

# **A Report on the Fifth Annual Sexual Gender Based Violence & Persecution (SGBVP) Awareness Week**

**(4th - 8th March 2013)**



**(Kampala, Isingiro, Mbarara, Gulu, Hoima and Kotido districts)**



**2013**



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## **Refugee Law Project**

Refugee Law Project (RLP) was established in 1999 to work with asylum seekers and refugees. It has since expanded to also work with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), deportees and other forced migrants. Recognising that sexual violence in conflict situation against women, girls, men and boys refugees, is a serious problem in all the populations with which it works, RLP established a special programme of Legal & Psychosocial support (including medical referrals) coupled with advocacy and awareness raising, in early 2009.

RLP envisions a country that treats all people within its borders with the same standards of respect and social justice, where everybody enjoys their human rights, irrespective of their legal status. Relevant international laws as well as the Constitution of Uganda support this vision. RLP's Mission statement is to "To empower asylum seekers, refugees, deportees, IDPs and host communities in Uganda to enjoy their human rights and lead dignified lives".

The Refugee Law Project seeks to ensure fundamental human rights for all asylum seekers, refugees, deportees and internally displaced persons within Uganda. We work to see that all people living in Uganda, as specified under national and international law, are treated with the fairness and considerations.

Refugee Law Project has its head office in Kampala and five field offices in Gulu, Kitgum, Kotido, (Currently closed) Hoima and Mbarara. The Mbarara and Hoima offices were opened officially during the Sexual Gender Based Violence & Persecution (SGBVP) week reported on here.

## **RLP's annual SGBV Awareness Week**

The SGBV week is an annual week long awareness raising campaign highlighting issues of sexual and Gender based Violence and persecution organized and coordinated by the Gender and Sexuality Program of the Refugee Law Project. It brings together refugee communities in and around Kampala as well as in rural refugee settlements. It also attracts SGBV/P programming NGOs, CBOs, relevant Government departments, policy makers, host communities and other stakeholders, on a common ground of protection and promotion of Human Rights and the fight against SGBV, so as to create space for dialogue on pertinent issues around SGBV, and to highlight SGBV issues in forced migration and refugee situations.

Whereas forced migration strips people of the protection and security of their homes, Sexual Gender Based Violence is often one of the factors leading to flight, as well as exacerbating vulnerabilities of men, women, boys and girls during flight and even in the country of asylum after flight.

In 2013, RLP organized its Fifth Annual Sexual and Gender Based Violence/Persecution (SGBVP) awareness week. The week aims at advocacy, raising awareness on SGBVP, gender

and sexuality issues, strengthening collaborative networks, partnership and coordination with other organizations so as to provide comprehensive support mechanism and litigation to victims/survivors of SGBV/P.

The week helps in building on extensive work by partner organisations and survivor-led support groups in Uganda. It provides an opportunity to reflect, consolidate, strategize, publicise and advocate on practical questions of medical and psychosocial work with survivors, as well as the legal, political and sociological parameters of working on conflict-related sexual violence. The week thus helps to break the cycle that leads to domestic violence while in the country of asylum.

In 2013, for the first time, RLP took the week to the different refugee communities in and out of Kampala including refugee settlements. RLP managed to reach refugees in Nakivale and Kyangwali refugee settlement in Insingiro and Hoima district respectively.

### **Theme of the 2013 SGBV Awareness Week**

The 2013 awareness week ran under the theme: *“From Sexual Violence in Conflict to Domestic Violence in Peace”*. This theme was proposed and chosen by refugee leaders of the support groups affiliated to RLP. It resonated with our daily work with a wide range of forced migrants. The week explored how sexual violence results in a range of psychological and emotional tensions, conflicts, and violence, and how these dynamics not only transcend borders, but also affect all members of society; women, men, girls and boys, whether as individuals, as members of households, or as members of their wider community.

### **Chief Walker and other Invited Guests**

As in previous years, the week started with a peaceful march from Railway Gardens to Old Kampala Secondary School Playground (Opposite Gadaffi Mosque) and the Chief Walker was the Late (RIP) Hon. Dr. Stephen Malinga, Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees represented by Apollo Kazungu, the Commissioner for Refugees in the Office of the Prime Minister who officially opened the week long event.

The week brought together different stakeholders, government agencies, national and international organizations working on Gender and Sexual violence and persecution together with refugee serving/support agencies. Professionals like human rights activists, practicing lawyers, medical practitioners, psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists from around the country also participated in the awareness week.

## **Outputs and impacts of the SGBVP week**

### **Legal Advocacy**

The presentation of the week and the stakeholders’ roundtable informed the development of a legal advocacy agenda designed to ensure that legal frameworks identify the gaps in the

implementation of the law and how to best respond to and prevent sexual violence in conflict and asylum situations. Subsequently, information gathered on this day informed discussions during the First South-South Institute and was also used during a strategic litigation meeting on the legal options for male survivors of sexual violence.

### **Advocacy & Lobbying for Inclusion of Refugee survivors in SGBVP work of the government and other stakeholders**

It was expected that the week would add considerable momentum to the development of evidence-based interventions in support of refugee survivors of sexual violence. Indeed, the proceedings of the week, notably the roundtable and the community outreaches, were captured in the press statement was released in the middle of the week.

#### **Press statement**

Refugee Law Project together with the support groups produced a press statement in the Monitor Newspaper Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013. The statement highlighted the plight of refugee survivors/victims of SGBVP. It included the logos and names of some of the support groups hosted by Refugee Law Project, and were used as a means of reaching out to the broader communities both in Uganda and outside the country.

#### **Radio talk shows**

On Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2013, RLP was hosted on Mega FM, a local Radio station based in Gulu with coverage in Northern Uganda and part of Southern Sudan. The talk show was hosted in a bi-monthly programme called *Te-yat (Under a tree)*. The radio talk show brought on board technical and influential speakers; Rosalba Oywa (People's Voice for Peace), the District Gender Officer (Gulu District Local Government), Mrs. Betty Ochan (Gulu Women's Representative in Parliament), Onekgiu (Community Liaison Officer Gulu Central Police Station), Komakech Kilama (Private Legal Practitioner), Stephen Oola (Head of Program, Conflict, Governance and Transitional Justice) and James Ronald Ojok (Gender Researcher).

The topic was guided by the theme of the SGBVP week **"From sexual violence in conflict to domestic violence in peace"** This discussion came in at a very important time as Uganda joined the rest of the world in celebrating the International Women's Day (8<sup>th</sup> March 2013) under the sub-theme, **"The gender agenda, connecting grassroots women to development."** The focus of the discussion ranged from the nature and effects of sexual violence, through roles, rights and way forward.

During the discussions, a range of manifestations of SGBV were classified under the following categories; Domestic violence, Sexual violence, Economic violence, Abuse of children in their homes, Early marriage of young girls, Rape and Defilement. Listeners had the opportunity to call and give input and ask questions to the panelists. Both panelists and

callers (Listeners) came out with the following as some of the causes of the various forms of SGBV that were mentioned as above:

1) The high levels of alcoholism in the community as a result of unemployment and lack of productive alternative sources of income, 2) Existing support programs that empower some sections of society while disenfranchising others e.g. Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA). 3) Lack of consultative decision-making processes in homes (especially regarding how to share the proceeds of the farm products during harvest sessions). 4) Lack of structures for redress in the communities like inadequate by-laws, policies and lack of enforcement of existing laws against intake of alcohol and finally 5) The traumatic experiences of communities in Northern Uganda, which to date have been left largely unaddressed.

Discussants explored the effects of violence at the family level, they pointed out that, irrespective of whether it targets men or women, violence leads to physical and psychological injuries that impact on survivor's sense of physical and psychological wellbeing. The team also noted that the negative impacts of violence affect not only the immediate survivors but are transferred to their children and friends hence in the long run paralyzing and frustrating the whole community/society through dynamics such as separation and divorce.

General comments were made on the existing focus on the gender dimension of working with communities in the post conflict communities. A panelist noted that the government perception of gender is still focusing on women as survivors and it is not inclusive on dealing with men as survivors of sexual violence. Some of the cultural practices were also noted as reinforcing SGBV in the community by discriminating against women.

The perception of viewing women as sexual objects has also led to the continued violation that target women in the community. The inability of many women to report cases of sexual violence was also viewed as a factor leading to the continued violation of men and lack of redress for men as survivors of SGBV.

Callers had the opportunity to openly share their thoughts, comments and questions, and crowned the radio talk show with lively discussions and examples of SGBV related issues happening within the communities.

On a similar note, RLP was hosted on Central Broadcasting Service (CBS) FM 89.2 on 11th March 2013 at 14:35hrs, by Martin Oscar Kintu. Gerald Siranda Blacks represented RLP in the talk show. Discussion was on the theme of the week, why it was chosen and key activities that will grace the weeklong event. The proceedings of the talk show were recorded and uploaded onto RLP YouTube<sup>1</sup> (Published on Mar 11, 2013). Similarly, RLP was

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvGovRZMAw>

hosted on NBS television<sup>2</sup> on Monday 4th March. Under the programme “The Morning Breeze” by Simon, Doreen and Joe, again discussing the theme of the week, how sexual violence experienced during times of conflict leads to domestic violence during times of peace.

Representatives of 29 media houses in and around Kampala joined RLP during the launch of the awareness week. The following media houses were present; Radio Kaboozi, Bukedde FM, Channel 44 TV, Bukedde Print, Radio Kiira, Record TV, Magic FM, NBS, CBS, UBC Radio, Mega FM, Sanyu FM, Radio Sapientia, Voice Media Group, Star FM, KFM, Dembe FM, Radio Simba, WBS TV, BTV, Observer and New Vision among others.

### Attendance during SGBVP week

The attendance during the week was overwhelming, many forced migrants and host community members participated in one or multiple activities. A total of 1,939 participants registered during the week in Kampala, Isingiro and Hoima. Participants were drawn from general refugee community in Kampala, Kyangwali and Nakivale as well as participants who attended the roundtable, community outreaches. Government agencies, donor communities, community leaders and refugee service providers also participated in the weeklong event

### Program of the week

The program below guided the weeklong event

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	VENUE
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> March, 2013	9:00AM - 11:00 AM	Launch of the week long activity: peaceful marching from Railway Gardens to the Old Kampala Secondary School Play Ground Opp. Gaddafi Mosque	Old Kampala Secondary School's Play Ground
	11:00 AM -11:15 AM	Opening and Welcome Remarks - Director RLP	
	11:15 AM- 11:45 AM	Speeches by Support Group Leaders (3 Representatives)	
	11: 45 AM - 12:00 PM	Speech by Dr. Ben Twinomugisha. Former Dean, School of Law, MUK	
	12:00 PM -12:40 PM	MDD Performance by the Refugee Groups	
	12:40 PM -1:00 PM	Keynote address UNHCR Country Representative-Uganda.	

<sup>2</sup> <http://nbs.ug/details.php?option=videodetails&id=865#.UT8R1hzFWS0>

	1:00 PM -1:30 PM	Speech by the Chief Walker/Guest – The Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees. Hon. Dr. Stephen Malinga	
	1:30 PM - 3:00 PM	<b>LUNCH</b>	
	3:00 PM - 3:30 PM	Closing remarks - By Eunice Owiny, Mental Health & Psychosocial Wellbeing Programme	
	<b>9:00 AM - 4:00 PM</b>	<b>Exhibition/show casing, on spot service delivery, VCT, Blood donation</b>	
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> March, 2013	9:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Activities ongoing for refugee communities in the settlement to interface and get engaged in the week activities.	Kyangwali Refugee Settlement - Hoima District
		Prison Visits to refugees, asylum seekers and IDP and inmates in the prisons	Kigo Prison. Kampala
Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> March, 2013	9:00 AM -3:00 PM	Prison Visits to refugees, asylum seekers and IDP and inmates in the prisons	Luzira, Mbarara & Hoima prison
		Community Outreaches	Nsambya and Makindye
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> March, 2013	9:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Day one Activities ongoing for the refugee communities in the settlement to interface and get engaged in the week activities.	Nakivale Refugee Settlement – Isingiro District
	10:00 AM - 3:00 PM	Stake Holders Round Table Discussion (Closed)	Grand Imperial Hotel, Kampala
Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> March, 2013	9:00 AM- 3:00 PM	Press release with all the week activities reflected. Radio and TV talk shows. Commemoration of International Women’s day in Kotido	Monitor, NBS & NTV, KFM & CBS, Kotido District HQS
	2:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Community Outreaches	Kasubi, Katwe & Nabulagala

### Exhibition and blood donation

The week was graced by exhibitions and the opportunity to make blood donations. Out of the 30 organizations that booked space for exhibition 26 turned up and exhibited their items while over 200 people went for confidential voluntary counseling and testing for

HIV/AIDS. 80 people donated blood on the same day during the open blood donation service organized by Uganda Blood Transfusion Service.



*Participants during voluntary counseling and testing and exhibition of SGBVP related materials*

## Marching

The launch of the weeklong activity began with a peaceful march from Railway Gardens, Jinja Road. The Traffic Police who provided the marching route guided the march and 45 police officers provided protection during the march; including travel and patrol police officers from Kampala Central, Katwe and Old Kampala Police Station. The OC Station of Old Kampala Police Station provided security at the venue for both day and night guard. Participants and invited guests assembled at Railway Gardens marched, T-Shirts were given out. The march recorded 420 participants and was led by Uganda Prisons Brass Band.



*Prison's Brass Band leading the march as Police escorts participants*

## Opening Speech of the Director of Refugee Law Project, Dr. Chris Dolan

Upon finishing the TV talk show at NBS TV, Dr. Chris Dolan joined the rest of the people at Old Kampala Secondary School Play Ground and delivered a speech. In his opening remarks, Dr. Chris Dolan thanked all the people for honouring the invitation and for showing solidarity in the fight against sexual and gender based violence.

He thanked the refugee leaders who gave the theme of this year's awareness raising week which has given a very resourceful insight into one of the big gaps in the way many organisations respond to SGBV, as attention is given only to what happens in peace with no connection to what happened during war and crisis situations. Dr Chris noted that Sexual Violence is a weapon of war that not only immobilises the victim but breaks down victim's support systems, and makes that person's community less and less able to engage in war with their attackers. In his description, Dr Chris made an analogy of sexual violence as better weapon than most bombs. He elaborated that the impact of sexual violence on survivors/victims and their families extends long after the visible event, and the legacies manifest in times of supposed peace.

Dr. Chris in his statement about the search for solutions to break the cycle of sexual violence in conflict to domestic violence in peace, argued that much of the discussion is currently focused on the search for justice through formal prosecutions and the imprisonment of perpetrators as an important element in the healing and recovery of survivors. He called for the need to see formal justice system of persecution as only one of the elements. He pointed out that in building a wall against SGBV, prosecutions are only one brick, and to build the wall properly, there is need for many more bricks as well as some cement. He supported his statement by noting that there is need to accept that for many survivors/victims, access to formal justice is not the preferred solution at all and that some would not opt for formal court system because they consider it a very long, tedious, corrupt and expensive system.

He pointed out that for many survivors of sexual and domestic violence; the imprisonment of the perpetrator is not the desired outcome because imprisonment may bring further attacks from others against whom no protection is provided. He added that for some victims, the perpetrator is their own husband, or wife, or partner, or parent, and sometimes they are dependent on that perpetrator for food; what they seek is how to make the relationship liveable – and that is one of the reasons that victims do not always report. He added that for many victims of sexual violence in conflict, there is no way of tracking down the perpetrator; they do not know which armed group the perpetrator belonged to, let alone where to find him or her.

Dr. Chris called on service providers to respond to physical and psychosocial challenges that survivors of sexual violence go through. He further urged that, if victims of sexual violence in conflict are properly treated and the stigma and shame issues attached to being a victim are

handled both with the person directly affected as well as her or his family, then the chances of domestic violence occurring in their homes are going to be reduced.

He further emphasised the need to open more space to talk, share, break down the isolation of survivors and their families, find joint solutions, and more space to prevent the person from turning hurt into anger. He added that creating space is not so difficult, nor so costly because even a three or four days spent working with the partners of victims of SGBV can make a major and positive change in their relationship. While drawing on examples on the work of Refugee Law Project, Dr. Chris noted RLP is part of a process of creating the space to and breaking the barriers. He, however, noted that four days cannot instantly undo what we learn in a lifetime, but it can begin a process.

While concluding his welcome remarks, Dr. Chris noted that the barriers to the prevention and response to SGBV takes the form of taboos; taboos discussing violence, sex, gender identity. He was concerned that many people cling onto those barriers. Dr. Chris thanked every participant for joining hands with Refugee Law Project on the occasion and urged them to continue the good spirit and collaboration.



*Dr. Chris Dolan, Director, Refugee Law Project giving opening remarks*

## Speech by Support Group Leaders

Over the years, support groups have become an integral part of RLP's intervention strategy, this is especially in response to the increasing number of clients compared to staff providing services in the relevant offices; this strategy has been devised to ensure continued healing when organizational services which are often donor funded cease operations due to funding constraints. Over the years, RLP has helped establish sixteen support groups that are directly and indirectly affiliated to different thematic programmes.



*The President of Men of Hope and Deputy President Torture survivors association presenting speeches on behalf of support groups affiliated to RLP*

## Men of Hope Refugee Association in Uganda (MOHRAU)

Kabenga Alain, president of MOHRAU, presented a speech on behalf of the association before the same group recited a poem. In his speech, Kabenga explained the historical background of the association. He noted that MOHRAU is one of the youngest refugee led groups at RLP and the majority of its members are refugees from Democratic Republic of Congo. The group was formed due to the increasing number of persons presenting similar challenges and needs as well as the need to overcome the challenges.

The association was formed on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2011 due to increasing numbers of individuals presenting with challenges resulting from male rape. From the experiences shared especially during group counseling sessions, it was noted that many of the survivors of male rape had various challenges including poor health, stigma from within and outside the refugee community, failure to cope, suicidal tendencies, divorce/separation by wives due to fear of contracting sexually transmitted diseases and infections, rejection by family members, loss of identity, self hate, failure to access medical care due to stigma associated with anal sex and the community's failure to distinguish between male rape and

homosexuality, a confusion not helped by Uganda's stand on same-sex relationships which makes any discussion of the distinctions more difficult.

Kabenga added that (MOHRAU) was formed in 2011 to; foster contact and regular flow of information; harmonize and share problems faced by male survivors of sexual violence and devise means of tackling them; serve as an instrument for the promotion, protection and empowerment of rights of all male survivors of sexual violence; help the survivors in attaining medical care and psycho-social help and, be a forum to harness Family Unity and help in addressing domestic conflicts.

### **Poem by Men of Hope**

After the speech of the President of MOHRAU (Alain Kabenga), members of the group used the time they were allocated to recite a poem. The poem titled "Wicked World" highlighted the plight of refugee male survivors of sexual violence. In the poem, MOHRAU called for an end of stigma and discrimination of refugee men and boys survivors of sexual violence. They also called on stakeholders to align the existing laws to have inclusive definition of rape, and appealed to them to provide services to refugee male survivors just as they do for women and girls.

### **Speech and poem of Living with Hope Refugee Association**

Living with Hope Refugee Association is a refugee support group that brings together urban refugees living with HIV/AIDS. 80% of the group's members believe that they contracted HIV/AIDS as a result of the sexual violence that they underwent. The association has representatives from DRC, Rwanda, Somalia and Eritrea. The group presented a speech and a poem on violence and its impact on lives and families.

### **Speech by the President of Living with Hope Support Group**

Read by the President, the group spoke on the theme of the week and how sexual violence causes domestic violence. While explaining the impact of violence using the analogy of a visitor, the group explained that "when violence visits your house, it can't go out without leaving its destructive germs". The President of the group lamented that sexual violence, particularly rape, transmits deadly diseases including HIV/AIDS. She appealed to parents and caregivers to take care of children within their custody. She cited example of how women who become pregnant due to sexual violence, give birth to children who might never know the whereabouts of their fathers. She lamented that the presence of children born out of rape in a family can act as monuments of a sad and painful memory to their mothers. In addition, such children also end up deprived of family affection and will always remain silent in any debate with friends about fathers. In her closing remarks, she appreciated the good work of the Refugee Law Project and other partners working with refugees especially those living with HIV/AIDS.

### **Poem by Living With Hope Support Group**

After the speech by the President, a member of the group recited a poem titled “Violence”. In the poem, members noted that experiences of sexual violence breed domestic violence when not addressed at early stages. In the poem, it was clear that violence denies peace in the homes, pushes many children onto the streets, and deprives people of their health. The group called on refugee serving agencies, government representatives as well as donor communities present to have inclusive support for refugee survivors of sexual violence, be they males, females, children, elderly or disabled.

### **Drama Performance by the Refugee Groups**

During the launch, music, dance and drama group of the Refugee Law Project presented a drama on violence and its impact on individuals, families and communities at large.



*Refugees performing drama on the impact of Sexual Gender Based Violence and Persecution*

### **Speech by the Chief Walker/Guest**

The Chief Guest, the Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees. Hon. Dr. Stephen Malinga (RIP), was represented by Apollo Kazungu, Commissioner for Refugees in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

In his opening sentence, Mr. Kazungu noted that Conflict-related Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Persecution (SGBVP) affect forced migrants in many different locations. For some, SGBVP in their country of origin is the cause of flight. For others, it happens during flight, and for others SGBVP turns their country of asylum into a place of nightmares. What few people are willing to discuss is how these various experiences of targeted attacks also result in problems at home, and can at times become the cause of domestic violence even after conflict is over, or the persons affected have found asylum elsewhere. For us here, in Uganda, which is a host to refugees from across the Great Lakes region as well as the Horn

of Africa, it is imperative to recognize and address the nexus between these two forms of violence.

Mr. Kazungu thanked Refugee Law Project (RLP) for organizing the annual SGBVP awareness week. He added the awareness week does not only create awareness on SGBVP issues but also strengthens networks, partnerships and collaborations with other organizations addressing SGBVP. He added that SGBVP violates a number of human rights principles, including: life, liberty and security of the person, freedom from torture or cruel inhuman/degrading treatment or punishment, freedom of movement, freedom of opinion, expression and association, freedom to enter into marriage with free and full consent and the entitlement to equal rights to marriage, during the marriage and at its dissolution, equality.

He added that refugees have equal protection under the law even during war, human dignity and physical integrity, be free from all forms of discrimination, equality in the family, the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. He re-echoed that SGBVP denies its victims a host of rights as enshrined in international human rights instruments and the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and as such denies clients a right to lead a dignified life.

Mr. Kazungu acknowledged that victims/survivors of sexual violence include women, girls, men or boys, and that all can experience multiple serious medical complications ranging from chronic urinary tract infections, sexually transmitted infections, difficulties in using the bathroom, fistula, fissures, chronic abdominal pains, and the like. He added that when not reported and treated early, such experience can affect a person's wellbeing and also expose the victim to higher risk of HIV transmission among other challenges. He added that for many, the experience of sexual violence can have serious psychological impacts, evident in memory loss, nightmares, sleepless nights, screaming and trying to run out of the house, feeling that they are about to lose their minds, excessive worries and anxieties, tearful and sad moments, feeling unworthy to live, sometimes resulting in suicidal thoughts and tendencies.

Mr. Kazungu lamented that the damage done by sexual violence is not restricted to the body and the mind of the victim; it also extends to their domestic lives; to their spouses, their siblings, and their children. He added that sexual violence also affects the victims' economic capacity, and it undermines their contribution to their communities. He alerted his audience to the fact that individuals and organizations should not be surprised if men who were brought up to believe that they must provide for their families get frustrated when they are unable to do so. When there are high levels of domestic conflict and violence, when adults who do not want to deal with their children, or do not want to engage in shared activities, then we should be asking ourselves whether there is a history of sexual violence behind the domestic violence we are seeing.

He encouraged humanitarian actors to better identify victims of sexual violence, and try and help people to report as early as possible so as to minimize the damage. He appealed to humanitarian actors to allocate resources for survivors of sexual violence, so that nobody is turned away on the grounds that there is not enough money. He added that there is need to work with churches, so that they can truly become spaces or places of healing for individuals and their families given the fact that it is shameful and difficult for most survivors to share with their family what has happened to them. He also encouraged organizations to work closely with families and communities so that they can provide comprehensive support which all survivors need, rather than becoming the enemy that further stigmatizes and marginalizes them.

Mr. Kazungu in his conclusion reminded legal aid service providers that they need to start the process to amending laws of our country to fully recognize that anybody can become a victim/survivor of sexual violence, whatever their gender or sex. He was concerned that without such changes, many victims will continue to suffer in silence and it denies many the opportunity to come forward for fear that they will be further victimized by the existing laws. According to him, legislators need to let go of the idea that men can only be perpetrators and women can only be victims; research has gone a long way to show that both these views are false. In reality, men can be victims, just as women can be perpetrators. Mr. Kazungu also called on working with medical and legal students in the process. Mr. Kazungu ended by saying

*“In short, we here today are part of a bigger picture which includes culture, religion, law enforcement institutions, marriage and family, lower and higher institutions of learning, military, and police among others, to break the cycle of sexual violence to domestic violence, all these stakeholders need to change; pain is pain and nobody is immune to sexual violence. Please let us join hands to stand against SGBVP by highlighting the close connections between sexual and domestic violence, and by advocating for inclusive response mechanisms and non-discriminatory programming as well as involvement of all stakeholders. For God and My Country.”*



*Apollo Kazungu, Commissioner for Refugees in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)*

## Day Two: Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013

The second day of the week saw refugee communities in the settlement interface and get engaged in the week's activities. Events took place in Kyangwali and Nakivale Refugee Settlements - Hoima and Isingiro district respectively.

Kyangwali hosted the Hoima event on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at Kasonga base camp (Kasonga Primary school ground). A number of different stakeholders and humanitarian with key people such as UNHCR - Hoima field office Olga Lussa, community services, The Refugee Desk Officer-Hoima (RDO) - Solomon Osakan and the Camp commandant Kyangwali - Amos Kirya. RLP staff from Kampala main office also joined the event.

Before the main event, RLP's Hoima team held meeting with other partners and government representatives. The team met with camp commandant for Kyangwali, Action Africa Help, American Refugee, Gender Task Force; a refugee group and Refugee Welfare Council three (RWC III) where strategies for reaching the refugee communities were drawn.

### Community participation

Led by 20 members of the Morning Glory Brass Band, refugees and forced migrants from different communities within Kyangwali participated in the peaceful march. Over 300 people attended the event at Kasonga base camp, attracting both forced migrants (Congolese, South Sudanese, Rwandese and Burundians) and nationals.

### Participation of implementing partners

Action Africa Help-Uganda (AAH) played a major role in mobilizing refugee support groups such as; Peer Counselors, COBRUAS, Gender task force (GTF), Community activists, Men to Men and Community social workers. Other implementing partners who attended the event included American Refugee Council (ARC) (whose coordinator delivered a speech on behalf of the Implementing Partners); Finnish refugee Council (FRC), Samaritan Purse and UNHCR.

The day began with a peaceful march from Kinakyeitaka Primary School to Kasonga base camp, a distance of 6 kilometers. Opening remarks were given by Dr. Chris Dolan, Director, Refugee Law Project, after which Marrie Mabala; President of the Association for Female Refugees in Africa (ASSOFRA), presented a speech on behalf of support group leaders. The Kyangwali Settlement Commandant's presented his speech in his capacity as the event's host. The event also witnessed dance and drama performances from the support groups within the settlement, *Umudiho*, and *Nyamindu*. Olga Lussa of UNHCR delivered keynote address on behalf of Hoima field office and Guest of honor. The Refugee Desk Officer, Mr. Solomon Osakan, delivered Speech as the Chief Walker. Other invited guests who presented speeches were; the Regional Programme Coordinator of ARC Bernard Ojom on behalf of implementing partners (IPs). Thereafter, the Director of RLP Dr Chris Dolan officially opened the RLP Hoima field office. The Master of Ceremony was Gerald Siranda Blacks.

## Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2013 Prison Visits to Luzira

### Luzira Maximum Prison

Luzira maximum prison had 3,468 inmates by the time of visit. Within the prisons, individuals are categorized as either foreigners or Ugandan nationals. All persons who are not Ugandan nationals are therefore recognized as foreigners, there is no categorization of refugees or asylum seekers. During the visit, all the 3 foreigners that the team interacted with were economic migrants, not refugees. However, it was also reported that some 'foreigners' do not want to be recognized and therefore disguise as nationals and can speak local languages fluently. In line with this, it was noted that there were people from Kenya, Sudan, Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, China, South Africa and Turkey, even though only three of them admitted to being 'foreigners'.

### Luzira Women's Prison

On the same day (5<sup>th</sup> March 2013), a parallel team visited the women's section of the Luzira Prisons. During the time of visit, the female section had 219 inmates with 161 on remand, 27 committed to the high court and 31 convicts. The 'foreigners' available were from Kenya, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

During the time of visit, inmates in Luzira complained of lack of adequate facilities, language barriers that call for interpretation, insufficient medicines, overcrowding and poor sanitation. The team appreciated the presence of counseling and medical services including special care for persons living with HIV/AIDS, including special diet and extra dishes. From the interviews conducted, it was noted that there were no specific services on SGBVP. The inmates interviewed said there was no sexual abuse case reported among inmates. It was however reported that if inmates were caught engaging in homosexuality they would be punished severely to deter others from practicing same sex acts. Such punishment includes isolation for a couple of weeks. It was reported that inmates were allowed to receive visitors, and that when prisoners are given money it is deposited because the prison has a bank account for prisoners.

Inmates in Luzira requested that management of the Prison establish a Toll-free telephone where they can connect with friends, families and colleagues outside the prison. They added that this would enable those whose relatives could not visit them physically to call. The inmates also expressed the need to allow men and women interact occasionally. Those interviewed expressed their fears that upon release, they may be caught on the wrong side of the law due to deprivation of the company of the opposite sex. The 'foreigners' appreciated RLP for the visit and asked that the team regularize the visit.

## Day 3 (6<sup>th</sup> March, 2013) Hoima field office

The third day of the awareness week was used to conduct prison visits in Hoima Prisons. The team held interactive sessions with 16 refugee inmates. Discussions were centered on SGBV and how they have been affected while in detention. The team used the same time to provide spot-on counseling and appointments were made for follow up individual counseling sessions upon request. Case identification for possible follow-up, especially at court was also conducted.

### Summary of the details of the Refugee inmates in Hoima Prison as of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013

S/no	Cases/ offence	#
1	Malicious damage to property	6
2	Theft and malicious damage to property	2
3	Possession of opium	1
4	Rape	2
5	Defilement	2
6	Aggravated defilement	1
7	Simple defilement	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>

### Activities in Kampala Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013: Prison Visits to refugees, asylum seekers and IDP inmates in the Prisons: Kigo Prison, Kampala

#### Kigo Prison, Male section

Kigo prison male section has a total population of 1,148 inmates; 807 are on remand and 341 convicts. The high number of inmates on remand was attributed to the backlog of cases in the different courts of law. During the time of visit, there were only 2 forced migrants, both from Burundi and serving 6-year sentence for illegal possession of firearms. Findings from the prison health workers revealed that there is a 24-hour service for inmates but cases that could not be handled were referred to Mulago National Referral Hospital. Management of the prison praised inmates for being very disciplined with very few cases of violence reported.

#### Kigo Prison, Female section

The female section has 66 inmates with 4 children. By the time of visit, there were 6 'foreigners', 1 Tanzanian, 3 Rwandans and 2 Burundians who were in detention for sale of Marijuana, sale of another persons' land, 3 murder cases and theft.

### **Hoima Prison visit (6th March 2013)**

The Hoima team conducted prison visit as part of the SGBVP week and were able to reach out to 16 inmates. In the interactive session, inmates were asked what services they got while in detention. It was noted that there is provision for 24-hour medical assistance. However, it was noted that specific gender and reproductive health related programmes were missing. Subsequently, on the spot counseling was offered and appointments were made for further follow up especially cases that required legal and psychosocial follow-ups.

### **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013: Prison Visits to refugees, asylum seekers and IDP inmates in Mbarara prison**

As part of the weeklong event, Mbarara field office also extended the activities of the week to the Prisons and Nakivale refugee settlement.

#### **Prison Visit**

The team conducted a prison visit on the 5<sup>th</sup> march and 6<sup>th</sup> march. Both male and female refugee inmates were interviewed. Donor representatives joined the team as well in the prison visit. A total of 38 prisoners were reached; 36 males and 2 females. There were 22 Rwandese inmates, 10 Congolese and 6 Burundian. The command charges were mainly capital offences such as murder, rape, aggravated defilement, simple defilement, aggravated robbery and conning (represented in the table below). Others were awaiting committal to the High Court, and 4 of the refugee inmates serving sentence. There were 9 clients charge with aggravated defilement, 20 for murder, 3 for rape, 4 for defilement and 1 for fraud and robbery.

#### **Challenges faced by Mbarara Prison inmates**

All the interviewed inmates complained of poor bedding as they lacked mattresses and blankets, coupled with overcrowding. Poor feeding was also reported as inmates complained of only being fed on posho and beans, which have stayed for a long time in the store, poor health and sanitation. The team witnessed this as a high number of the inmates were suffering from skin infection such as scabies, which is highly contagious. The team learnt that there was a high demand for psychosocial support as many of the inmates showed signs of trauma; more so for refugees coming from different countries and others who could not speak the local language.

### **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013: Nakivale Refugee Settlement – Isingiro District**

On the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013, the campaign was successfully launched in Nakivale refugee settlement and a number of activities were conducted.

Marching began from the base camp to Juru, service providers like Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, its implementing partners as well as leaders of the refugee led groups made several presentations on that day. The groups that took part in the event of the day were Men of Peace; a refugee led group of male survivors of sexual violence, Angel's support group; a group for sexual and gender minorities. The groups performed drama and sang songs related to the theme of the awareness week.

### **Friday 8th March 2013: Community Outreach in Kasubi/Kawala**

In Kampala, the week was crowned with community outreaches in Kasubi and Kawala. The meeting took place on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013 at All Nations Together Bible College Status from 2:00pm to 5:30pm. The aim of the community outreach was to extend the event of the week to refugee host communities and reach out to both forced migrants and host communities, especially those that did not participate in the launch of the awareness week. During this outreach, RLP team explained the rationale behind the awareness week, why the theme was chosen as well as update on key activities conducted in Hoima, Mbarara, Isingiro, Gulu and Kotido districts.

The outreach was also used to create awareness on dangers of SGBVP and the roles of communities in prevention of and response to reported cases of SGBVP. Information, Education and Communication materials on SGBVP were disseminated to participants including referral pathways and a SGBV poster with a hotline were also disseminated. The outreach came to end at 5:30pm with questions and answer session and appreciation from RLP staff to communities for turning up.

### **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2013: Commemoration of International Women's day in Kotido: Kotido District HQS**

The weeklong event was concluded in Kotido with the International Women's Day celebration. RLP team joined communities in Kotido and Kotido district local government to commemorate the day at Kotido Town council under the theme: **'The Gender Agenda: Connecting Grass-roots Women to Development'**. This theme connected to that of the SGBV week, chosen by refugee group leaders in Kampala. Connecting women to development cannot be achieved when there is violence within communities and families. Violence does not only affect individuals but communities as a whole. Kotido district itself has had a long history of violent inter-clan conflict that has left untold suffering and poverty, rendering especially women and girls more vulnerable, struggling to provide for their families every day.

RLP supported the district initiatives through a number of community specific interventions aimed at strengthening community advocacy to end gender violence and to stimulate local

activism so as to create peaceful communities and connect grass roots women to development.

During the commemoration of the International Women's day, RLP supported and facilitated 3 community groups (2 – school GBV clubs, 1 – SASA! Group) to take part in dissemination of advocacy messages through poems, songs and drama during the international women's day commemoration at Kotido town council. The groups were from Kacheri and Kotido sub-counties, including Kotido town council. The school children recited poems and messages about the strength communities have to end gender violence, the importance of peaceful communities, and the need to support women and girls to achieve community empowerment.

During the public awareness event, over 1,200 people including women, men, boys, girls, stakeholders, community leaders and NGO partners were reached with gender and GBV advocacy messages and advocacy speeches calling on the communities to support women empowerment initiatives. The event started with communities marching around the streets of Kotido district in solidarity to show support and commitment to end violence against women and girls in their lives.

During the event, 2 community briefs were given. One was on Domestic Violence Act by the guest of honour who is the Woman Member of Parliament for Kotido district, and the other was on Gender Realities in Kotido by the RLP's Kotido Coordinator who highlighted a number of violence situations affecting women, girls, men and boys in Kotido and called on the communities to put their voices together to speak out against violence because – our strength is the solution. In her speech, the Guest of Honour thanked all the community members for coming together in support of the International women's day. She also thanked all the organisers and mobilisers for the day, especially RLP – Kotido field office for their continuous efforts to end violence against women and girls. She highlighted that the Government of Uganda is committed to fight and end gender violence and cited some legal instruments that attest to that such as the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, the Domestic Violence Act, Children's Act and the Penal Code. She encouraged people of Kotido to join together with NGOs to bring social change into the community.

RLP also used the opportunity of the community event to launch the 'Gender Realities report' and '*The Karamoja you might have missed*' photo essay book, ([www.refugeelawproject.org](http://www.refugeelawproject.org)) all publications of the RLP. Over 150 copies of both books were disseminated to the people who attended the event.

During the launch speech, the guest of honour once more recognised the efforts of RLP in documenting important information about Karamoja that would otherwise be lost or unknown and asked other partners to continue doing the same for future reference.

RLP's Kotido coordinator in her launch speech thanked especially men and boys for turning up in big numbers to participate in the international women's day despite the fact that

many people within the community only view it as a women's thing. She also explained the contents in both books that were launched by the Guest of Honour: Gender realities report – containing an assessment of community perceptions, attitudes, definitions and values of the gender based violence in Kotido, and “the Karamoja You Might Have Missed” - a pictorial essay of the social, cultural, economic and political realities of life in Karamoja. She emphasized the beauty and positivity that the book presents and that many people in Uganda and beyond may not know considering the widespread stereotypes and misinformation about Karamoja sub-region that predominate throughout Uganda.

The event was successful and the day's activities were crowned with a friendly football match between women and men of Kotido where the women won with 2 goals to nil.



*Women in Action: A friendly football match between women and men in Kotido. Women won 2 goals to nil*

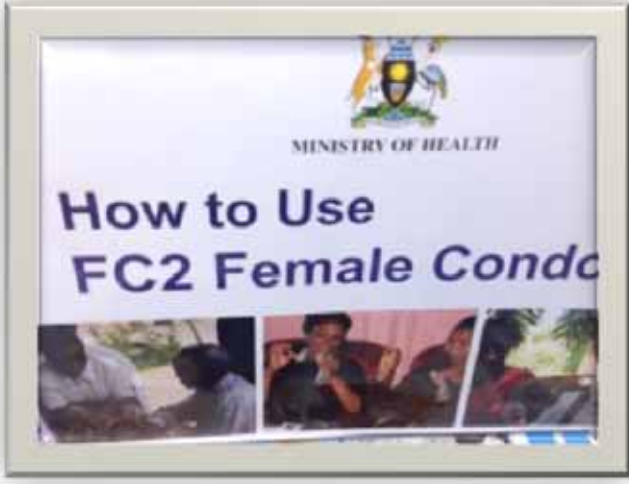
# Photo Gallery

## Kampala Events



OUR PARTICIPATION IS A REMINDER THAT U.G, UNHCR AND NGOs HAVE NOT YET ADDRESSED THE REAL CAUSES OF SGBV P AMONG REFUGEES

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## Kyangwali and Nakivale Refugee Settlement





## Kotido District Celebrations



**A Report on the Fifth Annual Sexual Gender Based Violence & Persecution  
(SGBVP) Awareness Week**

**For more information, contact**

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[www.refugeelawproject.org](http://www.refugeelawproject.org)