



Refugee Law Project

Faculty of Law, Makerere University



**REPORT ON VISITS BY THE LEGAL AID AND
COUNSELING DEPARTMENT TO IKAFE AND
INVEMPI REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS BETWEEN
22 FEB – 4 MARCH 2008**

Refugee Law Project

Vision

Human rights for all people in Uganda irrespective of their legal status. This vision is informed by relevant international laws as well as the Constitution of Uganda.

Mission

To empower asylum seekers, refugees, deportees, IDPs and host communities in Uganda to enjoy their human rights and lead dignified lives.

Mandate

- To promote the protection, well-being and dignity of forced migrants and their hosts.
- To empower forced migrants, communities and all associated actors to challenge and combat injustices in policy, law and practice.
- To influence national and international debate on matters of forced migration, and justice and peace, in Uganda.
- To be a resource for forced migrants and relevant actors.

All of the above is achieved through a combination of activities broadly categorized under legal aid and counseling, research and advocacy, and training and education.

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INTRODUCTION

The Refugee Law Project (RLP) Legal Aid and Counseling (LAC) Department as part of its routine visits to the refugee settlements visited Imvepi and Ikafe refugee settlement in Arua and Yumbe districts between 22nd February and 4th March 2008 and conducted in-depth interviews with some selected refugees living in the two settlement, the neighboring host community, local leaders, Government and UN officials and NGO staff working in the settlements and the districts. The team that visited the settlements included, Mr. Mindrea Godwin Buwa, Mrs. Eunice Owiny, Ms. Mr. Godwin Bwire and Christine Mbawa. The team was based in Arua town owing to unreliable accommodation facilities in the settlements due to the repatriation programme. The team made daily visits to the settlements during the period of the visit. The purpose of the field trip was to provide legal aid and psychosocial counseling for the refugees in the settlement and protection monitoring in general in the wake of the repatriation of the Sudanese refugees. The team made this visit with background knowledge of the repatriation process from other refugee settlements over the last two years particularly from Rhino camp refugee settlement and Kyangwali refugee settlement. This report makes a comparative analysis of the repatriation process in Imvepi and Ikafe refugee settlements and other refugee settlements. Apart from monitoring the repatriation process, the visit looked into issues of health, protection, extremely vulnerable refugees, security and justice, inter tribal and community relationships, sexual gender based violence, water and sanitation, education and livelihoods.

The findings on most of the salient issues that emerged from the visit are presented in this report with recommendations for improvements in the various areas of the findings. This document is circulated so as to inform the key stakeholders on the progress of the repatriation process and pertinent issues that accompany or are collateral to such repatriation programmes

Imvepi refugee settlement occupies an area of about 21,000 square kilometers. It is situated in Maracha Terego district in west Nile. The settlement is administered by the Office of the Prime Minister, Directorate of Refugees. It has the office of the settlement commandant. UNHCR runs programmes in the settlement through DED¹, its implementing partner in the settlement. DED has offices and staff in the settlement. The population of the settlement was quoted by the deputy settlement commandant and the Programme Coordinator of DED in the settlement, 8,215 refugees. The population is primarily composed of Sudanese refugees with very few Congolese refugees not numbering more than 400. The repatriation programmes for Sudanese refugees kicked off some time in early 2007 with registration for repatriation but actual repatriation has not started.

¹ Duetscher Entwicklungsdienst. A non profit organization registered as German NGO.

Ikaffee refugee settlement occupies an area of about 21,000 square kilometers. It is situated in Yumbe district in west Nile. The settlement is administered by the Office of the Prime Minister, Directorate of Refugees. It has the office of the settlement commandant. UNHCR runs programmes in the settlement through IRC², its implementing partner in the settlement. IRC has offices and staff in the settlement. The population of the settlement was quoted by the deputy settlement commandant to be within the range of 20,000 refugees. The population is primarily composed of Sudanese refugees with very few Congolese refugees not numbering more than 400. The repatriation programmes for Sudanese refugees kicked off some time in early 2007 with registration for repatriation but actual repatriation has not started.

FINDINGS

We started the field trip with courtesy calls on the office of the Refugee Desk Officer and UNHCR in Arua. We met with the deputy Refugee desk officer and the head of sub office UNHCR Arua. From both offices we were informed that repatriation was not actively ongoing in the two settlements because the refugees had shown no interest in repatriating to Sudan. We visited the two settlements with this information in the background.

From the start of our interaction with the refugees, we noticed overwhelming desire among the refugees to repatriate to Sudan. Over 98% of the refugees we talked to expressed an overwhelming desire to repatriate instantly. Majority expressed disappointment at delay in starting the actual repatriation process. Day in and day out they sought to be repatriated as soon as possible but they are frustrated at the delay. Majority of the Sudanese refugees want to be repatriated back to Sudan for various reasons, the elders in the communities see repatriation as an given them the opportunity to return to die in their home land and be buried on the ancestral lands, they thus oblige their families and communities to register for repatriation.

The refugees have spent over two decades in exile and have gone through chains of violence and suffering and have been fatigued by the refugee regime, any prospect of return to peaceful life is overwhelming for them.

The climates conditions in the settlement is harsh and uncertain, the soils are not very favorable. By the time of visit both camps were totally dry and there was no sign of any change in few months to come. We were informed by the Refugees that they were inadequate rains last year and therefore their attempts at agriculture were a total fiasco. This has set in untold hunger among the refugees in settlements, one refugee woman retorted "We rather go and die in Sudan under circumstance we don't know than die in

² International Rescue Committee

the settlement of hunger” Food rations in both settlements are inadequate to sustain human living. The amount of food ration given to the refugees has been substantially reduced and given that the settlements have been hit by draught, there is untold food insecurity this is one of the most serious pushing factors in the repatriation equation.

Relatives of refugees already repatriated to Sudan from other refugee Settlements maintain close communications with their relatives in the settlements, enticing them to register and develop a crave for immediate repatriation.

There is the talk of booming economy in southern Sudan and the refugees who live in absolute poverty for the last two decades have naturally developed a crave for return in order to share the benefit of the booming trade and economy in southern Sudan.

A lot of the youth who have dropped of schools since UNHCR pulled out of sponsoring secondary education for refugees express optimism of returning to school back in Sudan where they feel they can be able to raise school fees for their education given the talk of a booming trade of economy in southern Sudan.

On the overall there is expression over whelming desire among Sudanese Refugees to return to southern Sudan. It is not entirely clear whether this desire is voluntary desire to return or a desire developed in the face of push and pull factors; however given the circumstance in these settlements a number of push and pull factors has input considerably into generating the desire to return tom southern Sudan. The desire to return may not necessarily entail voluntary crave for repatriation within the meaning of voluntary repatriation in international Refugee law.

Amidst this heated crave for repatriation to Sudan actual repatriation has not commenced in Imvepi refugee settlement. In Ikaffe refugee settlement actual repatriation has began but only in one of the three parcels of the settlement that is to say in Ariwa settlement. There is expression of deep anger in the other two parcels of Ikaffe refugee settlement, that is to say Abirimajo and Okuyo over what they call unfair favoritism and discrimination in the repatriation process in Ikaffe refugee settlement. In Okuyo settlement we were informed of some elder who attempted suicide in protest of the failure to repatriate them in time while repatriation was going on in another part of the settlement. This prompted UNHCR to urgently repatriate the families of those who attempted suicide.

In both settlement UNHCR commenced registration for repatriation some time last year but the registrations were stopped allegedly for want of or poor turn up on the part of refugees; the refugees on the other hand blamed the office of the Prime minister and UNHCR for the failures in the registration process. They particularly cited failure to give adequate notices to refugees whenever they would come for registration exercises, they also stated that sessions of registration exercises were too short to cover the targeted

villages during the registration visits. They further complained of the timing of the registration exercises arguing that they were conducted during times when a number of refugees were not in the settlements either because some of them were in schools or business trips. The office of the prime minister{RDO's office } responded by saying that during the time of registration exercises most the left out of the registration had traveled to Sudan without travel permits issued by the camp Commandants and by law they would technically have qualified for cessation under refugee law. The camp commandants of both camps promised to look in to the cases of those who missed out on the registration process and include them.

Particularly for Ikaffe refugee settlement the office of the Prime minister and UNHCR conducted a verification exercise between 4th and 11th February 2008 and almost half of the population of the settlement were left out of the exercise due to their absence in the settlement. From a population of about 21.000 refugees from the previous verification only about 10.000 refugees were verified. This prompted worries among refugee communities over their repatriation back to Sudan as families since some of the family members were absent during the verification exercise. We noted that the gaps in this verification exercise will definitely hinder food distribution to refugees, registration for repatriation and actual repatriation it self; we raised the matter with camp commandant and RDO and by the time of our departure there were circulars on notice board across the settlement calling upon those who missed to come and explain their absence to the office of the camp commandant and UNHCR with a possibility of their verification.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. UNHCR, OPM and the implementing partners should provide adequate information and notice to refugees on registration for repatriation and verification exercises carried out in the settlements.
2. UNHCR, OPM and implementing partners must as a matter of necessity look into the food rations and maintain food rations at percentages that can sustain human life amidst the vagaries of climates and the soils in the two settlements
3. UNHCR, OPM and implementing partners need to carry out re-verification of refugees who were left out during the last verification exercise.
4. UNHCR, OPM and implementing partners ought to harmonize their repatriation exercise in order to insure balanced repatriation practices in all the settlements and clusters of settlements where repatriation is ongoing.
5. the threshold of 320 refugees registered for any repatriation convoy ought to be reduced to a reasonable figure that will not necessarily hinder the repatriation process.
6. There is need for UNHCR and implementing partners to provide increased awareness on repatriation and to provide country of origin information for refugees in order to make informed repatriation decisions.

EXTREMELY VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS {EVI}

There are high numbers of extremely vulnerable individuals in both settlements. Whereas we could not establish with certainty the numbers of EVIs in Imvepi settlement, in Ikaffe they numbered about 3000 of the total population of the settlement. These were those officially registered by UNHCR, OPM and implementing partners. Despite this high number of registered EVIs, they were numerous complaints of none registration of EVIs who were not identified two or so years ago. In Imvepi settlement the implementing partners use community facilitators to identify EVIs, whereas in Ikaffe refugee settlement the implementing partners use vulnerable assessment committees {VACs} comprising not only of community facilitators but also staffs of IRC, OPM, UNHCR, Refugee welfare councils. There were more complaints of none registrations of EVIs in Imvepi than in Ikaffe settlement. The VAC system spreads out the identification process to a larger catchment than the use of community facilitators alone. Secondly they were complaints of corruptions in EVI identification in Imvepi settlement; they were allegations of irregular registration of unqualified persons, who are either friends or relatives of the community facilitators to reap the benefits that accrue to EVIs.

The level of assistance rendered to the EVIs in both camps has been reduced to within 60 to 80% depending on the level of vulnerability. Last year, Community services built 10 huts for EVIs in Ikaffe. The community services officer informed us that the this year, they plan to build five huts for EVIs using the same budget they had for huts last year. This is because the prices of building materials have hiked. Most of the EVIs are living in very dilapidated huts. Given the number of EVIs in Ikaffe, the ratio of accommodation assistance for EVIs vis-à-vis the population of EVIs is very alarmingly low. Some of the EVIs missed out on the verification exercise in Ikaffe due to their vulnerability. For example a blind woman under the care of a 7 year old minor could not make it to the verification centre and missed out and her rations and that of her caretaker were cut off due failure to be verified. We brought this case to the attention of the community services and OPM and by the time of our departure, they were at the brink of solving it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is need to harmonize EVI identification procedures by UNHCR, OPM and implementing partners in the refugee settlements. Particularly the VAC system is recommended.

2. There is need to push the percentages of assistance to EVIs to 100% given the settings of the two settlement in arid and none productive locations.
3. There is need to build more huts for EVIs who can not because of their vulnerability construct huts. There is also the need for UNHCR OPM, and implementing partners to encourage community participation in assisting the EVIs in their communities.

RELATIONSHIPS.

In both settlements refugees enjoy very cordial relationship with their host communities namely the lugbara in Arua and the aringa in Yumbe. There are though some stereotypes that the host communities have against the refugees which may not necessarily reflect a strain on their relationship with the refugees. The host communities perceive the Sudanese refugee communities as hostile and fairly backward lot of people, whereas they have no stereotypes against the Congolese refugees and other nationalities in these camps.

The Congolese refugees and the Sudanese refugees are not in total harmony. Partly because of the lingual, social and cultural background diversities between them but most importantly because the Congolese refugees feel that as a minority group in these camps they sidelined, isolated and discriminated against over opportunities in the settlements. They complain that the refugee leaders in the settlements especially the positions in the Refugee welfare council are predominantly occupied by the Sudanese and they do not get any help from these RWCs when ever they report their plight to them. There is a family of Liberians and another family of refugees from Central African Republic in Imvepi refugee settlement who feel extremely marginalized and a total minority in the settlement.

Among the different Sudanese tribes in the settlement, there is no marked hostility among them. They are coexisting perfectly well except that in 2007, there erupted an internal conflict among Nuer youth in Ikaffe settlement which led to bloody clashes among them until they were suppressed by mobile police patrols that were called in by the camp authorities to quell the clashes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Given that the repatriation process is gathering pace in north western Uganda, there is need to relocate the Congolese refugees and other minority nationalities in the refugee settlements in that part of the country to settlements where there are good numbers of Congolese refugees.

2. UNHCR and OPM should redesign protection strategies for the Congolese refugees and other minority nationalities in the refugee settlements in West Nile.
3. While the repatriation process still lasts, Congolese refugees and other minority nationalities in the refugee settlements in West Nile should be given a special consideration on the Refugee welfare council since these positions are political and elective.
4. Peace education and conflict resolution should be considered by OPM, UNHCR and its implementing partners in settings where there are tribes considered to be hostile.

SECURITY AND JUSTICE.

There security of the refugees could be at a very cognitive jeopardy if there was general insecurity in the region. There are only four police constables in Ikaffe refugee settlement yet according to the deputy camp commandant; there are about 320 access routes into the settlement. The police are very poorly facilitated. They have no means of transport, not even a bicycle to patrol the settlement. The refugees complain that in quest for justice complainants who report their cases to the police have to facilitate the police to take the matter to court. They claim that they are obliged to pay at least 50,000 Uganda shillings in facilitation in order for their cases to reach court through the police. The police claim that there are poorly paid receiving only 50,000 Uganda shillings per month for their service yet the work is unbearable.

We visited the police cells in Ikaffe settlement and noted that there was no food for suspects held at the police post. The police complained that they are sometimes forced to release suspect for fear of death by hunger while under their custody. The police also complained that they are forced to share their own food with suspects whose relatives or friends do not visit and bring food for the suspect in the police cells. There is no transport to take the suspects to court, which courts are about 70 kilometers from the settlement. The police cells have no lighting whatsoever, not even a poor lamp. The poor facilitation and lack of transport for the police forces a lot of the cases reported to be arbitrated between the parties out of court. There are also severe complains against the police of corruption. That most often than not, suspects bribe their way out of police custody and get back into the society intimidating victims and complainants who report cases against them to police. Fortunately, crime rate is very low in both Imvepi and Ikaffe refugee settlements. The most common crime in the two settlements is arson.

Just like any other refugee settlement the reporting mechanism is through the chain of command. Criminal and protection cases have to be reported to RWC1 then to RWCII then RWC III then to police. The police then send the case either to court if it is a criminal case or to the protection actors if it is a protection case. This reporting mechanism hinders timely arrests and action on a case. It allows time for culprits and suspects to escape. Particularly Sudanese refugees are notoriously known in the two refugee settlements of escaping from justice especially on the offences of rape and defilement.

It is understood among the Sudanese refugee communities that sexual offences of rape and defilement are very serious offences in Uganda and those found guilty are severely punished. Given this understanding, reporting a rape or defilement case is considered a very hostile act by the complainant that attracts reprisals from the family of the suspect if not in the settlement then back home in Sudan given that the Sudanese refugees are in a repatriation phase. As a result of fear of reprisals, many defilement and rape cases are not reported to police.

On security in both settlements, refugees informed us that there is no insecurity in the settlements. They said there was insecurity during the times the West Nile Bank Front rebels and UNLFII rebels operated in the region but from the time a peace deal was signed between UNLF II rebels and Government, Insecurity did a natural death.

We got the same findings about security and justice in Imvepi refugee settlement but unfortunately we could not establish the number of police officers and confirm from them their conditions of service.

SEXUAL GENDER BASED VIOLENCE.

The prevalence of sexual gender based violence in both Imvepi and Ikaffe refugee settlements was blamed by the women and the girls on the cultural background of the refugees and the manner in which a woman is viewed in society. There is high prevalence of sexual gender based violence among women in the settlements, first there is the practice of early forced marriages. For most Sudanese cultures, when a girl attains the age of 13 years, she is considered as mature enough for marriage and priced highly for bride price and there is rampant occurrence of forced early marriages among the southern Sudanese communities in these two settlements. This has occasioned loss of lives of young girls during child birth as their bodies may not be prepared for such early deliveries. There are also high cases of still births among such young girls.

There is also a high prevalence of marital rape in families coupled with domestic violence. This arises to basically from the notion that women are property bought with bride price , a woman can not be heard to say no her husband's sexual advances. " How can she refuse, what were my cows paid for" retorted a Sudanese young man of about 34 years when asked whether he could force his wife into sex. The domestic violence which is rampant in both settlements is mainly occasioned by alcoholism, food insecurity and the changing gender roles in forced migration. In most of the Sudanese cultures these issues are considered confidential to the married partners and an open report of these phenomenon is considered as a breach of cultural norms and attracts reprisals from the males and the society. So many of the victims of sexual gender based violence do not therefore open up and if at all they do they open up on aspects that they consider not very offensive to the men and society as a hall; our confidants were very few and expressed fear for their lives if they were found out to have divulged

information to us on sexual gender based violence among the Sudanese refugee communities.

As a result of the suppression and abuse of the women they are a relatively high tendencies of unexplained suicide attempts an phenomenon among women particularly in Ikaffe settlement.

RECOMMANDATION

1. There is absolute need for psychosocial support for victims of sexual gender based violence in both settlements.
2. There is another absolute need for open sessions with female refugees about their rights and their protection against sexual gender based violence.
3. There is need for community policing on sexual gender based violence.
4. There is need to strengthen the enforcement of laws against sexual gender based violence in the two settlements.

HEALTH

The most common health hazard in the two settlements are malaria and typhoid, there are very few health facilities in both two settlements and most cases far for the majority of refugees in settlements, given that there is very poor transport network in the settlements, the most affected victims of the distance are the expectant mothers and the children. The health facilities have been handed over to the District Health services and are therefore run by the ministry of health. Mothers complain that most often than not there are no or very limited vaccines for the immunization of their young children against the six killer diseases.

Generally there is insufficiency of drugs supply in the health facilities, the refugees complain that when they visit the health facilities they are diagnosed and prescription of drug is done but the drugs are not available in the health centers, they have to buy these drugs from the clinics outside the settlements. The drugs are expensive for most of the refugees and so many turn to use o herbs for treatment of their ailments. The problem is that the herbs are normally administered without proper prescription and dosage, some refugees resort to taking alcohol as a medicine.

There is high stigmatization of HIV/AIDS patients and so cases of HIV/AIDS do not show up for medical identification. Refugees do not go to test for their HIV status for fear of stigmatization if found positive and so Refugees suffering from HIV/AIDS normally die without treatment and in isolation.

Many refugees complained that the attitude of the nurses and health workers towards patients is devastatingly negative, they mistreat expectant mothers in labor and pay less attention to the critically ill.

Medical referral of acute cases often take time and ambulance services in facilitation of such referral are in the hands of the implementing partners of UNHCR in these settlements, there is therefore a discord between the referral and the ambulance services leading sometimes to death or worsening of the conditions of the referred cases.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is need for palliative care training for the nurses and health workers in the settlements.
2. There is need to increase the number of health workers in the settlements to match the number of refugees needing health services in the settlements.
3. Given the distances to the health centers, there is need for mobile antenatal and postnatal clinics to the various clusters in the settlements .
4. Voluntary HIV testing needs to be encouraged among the refugee communities.
5. There is urgent need to increase supply of drugs in the health centers in the settlements.
6. Ambulance services for acute referral cases need to be harmonized.

WATER AND SANITATION

Water is not a critical problem in both settlements

UNHCR and its implementing partners have sunk boar halls in most of the clusters of the settlements except that some of the boar halls tend to run dry during dry seasons and in some cases some the boar halls break down and it takes fairly long to repair them. In Imvepi refugee settlement there are water committees from among the refugees charged with the responsibility of insuring the smooth running and maintenance of the boar halls; the water's committees charged 200Ush per families for the use of the boar halls. some families complain that they are unable to raise the money and they get harassed by the water committee members for failure to pay the money. In Ikaffe refugee settlement, there were reports that the water in some of the boar halls was turning green. By the time of our visit there was a report of diarrhea out break that the refugees linked to the quality of the water from the boar halls.

The sanitation in Imvepi overall was good whereas in some parts of Ikaffe was poor, this was linked to the location of some of the clusters in very arid, almost inhabitable parts which would make almost impossible to sink pit latrines in to the bedrocks. Overall the majority of the refugees kept very clean homesteads.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is need for avaiement for water purifiers for the refugees during seasons when the water comes dirty .
2. OPM, UNHCR and implementing partners should devise means of accountability for the funds remitted to the water committees.
3. There is need to relocate refugee families located in inhabitable parts of the settlements to fairly habitable parts of the settlements.

EDUCATION

There are a number of self help primary and secondary schools in both Imvepi and Ikaffe refugee settlements that would be sufficient for the educational needs of the refugees children in these settlements but there are some primary factors that have continue to hinder the education of the refugee children in these settlements. First of all the pull out of UNHCR from sponsoring secondary education has led to massive drop out of refugees youth from studies.

Secondly the remoteness of these settlements discourages teachers from getting employment in the settlements. The few teachers who are employed in these settlements are mostly absent from school when the children need them for their studies.

Thirdly there is language dilemma in the instructions of the school children. The schools are attended by children of both the nationals and refugees of different nationalities, tribes and languages. This presents a very big difficulty especially in laying the foundation for education for the diverse backgrounds. Some children prefer Lugbara, others prefer Arabic, others prefer Kiswahili and others prefer English yet the knowledge of the available teacher in the various languages is wanting. This hinders the education progress of otherwise very brilliant and education hungry children.

Before the start of the repatriation program UNHCR and World Food Program established a school feeding program that was a pull factor for a lot of refugee children to go to school but with the repatriation program ongoing, they have reduced on the feeding program, the school feeding program has dwindled considerably that a lot of children have dropped out of school given that they have to walk long distances and stay largely hungry at school the whole day.

In some of the schools particularly in the repatriation zone in Ikaffe settlement, some of the teachers who were refugees have been repatriated, leaving wide gaps that can not easily be filled. Some of the repatriated teachers maliciously make off with a valuable teaching aids and materials meant for the education welfare of the refugee children.

Some of the schools are far for some of the children. Some times some of the children have to walk over ten kilometers to attend school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is need to increase remuneration for the teachers in the settlements as well as inventing some other forms of motivation for the teachers in the settlements.
2. There is need to harmonize the language of instruction in the schools in the settlements.
3. There is need to build houses for teachers in the teachers quarters near the schools in the settlements.
4. There is need for a more vigorous supervision of teachers in the schools in the settlements.
5. There is need for reinstatement of the school feeding programme even amidst repatriation to enable children to continue with their education until they are repatriated.
6. There is need to establish vocational schools that would cost less for imparting vocations into the school drop out who may not have another chance to learn a trade again.

LIVELIHOOD.

A lot has been said about livelihood in the first part of this report while dealing with the push factors in the repatriation equation but there is need for a brief mention under this heading.

The amount of food rations given to the refugees in both settlements has been substantially reduced to rations ranging between 6 – 9 kilograms of maize grains, 1 kg of beans and less than half a liter of cooking oil per person per month. A lot of refugees are resorting to gathering in the bushes for food. They gather a lot of shea seeds for butter and sell them in the markets in order to raise some money to buy more food, given that the settlements are basically dry and can not support agriculture except during seasons of heavy rains. Refugees who were left out in the verification exercise in Imvepi have been deleted from provision of food rations. They therefore have to survive on the meager shares of other family members who were verified and are entitled to food rations in the settlement. Also relatively new arrivals have not been considered for food rations. There are scores of *defacto* refugees in the settlements who arrived in the settlements after initial registrations had been done. Some have stayed in the settlement for close to five years and over. UNHCR and OPM have not registered them claiming that they have to be registered from Kampala. These *defacto* refugees have settled with their families and relatives in the settlements. They are not entitled to food rations and therefore depend on the meager food rations given to members of their families or relatives who are entitled to food rations in the settlements.

Given the food situation, there is food insecurity and the standards of living are very low. The Deputy RDO informed us that World Food Program intends to continue with the progressive reduction of the food rations for refugees and then phase out food distribution by 2011.

The range of economic activities that refugees would engage in are very limited and the refugees have very serious limitations in trying to penetrate into these economic

activities. Agriculture is very problematic given the nature of the soil and the climate of the settlements. Refugees have no capital to engage in trade and other businesses. Most of the businesses in both settlements belong to nationals. Most of the refugees can not earn more than one thousand Uganda shillings in weeks. Even if the refugees could raise capital for any business they would be hindered by the poor transport network and the restrictions on movement of refugees from the settlements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. UNHCR and OPM need to lobby WFP for reinstatement of the the full food rations for refugees in the settlements
2. In the alternative, UNHCR and OPM need to expedite the repatriation program for thee refugees .

INTERMARRIEGES.

Inter marriages between Sudanese refugees and the nationals was largely unregistered. However there were very minimal intermarriages between the different Sudanese tribes. Diversities in tribal and cultural practices were cited as the major limiting factor in inter marriages phenomenon. Most especially the variations in bride price levels. There was no notice of any intermarriages between Sudanese refugees and the Congolese refugees. Much as there were intermarriages among the Congolese refugees, They were considered less of intermarriages given that the number of Congolese refugees in the two settlements id very low in comparison with the Sudanese population and the Congolese are therefore considered a closed community that intermarriages among them can not easily be recognized. We could not therefore with certainty asses the impact of intermarriages on the repatriation process as we had done earlier in the Rhino camp refugee settlement field visit report.

PROTECTION CASES.

We identified very few protection cases in both Imvepi and Ikaffe refugee settlement who may not return to Sudan amidst the crave for return among the majority of the refugees. These cases are confidential and can't be produced in this report however the major and overriding factor giving rise to protection concerns in the wake of the repatriation stampede is fear of revenge killings, marital conflicts with officer in the SPLA and *Jalaba* factor³

CONCLUSION.

³ For the full expression of these terms, refer to RLP Madi Okoll filed visit report Nov 2007.

By and large, the repatriation exercise has stalled very conspicuously in both Imvepi and Ikaffe refugee settlements. There is overwhelming desire among majority of the refugees in both settlements to return to Sudan. Refugees are getting frustrated at the stall of the repatriation programme. OPM and UNHCR complain of lack of adequate resources to hasten the repatriation of these refugees. They also complain of the very limited resources and capacity of the Government of southern Sudan to receive the repatriated refugees. There is need on the part of UNHCR to increase its capacity in the repatriation programme and repatriate the bulk of refugees who are increasingly becoming impatient with the waiting. Government of Uganda and UNHCR need to address the issues identified in this report and think through the recommendations herein. Government of Uganda and UNHCR need to liaise with the international community and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) to try to enhance the capacity of GoSS to receive the repatriating refugees (returnees) For those refugees who cannot genuinely repatriate to Sudan, there is need by UNHCR to find alternative protection mechanisms and durable solutions by way of resettlement and local integration.