



Refugee Law Project

## **South – Sudan Crisis: Impact on Northern Uganda A Rapid Assessment Report, January 2014**

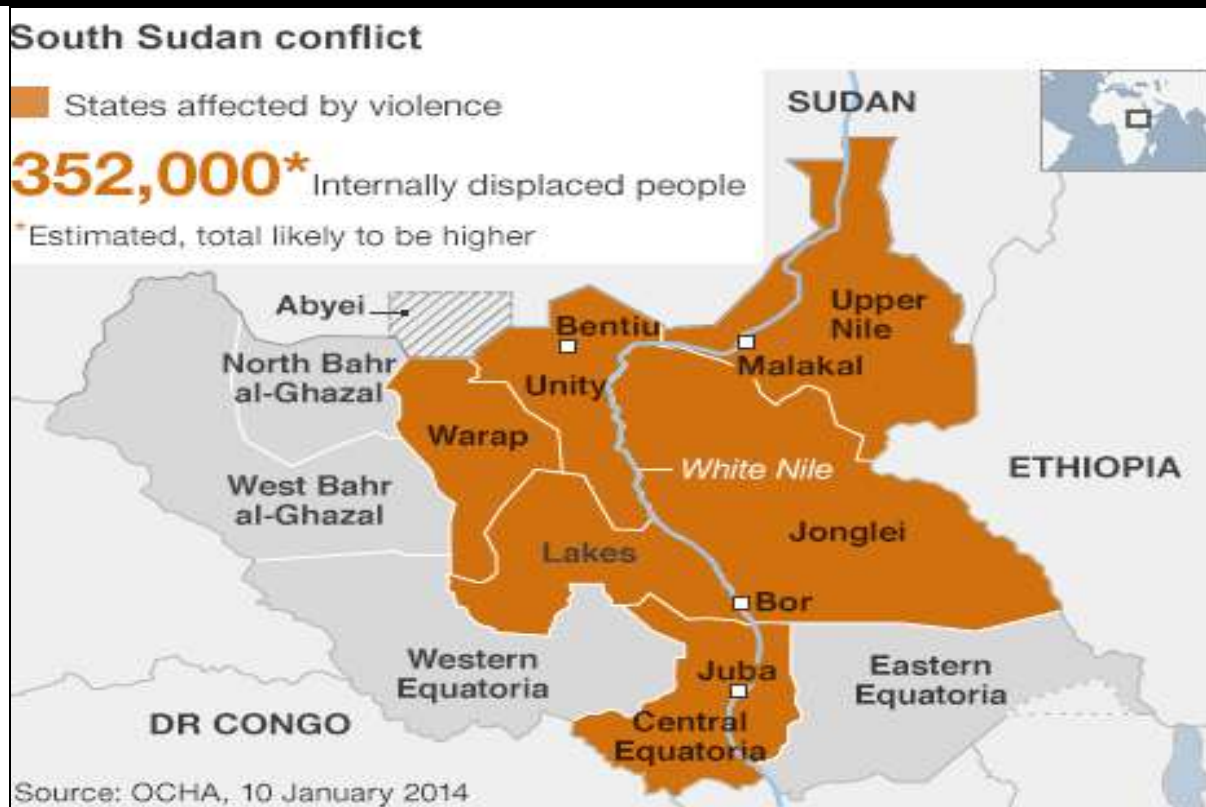
### **Background**

From the time the current violent conflict started in South Sudan, the Districts bordering South Sudan within Northern Uganda have been receiving refugees fleeing from the conflict in large numbers. The immediate concerns have been security implications for post-conflict northern Uganda and attendant humanitarian crisis. The humanitarian response has been the creation of refugee camps in some of the Districts including Dzaipi refugee camp in Adjumani, Elegu in Amuru, and Rhino Camp in Arua. Other districts like Gulu, Lira, Kitgum, Lamwo, Moyo, Koboko, and Yumbe have also seen refugees coming in thousands and settling within towns and villages mostly undocumented. In Lira and Adjumani, there has been a corresponding spike in criminal activities and armed robberies.

This report assessed the situation on the ground inside the Ugandan border and highlights the issues, figures, patterns and perceptions of refugees, asylum seekers, and key stakeholders. The report also looked at the immediate social-economic and political impact of the crisis within the refugee host districts including the relationships between the asylum seekers/refugees and local communities. The report was prepared for early warning purposes and presented sub-regional leaders (LCVs, RDCs, DPCs, CAOs, DISOs, and UPDF representatives) from Acholi and West Nile sub-regions in Gulu on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2014.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Local Council Five Chairpersons, Resident District Commissions, Chief Administrative Officers, District Internal Security Organizations.



### **Methodology:**

The preliminary findings of this rapid assessment report are based on field interviews and observations made by a team of RLP researchers who visited Elegu border point and the refugee reception centre and Dzaipi refugee collection centre in Adjumani district between 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> January 2014. The team held 37 key informants interviews and one focus group discussion with 5 refugees who fled into Uganda. The key informant interviews were conducted with selected government officials from the districts of Amuru, Adjumani and Gulu, OPM officials, Police, UHCHR representatives and local community representatives. The findings are preliminary and an in-depth analysis will be developed into a briefing paper for advocacy purposes.

### **Acknowledgement**

The Rapid Assessment was conducted by Lyandro Komakech - RLP Senior Research and Advocacy Officer (RLP), Stephen Oola - Programme Manager (RLP), James Ojok - Gender Researcher (RLP), Barnabas Otim - Project Officer (ACCS), Eunice Ouko - Programme Assistant (RLP), Moses Odokonyero, Brian Cana, Charles Akena, and Stephen Okello, as part of the Advisory consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS), a three member partnership bringing together three organisations: International Alert, Refugee Law Project and Saferworld, funded by DFID. The overall aim of ACCS is to

assist DFID and partners in strengthening the potential of the PRDP to address the causes of conflict in a way that is itself conflict sensitive, and which can contribute to sustainable peace and stability.

## **Key Findings**

In this field visit the research team found out that the perceived cause of the Southern Sudan conflict centres around power struggle between President Salva Kiir and his vice Dr. Riek Machar. The weak institutions and persistent governance crisis (bogged down by patronage, lack of accountability, poor service delivery, dysfunctional institutions and incomplete disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) compound this. The trigger factor became an apparent regime purging manifested in the dismissal of the entire South Sudan cabinet by the President. The dismissal and subsequent reappointment which left out key political actors and groups created a condition of mistrust amongst the rival political, ethnic and military camps within the SPLA/M.

The violence was sparked off by an alleged suspicious (ethnic-based) disarmament within the President guards and coordinated arrests and detention of key political figures in Juba, on December 15. This was followed by a quick succession of events including rapid evacuation of foreign nationals, mutiny, defections and violent uprisings sometimes taking ethnic dimensions. The immediate impacts were large number of civilian death and flights across the border. In just one month, the crisis has displaced over 300,000 south Sudanese and several thousands have crossed the border into Uganda as refugees.<sup>2</sup> By 12<sup>th</sup> January 2013 over 21,659 south Sudanese had been registered as refugees at Elegu border point alone. An estimate 5,000 Sudanese have entered Uganda via Lamwo border points even though only a few identifies themselves as refugees and between 10,000 -20,000 fled into Ethiopia and Kenya. An estimated 10,000 have fled north to Sudan. According to Interpol and immigration officials at the border points, there are several hundreds of south Sudanese fleeing but not identifying themselves as refugees. Previous record shows that there were over 10,000 refugees in northern Uganda before the current conflict. However, by 12<sup>th</sup> January 2014 the new statistics shows the followings:

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Interpol official at Elegu on January 11<sup>th</sup> 2014.

Refugee.....27, 870

Displaced Ugandans.....16, 350

Other nationals.....13, 947

**Total.....58, 230**

**Sources: Uganda Police Regional Interpol Office-Elegu**

**Table 1: South Sudanese Asylum Seekers and Ordinary Citizens Movement into Uganda as of December 2013**

Dates	Asylum Seekers	Ordinary Travellers	Total
27th	79	30	109
28th	391	63	454
29th	212	45	257
30th	456	64	520
31st	511	65	571
	<b>1649</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>1911</b>

In the last days of the month of December, 2013 there was continuous and increasing number of South Sudanese fleeing from the conflict prone areas of Malakal in Upper Nile State, Bor in Jonglei State, Bentiu in Unity State and Juba.

**Source:** *Elegu Border Internal Security Office (2014)*

The reasons for continuous influx of asylum seekers are attributed to the intense war between the government forces and the opposition forces especially in the states of Jonglei, Unity, Central Equatoria, Warap and Upper Nile. Besides, there has been an increase in intra-ethnic violence mainly between the Dinka ngok and Nuer communities. According to the sources we talked to, the most conflict-affected states are the Upper Nile, Jonglei, Unity State and some parts of Central Equatorial. The ethnic communities most affected in these states are the Nuer, Morolei, Dinka, Shilluk and Anywak. For more analysis see: <http://www.irinnews.org/fr/report/99477/refugee-arrivals-in-uganda-raise-humanitarian-security-concerns>.

## **Immediate Impact**

1. **General Security:** Inadequate border security and the porous nature of our border pose a big security threat. The Uganda Police at the border informed us that they are overstretched and their appeal for immediate reinforcement has not yielded much. There are cases of refugees coming with arms; for instance, over 60 pairs of army uniform and ammunition were reportedly recovered from some of these refugees who are currently settled in Elegu, Amuru District. There have also been reported cases of inter-tribal conflict among the refugees, especially the Dinka and Nuer in Elegu and Dzaipi. This creates a big risk to the population of this region if not well handled.

2. **Food Security:** There has been a sharp increase in demand for local foodstuff and basic necessities. The populations within the neighbouring have taken full advantage of the new market created by the fleeing refugees and all routes leads to the border market and Adjumani for foodstuff. This is likely to cause food shortage in the immediate and long term as farmers depletes their grain store to take advantage of good prices and available market.

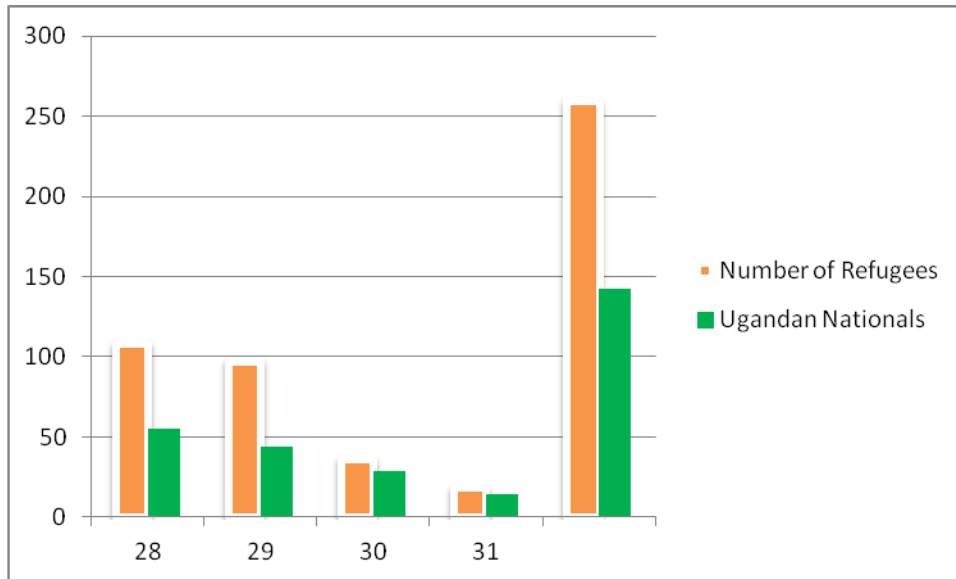
3. **Health:** The influx of these people possess a big threat in the health sector since there is an increase in the population size and congestion in some other areas without clear medical records and there is general fear that some of these refugees might not have gone through the required immunization, medical screening and pre-cautions as practiced here in Uganda. The refugees themselves have gone through traumatic and difficult experiences requiring specialized medical services including psychosocial support, which is already lacking with dire consequences. The sanitation has deteriorated with reported cases hepatitis B outbreak. According to a medical official at Dzaipi health centre, diseases like measles and malaria have been registered to be the increase. Within the local health centres and Adjumani district, there exist very limited capacities to handle this increasing influx. In eleven days, medicals staffs at Dzaipi Health Centre III outpatient department attended to 1,406 patients, out of which 988 where South Sudanese asylum seekers and 418 Ugandan nationals. The average ratio of refugee per Ugandan seeking treatment at Dzaipi health centre stands at 2.1.

**Figure 2: Extract of Statistics of Patients attended to at Dzaipi Health Centre III on Daily basis, December 2013 in the last 4 days of December 2013.**

Date	Number of Refugees	Ugandan Nationals
28	108	55
29	97	44
30	36	29
31	18	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>142</b>

**Source:** Dzaipi Health Centre III, Outpatient Department, 2014.

**A graph showing out-patience attendance in Dzaipi Health Centre**



**Source:** Dzaipi Health Centre III, Outpatient Department, 2014.

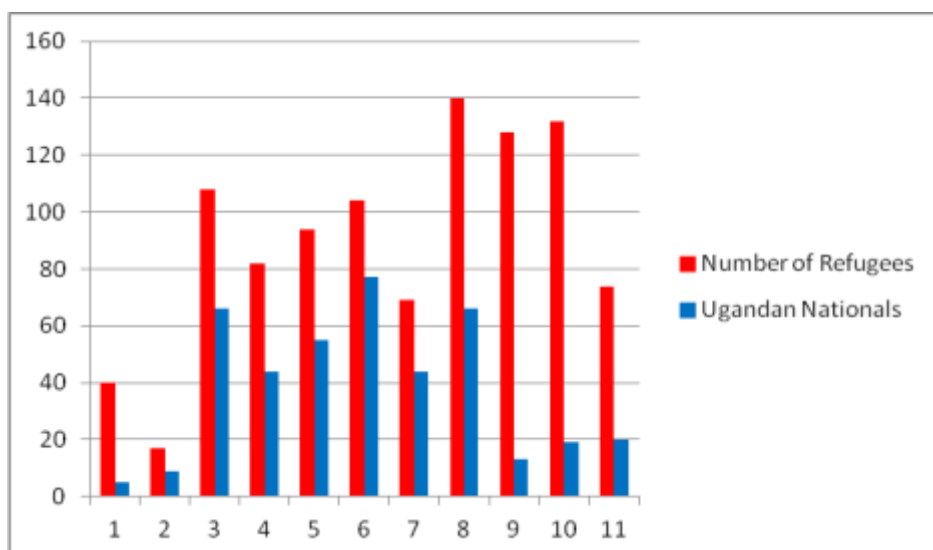
As the influx continues, the health sector continues to experience the stress. There are reported cases of mothers delivering on the way as they flee and new-born not receiving vaccinations. At Dzaipi health centre, there are only two trained midwives handling on average 10 women each per day.<sup>3</sup> Other pre-cautions like HIV testing for expectant mothers are proving difficult.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Health officials, Dzaipi.

**Statistics of Patients attended to at Dzaipi Health Centre III on Daily basis, December 2014.**

Date	Number of Refugees/Asylum Seekers	Ugandan Nationals
1	40	5
2	17	9
3	108	66
4	82	44
5	94	55
6	104	77
7	69	44
8	140	66
9	128	13
10	132	19
11	74	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>418</b>

**Source:** Dzapi Health Centre III, Outpatient Department, 2014.



**Source:** RLP, 2014, Adapted from Dzapi Health Centre III, Outpatient Department, 2014.

At Dzaipi, the major refugee collection point in Adjumani, the health centre is already experiencing drug shortage despite borrowing from other sources and the support being provided by Medicines Sans Frontiers and UNFPA, staff fatigue, limited spaces for admission and delivery and reduced delivery kits, water and sanitation have become a big problem.

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## **Intra-refugee tensions**

At Dzaipi collection point, there are fears of potential violence breaking out amongst the Dinka and Nuer communities who initially refused to be profiled alongside each other. Both UNCHR and OPM have decried the lack of adequate space for settlement. The current 8 settlement camps are already overstretched and the authorities are negotiating with neighbouring communities to avail three more settlement. Those who spoke to us also alleged growing hostilities against Dinka-Ngok and Dinka –Twic in the refugee communities.



**Source:** RLP Video Unit; Newly Profiled Refugees at Dzaipi collection centre constructing their makeshift tents.

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## **Impact on local economy in northern Uganda**

- The conflict has halted the sale of Ugandan goods and services in the South Sudan Market, which affected many local business communities that used to do cross-border trade.
- The conflict has however created new ready markets for the local communities who could not travel the long distances to Juba for trade within the Uganda border.
- There has been a shoot up in market prices especially beans, maize, cassava, millet and rice. Most food commodities prices have tripled along the border region.
- Traders from local markets and neighbouring districts are rushing to take advantage of the available markets



## Observations

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- The controversial deployment of Ugandan troops in south Sudan has had a significant impact on the trajectory of the south Sudan conflict with long-term implications. There are fears of reprisal from the oppositional forces against Ugandans and Uganda in the course of the violence or after a settlement is found. It is alleged that Ugandans in Juba and other towns are disguising as Kenyans in fear of targeted killings.
- Refugee mothers are giving birth with no facilities to support children at birth, e.g. baby blankets, towels, and clothes.
- There are a big number of un-accompanied minors whose parents were killed during violence, flight or are separated and need re-union. Uganda Red Cross society had already documented 221 unaccompanied minors and 80 children separated from their families.<sup>4</sup> Save the Children has established a temporary child friendly space and beginning to profile these children. It was apparent from our observation that these children are extremely stressed, malnourished and the available services are grossly inadequate to address their emotional, educational and livelihood needs.
- The children, as a category of refugees in the camps have challenges of diseases like malaria, diarrhoea, and measles that at present have inadequate facilities.
- There exist looming conflicts with the host communities on issues of land, sharing water points, school facilities and toilets. The Resident District Commissioner Adjumani and the District Police Commander of Adjumani have appealed to the government and UNCHR to relocate some refugees to Kiryandongo to reduce the congestion and avoid refugees encroaching on local communities land. The officials also report incidents of hostilities against some refugees of Dinka origin.<sup>5</sup>
- Communities have rejected refugees to be accommodated in school facilities at present and threatening them with evictions.
- Zoning of ethnic communities at resettlement camps without any reconciliation initiatives is a recipe for future violence even within the settlement sites.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Red Cross official - Adjumani, January 12, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with RDC Adjumani January 12, 2014.

## **Immediate responses**

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- There is need for immediate police deployment in the border points and affected areas to boost capacities of the current manpower on the ground. Besides, there is need for sustained logistical support to police force e.g. pickup Lorries, ambulances, emergency food supply among others
- The regional local governments must put in place mechanisms like DDMCs to coordinate documentation and management of the Sudanese influx and settlement.
- Awareness programme should be put in place with immediate effect as regards general security, food security and health concerns, including screening measures for possible strange disease outbreaks in habitat areas.
- There is need for drugs of various assortments to be supplied in the sites.
- Counselling services should be provided especially on HIV/AIDS. As observed the communities are very hostile to anyone on issues of AIDS/HIV testing.
- The injured should be given immediate medical attention. The traumatized refugees should be provided with counselling services and psychosocial support programs and the elderly and disabled should be given special assistance.
- Refugee youth should be recruited to work alongside the officials as a means of instilling confidence among the refugee population.
- Peace building and reconciliation initiatives, including intra-ethnic dialogues between the rival groups should be promoted even while in displacement and exile and local humanitarian agencies should intervene immediately before the situation become dire.

## **Long-term responses**

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- There is urgent need for Uganda to rethink its militaristic and partial nature of intervention in South Sudan by engaging with regional leaders to support a comprehensive solution to the south Sudan crisis.
- There is need to support a peaceful resolution to the conflict and protection of civilians in a non-partisan manner.

- IGAD's involvement in mediation should be re-assessed to ensure consensus is built amongst all IGAD leaders for the peace talks to be taken as credible.
- The UN and AU should deploy a neutral force to enforce a ceasefire and provide safe space and evacuation to civilians and other nationals trapped in the conflict. It must guarantee the peace process and support effective DDR and reconstruction of post-conflict south Sudan.

For more analysis see: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/99494/doubts-over-uganda-s-military-intervention-in-south-sudan>.

### **About Refugee Law Project (RLP)**

The Refugee Law Project (RLP) seeks to ensure fundamental human rights for all, including asylum seekers, refugees, and internally displaced persons. RLP envisions a country that treats all people within its borders with the same standards of respect and social justice. We work to see that all people, as specified under national and international law, are treated with the fairness and consideration due all fellow human beings. The Refugee Law Project, School of Law, Makerere University, has several projects and programmes with offices in Kampala, Gulu and Kitgum.

### **About the Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS)**

The Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS) is a three-member consortium that brings together Refugee Law Project, International Alert and Saferworld. The consortium was established to support the operationalization of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) programming, *“to ensure that the programme does no harm, and that the overall process addresses the drivers of conflict and delivers tangible peace building results”*, through on-going audits and analysis of recovery-related interventions and those that are DFID funded. The overall aim of ACCS is to assist DFID and implementing partners in strengthening the potential of the PRDP and recovery process to address the causes of conflict and contribute to sustainable peace and stability. The rapid assessment was conducted by the Conflict, Transitional Justice and Governance Programme supported by DFID and Democratic Governance Facility.

With funding support from the UK-Department for International Development (DFID)

