Apollo Kazungu, Director of Refugee Affairs at OPM in Kampala, 24 May 2017.

OPM stated that this has not yet been provided, and the SPHERE standards of a minimum of 15 litres of water per person per day are barely being met.¹⁴⁷ In Adjumani and Rhino camp in Arua, refugees are receiving less than 15 litres of water per person per day, and in all the other settlements, they are receiving less than 20 litres of water per person per day.¹⁴⁸

LIVELIHOODS SUPPORT

In line with Uganda's refugee policy, after five years, refugees are meant to be self-reliant and to 'graduate' from receiving food rations and other support.¹⁴⁹ While there were livelihood activities and access to land for cultivation at the beginning of the South Sudan refugee influx in some of the smaller settlements, it has not been possible to provide this level of support in bigger settlements like Bidibidi.¹⁵⁰

According to one NGO source working in the settlements in West Nile, the "numbers [of refugees arriving] are too vast and coming too fast."¹⁵¹

All land in West Nile is owned by the community, including land for agricultural use.¹⁵² The government negotiates with host communities for access to this land, in exchange for investment in infrastructure and other services. This is in accordance with Uganda's refugee policy that 30% of support must be provided to host communities.¹⁵³

Land for agricultural use has not been provided by the government and host communities in the majority of settlements since mid-2016. According to OPM they had initially planned to provide small plots of land to refugees in addition to land allocated for mechanized and large-scale farming by refugees and host communities.¹⁵⁴ However as people are still arriving they have been unable to provide additional land, and the majority of refugees are currently dependent on humanitarian assistance.¹⁵⁵ The Director of Refugee Affairs at OPM told Amnesty International that they are exploring options beyond providing households with small plots of land for farming in order to enhance resilience.¹⁵⁶ One option is to look into having mechanized production which results in higher yields than subsistence farming.

In addition to insufficient land for livelihood activities, there has been a lack of funding and support from the international community.¹⁵⁷

A non-governmental source working in the settlements in northern Uganda said:

"Livelihoods is a secondary thing - placated but miniscule compared to the budget. Every NGO is trying to raise money to provide livelihood activities and there are multiple initiatives. There is some [provision for livelihood activities] in the UNHCR budget but most NGOs are trying to raise their own sources of funding. There are a lot of initiatives but doesn't meet all the people. There is no standard livelihood package everyone gets."¹⁵⁸

In 2016 UNHCR planned for USD 2.8 million for livelihoods support but only USD 1.7 million was provided by donors. Skills training for youth is needed with 70% of the refugee population in the settlements between the ages of 17 and 25 years. According to UNHCR, only 15% of their training needs are met.¹⁵⁹ Without funding and support for livelihoods, many refugees are unlikely to be able to become self-reliant.

¹⁴⁷ Amnesty International meeting with David Apollo Kazungu, Director of Refugee Affairs at OPM in Kampala, 24 May 2017. For more information on the SPHERE standards see: The Sphere Project, *Water supply standard 1: Access and water quantity*, available at: <http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/water-supply-standard-1-access-and-water-quantity/> (accessed 26 May 2017).

¹⁴⁸ Information shared with Amnesty International by UNHCR via email, 16 May 2017.

¹⁴⁹ This is subject to an assessment by OPM and UNHCR. Information provided by WFP in Kampala on 16 March 2017 and a follow-up Skype call on 30 March 2017.

¹⁵⁰ Amnesty International interviews with UNHCR, OPM, non-governmental organizations and refugees in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017.

¹⁵¹ Amnesty International interview with a non-governmental source via Skype, 24 April 2017. Bidibidi hosts over 270,000 refugees and is considered the biggest refugee settlement in the world. See: The Guardian, *Uganda at breaking point as Bidibidi becomes world's largest refugee camp*, 3 April 2017, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/apr/03/uganda-at-breaking-point-bidibidi-becomes-worlds-largest-refugee-camp-south-sudan> (accessed 26 May 2017).

¹⁵² Amnesty International interviews with UNHCR, OPM, non-governmental organizations and refugees in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017.

¹⁵³ Amnesty International interviews with UNHCR, OPM, non-governmental organizations and refugees in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017.

¹⁵⁴ Amnesty International meeting with David Apollo Kazungu, Director of Refugee Affairs at OPM in Kampala, 24 May 2017.

¹⁵⁵ Amnesty International meeting with David Apollo Kazungu, Director of Refugee Affairs at OPM in Kampala, 24 May 2017.

¹⁵⁶ Amnesty International meeting with David Kazungu, Director of Refugee Affairs at OPM in Kampala, 24 May 2017.

¹⁵⁷ Amnesty International interviews with UNHCR, OPM, non-governmental organizations and refugees in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017.

¹⁵⁸ Amnesty International interview with a non-governmental source via Skype, 24 April 2017.

¹⁵⁹ Amnesty International interview with UNHCR via phone, 16 May 2017.

OPM told Amnesty International that they recognise that not all refugees have farming skills and are looking at how best to integrate them through other livelihood options. In line with this, UNHCR carried out a livelihoods assessment in February 2017 which examined alternatives to farming including small-scale businesses and training for women and youth.¹⁶⁰ Partnerships with the private sector are also being explored in conjunction with Uganda's STA and ReHOPE strategies.¹⁶¹

A solidarity summit on refugees to raise funds and increase support has been organized by the government of Uganda and the UN on 22 and 23 June. The summit aims to mobilize international support to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of refugees, in addition to the longer-term needs of refugees and host communities.¹⁶² It also aims to provide significant funding for the STA and ReHOPE in addition to showcasing Uganda's model in relation to the CRRF.¹⁶³ The CRRF is an outcome of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants whereby UN Member States have committed to responsibility sharing and a comprehensive response to any large scale movement of refugees.¹⁶⁴

As noted above, in 2016 only 51.4% of the funding requirements (for the South Sudan Regional Response Plan) was met.¹⁶⁵ The main donor to the UN and NGOs operating in Uganda is the US which gave almost USD 59.2 million in 2016. This was followed by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department, which gave USD 17.3 million. Other funding was provided by Sweden, Canada, Denmark, Japan, the UK, the European Commission, Belgium, Norway, Finland, Ireland, Kuwait and the Czech Republic, which in total amounted to just over USD 34.5 million.¹⁶⁶

In 2017, UNHCR and its partners are seeking USD 1.4 billion to respond to the needs of South Sudanese refugees in the region (this includes Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of Congo).¹⁶⁷ As previously mentioned, UNHCR and partners require USD 673.2 million for Uganda, which hosts the greatest number of South Sudanese refugees, but as of May 2017 had received 15% of this amount.¹⁶⁸ The main donor continues to be the US. However, there are concerns that US funding will be reduced if President Trump enforces his plan to cut the foreign aid budget.¹⁶⁹ Because the South Sudan response is so heavily reliant on US funding, any such reduction would have an immediate detrimental impact on refugees in Uganda unless other donors significantly increase their contributions. UNHCR is trying to diversify the range of donors assisting with the refugee response in Uganda.

¹⁶⁰ Amnesty International interview with UNHCR via phone, 16 May 2017.

¹⁶¹ Amnesty International interviews with UNHCR, OPM, non-governmental organizations and refugees in northern Uganda, 5-15 March

¹⁶² Government of Uganda, UN, *Uganda Solidarity Summit on Refugees*, available at: <http://solidaritysummit.gou.go.ug/> (accessed 2 June 2017).

¹⁶³ Amnesty International interviews with UNHCR, OPM, non-governmental organizations and refugees in northern Uganda, 5-15 March 2017; and follow-up meetings with the same actors by email, Skype, phone and in person in Kampala from 23 March – 26 May 2017.

¹⁶⁴ UNHCR, *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework: from the New York Declaration to a global compact on refugees*, 5 December 2016, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/584687b57.pdf> (accessed 5 June 2017).

¹⁶⁵ Financial Tracking Services, *South Sudan Regional Response Plan 2016*, available at: <https://fts.unocha.org/content/south-sudan-regional-refugee-response-plan-2016> (accessed 2 June 2017).

¹⁶⁶ Financial Tracking Services, *Uganda 2016*, available at: [https://fts.unocha.org/countries/233/donors/2016?order=total_funding&sort=desc&f\[0\]=destinationPlanIdName%3A%21](https://fts.unocha.org/countries/233/donors/2016?order=total_funding&sort=desc&f[0]=destinationPlanIdName%3A%21) (accessed 8 May 2017). See Annex 1 for more details on funding.

¹⁶⁷ UNHCR, *Over US\$1.4 billion needed for South Sudan refugees in 2017*, 15 May 2017, available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/5/591966294/us14-billion-needed-south-sudan-refugees-2017.html> (accessed 2 June 2017).

¹⁶⁸ 2017 South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan, Funding snapshot as of 11 May 2017, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SouthSudan2017RRPFundingSnapshot-11May2017.pdf> (accessed 5 June 2017)

¹⁶⁹ The Guardian, *'Trump's aid budget is breathtakingly cruel – cuts like these will kill people'*, 31 May 2017, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/may/31/trumps-aid-budget-is-breathtakingly-cruel-cuts-like-these-will-kill-people> (accessed 2 June 2017).

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Countries like Uganda have done all one could expect, but won’t be able to sustain support for refugees unless the rest of the world steps up”

Filippo Grande, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.¹⁷⁰

As the conflict in South Sudan rages on, refugees continue to flee to Uganda at a rapid pace. They are fleeing horrific abuses in South Sudan including indiscriminate killings, torture, sexual violence, detention and the looting and burning of property carried out by government and opposition forces. The conflict reached new heights after fighting between President Kiir and Riek Machar’s troops in Juba in July 2016 triggered a surge of fighting in the southern Equatoria region and threw the status of the ARCSS into question. The ongoing conflict has resulted in the third largest refugee crisis in the world after Syria and Afghanistan, and the biggest refugee crisis in Africa today. In the first half of May 2017 alone, over 20,000 South Sudanese refugees arrived in Uganda, with a daily average of 1,353.¹⁷¹ The total number of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda as of 15 May 2017 was 919,156 out of a total of 1.89 million South Sudanese refugees in the region.¹⁷²

The majority of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda are from the Equatoria region, which was previously considered a stable bread basket of South Sudan. Amnesty International researchers spoke to over 80 refugees who fled from the South Sudan, all of who recounted human rights abuses they had witnessed or endured themselves, including rape and brutal killings of relatives or friends. Many of those arriving in Uganda are extremely vulnerable - more than half (64%) of the refugee population are children under 18 years old. Together with women, they make up 86% the refugee population from South Sudan.

Despite these staggering facts and figures, no new political process to negotiate a new ceasefire or resolution to the conflict has been initiated. The international community has also failed to provide adequate support for South Sudan’s refugees or the countries hosting them. The UN’s appeal for support to Uganda for 2017 is just 18% funded and the regional appeal was only 51.4% funded in 2016. Without support, the government of Uganda, UN and NGOs, are struggling to meet even the most basic needs of refugees including food, water and shelter, let alone other needs and services including psychosocial support, mobility aids for people with disabilities, or access to livelihoods. Amnesty International spoke to refugees who were unable to build their own shelters but who were not receiving the additional support they needed, and who

¹⁷⁰ UNHCR, *Over US\$1.4 billion needed for South Sudan refugees in 2017*, 15 May 2017, available at: www.unhcr.org/news/press/2017/5/591966294/us14-billion-needed-south-sudan-refugees-2017.html (accessed 2 June 2017)

¹⁷¹ UNHCR, *South Sudan Situation: Regional Update, 1-15 May 2017*, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/57153.pdf> (accessed 2 June 2017).

¹⁷² UNHCR, *South Sudan Situation: Regional Update, 1-15 May 2017*, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/57153.pdf> (accessed 2 June 2017).

did not receive enough food or water, as well as refugees who were generally struggling to cope due to the trauma they faced in South Sudan.

Funding shortfalls have also severely impacted Uganda's ability to implement its progressive refugee law and policy which encourages refugees to be self-sufficient. This is largely through Uganda's Settlement Transformation Agenda and its Refugee and Host Populations Empowerment Strategy (known as ReHOPE) which bring together UN agencies, the World Bank, donors, development actors and the private sector to address both humanitarian and development needs for refugees and host communities. Both these initiatives are considered a central pillar of the UN-led Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) for Uganda.

Uganda's policy is being put under incredible strain. Land in the West Nile region, where the majority of South Sudanese refugees are being hosted, is not enough or of suitable quality to carry out traditional agricultural activities on. Skills training needs and support for alternatives to farming are not available due to funding shortfalls.

In an attempt to gain more support and funding for Uganda as a major refugee hosting country, the government and UN are holding a solidarity summit on 22 and 23 June. Uganda is fulfilling its international obligation to host refugees and also to seek international co-operation. It is now the international community's turn to ensure they are pulling their weight, and to support Uganda by increasing funds and resettlement places for the most vulnerable refugees.

IN LIGHT OF THE FINDINGS OUTLINED IN THIS REPORT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IS MAKING THESE RECOMMENDATIONS WITH REGARDS TO REFUGEES IN UGANDA:

To the international community including the US, Canada, the EU and its Member States, Australia, China and Japan:

- Significantly increase funding for refugees in Uganda. Funding should be both timely and sustainable and in support of immediate and longer-term needs for refugees in Uganda. These include, but are not limited to, access to basic services including food, water, sanitation, shelter, education and healthcare including psychosocial support.
- Provide support in the form of technical and financial assistance to ensure Uganda's refugee policy, including the Self-Reliance Strategy and Refugee and Host Populations Empowerment Strategy is implemented effectively within the given time-frame. Livelihoods support should be diverse and include capacity and skills training beyond agriculture which caters to refugee and host community needs within and outside the settlement structure.
- Significantly increase the number of resettlement places in your country for South Sudanese and other refugees in Uganda. Priority should be given to the most vulnerable, including but not limited to: persons with serious medical needs, women and girls at risk, children and unaccompanied minors at risk, persons with disabilities, persons with physical protection needs including as a result of their political or ethnic profile or their involvement in peaceful humanitarian or other activities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex individuals.
- Offer other avenues to allow people to leave the region safely and legally and enter safe third countries such as: community sponsorship, work and student visas. Facilitate family reunification for people in the region who have family members living abroad. States should apply a broader definition of family members to include extended or non-nuclear family. Flexibility should be applied to the level of documentary requirements for proving family links and with regards to travel documents.

To the Government of Uganda:

- Ensure that refugees in Uganda are able to access livelihood opportunities that are sustainable and that benefit both the refugee and host communities. These should include skills training and opportunities beyond agriculture.
- Ensure refugees are registered in a timely manner while taking into account specific vulnerabilities and needs. Registration systems should be coordinated with UNHCR and other relevant organizations who can respond to and provide for specific needs. Where necessary, seek technical and financial assistance in order to ensure that registration is carried out in the most effective and efficient way.

- Ensure minimum essential levels of water, sanitation, shelter, health, food and education for all and continue to seek international cooperation and assistance, if necessary to do so. In all efforts and while allocating resources, give due priority to the most disadvantaged groups including the refugee population from South Sudan.

To UNHCR, WFP, and international NGOs:

- Collaborate with and support the government of Uganda to ensure refugees are registered in a timely manner while taking into account specific vulnerabilities and needs. Registration systems should be coordinated with the Ugandan government and other relevant organizations who can respond to and provide for specific needs. Where necessary, seek financial assistance in order to ensure that registration and follow-up support for refugees is carried out in the most effective and efficient way.
- Acknowledge and seek to address issues raised by refugees in settlements regarding the quality and level of services provided. Ensure these issues are followed-up and that reasons are provided to them when services are not available.
- Continue to seek funding and support in order to provide skills training and other livelihood support to refugees and host communities within and outside of the settlement structure.
- Strengthen support provided to Persons with Special Needs, including support in building shelters, and in the provision of food, water and other basic services in a timely manner, in line with international standards. Continue to seek additional funding and support where needed to meet these requirements.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IS MAKING THESE RECOMMENDATIONS WITH REGARDS TO THE CONFLICT IN SOUTH SUDAN:

To the Government of the Republic of South Sudan:

- Ensure that members of the security forces immediately cease all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including sexual and gender based violence by issuing clear orders prohibiting sexual violence, providing their forces with appropriate training, and by putting in place mechanisms to adequately monitor the conduct of these forces.
- Initiate prompt, effective and impartial investigations into all allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and other serious violations and abuses of international human rights law.
- Facilitate the expeditious establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, the Compensation and Reparations Authority and Fund, and the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing, without delay. Ensure that all bodies effectively implement elements of their mandate related to reparations, and that collective and individual reparations programs fully address the needs of survivors of human right violations.

To the SPLM/A in Opposition and other opposition groups:

- Immediately cease and prevent all violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. In particular, all forces should immediately cease unlawful killings, acts of sexual violence and any other attacks on civilians, looting and destruction of public and private property, and acts that obstruct humanitarian access.

To the African Union, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and UN Security Council:

- Take measures to ensure that all parties to the conflict cease violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law;
- Support efforts to ensure access to justice and reparation programmes for victims of human rights violations and abuses. This includes support for the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, the Commission on Truth, Reconciliation and Healing, and the Compensation and Reparations Authority and Fund. Ensure that all bodies effectively implement elements of their mandate related to reparations, and that collective and individual reparations programs fully address the needs of survivors of human rights violations;
- Stem the flow of weapons into South Sudan being used to cause abuses and consequent trauma by imposing a comprehensive arms embargo against all parties to the conflict South Sudan.

5. ANNEX

RESPONSE PLAN FUNDING¹⁷³

Date	Response Plan	Requested for Uganda	% of Uganda's share of the response plan which is funded
2016	South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan (Revised)	USD 193,723,395 ¹⁷⁴	51.4% by end of 2016 ¹⁷⁵
2016	Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan	USD 27,051,138 ¹⁷⁶	33% by end of 2016 ¹⁷⁷
2017	South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan (Revised)	USD 673,190,970 ¹⁷⁸	15% by 11 May ¹⁷⁹
2017	Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan	USD 71,642,814 ¹⁸⁰	No funding received as of April ¹⁸¹
2017	DRC Refugee Response Plan (including budget for other protracted refugees at the same locations)	USD 215,334,462 ¹⁸²	

¹⁷³ Refugee Response Plans are UNCHR led, inter-agency documents which provide a strategy and combined financial needs for a given situation.

¹⁷⁴ *Revised South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan, January – December 2016*, available at: www.unhcr.org/578f2da07.pdf (accessed 22 May 2017)

¹⁷⁵ Financial Tracking Service, South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan 2016, available at: <https://fts.unocha.org/content/south-sudan-regional-refugee-response-plan-2016> (accessed 22 May 2017)

¹⁷⁶ Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan, January – December 2016, December 2015 (updated July 2016), available at: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Burundi%20RRRP%20Jan-Dec.%202016%20-%20December%202015%20%28Updated%20July%202016%29.pdf> (accessed 18 May 2017)

¹⁷⁷ 2016 Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan, Funding Snapshot as of End of 2016, available at: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Burundi%20RRRP%202016%20-%20Funding%20Snapshot%20%28final%29.pdf> (accessed 18 May 2017)

¹⁷⁸ South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan - revised January – December 2017, May 2017, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2017%20Revised%20South%20Sudan%20Regional%20Refugee%20Response%20Plan%20-%20Jan-Dec%202017%20%28May%202017%29.pdf> (accessed May 2017)

¹⁷⁹ South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan, Funding snapshot as of 11 May 2017, available at: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/South%20Sudan%202017%20RRRP%20Funding%20Snapshot%20-%202011%20May%202017.pdf> (accessed 22 May 2017)

¹⁸⁰ Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan- January – December 2017, available at: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2017%20Burundi%20Regional%20Refugee%20Response%20Plan%20-%20Jan-Dec%202017%20%28December%202016%29.pdf> (accessed 22 May 2017)

¹⁸¹ Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan 2017, available at: <https://fts.unocha.org/content/burundi-regional-refugee-response-plan-2017> (accessed 22 May 2017)

¹⁸² Uganda: 2017 Refugee Humanitarian Needs Overview South Sudan, Burundi and DRC Refugee Response Plans, available at: <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Uganda%20Ref%20Hum%20Needs%20Overview%20-%20full%20version%20FIN2.pdf> (accessed 22 May 2017)

MAIN DONORS¹⁸³

Donor	2016 (USD) ¹⁸⁴	2017 (USD) ¹⁸⁵
US	59,158,919	77,003,471
Central Emergency Response Fund ¹⁸⁶	28,297,524	14,986,704
European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department	17,388,793	40,192,881
Sweden	9,210,171	6,692,767
Canada	5,497,505	11,350,050
Denmark	4,252,409	7,968,406
Japan	4,085,819	5,990,088
UK	3,017,206	
European Commission	2,414,306	
Belgium	2,387,186	398,090
Norway	2,267,531	351,418
Finland	1,076,750	2,408,582
Ireland	129,856	107,411
Kuwait	116,026	
Czech Republic	81,037	178,000
Italy		395,000
Luxembourg		265,393
Iceland		200,000
Slovenia		48,026
New Zealand		11,745
France		470,171

¹⁸³ This table relies on data from the Financial Tracking Service. The service reports on humanitarian funding submitted by Government donors, UN agencies and funds, NGOs, and other partners, however this table only includes data related to funding from states. For all sources of funding please visit <https://fts.unocha.org/>. Although the amounts in this table are received by UNHCR and partners, the data does not breakdown into project type so it is not possible to determine which of these amounts relate specifically to refugee related work.

¹⁸⁴ Data as of 8 May 2017, available at:

[https://fts.unocha.org/countries/233/donors/2016?order=total_funding&sort=desc&f\[0\]=destinationPlanIdName%3A%21](https://fts.unocha.org/countries/233/donors/2016?order=total_funding&sort=desc&f[0]=destinationPlanIdName%3A%21) (accessed 8 May 2017)

¹⁸⁵ Data as of 6 June 2017, available at: [https://fts.unocha.org/countries/233/donors/2017?f\[0\]=destinationPlanIdName%3A%21](https://fts.unocha.org/countries/233/donors/2017?f[0]=destinationPlanIdName%3A%21) (accessed 6 June 2017)

¹⁸⁶ CERF pools contributions from donors – mainly governments, but also, foundations, companies, charities and individuals – into a single fund for use at the onset of an emergency or to put toward underfunded emergencies.

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“HELP HAS NOT REACHED ME HERE”

DONORS MUST STEP UP SUPPORT FOR SOUTH SUDANESE REFUGEES IN UGANDA

Uganda is host to over 900,000 refugees from South Sudan with over one thousand continuing to arrive each day. Refugees are fleeing serious violations and abuses of human rights and international law committed by government and opposition forces with impunity. These include targeted killings of civilians, torture, and sexual violence including rape.

Uganda has a progressive refugee policy which is lauded by the international community. Refugees are welcomed, provided with land where they can construct shelters and farm, and have access to public services, and the right to work.

However, the international community has failed to provide an adequate response to this crisis. As of 30 May 2017, the UN's appeal for support to Uganda for 2017 was just 18% funded and Uganda's share of the regional appeal was only 51.4% funded in 2016. This has meant basic needs including access to food, water, sanitation, health care and shelter not being met.

The report calls on donors including the US, the EU and its Member States, Australia, Canada, China, and Japan, to urgently meet financial needs and support for technical assistance required to support Uganda's progressive refugee policy. It also calls on parties to the conflict in South Sudan and the international community to cease and prevent all abuses and violations and to support efforts for justice and reparations for victim.