

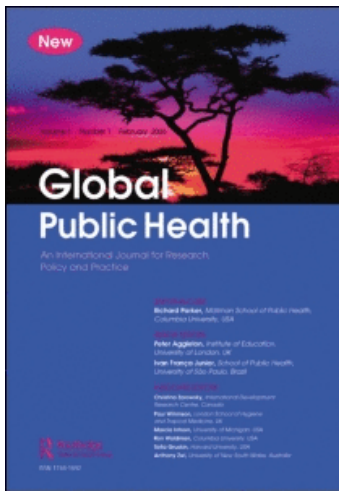
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## Violence against refugees, non-refugees and host populations in southern Sudan and northern Uganda

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### Abstract

We carried out a cross-sectional household survey among Sudanese refugees and Ugandan nationals in Arua district Uganda, and Sudanese non-refugees in Yei county Sudan. The objective was to document and compare, across population groups, violent events experienced or witnessed, both to document the frequency and nature of violent events and to assess the potential burden of psychological trauma. The extensive psychological trauma in this population has been reported elsewhere (Karaunakara et al. 2004). Half or more of all groups had experienced or witnessed injury by a weapon or gun, beating/torture, harassment by armed personnel, robbery/extortion or imprisonment. Having ever experienced or witnessed confiscation of property was more common among both Sudanese groups than among Ugandans. Exposure to sexual violence was common among both men and women, particularly during times of migration. Almost all violent events were witnessed or experienced more commonly by refugees. Violent events continued for refugees after settlement in Uganda. Many of the violent events reported by Ugandans had occurred earlier, during Uganda's civil conflict. The protection offered refugees in Uganda, by the host government and United Nations, seemed of limited benefit, both now and in the past. In spite of recent peace accords for southern Sudan, many refugees are likely to remain in Uganda for some time. The potential for refugees and those remaining in Sudan to develop longer term psychological disorders from the high level of exposure to violent events is substantial.

**Keywords:** *Refugees, violence, Sudan, Uganda*

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## Introduction

A number of studies have documented the prevalence of war-related traumatic events among civilian populations, including sexual violence (Amowitz et al. 2002; Pedersen 2002; Kerimova et al. 2003; Hynes et al. 2004; Seaman & Maquire 2005). Among the more detailed studies have been the ones of violence in Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Democratic Republic (DR) of the Congo (Swiss et al. 1998; Amowitz et al. 2002; Van Herp et al. 2003). Although data of violence are important measures on physical safety, they also strongly predict the extent of psychological trauma in those affected by violence (Neuner et al. 2004; Schaal & Elbert 2006). Other than in the Congo, few studies have assessed the frequency of similar violent events across population groups.

In insecure environments women, particularly, are targets of violence, both from within and outside the household. Their vulnerability is linked to their abilities to negotiate in conflict situations (Khawaja 2004; Tambiah 2004). While sexual violence against women has been well documented, there have been only a few reports of sexual violence against men in conflict-affected populations (Human Rights Watch 1999; Oosterhoff et al. 2004).

Fifty years of instability and civil war in both Sudan and Uganda have caused populations to cross the border in both directions (Gersony 1997; O'Ballance 2000). There are an estimated 4.8 million displaced refugees within Sudan; 223 500 Sudanese in Uganda; 90 533 in Ethiopia; 180 000 in Chad; 69 473 in DR Congo; 65 000 in Kenya; 36 000 in Central African Republic; 30 300 in Egypt, and 714 in Eritrea (UNHCR 2005a, b). The circumstances of Sudanese refugees and Sudanese non-refugees remained largely unchanged until early 2005, when agreements between the Government of Sudan and the principal rebel groups were reached, which led the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR 2005c) to plan for repatriation.

In this report, we examine violent events experienced or witnessed, as reported by both men and women among Sudanese refugees in Arua district (Uganda), non-refugees remaining in Yei county, Sudan, and among the Ugandan host population of Arua (see Figure 1). Many of the Ugandans had been refugees in southern Sudan in the 1980s. Data on traumatic events presented here come from a demographic survey, conducted in 1999 and 2000, which focused on fertility, childhood mortality, and violence among the three populations. The sample size for the study was calculated based on the under five mortality rate. The survey enrolled women aged 15–50, and men aged 20–55. The sample for females was three times as many as that of males, as it was also assessing fertility and childhood mortality. The effects of clustering and non-response were considered in deciding sample size.



Figure 1. Aura district, Uganda, and Yei county, Sudan

## Methods

### *Sampling*

This report is based on responses to questions about violent events obtained from 2605 persons. These 1978 women, and 627 men, were either Sudanese refugees in Uganda, Sudanese nationals continuing to live in conflict-affected southern Sudan, or Ugandan nationals living in Sudanese refugee-affected areas in Arua district. All had a history of migration. Detailed demographic findings, and findings related to symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in this population, have been reported elsewhere (Swiss et al. 1998; Singh et al. 2005). The survey participants were selected using a multi-stage sampling approach. The population of Arua was stratified by nationality and current status of respondents to reduce normal sampling variation and to improve precision of variables related to stratification. The first level of sampling was purposive. Arua district was chosen for security and accessibility reasons, and Bahr al-Jabal State in Sudan was chosen for security reasons. Within Arua, two of three counties (Koboko & Terego) with Sudanese refugees were chosen because of similar ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. One county (Maracha), which had no refugees, was chosen for interviews with Ugandans, as it was adjacent to the two counties containing refugees. Yei county in Bahr al-Jabal was selected because the majority of refugees in Koboko and Terego were originally from there.

In the second stage, one sub-county was randomly selected from each of the four counties which were purposively chosen. Next, the parish, or wards, were randomly selected. Then villages or sub-wards were randomly selected from each of the parishes or wards. In Imvepi refugee camp, seven points were arbitrarily established to represent equal sectors of the camp. Of these, four were then chosen randomly.

In the third stage, households were selected in a systematic manner depending on the population of a given unit, for example, every second or third house, starting from a central point in the village or sub ward, such as a church or a school. Household visits proceeded in a certain direction until the required numbers were identified. In a few villages with small populations, all households were selected to reach the number needed. In each household all women aged 15–50, and one third of the men aged 20–55, present were selected for interview.

### *Survey*

The survey questions were developed, after extensive formative research, field-testing and validation in Arua district, using both Sudanese and Ugandan field staff. Local definitions were developed for each violent event. Many of the questions on violence were asked in a standard “have you witnessed or experienced” framework. This approach was chosen after extensive formative research, and addressed concerns of the local project staff. It was felt that asking about direct personal experiences might make both the subjects and the interviewers vulnerable to reprisals, as they both continued to live among some of the likely perpetrators. This is a common fear of participants in surveys of violence in conflict situations (Amowitz et al. 2002). Based on previous survey experience in the area, it was anticipated that there would be considerable reticence in discussing sexual or gender-based personal violence. Gender-based violent events might have been underreported when directly queried (Kloss 1993). One of the aims of the study, was to assess the potential for psychological trauma from violent events, and both witnessing and actually experiencing violent events can produce psychological trauma (American Psychiatric Association 1994; Keller et al. 2006). Participants were also asked directly about personally experienced sexual abuse, however, it is likely that the responses to direct questioning underestimated the size of the problem.

Participants were asked to identify all events that they had ever witnessed or experienced and, then, those that had occurred in the past year. Because of the potential for recall bias, a local events calendar was developed as a reference point, and a linkage with place of residence at the time of occurrence was also used. In practice, most residents were more comfortable with a standard calendar. The types of violent events were selected for inclusion based on information obtained in the formative research. Local terminology for types of abuse was developed and validated before being used.

The questionnaire was written in English and translated into Lugbara and Arabic for the Ugandans and Sudanese, and then translated back into English for

verification. Two teams, composed of 24 interviewers and two supervisors, conducted the interviews. The Arabic-speaking Sudanese team (nine females, three males and one supervisor) interviewed Sudanese refugees in Uganda and Sudanese non-refugees in Sudan, and the Lugbara-speaking Ugandan team (nine females, three males and one supervisor) interviewed Ugandan nationals in Uganda. Interviewer training was conducted over two months. Training involved extensive pilot testing of the questionnaire as well as quality control for interview and data recording.

Interviews were conducted between November 1999 and March 2000. Male interviewers interviewed males and female interviewers recorded information from females. Each interview took about two hours to complete. Data editors reviewed interview records, generally within 24 hours, and data were then entered. During the period of the survey, there was little in or out migration in the three sites, although there was ongoing violence in Yei. The non-response rate was less than 5%.

#### *Protection of human subjects*

The study was approved by the Committee on Human Research (CHR) of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and the Uganda National Committee for Science and Technology. Permission was obtained from refugee leadership and local government in Arua. In Sudan, permission from the County Commissioner and the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation representative was obtained for interviews in Yei. All participants were read a consent form to which they signed their name or affixed a mark. The consent form was approved by the Johns Hopkins CHR and the Uganda Committee for Science and Technology. The respondents did not receive any incentives.

All interviews were conducted in private, with no unique identifiers recorded. Some of the questions regarding violence had the possibility to provoke re-traumatization in respondents. To reduce this risk, all interviewers attended a workshop on sexual and gender-based violence conducted by a UNICEF consultant. A referral arrangement for psychological counseling was available for respondents requesting help.

#### *Statistical analysis*

We compared the prevalence of experienced or witnessed trauma events among population groups, and between male and female, by chi square. To estimate risks associated with sexual abuse during accumulative migratory events among Sudanese, we performed logistic regression analysis, considering collinearity. All descriptive and inferential analyses were performed using STATA version 8.0 (Stata Corp, College Station, TX).

Table I. Demographic characteristics of Sudanese and Ugandan respondents\*.

	Male <i>n</i> = 627						Female <i>n</i> = 1978					
	Sudanese refugee <i>n</i> = 267		Sudanese non refugee <i>n</i> = 67		Ugandan national <i>n</i> = 293		Sudanese refugee <i>n</i> = 949		Sudanese non refugee <i>n</i> = 360		Ugandan national <i>n</i> = 669	
Age, years mean (SD)	34.2	(10.1)	37.9	(11.2)	35.0	(8.7)	27.9	(9.0)	30.2	(10.6)	31.0	(8.1)
Current marital status	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>n</i>	(%)	<i>n</i>	(%)
Single	42	(16.0)	3	(4.7)	8	(2.9)	239	(25.7)	58	(17.0)	33	(5.3)
Married/ Cohabiting	215	(82.1)	60	(93.8)	265	(95.7)	619	(66.6)	230	(67.5)	524	(83.7)
Separated/ Divorced/ Widowed	5	(1.9)	1	(1.6)	4	(1.4)	72	(7.7)	53	(15.5)	69	(11.0)
Whereabouts of spouse**												
Live together now	199	(92.6)	55	(98.2)	248	(95.4)	476	(76.7)	173	(73.6)	472	(86.3)
Live elsewhere	13	(6.1)	1	(1.8)	11	(4.2)	134	(21.6)	59	(25.1)	72	(13.2)
Do not know where she/ he is	3	(1.4)	0		1	(0.4)	11	(1.8)	3	(1.3)	3	(0.6)
Education												
None	215	(82.7)	54	(84.4)	249	(89.6)	743	(79.6)	298	(87.1)	496	(79.1)
Receiving relief assistance	129	(50.4)	4	(6.6)	5	(1.8)	463	(50.3)	2	(0.6)	18	(2.9)

\*Number of respondents for each characteristic does not equal to 1216 for Sudan refugee, 427 for Sudan stayee and 962 for Ugandan national respondents due to nonresponse. Percentages are weighted and adjusted for the survey design. Because of rounding, not all percentages may total 100.

\*\*Among those married or cohabiting.

## Results

### *Characteristics of respondents*

The demographic characteristics of the study population are shown in Table I. For all three groups, women respondents were, on the average, six years younger than men. Among Sudanese, a higher prevalence of single or separated/divorced/widowed status in females (33.4% of refugees and 32.5% of non-refugees) was seen, compared to males (17.9% of refugees and 6.3% of non-refugees). Even among the married group, the prevalence of separation was higher in females (23.4% of refugees and 26.4% of non-refugees) than in males (7.5% of refugees and 1.8% of non-refugees). Among the refugee households, 556 of 725 (76.7%) were headed by men, compared with 217 of 313 (69.3%) for Sudanese staying in Sudan, and 716 of 765 Ugandan households (93.6%). Among the refugees interviewed, 60% had been officially registered with the UN as refugees. Of these, only one percent had been registered during the past year. About half of refugees, or 376 (54.2%), had been registered for greater than 60 months, with 320 (44.8%) registered for 12–59 months. During their time as registered refugees, only 221 registered refugees (31.4%) reported returning to their place of former residence in Sudan, usually for a family visit or a funeral. The major source of income in refugee households was contract labor (17.7%) and agriculture (26.1%). There were 28.2% unemployed.

### *Trauma experienced or witnessed by respondents*

In all groups, both males and females had frequently witnessed or personally experienced violent events (see Table II). The mean number of violent events ever witnessed was highest among the Sudanese refugees, with both men and women witnessing or experiencing more than eight violent events.

Half or more of all groups, had experienced or witnessed injury by a weapon or gun, beating/torture, harassment by armed personnel, robbery/extortion, or imprisonment. Ever having experienced or witnessed confiscation of property was more common among the Sudanese than among Ugandans, Less than 30% of Sudanese non-refugees had ever experienced or witnessed a combat situation/shelling or bomb attacks, while this figure was over 40% for Sudanese refugees, and over 50% for Ugandan nationals. Some 55.7% of Sudanese refugees had ever experienced or witnessed flight from dangerous situations. This was a much higher prevalence than among Sudanese non-refugees (32.3%) or Ugandans (15.4%). During the past year, Sudanese refugees, regardless of sex, experienced or witnessed almost all types of violence more frequently than Sudanese non-refugees or Ugandans.

Regardless of when it had occurred, witnessing or experiencing sexual abuse or sexual exploitation was most common among refugees, followed by Sudanese non-refugees, and was least common among Ugandans (see Table III). Only “ever witnessing or experiencing rape or sexual abuse by a man”, was

Table II. Violent events experienced or witnessed by respondents, ever and in the past one year.

Type of violence	Sudanese refugee <i>n</i> = 1216				<i>P</i> -value* M/F	Sudanese non refugee <i>n</i> = 427				<i>P</i> -value* M/F	Uganda national <i>n</i> = 962				<i>P</i> -value* M/F
	Male 267		Female 949			Male 67		Female 360			Male 293		Female 669		
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
	<i>P</i> -value compared with <i>refugees</i> of the same sex														
Injury by a weapon or gun; ever	129	(49.4)	688	(73.6)	<0.001	43	(65.2) 0.02	215	(59.9) <0.001	0.42	198	(72.5) <0.001	250	(42.0) <0.001	<0.001
In the past one year (%)	70	(26.2)	269	(28.4)	0.49	6	(9.0)	57	(15.8)	0.15	33	(11.3)	54	(8.1)	0.11
Beating/torture; ever	161	(61.5)	690	(73.8)	<0.001	49	(74.2) 0.05	221	(61.7) <0.001	.05	237	(87.1) <0.001	312	(52.4) <0.001	<0.001
In the past one year (%)	94	(35.2)	261	(27.5)	0.014	6	(9.0)	42	(11.7)	0.52	80	(27.3)	94	(14.1)	<0.001
Harassment by armed personal; ever	133	(50.6)	666	(71.2)	<0.001	50	(75.8) <0.001	212	(59.2) <0.001	.01	234	(86.0) <0.001	325	(55.1) <0.001	<0.001
In the past one year (%)	57	(21.3)	246	(25.9)	0.13	6	(9.0) 0.02	57	(15.8) <0.001	0.15	37	(12.6) 0.006	58	(8.7) <0.001	0.06
Confiscation of property by officials; ever	191	(73.2)	770	(82.4)	.001	55	(83.3) 0.09	311	(86.6) 0.07	0.48	124	(45.6) <0.001	183	(31.0) <0.001	<0.001
In the past one year (%)	107	(40.1)	295	(31.1)	0.01	7	(10.5) <0.001	98	(27.2) 0.17	0.003	39	(13.3) <0.001	77	(11.5) <0.001	0.43
Robbery/extortion; ever	173	(66.0)	550	(59.1)	0.04	40	(71.2) 0.42	172	(47.9) <0.001	<0.001	169	(62.1) 0.35	251	(42.6) <0.001	<0.001
In the past one year (%)	102	(38.2)	246	(26.0)	<0.001	7	(10.5) <0.001	64	(17.8) 0.002	0.14	40	(13.7) <0.001	56	(8.4) <0.001	0.012
Imprisonment; ever	111	(42.5)	600	(64.4)	<0.001	39	(59.1) 0.02	180	(50.1) <0.001	0.18	186	(68.4) <0.001	319	(54.4) <0.001	<0.001
In the past one year (%)	47	(17.6)	261	(27.5)	0.001	8	(11.9) 0.26	71	(19.7) 0.004	0.13	87	(29.7) 0.001	170	(25.4) 0.35	0.17
Murder; ever	164	(63.3)	505	(54.2)	0.009	14	(21.2) <0.001	170	(49.9) 0.17	<0.001	128	(46.9) <0.001	118	(20.4) <0.001	<0.001
In the past one year (%)	111	(41.6)	209	(22.0)	<0.001	7	(10.5) <0.001	29	(8.1) <0.001	0.52	37	(12.6) <0.001	51	(7.6) <0.001	0.013
Combat situation/shelling, bomb attacks; ever	153	(58.4)	365	(39.3)	<0.001	20	(30.30) <0.001	86	(25.4) <0.001	0.42	143	(53.16) 0.22	300	(51.5) <0.001	0.64
In the past one year (%)	101	(37.8)	165	(13.4)	<0.001	13	(19.4) 0.004	26	(7.2) <0.001	0.001	10	(3.4) <0.001	29	(4.3) <0.001	0.51

Table II (Continued)

Type of violence	Sudanese refugee <i>n</i> = 1216				<i>P</i> -value* M/F	Sudanese non refugee <i>n</i> = 427				<i>P</i> -value* M/F	Uganda national <i>n</i> = 962				<i>P</i> -value* M/F
	Male 267		Female 949			Male 67		Female 360			Male 293		Female 669		
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Evacuation under dangerous situation; ever	156	(59.5)	522	(56.0)	0.31	11	(16.7) <0.001	127	(37.7) <0.001	0.001	64	(23.7) <0.001	84	(14.6) <0.001	0.001
In the past one year(%)	94	(35.2)	221	(23.3)	<0.001	0	<0.001	15	(4.2) <0.001	0.089	3	(1.0) <0.001	23	(3.4) <0.001	0.034
Mean number of violent type (SD) [range] **	8.86	(4.60) [0-16]	9.38	(4.92) [0-16]	0.120	6.27	(3.23) [0-15]	7.46	(4.84) [0-16]	0.02	7.25	(3.66) [0-16]	4.90	(3.11) [0-14]	<0.001

\*Comparison between males and females of the same group. \*\*Calculated by *t*-test without assuming equal variances.

Table III. Sexual violence experienced or witnessed ever and in the past one year.

Type of sexual violent event	Sudanese refugee <i>n</i> = 1216				<i>P</i> -value *	Sudanese non refugees <i>n</i> = 427				<i>P</i> -value*	Uganda national <i>n</i> = 962				<i>P</i> -value*				
	Male 267		Female 949			Male 67		Female 360			Male 293		Female 669						
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%					
					M/F	<i>P</i> -value compared with <b>refugees</b> of the same sex				M/F	<i>P</i> -value compared with <b>refugees</b> of the same sex				M/F				
Sexual abuse of a woman; ever	169	(65.0)	417	(44.7)	<0.001	26	(39.4)	<0.001	107	(29.8)	<0.001	0.12	64	(23.5)	<0.001	84	(14.5)	<0.001	.001
In the past one year (%)	116	(43.5)	170	(17.9)	<0.001	8	(11.9)	<0.001	31	(8.6)	<0.001	0.39	17	(5.8)	<0.001	23	(3.4)	<0.001	0.09
Sexual abuse of a man; ever	79	(30.4)	369	(39.6)	0.006	30	(46.9)	0.01	126	(35.1)	0.13	<0.001	12	(4.4)	<0.001	18	(3.1)	<0.001	0.33
In the past one year (%)	34	(12.7)	189	(19.9)	0.007	2	(3.0)	0.02	41	(11.4)	<0.001	0.04	6	(2.1)	<0.001	10	(1.5)	<0.001	0.54
Sex for food or security; ever	79	(30.4)	370	(39.7)	0.006	5	(7.6)	<0.001	85	(23.8)	<0.001	0.003	53	(19.6)	0.004	66	(11.4)	<0.001	0.001
In the past one year (%)	41	(15.4)	173	(18.2)	0.28	2	(3.0)	0.007	31	(8.6)	<0.001	0.11	15	(5.1)	<0.001	22	(3.3)	<0.001	0.17
Abduction; ever	185	(71.2)	561	(60.1)	0.001	11	(16.7)	<0.001	184	(51.5)	0.006	<0.001	41	(15.1)	<0.001	68	(11.7)	<0.001	0.17
In the past one year (%)	130	(48.7)	193	(20.3)	<0.001	6	(9.0)	<0.001	54	(15.0)	0.03	0.19	7	(2.4)	<0.001	16	(2.4)	<0.001	1.0
Forced prostitution/sexual slavery; ever	158	(60.5)	389	(41.7)	<0.001	11	(16.7)	<0.001	109	(30.9)	<0.001	.019	54	(19.9)	<0.001	43	(7.5)	<0.001	<0.001
In the past one year (%)	98	(36.7)	192	(20.2)	<0.001	8	(11.9)	0.001	45	(12.5)	0.001	0.90	14	(4.8)	<0.001	11	(1.6)	<0.001	0.005
<b>Worry about being forced to have sex at the current place of residence</b>																			
Little or none	108	(46.7)	360	(42.1)		5	(8.9)		157	(44.0)			208	(80.6)		467	(84.3)		
Some or very much	123	(53.3)	494	(57.9)	0.21	51	(91.1)	<0.001	200	(56.0)	0.56	<0.001	50	(19.9)	<0.001	87	(15.7)	<0.001	0.19
<b>At least one direct or personal experience</b>																			
Being sexually abused	45	(17.1)	172	(18.3)	0.64	30	(46.9)	<0.001	77	(21.5)	0.19	<0.001	9	(3.1)	<0.001	19	(2.9)	<0.001	0.86
<b>Most likely perpetrator of sexual abuse, named by respondents at least one direct or personal experience of being sexually abused</b>																			
Spouse/partner	7	(15.6)	45	(26.2)	0.14	29	(96.7)	<0.001	27	(35.1)	0.15	<0.001	0	(0.0)	0.21	1	(5.3)	0.04	0.48
Parents	5	(11.1)	16	(9.3)	0.72	29	(96.7)	<0.001	4	(5.2)	0.43	<0.001	0	(0.0)	0.29	0	(0.0)	0.44	NA
Relative	16	(35.6)	71	(41.3)	0.49	29	(96.7)	<0.001	25	(32.5)	0.19	<0.001	0	(0.0)	0.03	3	(15.8)	0.03	0.21
Police/military	28	(62.2)	129	(75.0)	0.09	29	(96.7)	0.001	74	(96.1)	<0.001	0.89	2	(22.2)	0.03	11	(57.9)	0.11	0.31

Table III (Continued)

Type of sexual violent event	Sudanese refugee <i>n</i> = 1216				<i>P</i> -value * M/F	Sudanese non refugees <i>n</i> = 427				<i>P</i> -value* M/F	Uganda national <i>n</i> = 962				<i>P</i> -value* M/F
	Male 267		Female 949			Male 67		Female 360			Male 293		Female 669		
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	
						<i>P</i> -value compared with <i>refugees</i> of the same sex					<i>P</i> -value compared with <i>refugees</i> of the same sex				
Government employee	24	(53.3)	116	(67.4)	0.08	27	(90.0) 0.001	38	(49.4) 0.01	<0.001	0	(0.0) 0.003	3	(15.8) <0.001	0.21
NGO/camp employee	24	(53.3)	85	(49.4)	0.64	23	(76.7) 0.04	7	(9.1) 0.02	<0.001	0	(0.0) 0.003	2	(10.5) 0.26	0.31
Teacher	17	(37.8)	88	(51.2)	0.14	10	(33.3) 0.64	41	(53.3) 0.76	0.06	0	(0.0) 0.02	2	(10.5) 0.001	0.31
Other	8	(17.8)	1	(0.6)	<0.001	0	(0.0) 0.02	0	(0.0) 0.50	NA	7	(77.8) <0.001	10	(52.6) <0.001	0.20
Do not know	7	(15.6)	44	(25.6)	0.16	0	(0.0) 0.02	34	(44.2) 0.003	<0.001	0	(0.0) 0.21	0	(0.0) 0.31	NA

\*Comparison between males and females of the same group. NA: Not Applicable.

substantially more commonly reported among male Sudanese non-refugees (46.9%), but not among female Sudanese non-refugees (35.1%).

When respondents were asked how much they worried about being forced to have sex against their will at their current place of residence, over half of Sudanese responded that they were quite worried or extremely worried. The highest rate of worry was among male Sudanese non-refugees, where 91% were quite or extremely worried. Levels of worry were lowest among the Ugandans (14.2%). For all groups there was a tendency for the fear of sexual assault to increase with age. This difference with age was statistically significant only for female refugees. Those named by respondents as most likely to perpetrate sexual abuse were police/military personnel, government employees, and NGO or camp personnel (data not shown).

There were 75 Sudanese males, and 249 Sudanese females, who reported personally experiencing sexual abuse. Their mean age at the time of interview was 33.6 years for the 45 male refugees, and 36.2 years for the 30 male Sudanese non-refugees. Among the 249 Sudanese females, the mean age was 29.4 years for the 172 refugees, and 32.3 years for the 77 Sudanese non-refugees. While most of the reported events among the Sudanese had occurred between 1990 and 2000, 90% of those of Uganda had occurred before 1990. Most of Sudanese victims did not seek help for the sexual abuse they had experienced. This was particularly so for males. The lack of available assistance to those attacked, and personal embarrassment, was noted by both refugees and Sudanese non-refugees.

#### *Risks of being sexually abused or raped during migration*

Sexual abuse occurring during the cumulative sum of all migrations is shown in Table IV. Sexual violence occurred more commonly among Sudanese refugees when they were traveling across the border for routine activities rather than during flights for their personal safety. Traveling by truck posed significantly less risk of sexual violence for women, compared with walking (OR 0.48). Associated with sexual attacks was the theft of personal property, or being threatened or otherwise physically attacked, during migration. This risk was much higher for women than men. Age at the migration, marital status, days of preparation for the travel (a measure of suddenness of departure), and days of travel, were not associated with the experience of being sexually abused or raped.

#### *Risk of sexual violence in settlements*

Events, which occurred to Sudanese refugees during the total or cumulative time spent living in refugee settlements, are shown in Table V. Women staying in Sudan had a higher risk of being sexually abused than refugees living in Uganda. For both men and women, being threatened or attacked and suffering bodily injury at the settlement, was associated with being sexually abused or raped. For women, sexual violence was also associated with losing personal items. Age at the time of

Table IV. Risk factors among Sudanese refugees reporting events of sexual abuse during migration<sup>§</sup>.

Marital status at the migration	Male				Female			
	Number of migrations				Number of migrations			
	Total number of trips	Trips with sexual violent events		Adjusted OR <sup>†</sup> (95% CI)	Total number of trips	Trips with sexual violent events		Adjusted OR <sup>†</sup> (95% CI)
<i>n</i>		(%)	<i>n</i>			(%)		
Single	346	38	(11.0)	1.0	1714	72	(4.2)	1.0
Married/cohabiting	768	83	(10.8)	0.69 (0.29–1.64)	2890	169	(5.9)	1.12 (0.69–1.81)
Separated/divorced/widowed	16	1	(6.3)	NA	326	12	(3.7)	0.70 (0.26–1.88)
Reason for travel								
Safe place	777	66	(8.5)	1.0	3025	128	(4.2)	1.0
Find jobs/land	86	24	(27.9)	5.82 (1.43–23.72)*	304	13	(4.3)	3.78 (1.58–9.07)*
Schooling/health care	49	3	(6.1)	3.71 (0.63–21.87)	177	10	(5.7)	3.99 (1.19–13.37)*
Join relatives	17	7	(41.2)	2.58 (0.99–6.73)	239	11	(4.6)	1.41 (0.55–3.61)
Access aid	160	6	(3.8)	1.02 (0.29–3.59)	616	38	(6.2)	2.81 (1.58–5.02)*
Return home	35	14	(40.0)	3.00 (0.44–20.28)	258	21	(8.1)	4.12 (1.68–10.11)*
Method of travel								
Foot	570	100	(17.5)	1.0	3163	194	(6.2)	1.0
Bicycle	26	2	(7.7)	1.72 (0.14–21.78)	67	2	(3.0)	0.41 (0.03–5.85)
Cart	0	0		NA	5	0		–
Truck	546	25	(4.6)	0.64 (0.30–1.40)	1850	58	(3.2)	0.48 (0.29–0.79)*
Separation of a household member during travel								
No	1144	127	(11.1)	1.0	5062	259	(5.1)	1.0
Yes	16	2	(12.5)	1.55 (0.29–8.40)	29	2	(6.9)	0.81 (0.27–2.40)
Cause of separation**								
Abduction	6	2	(33.3)	NA	4	0		NA
Confusion	10	0		NA	23	2	(8.7)	NA
Military recruitment	0	0		NA	2	0		NA
Death of household member during travel								
No	1139	127	(11.2)	1.0	4845	242	(4.5)	1.0
Yes	13	1	(7.7)	3.43 (0.42–27.71)	176	13	(7.4)	0.37 (0.14–0.95)*
Loss of personal items during travel								
No	585	23	(3.93)	1.0	3734	64	(1.71)	1.0
Yes	568	106	(18.7)	1.53 (0.34–7.01)	1354	197	(14.6)	2.39 (1.36–4.20)*
Threatened or attacked during travel								
No	716	28	(3.9)	1.0	4446	94	(2.1)	1.0
Yes	441	101	(22.9)	2.90 (0.71–11.88)	635	167	(26.3)	6.47 (4.14–10.13)*

Table IV (Continued)

Marital status at the migration	Male				Female			
	Number of migrations				Number of migrations			
	Total number of trips	Trips with sexual violent events		Adjusted OR <sup>†</sup> (95% CI)	Total number of trips	Trips with sexual violent events		Adjusted OR <sup>†</sup> (95% CI)
		<i>n</i>	(%)			<i>n</i>	(%)	
Suffered a bodily injury during travel								
No	771	28	(3.6)	1.0	4613	106	(2.3)	1.0
Yes	388	101	(26.0)	2.73 (1.14–6.53)*	461	155	(33.6)	5.77 (3.76–8.84)*
Age at the migration	<i>mean (SD)</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>(SD)</i>		<i>mean (SD)</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	
Mean (SD)	27.9(10.1)	28.5	(10.6)	1.0 (0.97–1.06)	21.5(10.0)	22.1	(9.7)	1.00 (0.98–1.02)
[range]	[4–53]	[8–53]			[0–50]	[2–46]		
Days of travel								
mean (SD)	2.2 (5.8)	4.7	(10.5)	1.01 (0.97–1.05)	2.5 (4.6)	3.5	(6.2)	0.99 (0.97–1.02)
[range]	[0–73]	[0–84]			[0–60]	[0–60]		

Number of accumulate respondents for each factors does not equal to 1160 for male and 5091 for female due to some non-response. <sup>§</sup>Each cross-border migration is counted as a separate trip.

<sup>†</sup>Odds ratio and *P*-value were calculated from robust estimate. Each variable has been adjusted for age at that time, marital status at that time, current status (refugee or non-refugee), reason of choosing destination, days to prepare travel, days of travel, way of travel, circumstances causing separation of household member during travel, death of member of household during travel, losing personal item during travel, threatened or attacked during travel, and suffered a bodily injury during travel. \**P* < 0.05: Calculated from robust estimate. \*\*Among total number of separated household members, OR has been calculated by comparison to the respondents who have no experience of separation of a member of household. NA: Not Applicable (predicts failure perfectly).

Table V. Risk factors among Sudanese refugees reporting events of sexual abuse during episodes of residence in refugee settlements in Uganda<sup>§</sup>.

	Male				Female			
	Separate episodes in settlements				Separate episodes in settlements			
	Total number settlement episodes	Number settlement episodes with sexual violence (%)		Adjusted OR <sup>†</sup> (95% CI)	Total number settlement episodes	No. settlement episodes with sexual violence (%)		Adjusted OR <sup>†</sup> (95% CI)
Age at the settlement mean(SD) [range]	28.1(10.2) [4–53]	27.1 [8–48]	(9.9)	1.01 (0.94–1.08)	21.5(10.0) [0–50]	22.4 [3–46]	(9.1)	1.00 (0.98–1.03)
Place at the settlement								
Uganda	775	36	(4.7)	1.0	2764	54	(2.0)	1.0
Sudan	322	14	(4.4)	0.7 (0.2–3.1)	2022	86	(4.3)	2.2 (1.2–3.9)*
Other	54	0		NA	242	7	(2.9)	1.6 (0.6–4.2)
Marital status at settlement								
Single	346	19	(5.5)	1.0	1717	34	(2.0)	1.0
Married/Cohabiting	768	31	(4.0)	1.0 (0.2–4.1)	2892	99	(3.4)	1.2 (0.2–2.2)
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	16	0		NA	325	12	(3.7)	1.4 (0.5–4.1)
Occupation at settlement								
None	672	25	(3.7)	1.0	1671	28	(1.7)	1.0
Agriculture	162	5	(3.1)	3.6 (0.5–23.5)	1308	69	(5.3)	1.6 (0.9–2.8)
Politics	9	0		NA	13	1	(7.7)	22.7 (3.3–158.2)*
Trading		1	(4.4)	NA	958	24	(2.5)	1.0 (0.5–1.9)
Contract labor	82	4	(4.9)	22.8 (2.13–243.0)*	550	16	(2.9)	1.0 (0.5–2.1)
Work for aid agency	114	11	(9.7)	3.1 (0.50–19.6)	135	1	(0.7)	0.5 (0.07–3.8)
Personal items taken at the settlement								
No	653	12	(1.8)	1.0	3667	24	(0.7)	1.0
Yes	502	38	(7.6)	0.5 (0.1–1.7)	1412	123	(8.7)	3.2 (1.6–6.5)*
Threatened or attacked at the settlement								
No	926	19	(2.1)	1.0	4509	51	(1.1)	
Yes	230	31	(13.5)	4.8 (1.1–20.4)*	581	95	(16.4)	4.2 (2.3–7.8)*

Table V (Continued)

	Male			Female		
	Separate episodes in settlements			Separate episodes in settlements		
	Total number settlement episodes	Number settlement episodes with sexual violence (%)	Adjusted OR <sup>†</sup> (95% CI)	Total number settlement episodes	No. settlement episodes with sexual violence (%)	Adjusted OR <sup>†</sup> (95% CI)
Suffered a bodily injury at the settlement						
No	941	9 (1.0)	1.0	4653	70 (1.5)	1.0
Yes	218	41 (18.8)	89.1(13.0–610.5)*	436	77 (17.7)	4.28 (2.6–7.0)*

Number of accumulated respondents for each factors does not equal to 1160 for male and 5097 for female due to non-response. <sup>§</sup>Migration from Sudan to Uganda begins a settlement episode, and cross-border travel back to Sudan ends a settlement episode. <sup>†</sup>Odds ratio and *P*-value were calculated from robust estimate. Variables have been adjusted for age at that time, marital status at that time, place at that time (Sudan or Uganda), current status (Sudanese refugee or non-refugee), county at the settlement, reason for choosing that place, duration in settlement, occupation at the settlement, receiving food aid, circumstances causing separation of household member at the settlement, death of a member of household at the settlement, losing personal item at the settlement, threatened or attacked at the settlement, and suffered a bodily injury at the settlement. \**P* < 0.05: Calculated from robust estimate. NA: Not Applicable (predicts failure perfectly).

interview, marital status, duration of time in the settlement, and receiving food aid, were not associated with the risk of being sexually abused or raped.

## **Discussion**

These results depict conflict-affected populations exposed to a large number and variety of traumatic events. Sudanese refugees in Uganda had ever witnessed or experienced, on average, eight or more types of violent events. Among Sudanese staying in Sudan, the number was only slightly less. Although the data were collected in 2000, the circumstances of both the Sudanese refugee and non-refugee populations remained largely unchanged until late 2005, when repatriation of refugees from Uganda slowly started (UNHCR 2005c). Since then, continued attacks in northern Uganda and southern Sudan, by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), have dissuaded many Sudanese from making a rapid return home, though the pace was increasing by mid 2007 (Reuters AlertNet 2007). Among the Ugandans, the nature of violent events reported did not differ substantially from those reported by the Sudanese. Most of the incidents reported by the Ugandans occurred during the country's 20 years of conflict, during which many Ugandans fled to southern Sudan. During 1985–1987, the Ugandans were again exposed to considerable violence when the West Nile Bank Front attacked civilians. Given the intervening period, recall of earlier events may lack accuracy.

Half of the Sudanese population, whether refugees in Uganda or staying behind in southern Sudan, had witnessed or experienced beating or torture, confiscation of personal property, abduction, murder, robbery, injury by a gun, and imprisonment. The Sudanese refugees in Uganda experienced the highest levels of violent events, which may have been a factor in their flight from Sudan. They were also the most likely to have experienced flight under dangerous situations. However, both the Sudanese refugee population and their Ugandan neighbors, had an equal experience in combat situations or attacks. Not surprisingly, the Sudanese population interviewed in this study, also reported symptoms of PTSD with considerable frequency (Neuner et al. 2004).

When the number of violent events witnessed or experienced in the past year is separated from those ever experienced, it appears that much violence was continuing at the time of the study. Many types of violence appear more common among refugees than among people staying in the conflict areas of Sudan, a commentary on the weakness of protection. In the previous year, 27.9% of refugees had witnessed or experienced injury by a weapon, 29.2% beating or torture, 33.1% confiscation of property, and 26.7% abduction. This violence is likely to have come from a variety of sources, including forced recruiting of young males by armed factions from Sudan, attacks from the LRA and other groups, and travel back and forth through the dangerous border areas. The southern Sudan conflict has been one of the most intense in the past 50 years, with an estimated 1.9 million persons killed and 4 million, or 80%, of the surviving population displaced (USCR 2001).

Among persons staying in Sudan, the most frequent violent events during the past year were the confiscation of property (24.6%), imprisonment (18.5%), robbery or extortion (16.6%), and abduction (14.1%). The patterns of violence are similar to those documented in Sierra Leone by Amowitz et al. (2002), and in Liberia by Swiss et al. (1998), although the prevalence is not strictly comparable.

Sexual violence was commonly reported among both the Sudanese refugees and those remaining in Sudan, and this included both women and men. The majority of refugees walked into Uganda, a journey of less than three days. Those who went by truck had half the risk of sexual violence of those who went on foot. Other forms of violence were common to those in migration, with large numbers of refugees reporting being threatened or attacked, suffering bodily injury, or losing personal possessions en route. Among women, there was a significant association between personally experiencing these violent events and sexual abuse.

The finding that violent events during flight were less common than during more routine cross-border travel seems at first surprising. However, as travel patterns became more predictable, it might be easier for attackers to prey on travelers, especially those on foot or bicycle.

Dependence by refugees on relief assistance may put them at risk of sexual exploitation (Save the Children (UK) 2002). A third of refugees indicated they had witnessed or experienced sex for food or security. Ugandan nationals and Sudanese remaining in Sudan reported these events less commonly. Forced prostitution and sexual slavery was also most commonly reported among the refugees. These data were collected at a time when rations were being reduced for refugees to encourage self-reliance, a time when women would be especially vulnerable to exploitation (Amnesty International 2006).

These data also present a picture of what it means to stay behind in Sudan. Not only did those remaining experience or witness many traumatic events, but this group had the largest number of women who are separated, divorced or widowed, and the largest number who are not living with their spouse. Females remaining in Sudan were least likely to have had any education. Sudanese women remaining in Sudan reported the highest number of children dying. Among similar populations affected by conflict within Angola, malnutrition and fever or malaria accounted for the largest number of deaths, followed by war or violence (Grein et al. 2003). In conflict situations, much of mortality can be explained by lack of access to health services, which was the situation in Sudan (Van Herp et al. 2003; Coghlan et al. 2006). It may be that these households lacked the resources to leave Sudan. Women, especially those separated, divorced or widowed, may be at higher risk of PTSD as a consequence of psychological trauma, and indeed this was present in our study population (Neuner et al. 2004; Keller et al. 2006).

Although gender-based violence toward women refugees is well documented in conflict situations, we believe this study will be the first published African report of sexual abuse of males during forced migration (Watts & Zimmerman 2002). These findings, of personally-experienced sexual abuse among Sudanese males,

need to be studied in other conflict-affected populations. During recent decades, male sexual abuse has been sporadically reported (Lindholm et al. 1980; Agger & Jensen 1994). The sexual abuse of males in Bosnia, at the hands of Serb jailers, brought greater attention to this problem (Medical Center for Human Rights 1995; Oosterhoff et al. 2004). Although reports have documented sexual violence toward males in military units and persons under torture, there is little known about events among male refugees (Carlson 1997).

After episodes of sexual violence, almost no males, and only a minority of females, sought help. A variety of reasons were given, however, lack of services, embarrassment, and lack of a wish for any assistance, were frequently expressed. This is consistent with findings in other settings (Ben-David & Silfen 1993; Population Council 2004). Although the need for psychological support, as well as medical treatment after gender-based violence, is now well understood, there are still steps needed to make it both accessible and acceptable (Shanks & Schull 2000).

These data reveal a pattern of continuing violence among refugees ostensibly under the protection of both the UNHCR and the Government of Uganda. Clearly, better monitoring of violent events in the refugee settlements is needed. Although not the direct responsibility of the organizations implementing health services for this population, their proximity, and the nature of the services provided, offer an excellent opportunity to monitor these events. In some cases, NGOs might easily undertake actions to prevent or mitigate traumatic events. Providing assistance for those affected by sexual violence should always be considered an important part of the reproductive health services available to refugee populations (RHRC 2003).

The findings, related to violence occurring during travel or migration, offer an opportunity to reduce risk by organizing truck transport for routine travel back and forth across the border. Now that security is improving in the South of Sudan, and repatriation is underway, it is important that adequate protection be provided during return and reestablishment in Sudan (OCHA 2006). Given the extent of violence documented in the Sudanese non-refugee population, serious attention must be paid to safety once refugees are repatriated in Sudan. As policing functions and security monitoring may require some time to be established, following the signing of the peace accords, all parties involved in repatriation should monitor circumstances closely. Security for the returning population is typically the responsibility of the UN, though efforts to reduce violence must include all. Effective programs are now established for gender-based violence in displaced populations, and implementing these should be considered, particularly as populations prepare to return to Southern Sudan (Vann 2002). Beyond security needs and sexual violence programs for southern Sudan, the experiences in Rwanda illustrate the large burden of psychological trauma which will need addressing (Pham et al. 2004).

This study has a number of limitations. The numbers for some of the violent events were relatively small, making comparisons across population groups

difficult. The security situation often limited detailed probing about violent events. The potential for recall bias over a long period is real, though many of the events asked about are events not likely to be easily forgotten. Many of the events reported had taken place a number of years previously, particularly in the case of the Ugandans. By including questions about violence as “witnessed or experienced”, persons might have been more willing to report personally traumatic events, however, it made it harder to determine frequency of events if more than one person in an area were recalling the same event, making estimation of the prevalence of events in a population not possible.

The smaller number of males in this study limited the ability to assess fully the experience with many events among males. This is particularly true for sexual abuse in males, events we had not anticipated. For events reported, the study did not attempt to identify perpetrators of specific events.

Though we sampled extensively from three sub-counties in Aura district of the West Nile area of Uganda, there may have been pockets of population groups that differed substantially from those reported. Sudanese living elsewhere in Uganda may have differed from those reported here in important ways. Within Sudan, we sampled only in the location from where many of the refugees in Uganda had originally come. The events in other parts of southern Sudan may have been different. Within the area of Sudan surveyed, we were limited by on-going conflict and restrictions placed by the SPLA at that time. During the data collection in Sudan, government forces repeatedly bombed parts of the study area, possibly disturbing the usual population distribution. Finally, the sensitive nature of some questions may have prevented participants from full disclosure.

## **Conclusions**

The findings in this study are a powerful reminder that the life of those affected by conflict is fraught with many risks and hazards. Violence remains a major problem, even for populations granted asylum and under the protection of the UN and a neighboring state. Sexual abuse forms a prominent part of the violence experienced. Sexual assault toward men was an important finding in these conflict-affected populations, and needs further study. As repatriation begins in southern Sudan, returnees may be at risk of violent events unless security in transit, and on return, can be effectively provided.

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